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Rahul Ramakrishna takes back his statement in **ALLUARJUN CASE** 

the pioneer There is a 41 per cent jump in Hyderabad's crime rate after the Congress Government took charge compared to the time when the BRS was ruling. This is clear evidence of the CM's failure. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has failed to maintain law and order. Revanth is a failure as both the Chief Minister and as Home Minister -T Harish Rao, BRS MLA

QUOTE OF THE DAY

#### **HYDRAA** chief inspects water bodies near ORR

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath conducted field inspections of several ponds near the Outer Ring Road (ORR) on Monday, following complaints from the public and representatives regarding encroachments. The Commissioner expressed anger over encroachments on Thautanikunta and Bhagirathamma ponds near Nanakramguda, as well as Neknampur ponds in Narsingi. He directed HYDRAA officials to collaborate with ...

#### Bangla asks India to extradite Hasina

Bangladesh's interim government on Monday said it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi requesting for extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been living in India since fleeing Bangladesh in August. Bangladesh's de facto foreign minister Touhid Hossain said Dhaka wants Hasina back to face the judicial process. "We have sent a note verbale to the Indian government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Hossain told reporters in ... -PAGE: 5

#### Claims ratio of non-life insurers dips

Net incurred claims to net earned premium (claims ratio) of non-life insurance industry stood at 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent in the preceding fiscal year, as per the Irdai's annual report. According to the Annual Report 2023-24 of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), during 2023-24, the non-life insurance industry underwrote a total direct premium of Rs 2.90 lakh crore in India registering a growth of 12.76 per cent from previous year. The contribution of public .

-PAGE: 8

#### 'Shami not fully fit yet'

India pacer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of the last two Tests against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said on Monday. Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November, 2023, made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month. With calls for his selection growing, Shami played all nine games for Bengal in the subsequent Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy. He is also part of Bengal's squad for ...

# Patch up attempt

Tollywood representatives plan to meet Telangana CM to mend fences

PNS HYDERABAD

After the arrest of actor Allu Arjun for the death of a woman in a stampede at the Sandhya Theatre during the premiere of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' and subsequent developments which strained relations with the Telangana Government, representatives of the Telugu film industry are planning to meet Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Producer Naga Vamsi said on Monday that a decision on meeting the Chief Minister will be taken after Telangana Film Development

#### Arjun to appear before Chikkadpally PS today

The Chikkadpally Police summoned actor Allu Arjun, asking him to appear before the police in regard to the ongoing investigation into the alleged stampede at Sandhya theatre where a woman had died.

The actor has been asked to appear before the Police at 11 am on Tuesday at Chikkadpally police station. The police had cited Allu Arjun as accused no 11 in the case. The Chikkadpally Police had earlier arrested the actor and he had to spend a night in Chanchalguda jail.

#### Producers donate Rs 50 lakh to kin of stampede victim

starrer Pushpa-2 on Monday extended a financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to the family of the woman who died in a stampede during the screening of the film on December 4.

Naveen Yerneni, the producer, visited the hospital where the vic-



Corporation Chairman Dil Raju's return. A leading producer, Dil Raju, who was recently appointed the Chairman of the TFDC by the government, is currently in the US.

Terming the incident at the Sandhya Theatre as unfortunate, Naga Vamsi said no hero or producer would want such incidents. He also denied that the Telugu film industry would shift to Andhra Pradesh. He

The producers of actor Allu Arjun tim's eight-year-old son is undergoing treatment and handed over a cheque to the family. Condoling the death of the woman, he told reporters that the cheque was handed over to the

woman's husband as they wanted to support the family. said film shoots are being carried out in both states and the Government

of Andhra Pradesh is also cooperat-

ing with the industry.

In another move to reach out to the Telangana Government, the State Film Chamber of Commerce on Monday appealed to its members to donate money to the family of Revathi, **Continued on Page 2** 

The police on Monday said a

fresh notice would be

served on veteran Telugu

actor Mohan Babu, who

was earlier exempted by

the Telangana High Court

from appearing before the

police for probable breach

of peace, till December 24.

Rachakonda Commissioner of

Police G Sudheer Babu told

Police to issue notice to actor Mohan Babu

reporters that they would deal with bind them over. Continued on Page 2

# Stop speaking about 'Pushpa'

CM Revanth Reddy directs party leaders

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

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy directed Congress leaders to stop speaking about 'Pushpa-2' fame



the issue with firmness and

as per law. He was

responding to a query on

the plan of action with

regard to the Mohan

"We will follow the

process which is laid down.

This issue will be dealt with

firmness. Notices were issued to

them under Section 126 BNSS to

Babu case

hero Allu Arjun from Tuesday onwards.

It is learnt that the Chief Minister told this to Congress leaders through Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Monday. It is learnt that the Chief Minister

The Commissioner said he lost

his cool when faced with provok-

ing questions on ongoing investi-

gations. Anand had remarked that the national media has been bought

said that the Congress is in power and that it is the responsibility of Congress leaders to maintain restraint and stop speaking about the Allu Arjun issue from now onwards.
It is learnt that the CM directed

Congress leaders that if they speak about the Allu Arjun issue then they have to say that the Congress is not against 'Pushpa-2' hero Allu Arjun and the Telugu film industry.

Congress leaders have to stress the fact that the party was the main force behind shifting the Telugu film industry from Chennai to Hyderabad, it is learnt the CM said.

Congress governments encouraged the Telugu film industry in a big way by giving land and subsidies

Hyd police chief apologises for remarks on national media

Hyderabad Commissioner of over. His remarks evoked a strong police CV Anand on Monday reaction from the national media "I apologise for losing my cool apologised for his remarks about national media over its coverage of when asked continuous provoking the Sandhya Theatre stampede. questions on ongoing investiga-

tions and making unnecessary general remarks about national media," Anand said in a post on 'X' "I feel bad that I got provoked Continued on Page 2 and it was

to people in the cinema industry. It is learnt that the reason for the

#### Revanth to attend **Davos WEF in** January 2025

The Telangana State government has sanctioned funds for Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's upcoming visit to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, scheduled from January 20 to 24, 2025. The Chief Minister, accompanied by a delegation of State representatives, aims to attract significant investments to Telangana during this high-profile global event.

As part of the preparations, Special Chief **Continued on Page 2** 

#### 'TG saves Rs 800 crore by cancelling Formula E'

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana government has reportedly saved Rs 800 crore by cancelling its association with FEO Formula-E, following a probe into lanses and financia irregularities. Highly placed sources said that the government's decision to withdraw from the agreement comes after realising that the partnership posed substantial financial risks to the State, including selling assets of the HMDA.

Initially, Telangana had signed a four-season agreement for hosting Formula-E races, **Continued on Page 2** 

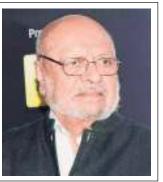
# Parallel cinema pioneer Benegal no more

PNS MUMBAI

Shyam Benegal, who heralded a new era in Hindi cinema with the 'parallel movement' in the 1970s and 1980s with classics such as "Ankur", "Mandi" and "Manthan", died on Monday after battling chronic kidney disease. He was 90. The filmmaker, a star in

theon of Indian cinema's great auteurs, died at Mumbai's Wockhardt Hospital where he was admitted in the Intensive Care Unit

"He passed away at 6.38 pm at Wockhardt Hospital Mumbai Central. He had been suffering from chronic kidney disease for several years but it had gotten very bad.



That's the reason for his death," his daughter Pia Benegal told PTI. He is survived by his daughter and wife Nira Benegal.

Just nine days ago, on his 90th birthday, actors who had worked with him through the decades gathered to wish him on the landmark day, almost as a last sayonara to the filmmaker who had given them perhaps the best roles of their careers.

Among those who had gathered were Shabana Azmi, who made her ebut with the powerful "Ankur" ir 1973, Naseeruddin Shah, Rajit Kapoor, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Divya Dutta and Kunal Kapoor. That photograph of a smiling

Benegal with his actors down the ages is his last in public. In his prolific almost seven-

decade career, Benegal straddled diverse worlds, diverse mediums and diverse issues. Continued on Page 2

## KCR, Harish Rao move HC to quash Medigadda graft notices

Former Telangana chief minister KCR and former minister Harish Rao have approached the

High Court, seeking the quashing of notices issued by the Bhupalpally district corruption in the construction Medigadda project.

The notices were issued following a petition filed by Rajalingamurthy, who

alleged that construction standards were not adhered to, leading to the misappropriation of public funds. The Bhupalpally court had taken

up the matter and issued notices to six individuals, including KCR and Harish Rao, on July 10. In response, both leaders have now

filed petitions challenging the notices, arguing that the allegations are base-The High Court is set

to hear the case on Tuesday, where it will deliberate on whether to quash the notices issued by the district court. This development has drawn attention,

given the magnitude of the Medigadda project and the allegations surrounding its execution.

## Biryani reigns supreme in Hyd's culinary landscape

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's enduring love for biryani remains unmatched, as the city contributed significantly to the 83 million birvanis ordered across India in 2024, according to Swiggy's latest food report. The iconic dish continues to dominate as Hyderabad's top choice, reinforcing its status as the undisputed king of the city's food culture.

Swiggy's findings highlight Hyderabad's consistent craving for biryani, which not only leads local pride in its culinary heritage.

Beyond biryani, the city showcased its sweet tooth with Belgium butterscotch cake emerging as one of the fastest-delivered items through Swiggy Bolt, clocking a delivery time of just three minutes.

Hyderabad's gastronomic preferences span beyond biryani, with South Indian staples like idlis and dosas holding their ground. The city also favored desserts like rasmalai and sitaphal ice cream, showcasing a perfect balance of spicy and sweet flavours. Dining out was equally celebrated, with Swiggy's Dineout feaorders but also reflects the city's ture saving Hyderabad residents Rs Continued on Page 2 101 crore

# Unemployment worsening in TG, says Sanjay

The unemployment problem in the state is worsening, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said.

Despite financial problems, thousands of unemployed youth are undergoing years of coaching to secure jobs, he said. He said he had seen many people in Hyderabad's Ashok Nagar preparing for government jobs by surviving on just one meal a day due to lack of money.

He praised the Modi Government for filling vacant posts in Central departments regularly and added that Prime Minister Modi had promised 10 lakh jobs and has handed out 9.25 lakh appointment letters under



Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar handing over the appointment orders in Rozgar Mela held at Hakimpet on Monday

the 'Rozgar Mela' initiative. On this day alone, he said that appointment letters are being issued

to 71,000 people across the country. Sanjay was the chief guest at the 'Rozgar Mela' Continued on Page 2

#### Sindhu marries Venkat Datta at Udaipur in a private ceremony

PNS ■ UDAIPUR

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu embarked on a new journey in life as she tied the knot with entrepreneur Venkata Datta Sai in a private ceremony here.

The 29-year-old shuttler from Hyderabad, who won a bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympics and a silver at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago, married Datta, an executive director at Posidex Technologies, on Sunday in a traditional ceremony attended by close family and Continued on Page 2 friends.

#### BY B KRISHNA PRASAD

t has become increasingly evident that Telugu film producers are being pushed towards creating only 'feel-good' films, where the hero performs virtuous deeds and the villain's misdeeds are kept minimal. The ongoing controversy surrounding Allu Arjun's Pushpa and the state of Telangana has evolved into an indirect form of moral policing within Tollywood. Ministers have questioned how a character portraying a red sandalwood smuggler could be awarded the National Film Award, while CPI leaders have demanded explanations for the government's liberal ticket price hikes and show-timing concessions for a film that depicts the rise of a smuggler.

film industry might be com-

# Creativity... a lifeline of cinema

of 'good boy Ramu' films, with directors, story writers, and screenplay writers losing their creative freedom. Stories must now ensure that 'good triumphs over evil', even if it deviates from reality. Producers may also face expectations to portray lead characters, whether heroes or heroines, as paragons of virtue, devoid of bad habits such as smoking, drinking, or adultery, under the notion that their actions could mislead audiences. The intrusion has reached such

extremes that in the future, moral policing could demand that heroes refrain from roles requiring them As a result, it seems the Telugu to follow different religious beliefs. For those who have forgotten,



For those who have forgotten, Bollywood legend Dev Anand played a smuggler in Jaal, an absconding gang member in Dushman, and a black marketeer in Kala Bazar. Does this diminish his status as a hero or his eligibility for awards? Similarly, Amitabh Bachchan's iconic role in Don was that of a criminal mastermind. Looking at Hollywood

Bollywood legend Dev Anand played a smuggler in Jaal, an ish his status as a hero or his eli-absconding gang member in gibility for awards? Similarly, Hollywood, Marlon Brando's absconding gang member in Dushman, and a black marketeer

in Kala Bazar. Does this dimin- in Don was that of a criminal

Academy Award in 1972. Where was the outrage over Brando receiving an Oscar for such a role? In Tollywood, the legendary NTR was celebrated for playing negative roles, such as Ravanasura, Duryodhana, and Karna, which mesmerised audiences without inviting criticism.

It is unfortunate that some political leaders and sections of society fail to differentiate acting from real life. Appreciation for an actor's performance is recognition of their skill, not an endorsement of the character they portray. Films are imaginative creations that transport audiences to a dream world, where larger-than-Amitabh Bachchan's iconic role portrayal of Don Vito Corleone life events, such as a hero defeat-

ing dozens of opponents, unfold. Expecting films to align with reallife values reflects a misplaced sense of moral policing.

If this trend continues, further restrictions may be imposed on language, dialogue delivery, and even the actors' style. A surprising aspect of the current controversy is the opposition to the recognition of a Telugu film and actor, with some Telugu leaders now advocating for the Tamil film Jai Bhim. While Jai Bhim carries a powerful message, it is perplexing to see Telugu leaders objecting to the success of a Telugu hero and film gaining national acclaim. The issue appears rooted in resentment over Telugu cinema's rising popularity.

The film industry must remain a space for creative freedom, where art is appreciated for its craft rather than subjected to

# **Congress activists to meet collectors,** request dismissal of Amit Shah

PNS HYDERABAD

Demanding Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah to resign immediately, the AICC's in-charge General Secretary, Deepa Das Munshi, said that Congress activists would meet collectors on Tuesday and request the dismissal of Union Home Minister Amit Shah from the Cabinet during its week-long Ambedkar Samman Saptah, a week-long protest.

Ambedkar Samman Sapthah, Congress leaders and activists would meet district collectors and submit memorandums requesting the dismissal of Goud and CWC member Amit Shah. Congress workers Koppula Raju on Monday,



AICC incharge general secretary Deepa Das Munshi addressing the media along with CWC member Koppula Raj and TPCC Chief Koppula Raju on Monday at

quarters on Tuesday.
Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan along with TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar

aptah, a week-long protest. will also garland Ambedkar Deepa said the BJP is trying to Deepa said that as part of statues at all district head- scrap the constitution as Rahul Gandhi pointed out and that Amit Shah's comments prove that. She said that Prime

Minister Modi's thoughts are shaped by the RSS philosophy. Koppula Raju demanded

his position or the PM should dismiss him from the Cabinet. He said the Congress government's constitutional amendments were useful to the poor. Mahesh said that the senti-

ments of the people were 'hurt' by Amit Shah's comments 'against' Ambedkar. He said the party will launch a week-long protest as per the call given by He said that the BJP's atti-

tude towards Ambedkar was exposed once again by the comments of Amit Shah.

The BJP is now conspiring to file an attempt to murder case against Rahul Gandhi, he said.

#### TG Cabinet meet on Dec 30 to address key issues

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cabinet is scheduled to meet on December 30 to discuss several significant issues, including Rythu Bharosa, the issuance of ration cards and cash transfer schemes for the landless poor. The agenda also includes deliberations on matters related to the Yadagirigutta Temple Board.

This meeting, chaired by the Chief Minister, comes at a crucial time as the State government seeks to address pressing welfare and developmental concerns. The focus on policies benefiting farmers and marginalised communities seem to be the administration's priorities heading into the new year.

### TG disburses 81.57% of Kharif loans Urges banks to meet Rabi targets

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has successfully disbursed 81.57 per cent of the targeted loans of Rs 54,480 crore for the 2024 Kharif season, amounting to Rs 44,438 crore. With a month remaining for

the Rabi season, banks have been urged to accelerate loan distribution to ensure timely help for farmers. Officials emphasised that delays in providing agricultural credit could undermine the agricultural sector's productivity, particularly during the Rabi season.
At a meeting held at the

Praja Bhavan, officials commended the role of bankers in achieving substantial progress in loan disbursement but

efforts to meet the remaining targets. Attention was also drawn to the government's allocation of Rs 21,000 crore for waiving farm loans within two months.

The TG government has set a target of providing Rs 20,000 crore as interest-free loans annually to empower women entrepreneurs. Over the next five years, this scheme aims to transform one crore women into successful entrepreneurs, aligning with the broader vision of inclusive develop-

Banks were also urged to adopt a liberal approach towards lending for farm mechanisation and cultivating oil palms, two areas iden- nation.

stressed the need for focused tified as key drivers of agricultural modernisation.

The officials also highlighted the need for banks to focus on lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), emphasising their role in generating employment, boosting production and contributing to GDP growth.

The meeting also touched on the government's broader developmental goals, including the upcoming Regional Ring Road project, the revival of the Musi River, and the establishment of skill and sports univer-

Officials described these projects as integral to the vision of a vibrant Telangana that can be an example to the

#### Kavitha: Congress, BJP working together to undermine regional leaders

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kavitha accused the Telangana Congress Government of aligning with the BJP to undermine regional leaders and weaken the state's identity.

Addressing the press at the Telangana Bhavan, she said the Congress Government is targeting BRS leaders like KT Rama Rao (KTR) through

'politically motivated' cases. She said the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) case against KTR, which was followed by Enforcement Directorate (ED) action, was the result of a conspiracy between Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the BJP brass in New Delhi.

This sequence of events exposes the Congress-BJP nexus aimed at eliminating regional leaders like KCR, who have consistently 'fought'



for Telangana's rights," Kavitha

She criticised the Congress administration as a "10 per cent commission government" focused on protecting private corporate interests while neglecting social welfare schemes and critical projects.

Kavitha highlighted the delay in implementing the Mahalakshmi Scheme, which promised Rs 2,500 monthly assistance to women, leaving them with dues of Rs 30,000

## Harish attributes increased crime rate to Revanth's failure

Former minister T Harish Rao alleged a sharp rise in the crime rate during the Congress government's rule, citing a 41% increase in Hyderabad city alone. Speaking at the BRS party office in Medak, Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for failing to maintain law and order, calling him a "fail-ure as both Chief Minister and Home Minister."

"Under Revanth's one-year administration, Hyderabad saw an increase of 10,000 cases, with crimes like murders, rapes, chain snatching, robberies, and land disputes surging. From 25,000 cases in a year during BRS rule, the city now reports 35,000 cases annually. This is clear evidence of his failure," Harish Rao stated, referencing a report recently issued by the Hyderabad Police Commissioner.

He also pointed out that communal clashes in the State have risen, with nine such incidents reported in the last year alone. There is no peace or safety under this administration. Citizens are living in fear, while Revanth's government is busy suppressing opposition and filing false cases against critics," he remarked.

Harish Rao accused the Congress government of breaking promises, including those made to farmers, selfhelp groups, and students. "This government failed to deliver on loan waivers, delayed Rythu Bandhu payments, and canceled welfare programs like Dalit Bandhu

Farmers and citizens feel betrayed," he said.

He further challenged Revanth Reddy's claims about loan waivers. "Revanth talks about Rs 49,000 crore in waivers but has only released Rs 12,000 crore. Farmers are still burdened with debts, and suicides have increased," Harish Rao alleged, citing recent incidents of farmer suicides in Medak and other districts.

Calling for accountability, Harish Rao demanded immediate resolution of pending issues, including Rythu Bandhu payments, bonus announcements for crops, and completion of farmer loan waivers. He warned that the BRS would organize statewide protests if the government continues to neglect its respon-

#### Pushpa-2 **Premiere** stampede: 8-yr-old stable

PNS HYDERABAD

The KIMS doctors have released a statement that the 8-year-old male child who was brought to emergency in a semi-conscious state is maintaining stable vital para-meters at KIMS Cuddles Mother and Child Centre in Secunderabad.

Doctors said that the boy is presently maintaining stable vital parameters. He continues to be off oxygen and ventilator. His fever spikes have reduced and blood investigations have been showing serially improving WBC and CRP trends. He is tolerating feeds well. His neurological status remains the same

## BJP politicising Sandhya Theatre incident: Kiran



Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy was addressing the media at Gandhi Bhayan on Monday

PNS HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BJP is politicising the Sandhya Theatre issue, the Congress's Bhongir MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said that 'Pushpa-2' star Allu Arjun would have become a real hero if he had revealed facts instead of reading the prepared statement at his press

conference. Kiran said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the police clearly explained in the Assembly and at the press conference respectively why a case was filed against Allu Arjun.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Kiran said that it was Congress governments which had helped the Telugu film industry to shift its base to Hyderabad from Chennai.

He said that no other government had provided so much help to the film industry like Congress govern-ments. "Should the government remain silent when people are getting killed during special shows," he said and made it clear that the government took strong action and there is nothing wrong in it.

### Parallel cinema ...

Continued from page 1

right from rural distress and feminist concerns to sharp satires and biopics. His oeuvre encompassed documentaries, films and epic television shows, including "Bharat Ek Khoj", an adaptation of Jawaharlal Nehru's "Discovery of Índia", and "Samvidhaan", a 10-part show on the making of the Constitution.

And he wasn't calling it quits anytime soon. "I'm working on two to three projects; they are all different from one another. It's difficult to say which one I will make. are all for the big scree Benegal told PTI just last week on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

He also spoke of his frequent visits to the hospital and that he was on dialysis.

'We all grow old. I don't do anything great (on my birthday). It may be a special day but I don't celebrate it specifically. I cut a cake at the office with my team.

His films include "Bhumika",
"Junoon", "Mandi", "Suraj Ka
Satvaan Ghoda", "Mammo", "Sardari Begum" and "Zubeidaa" most counted as classics in Hindi cinema. His biopics include "The Making of the Mahatma" and "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero". The director's most recent work was the 2023 biographical "Mujib: The Making of a Nation". He was also keen to bring to life the story of Noor Inayat Khan, the secret WW II agent.

TODAY

Dashami

Nakshatram

Rahukalam

Yamagandam

Amritakalam

**Temp:** 28°

Humidity: 65%

Sunrise: 6:47 AM

Sunset: 5:44 PM

**ALMANAC** 

#### Police to issue ...

Continued from page 1

They sought time. There is a process. He has got time till December 24, Tuesday. Again, notice will be issued. We will do as per the legal way," he said. The family of Mohan Babu was recent-

ly in the news over alleged disputes in the Mohan Babu and his two sons, Vishnu and

Manoj, were served notices earlier this month under Section 126 BNSS to appear before the Rachakonda Commissioner of Police on December 11 for a probable breach Accordingly, Manoj had appeared before the Commissioner. Mohan Babu and Vishnu approached the Telangana High Court seeking to stay the notices issued to them. The court granted them relief, deferring the appearance until December 24. A case was also registered against the vet-

eran actor for allegedly assaulting a video journalist who was covering the dispute between the actor and his younger son Meanwhile, in a related development, the

Telangana HC dismissed a petition filed by Mohan Babu seeking anticipatory bail in a case registered against him for allegedly assaulting a video journalist.

# R-Day 2025: 15 states, UTs selected

### Tableaux theme 'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas'

PNS NEW DELHI

The theme for showcasing tableaux at the upcoming Republic Day Parade is 'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas', and 15 states and UTs have been selected for presenting them on the Kartavva Path on January 26, the defence ministry said on Monday.

These states and UTs are -- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadar Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, it said.

In addition, 11 ministries and department of the Union government have also been selected for the 2025 Republic Day

celebrations, the ministry said in a state-

"Every year states/UTs and Union government ministries/departments showcase their tableaux on Kartavya Path as part of Republic Day Celebration (RDC). For RDC-2025, the theme for tableaux has been decided as 'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas'," it said.

#### Hyd police

Continued from page 1

wrong and should have kept calm. I withdraw my remarks wholeheartedly," said the Commissioner. The IPS officer lost his cool when some reporters of television channels continued their questions about the December 4 incident at Sandhya Theatre during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' and the case booked against actor Allu Arjun.

"Still you are supporting...I know national media how it has behaved. All bought over. Totally bought over. No shame. Bought over, I am telling you this," Anand told the reporters. The police on Sunday released minute-tominute CCTV footage of the incident at Sandhya Theatre, which left a woman dead and her eight-year-old son critically injured. The Commissioner said the investigations were on in the case. The police will seek legal opinion on how to proceed further.

The police had booked a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against the theatre management, Allu Arjun and his team. The actor was arrested by police on December 13. He was produced in a city court, which sent him to judicial custody for 14 days. However, on the same day the Telangana High Court granted him interim bail.

#### Sindhu marries

Continued from page 1

Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, shared the first photograph of the wedding on 'X'

"Pleased to have attended the wedding ceremony of our Badminton Champion Olympian PV Sindhu with Venkatta Datta Sai in Udaipur last evening and conveyed my wishes & blessings to the couple for their new life ahead," Shekhawat

The celebrations commenced with a lively Sangeet ceremony on December 20, featuring music and dance as the two families came together. This was followed by traditional rituals such as Haldi, Pellikuthuru, Mehendi, and other customs on

Sindhu's wedding news came close on the heels of her victory at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow earlier this month, ending a long title drought.

With five medals, including a gold, at the BWF World Championships, and two Olympic medals, Sindhu is widely regarded as one of India's greatest athletes.

The couple has invited some of the top celebrities of the country for the wedding reception, including the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

#### Stop speaking ... Continued from page 1

this decision is that Congress leaders were speaking as they liked without taking a unified stand giving scope for the opposition, particularly the BJP, to criticise the government. However, rumours spread in Congress circles that the high command had directed Telangana Congress leaders to stop speaking about Allu Arjun's Sandhya Theatre incident, which has become a national issue now, and that the BJP is trying to gain political-

## Biryani reigns ...

Continued from page 1 through restaurant deals and discounts.

From lavish meals to affordable indulgences, the city reaffirmed its position as a food lover's paradise. Swiggy's 2024 report cements Hyderabad's reputation as a culinary hub where tradition meets modernity, making it a city that defines India's love for food.

#### Allu Arjun's father-in-law visits Gandhi Bhavan

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Allu Arjun's father-in-law Congress leader Kancharla Chandrasekhar Reddy tried to meet AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi on Monday at the Gandhi Bhavan but she did not speak with him.

Chandrasekhar came to Gandhi Bhavan after coming to know that TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and CWC member Koppula Raju are available there. However, he left Gandhi Bhavan as both leaders were attending a press conference.

After coming to know about Chandrasekhar visiting Gandhi Bhavan, Mahesh spoke to him over the phone.

However, refusing to speak to the media, Chandrasekhar made it clear that he is in the Congress and that he had come to the Gandhi Bhavan only to meet party leaders.

#### Unemployment ...

Continued from page 1

held at the auditorium of the Space Centre at the National Industrial Academy (NISA) in Hakimpet, Hyderabad.

The event was attended by NISA Director Sunil Emmanuel, Deputy Director Srinivas Babu, senior police officials and around over 300 candidates who received appointment letters.

During his speech, he said that 'Rozgar Mela' is a favourite programme of Prime Minister Modi who has kept his promise regarding jobs. The initia-tive, which began on October 22, 2022, has been providing job opportunities continuously. As of now, 13 Rozgar Melas have filled 8.54 lakh jobs and with Monday's count 9.25 lakh posts have been filled,

# Patch up ...

Continued from page 1 who died in the December 4

Krishna Paksha

Dec 23 05:08 PM

to Dec 24 07:52 PM Dec 24 07:52 PM

to Dec 25 10:29 PM

Dec 23 09:09 AM

to Dec 24 12:17 PM

to Dec 25 03:22 PM

3:00 PM to 4:22 PM

9:31 AM to 10:53 AM

09:18 PM to 11:07 PM

12:15 PM to 1:38 PM

None

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 AM to 12:37 PM

**Updated:** December 23, 2024 5:00 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy

incident at Sandhya Theatre while her son Sri Tej was injured seriously. The Film Chamber also held a meeting to discuss the situation arising out of the recent develop-In another development, film-

maker R. Narayana Murthy visited KIMS Hospital on Monday and called on the family of eightyear-old Sri Tej who was critically injured in the stampede while This comes after Chief Minister

actor Allu Arjun and other film personalities for not meeting the family of the deceased and helping them. Speaking in the Assembly on December 21, Revanth had come down heavily on Allu Arjun for visiting the theatre without police

permission, conducting a 'road-

show' even after the stampede

claimed the life of a woman and

Revanth Reddy targeted both

critically injured her son.

The actor also drew flak for not meeting the bereaved family or visiting the injured child in the hospital. The Chief Minister also criticised film personalities who had made a beeline to Allu Arjun's house to meet him after his release from jail.

The Congress Government also did not like Allu Arjun addressing a press conference a few hours after the Chief Minister's statement in the Assembly saying that the allegations against him are false and that they are aimed at character assassination.

the incidents at Sandhya Theatre disputing Allu Arjun's claims. Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy had also announced in the Assembly that the government will not allow benefit shows of movies before their release and will also not per-

mit a hike in cinema ticket prices.

The next day police released

minute-to-minute video footage of

#### Revanth to ...

Continued from page 1

Secretary Jayesh Ranjan issued orders approving Rs 12.30 crore from the IT department's budget to cover expenses for the tour. This marks the Chief Minister's second visit to the WEF since assuming office in December 2023. His previous visit in January 2024 resulted in Rs 40,232 crore worth of investments being committed to Telangana, particularly in sectors that

boost job creation and economic growth. During his earlier participation, Revanth Reddy engaged with global industrialists and investors, successfully positioning Telangana as a preferred destination for industries and technology-driven enterprises. This year, the State government hopes to replicate and build on that success, further enhancing Telangana's appeal

on the international stage. The state's delegation is expected to focus on forging partnerships and securing investments that align with Telangana's development priorities, including job creation and infrastructure expansion. The visit underscores the government's commitment to leveraging global platforms to advance the state's economic prospects.

# 'TG saves Rs 800 crore ...

Continued from page 1 but after just one season, around

Rs 200 crore losses were incurred. The Formula-E Operations (FEO) company had filed a case in IAMC London against the State government at the International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC), seeking damages. Sources said, "However, following the state's intervention and inquiries, FEO reportedly withdrew its case, averting further financial liabilities. We might have ended up selling

our HMDA assets to pay them". Last December, representatives of Formula-E met the Chief Minister, who directed Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar to prepare a report. The subsequent findings revealed that the Secretariat Business Rules had been violated in finalising the agreement. Top sources said, "Chief Minister's intervention highlighted the potential misuse of public funds, which could have been diverted to a private entity if the deal had continued. The company could have just taken our Telangana

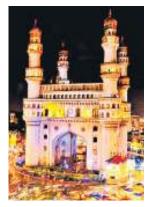
people's money over a race". During the arbitration proceedings in London, on behalf of Telangana government, senior advocate Harish Salve was reportedly appointed represent the State. Top sources said, "However, discrepancies arose when an advocate sought payment for work, prompting the government to involve the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). The ACB's findings confirmed procedural lapses, leading the government to distance itself from

the arbitration process." "The financial implications of continuing the agreement were staggering. The arbitration could have demanded compensation running into thousands of crores, forcing the State to cede valuable assets. The cancellation marks a significant win for the government in safeguarding public funds and preventing financial exploitation," top sources said.

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**Cultural Programmes** 

Sri Mayuri Nrityalayam

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi December 24 (9 am to 1 pm)

#### Yaad Na Jaaye

Md. Rafi 's100th birthday celebrations By Ragamadhuri Music Academy

Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana December 24 (4:30 pm)

#### **Christmas Eve Feast**

**Culinary Delights** 

Vivanta By Taj December 24 (7:30 pm)

#### Tuesday Night

With DJ Akhil

Venue Sounds & Spirits December 24 (8 pm)

#### Christmas Bazaar

Exhibition-cum-Sale

Lulu mall Till December 31, daily at 10:00 am

#### **NYU CARNIVAL**

With singer KARTHIK

Boulder Hills, Hyderabad December 31

#### **Weekend kids** cooking camp

Master cooking and bak-

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

#### Drone ban issued during V-P's visit

PNS HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mohanty has issued an order banning the use of drones, para-gliders and remotely controlled micro-light aircraft within the limits of RGIA, Shamshabad and Nandigama police station areas during the Vice-President of India's visit. The prohibition will be in effect

from December 25 to 26. The directive, issued under Section 163 of the BNSS, follows a Ministry of Home Affairs memorandum highlighting the risk of terrorist or antisocial attacks using such aerial platforms. The memo also noted the increasing use of drones by event organisers for live telecast and photography, necessitating strict precautions near sensitive loca-

Flying aerial platforms is strictly prohibited within a 5 km radius of the State Secretariat complex and a 2 km radius of vital installations, as per the guidelines. Violators will face legal action under relevant sections of the BNSS, including Sections 147, 148, 289 and 125.



# City Pioneer



# ORDERS REMOVAL OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES

# **HYDRAA** chief inspects water bodies near ORR

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath conducted field inspections of several ponds near the Outer Ring Road (ORR) on Monday, following complaints from the public and representatives regarding encroachments.

Commissioner expressed anger over encroachments on Thautanikunta and Bhagirathamma ponds near Nanakramguda, as well as Neknampur ponds in Narsingi. He directed HYDRAA officials to collaborate with Revenue, Irrigation, GHMC and HMDA departments to examine the encroachments, particularly the blocking of floodwater canals and submit a compre-

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Tourism

Development Corporation has

introduced combo tickets for

Hyderabad sightseeing pack-

Telangana Tourism oper-

ates package tours to major

tourist destinations both with-

in and outside the State, pro-

moting tourism. These tours

(daily, weekly, and on-

demand) are conducted by

the corporation's own fleet, making them a key tourism activity. The package tours

include transportation, accommodation and guide services.

In addition to operating package tours, TGTDC's lux-

ury coaches are used for major

events, conferences, cus-

tomised tours, group bookings

trips to Sabarimalai and for

weddings. According to Managing Director of TGDC N Prakash Reddy, the current

fleet includes 30 buses of var-

ious types: Volvo Multi-Axle

age tours using AC coaches.



HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath inspecting the water bodies near ORR

hensive report.

Locals complained that construction activities and the silting of tanks have worsened flooding in apartments due to blocked flood water channels. The canal linking the upstream Thautanikunta tank to the

Combo tickets for city

sightseeing package tours

downstream Bhagirathamma tank has reportedly been cut, exacerbating water flow issues.

The Commissioner ordered the removal of illegal structures and shops encroaching the flood water canals near Nanakramguda. Locals sug-

TGTDC has branded four

AC mini buses with attractive

designs representing key

tourist destinations. These buses will operate daily from

the central reservation office at

7:30 am, covering attractions

like Birla Mandir, Salarjung

Charminar, Golconda Fort and

Outub Shahi tombs (drive-

through), ending at Lumbini

Park/Tank Bund around 7:00

Chowmahalla

gested that directing floodwater from Maulana Azad National Urdu University's land Bhagirathamma tank could resolve the issue.

Commissioner Ranganath also inspected the Musi river basin near Narsingi and instructed construction companies to remove soil dumped in the river and its buffer zones, warning of strict action against violators.

Officials have been tasked with conducting a detailed examination using rural and advanced maps from the National Remote Sensing Agency, Survey of India and the Telangana departments, with a report due within a week. A final decision will be taken after thorough evalua-

PNS HYDERABAD

be resolved soon.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal

Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner

Ilambarithi instructed officials to

address Prajavani grievances quickly.

The Commissioner participated in the

Prajavani programme held at the

GHMC head office on Monday, where

he received petitions from the public

and assured them their issues would

Commissioner emphasised that offi-

cials concerned must take special

initiatives to resolve public griev-

He mentioned that complaints

were received regarding road

repairs, drainage issues, unautho-

rised constructions, sanitation

management, stray dogs prob-

lem, employment and compen-

sation for land acquisition. He

The Commissioner men-

tioned that five requests were

received through the Prajavani

phone-in programme and for-

address these issues.

Speaking at the programme, the

#### **HM** asks govt hospitals to fully utilise medical equipment

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare Damodar Rajanarsimha emphasised the need to strengthen government hospitals by ensuring the full utilisation of medical equipment and

adherence to Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS). He issued these directives during a high-level review meeting held at the Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Care Trust office on

The Minister instructed Heads of Departments (HoDs) to submit comprehensive reports on hospital maintenance, equipment repairs, infrastructure upkeep and the recruitment of technical staff and lab technicians. He also directed officials to focus on equipment repairs and hospital operations to ensure improved healthcare services.

As per the guidance of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Minister Rajanarsimha held extensive discussions with HoDs on enhancing government hospitals to rival private institutions. He stressed the importance of delivering superior medical services in public hospitals.

> Two complaints each were addressed to the Health and Veterinary depart-

> ments and one each to the UBD,

Housing and Administration depart-

A total of 115 applications were received across the six GHMC zones:

Kukatpally (41), Secunderabad (20),

Serilingampally (22), Charminar (6),

LB Nagar (21) and Khairatabad (5).

Additional Commissioners, senior

officials and department heads, includ-

ing Subhadra Devi, Nalini Padmavathi

and Abdul Vakeel participated.

Prajavani grievances should be

resolved quickly: GHMC chief



Students from Telangana seen at the NIT Hamirpur in

#### **YUVA SANGAM PROGRAMME**

#### TG students embark on journey to NIT Hamirpur

PNS HYDERABAD

Students from Telangana began a transformative journey to NIT Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, under the Yuva Sangam Programme Phase 5. In all, 50 students participated. Organised by the Ministry of Education under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, the programme promotes unity and understanding among India's diverse regions.

The students, representing various universities and disciplines, will spend seven days experiencing the culture, technology and traditions of Himachal Pradesh. The programme focuses on five pillars: Tourism (Paryatan), Tradition (Parampara), Development (Pragati), People-to-people connect (Paraspar Sampark) and Technology (Prodyogiki).

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) In-charge Vice-Chancellor Professor Fazulur Rahman emphasised the programme's importance in connecting young minds with India's cultural richness and achievements. Meanwhile, Professor Mohammad Fariyad, the Nodal Officer for Telangana, urged students to engage with local communities and embrace cross-cul-

tural learning.

Bronze medalist and chief guest Nandini Agasara highlighted the programme's role in nation-building and creating shared responsibility. Assistant Nodal Officer Meraj Ahmad called it a holistic experience, combining cultural immersion, social interaction and personal growth.



# **GHMC** standing committee

approves Rs 8,440 cr

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Standing Committee has approved a proposed budget of Rs 8,440 crore for the financial year 2025-26. The decision was taken during a special budget meeting held on Monday by Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi and GHMC Commissioner Ilambarithi.

During the meeting, the budget proposals were bers regarding various departments were addressed by the officials concerned. The approved budget will now set the course

for GHMC's developmental and maintenance activities for the upcoming financial year, said Mayor Vijayalakshmi.

## warded to relevant departments. TG to encourage Malaysian investments

Managing Director of Telangana Tourism Development Corporation N Prakash

Reddy flagging off special AC coaches on Monday

(2), Volvo Multi-Axle Sleepers

(2), AC Hitech Sleepers (2), Volvo buses (8), Non-AC Hitech buses (5), AC Luxury Mini Coaches (10) and an AC

To attract more tourists and

offer additional services,

duced the combo ticket con-

cept for Hyderabad sightseeing

package tours. These include

options such as lunch at

Salarjung Museum and boat-

ing at Hussain Sagar.

Caravan vehicle (1)

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana has created a favourable environment for investments in electric vehicle manufacturing, industrial development and commerce, said IT Minister D Sridhar Babu. Speaking at a meeting with a Malaysian trade delegation at the Secretariat on Monday, he highlighted the state's investment-friendly poli-Sridhar Babu discussed

potential investments in solar power, dry ports, sewage treatment plants and support for women entrepreneurs and startups. He invited collaboration in building advanced sewage treatment plants for Hussain Sagar Lake and highlighted plans for two new dry ports. He also



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu seen with the Malaysian trade delegation at the Secretariat on Monday

shared proposals to develop Kinnerasani and Srisailam backwaters as tourist hubs.

The Minister sought Malaysian support for marketing products made by Telangana's 6.4 million selfhelp group women and proposed holding a product exhibition in Malaysia. He also encouraged investments in the food processing sector.

The delegation's visit followed an invitation extended by Minister Sridhar Babu during the Malaysian Telugu Maha Sabha last month, facilitated by the Malaysia Telangana Association (MAITA). Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageshwar Rao and Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, along with PCC president Mahesh Goud, joined discussentatives.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwar Rao urged Malaysia to supply palm oil seeds or establish nurseries in Telangana, aiming to expand palm oil cultivation to 1 million acres in the next 4-5 years. In conclusion, Sridhar Babu appreciated the V-Hub initiative for securing partnerships with Malaysian entities to boost small industries and marketing opportunities. He thanked MAITA leaders for

organising the meeting.
IT department Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, TGIIC MD Dr Vishnu Vardhan Reddy, Industries Commissioner Dr Malsur and TGIIC CEO Madhusudan also participated in the meeting.

# UoH student develops solution to combat acid fly menace in hostels

PNS HYDERABAD

Tejas Anto Kannampuzha, a 2022 batch Physics student at the University of Hyderabad (UoH), has developed an effective and simple solution to tackle the recurring pest problem of acid fly attacks in the university's hostels Collaborating with Prof B R Shamanna from the School of Medical Sciences, Tejas introduced an intervention leverag-ing reduced ultraviolet-A (UV-A) radiation from LED light

Acid flies (Paederus spp) known for causing Paederus dermatitis through their acidic



tent nuisance in UoH hostels. Tejas conducted a study involving 209 hostel residents during an outbreak of acid fly attacks, revealing that rooms lit with LED lights experienced significantly fewer attacks compared

secretions, have been a persis

to those using CFL or incandescent lights, which emit higher UV-A radiation.

The findings offer a straightforward, yet impactful solution: replacing traditional light sources with LED lights in hostel rooms can mitigate the pest issue effectively. UoH Vice-Chancellor Prof

BI Rao praised the research. calling it a practically relevant work. He encouraged the team to extend their research to study the attraction of acid flies to different light sources based on UV content and intensity, envisioning a comprehensive fly-light interaction study in

# TGCSB arrests 21 cyber criminals involved in 25 cases

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) arrested 21 cyber offenders, including eight agents from different parts of the State.

TGCSB Operations and Technical teams conducted a operation in Hyderabad, Cyberabad, Rachakonda, Karimnagar, Jagatiyal and arrested 21 cyber criminals who are involved in 25 cybercrime cases in Telangana and 73 cases PAN India under various MOs i.e, business investments, part-



time jobs, digital arrests, KYC frauds and matrimonial frauds. They have criminal links with 714cybercrime suspects

across the country. Out of the arrested, 13 were involved in using their bank accounts to withdraw the pro-

ceeds of cybercrimes through cheques and handing them over to next-level agents. The total amount withdrawn by them was Rs 8.2 crore.

The remaining eight accused are the next-level agents who were collecting the withdrawn money and transferring the same to their counterparts operating from foreign countries through crypto currency.

These agents have criminal links with 325 cyber crime hotspot suspects across the country, said Director of TGCSB Shikha Goel.

## Rachakonda sees crime rise by 4%; crime against women down by 9% ders increased by 11 per cent,

PNS HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Commissionerate sees crime rise by 4 per cent under its limits in the year 2024. Total cases registered were 28,626 in 2024 as against

27,586 in 2023. The commissionerate saw 30 life convictions leading to 69.3 per cent conviction rate and 53 foreigners arrested in cyber crimes cases, said G Sudheer Babu, Commissioner of Police. Rachakonda, presenting the annual report on

The report details that mur-

kidnaps increased by 10 per cent and rape cases by 17 per cent as compared to 2023. The accomplishment is the

efforts of my team and I represent them. One of the cases saw 14 convictions of life imprisonment and it was a remote area murder due to believing in myths," he added. The dial calls have reached

2,41,742. Every two minutes we received a call from remote areas of Rachakonda, he added.

year when compared to the

cybercrime. Cybercrime cases have During 2024, a total of 183 increased by 42.5 per cent this

a total amount of Rs 23.12 crore was seized in bank accounts. Total of Rs 21.94 crore

previous year. In cybercrimes,

amount was refunded to victims who lost their money to

NDPS cases were registered by

The crimes against women reported in 2024 decreased by 9 per cent. This year, cases of molestation and POCSO violations also saw a low by 10 per cent, while domestic violence cases fell by 13 with 1,222

Special Operation teams and 130 offenders arrested.





HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 24, 2024

#### **Teacher** suspended for misbehaving with girls students

PNS ■ MAHABUBABAD

In Seerole mandal of Mahabubabad, a teacher was reportedly assaulted by parents after he allegedly misbehaved with female students and showed them obscene

videos on his mobile phone. The incident happened at the Sakram Naik Thanda Government Primary School. After the students informed their parents about the teacher's misconduct, the parents went to the school, confronted the teacher, and in a fit of anger, beat him with slippers. They also reported the matter to the authorities.

Following a preliminary inquiry report from the head-master of ZPHS, Kampally school complex, District Educational Officer. Ravinder Reddy suspended the teacher, Dharam Soth Sreenu.

An inquiry committee comprising the District Child Protection Officer and representatives from Bala Raksha Bhavan Mahabubabad, has been set up to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident.

#### **NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES**

# Police on high alert to combat marijuana trafficking

PNS HANAMKONDA

As 2024 draws to a close, some are gearing up for New Year celebrations with liquor parties, while others plan to ring in 2025 by procuring marijuana. With the growing demand for contraband year after year, narcotics smugglers are making arrangements to supply the drug to New Year revelers by sneaking into the State from the Andhra-Odisha border region. These smugglers are transporting marijuana to remote areas of the erstwhile Warangal district.

To curb the smuggling activities, local law enforcement agencies, including the Anti-Narcotics Bureau, task force police, law enforcement, and other related wings, have launched a comprehensive effort. They are closely monitoring the movements of gangs and maintaining strict surveillance on known hotspots. Authorities are also preparing to take action against users and ped-



Unlike the past, marijuana is no longer produced locally in Warangal. Instead, it is smuggled though the Andhra-Odisha border region and then transported through Warangal before being sent to Hyderabad. In addition to affecting the youth, narcotic gangs are allegedly targeting children, introducing them to ganja. There have even been reports of schools and hostels becoming popular

spots for both peddlers and users. Over the course of recent raids, enforcement officials have filed over 150 cases and confiscated the contraband worth more than Rs 3.5 crore.

On Sunday, a raid was conducted on a farm owned on the outskirts of Hasanparti, where a case was registered, and investigations are ongoing. Despite these efforts, the smuggling activity has not diminished, prompting the authorities to plan special raids ahead of the New Year.

Key hotspots in the city, such as Warangal Railway Station, Kazipet Railway Station, railway quarters, Hanamkonda, Warangal bus stations, ring road areas, Khilla Warangal, Yerragattugutta, Anantasagar, Gopalapur, and Komatipalli, have been identified by the enforcement agencies. Special teams from the Anti-Narcotics Bureau are conducting raids in these areas, with law and order police also focusing on cracking down on drug peddling as part of the New Year festivities.

A series of raids led to seizure of 1,150 kg of marijuana and registering of 33 cases. With New Year celebrations approaching, special teams are intensifying their efforts in the city and surrounding areas. He warned youth to stay away from narcotics and psychotropic substances, as authorities remain vigilant in thwarting ganja-related

#### **TO CURB ABSENTEEISM**

# Govt to display teachers' photos in schools

PNS ADILABAD

The state government has decided to display the photos of teachers in classrooms of government schools to curb absenteeism, especially in remote areas. This initiative aims to address the issue of "benami" (proxy) teachers, where someone else is hired to teach in place of an absent teacher who may be engaged in other activities.

In many remote areas, students and parents are not familiar with the teachers working in schools. By displaying the teachers' photos, along with the subjects they teach and their contact infor-

mation, the initiative will bring significant improvement in the functioning of govern-ment schools. This move will allow both parents and students to confirm whether the teacher present in the classroom is indeed the designated instructor. In case a teacher is absent, anyone can directly contact them to confirm their absence.

For instance, in the Gangapur Tribal Welfare School, a teacher had deployed a proxy to work in his place. When Khushboo Gupta, the ITDA project officer,

conducted a surprise visit, she discovered the impersonation and immediately suspended the teacher. In another case, a teacher from Talamadugumandal had left for overseas five months ago without proper authorisation from the Education Department.

In remote areas, some teachers have been sending proxies in their ers.

place or signing attendance registers and leaving to attend to personal matters. Others have been taking unapproved leave.

The State government has made significant efforts to improve education in government schools by providing basic amenities and resolving long-standing issues. Despite these efforts, some teachers have been neglecting their duties, depriving students of proper education.

There are currently 12,000 teachers working in 2,848 government schools across the undivided Adilabad district, with recent



efforts to fill vacancies through the DSc recruitment exam. The government's new move to display teachers' photos in schools is expected to effectively combat absenteeism and other irregularities. This initiative has been welcomed by both parents and teach-

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE(LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT COLLECTOR, JANGAON

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

FORM-VI
[See Sub-rate (1) of rate - 19 and Section - 11(1) of the Act-300313]
Dist Gazette No. LAVING22924 Dated: 13-12-2924
Cellector, Jgn, File No. 01/418/2924 Dated: 28-11-2024
Splicy Cellector, Jn, File No. 81/33/12(04-1) Dated: 28-11-2024
Whereas it appears to the Government of Talangare/District Cellector Jangace that a total of Act 15-11 gits of land is required in the Mescillands
Whereas St. Mescilland is required. District from the Cellector Dated to the Cellector District from the Cellector District Cellector District from the Cellector District

Wilage of Ghanper Stn. Mandal of Jangaon Distriction public purpose, namely equilistion of Israf for the purpose of Escapsition of Distributory 7L of High Level Right Main Censi of Geodesmann Tank from Km.0.000 to 3.000 Y.E. under J. Chokka Rae Godessa'i Lift Intigation Project.

As porthe Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition tehnolitration and Resettlement Act No. 30 of 2013 the District Collector sportfulde Government) declares that the proposed acquisition is convenient enemant and category saddlined under (2) is 70(4) of the soid act and as such reprovisions of Chapter-Hand Chapter-Hill of the Act shall not apply to this case.

Total (VII) families are likely to be displace due to the land acquisition. The fittinal Collector. Jangaon is appointed as Administrator for the purpose o sobilization and Resettlement of the offected families.

Therefore it is notified for the above said project in the Meedkonds Wilage of Gharpur Sh. Mandal of Jungaon District a piece of land measuring, more of less Ac. 15-11 gls of standard measurement, whose detailed description to stitiowing, is under acquisition.

SCHEDULE

From Km.0.000 to 0.5400 TE

Sib.Ema Nameiah hupperi Ravi Sio Yerra No

Road (0-02)

Bata (0-05)

Bata (0-02)

Dry 1-00 Chilliweru Kondalah Sib Komunalah (0-18)

Kusani Bia

4 157 Patta Dry 0-13 Kaseni Medhu Sio Komuraleh

Sib.Chendraleh (0-21)

This notification is made under the grovisions of section 11(1) of the Righ

o Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation-Resettlement Act 2013 Act No. 35/2013 to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collect

Jangaion & Special Deputy Collector, L.A., R&R, Irrigation Projects, Unit-

Jangson on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telengera / Collectic-cum-Appropriate Government, Jangson is pleased to authorize officer Spacial Deputy Collector, LA, RSR, Irrigation Projects, Unit, Langson and his staff LA to enter upon and servey land take levels of an land dig or bore into the sub-soil 8 de all other acts required for the proper.

secution of their work as provided and specified in section 12 of the said Act

Under section 11(4) of the Act no person shall make any transaction of ause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase etc. or create any nounbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification

Objection to the acquisition if any may be filed by the person interests with in 60 (sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification a provided UIs 15 of the Act before District Collector, Jangaon's Special Deput

Sd/- District

2 Pette

Patta Dry

Assignd Dry

Assignd Dry

Patta Dry 0-23

Patta

Patta

Patta

Grand Total 15-11

without prior approval of the Collector.

Sell-Special Deputy Collector,

Irrigation Projects, Jangson

Collector, L.A., R&R, Unit-I, Inrigation Projects, Jangaon

Ponnem Rajitha W/o.Ranjith (0-19)

huppari Vankataswarny

Thupperi Srinu Sio, Yerra Narsusi

Thuppari Raju S/o.Yerra Narsala

Vanam Mahender Sio Buchalah Vanam Madhu Sib.Budhalah

Garlapati Thirumal Reddy Sio Sudharshan Reddy (1-05)

Garlapathi Thirumal Reddy Sis.Sudharshan Raddy (0-11)

Gundavaram Mayer Babs Sio Ramesh Rao (0-36)

Jogu Yadamma W/o.Chandraiah(0-09)

Venkat Reddy (0-07)

Kavati Chinna Venio

W/ o. Chandrolah'

Kasarapu Yadagiri S/o.(0-06)

Veenelli Ramulu Sio. Yellalah (0-19

Kavati Rama Wko Rajalah (0-06)

Kavet Kavitha w/o.Kumar (0-06)

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# Alleged bid to grab farmland: Farmer seeks justice

PNS NALGONDA

A farmer from Tatikallu village under Nakrekal mandal in the district has accused the police of harassing him and his family for filing a complaint against his neighbour. The farmer Mutchapotulu

Venkanna alleged that his Nomula neighbour, Ramalingaiah, attacked him a few days ago.

A complaint was lodged with Nakrekal Circle Inspector Rajasekhar, but the police officer failed to take action. Venkanna's wife, Sarita, accused the Circle Inspector of foisting false cases on her hus-

She further alleged that the Nakrekal Town Circle Inspector was in cahoots with not sold the local leader. He a local leader trying to grab his



land. She even quoted the Circle Inspector as telling her to give the land her husband owned to the local leader and his associates.

He was also quoted even reatening her leader and his associates would harm her family if the land was even threatened her that he



would open a rowdy sheet against her husband, Sarita

The farmer couple sent a complaint to the Director General of Police (DGP) by

The police allegedly took control of the CCTV camera installed by Venkanna at his farmland, it is alleged.

# GITAM appoints two women to its board

PNS PATANCHERU

The Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) on Monday announce the addition of two women leaders, Justice K Vijaya Lakshmi and Padmaja Chunduru to its governing body. This strategic move under

scores the university's unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its leadership structure. Iustice

with an impressive breadth of experience, having served as a Judge in the

also includes her role as a government pleader in both states. Renowned for her expertise in arbitration matters, Justice Lakshmi's dedication to public service and her legal acumen will significantly enhance the university's governance.

Padmaja Chunduru is a seasoned financial ser-



services sector, both in India and the USA. A former leader of esteemed

#### Semi-Christmas celebrations held



PNS KHAMMAM

Semi-Christmas celebrations were held grandly at Sarvagna School in VDOS Colony in Khammam city on Monday.

In this event, the school directors Neelima and RV Nagendra Kumar, participated as chief guests. The entire premises were decorated. The children, dressed as Santa Claus, distributed gifts to their friends, sharing joy and happiness. The stuented Christ's

#### such as NSDL and Indian Bank, she message of peace with their has played a pivotal role in advancing talents, singing Christmas innovative solutions within the financarols, and creating a festive cial industry. atmosphere.

vices executive.

bring over 37

vears of exten-

sive experience

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#### **Parents to be punished if minors** found driving, warns police

PNS RAJANNA SIRCILLA

If minors are caught driving, cases will be filed against their parents and they will be sent to jail. The Rajanna Sircilla district police have been paying special attention to road accidents. As part of this, they conducted a special drive against underage driving. The police reported that 285 minors were caught driving vehicles across the district. The vehicles were seized, and the minors, along with their parents, were counselled by Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan in Sircilla. It was treated as the first offence, he

The Superintendent of Police warned that if the minors were found driving again, strict legal action would be taken as per the law. He advised parents not to encourage minors to drive vehicles since they are unaware of traffic rules and road regulations. He mentioned that minors causing accidents due to reckless driving is a growing concern. Recently, a minor driving a vehicle in the Rudrangi police station limits caused an accident that led to the death of a person, and a case was filed against the minor's parents, the SP clarified.

The SP explained that there are laws that impose strict punishment, including up to 10 years of imprisonment, if minors drive vehicles under the influence of alcohol or cause accidents leading to harming others.

Parents and vehicle owners were advised to be particularly careful when giving vehicles

#### Vijaya Lakshmi joined the gov- Justice K Vijaya Lakshmi

High Courts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Her distinguished career

## AMIT SHAH'S REMARKS A

# Congress takes out a massiv

PNS NAGARKURNOOL

The Congress party took out a massive protest march in Achampet fown in the district on Monday against the derogatory remarks made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. The march was held under the leadership of the Congress Party following a call from the party's central leadership.

The march began from the local MLA's camp office in Achampet town and proceeded to Ambedkar Chowrasta. The event was attended by key guests, including Nagarkurnool MP Mallu Ravi and local MLA Chikkudu Vamsikrishna, who played a major role in making the march a suc-

Speaking on the occasion Mallu



Congress party taking out a march in Nagarkurnool on Monday

Ravi stated that Dr BR Ambedkar belonged to all communities, and any insult to him was an insult to everyone. He added that the comments made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament had hurt the sentiments of the people of the country. In response, the All India Congress Committee den Cab Sha star The case inte tion

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) had initiated various less over the past weel ded the immediate reruit Shah from the Ut. He emphasised that remarks exposed the on Ambedkar once at has filed a murder attainst Rahul Gandhi witton of damaging his rewas a conspiracy. If MLA Vamsikrishna, ag, stated that the Modint has failed miserabing its electoral promise.	k. He noval Jnion Amit BJP's legain. lempt th the puta- while i gov- oly in	prises anto comp and Ada The adivisions basis of cology, la tism. It is basic n inequaliner, inst	d hander anies or ni.  government amon aste, rel nguage, imposi eeds a igating ed Ca ackwards	ed over wned be nent in g people god, a god, a ng rest and p system violen stes, Sd Class	ctor enter the wealth by Amban s creating ble on the region, ide and patrio rictions or romoting natic man ace agains Scheduled es, minori
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# Tiger population growing amid strong prey base

PNS NAGARKURNOOL

Tiger is increasing in Telangana. The government is taking various measures, including continuous monitoring, focusing on a strong prey base, and removing snares set by poachers with surveil-lance. Additionally, the government is boosting deer populations to match the increasing tiger population. Special efforts are being made to ensure the availability of water during the summer. Officials state that the tiger population has reached 42, with 34 in the Amrabad forest and eight in the unified Adilabad district. Drones have been deployed to monitor the tigers. The Forest Department is plan-

ning to set up Tiger Cells in each tigers from other tiger zones are district. Moreover, the govern- migrating to Telangana. ment is planning corridors for

tigers as well. As per state government directives, Forest the Department is developing special plans and strategies for tiger conservation Advanced technol-

ogy is being used to track tigers, including drones for monitoring tiger movements in forest areas, especially in the unified Adilabad district due to recent attacks. With the government's efforts, the tiger popula-

tion is increasing every year, and

It is estimated that there are 187

leopards in the region. In the Amrabad Sanctuary, there are about 34 tigers, including 15 female tigers, 11 male tigers, and eight cubs. In the unified Adilabad district, eight tigers

have been found. Authorities are constantly monitoring the movements of the tigers using trap cameras. Since

Telangana borders Maharashtra

and Chhattisgarh, tigers are

migrating from forest areas in

these states into northern

that tigers are coming from the Tadoba, Tipeshwar, and Kadamba Tiger zones in Maharashtra. Similarly, tigers are also migrating from the Nallamalai forest region to southern Telangana. In the Amrabad Reserve Forest,

there are ranges like Kolhapur, and in the Kawal Tiger Reserve, areas like Eturu Nagaram, Mulugu, Laknavaram, and Kothagudem, as well as in Nagar Kurnool and Nalgonda districts, are becoming safe zones for tigers. Recently, due to consecutive

attacks in the unified Adilabad district, drones have been used to track the movement of tigers. The authorities are actively engaged in monitoring tiger movements.

#### ACROSS THE STATES

the pioneer



#### 22 Bangla infiltrators held in Assam, pushed back

venty two Bangladeshis, including five children have been apprehended by Assam Police in two different operations for entering Indian territory illegally, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday. Sixteen Bangladeshis were apprehended in inter-state movement after arriving at Guwahati railway station from Bengaluru, they were moving towards South Salamar district, he said The nationality of the apprehended was established to be Bangladeshis on investigation, he added. The apprehended include seven male, four female and five children and these people are being pushed back across the border, he said. 'Inter-state movement of infiltrators busted; 16 Bangladeshis nabbed. In an excellent op carried out by @SSalmaraPolice, 16 illegal Bangladeshis who travelled from Bengaluru to Guwahati Railway Station and moved towards South Salmara Mankachar dist were apprehended and upon investigation their nationality as Bangladeshis were confirmed.



#### 'Process to recruit 2,061 'Van Mitras' completed'

he process to recruit 2,061 'Van Mitras' in the forest department on merit basis has been completed, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced on Monday. The goal of the Van Mitra scheme is to strengthen the local communities' involvement in the protection, conservation, and development of forest areas. Van Mitras (friends of forest) receive incentives for maintaining and protecting plantations. The newly-recruited Van Mitras will streamline the functioning of the forest department, besides helping to curb illicit felling of trees in the forest areas, an official statement quoted Sukhu as saying. Reviewing the schemes of the forest department, the chief minister said the state government is strengthening it to ensure better functioning, while the process to recruit 200 assistant forest guards is also in the pipeline



#### 11-year-old rape victim dies in Vadodara hospital

n 11-year-old girl, who was abducted and raped in an industrial area in Guiarat's Bharuch district leaving her Ainjured, died at a government hospital here on Monday evening after battling for life for a week, officials said. The girl had sustained serious internal injuries in the sexual assault and was referred to SSG Hospital in Vadodara after undergoing primary treatment at the civil hospital in Ankleshwar, an industrial town in Bharuch district, hospital authorities said. "The girl suffered from a cardiac arrest at around 2 pm. after which her condition deteriorated. The patient was stabilised after treatment, but at around 5:15 pm, she suffered another cardiac arrest. Doctors provided her with immediate treatment, but she was declared dead at 6:15 pm," said Resident Medical Officer (RMO), SSG Hospital, Dr Hitendra Chauhan. The minor girl's condition deteriorated as sepsis (a life-threatening response to infection or injury) spread to her entire body, leading to organ failure and causing cardiac arrests, he explained. On last Monday (December 16), an industrial worker abducted the girl when she was playing near her hut.

#### **GURDASPUR GRENADE ATTACK**

# 3 KZF members gunned down in Pilibhit encounter

PNS PILIBHIT/CHANDIGARH

Three suspected Khalistani terrorists allegedly involved in the grenade attack in Gurdaspur were killed in an encounter with police in Pilibhit early Monday, with Punjab's Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav terming it as a major breakthrough against a Pakistan-sponsored terror module.

The success comes after three blasts which took place in different districts of Puniab this month.

The gunfight between members of the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) and a joint team of Uttar Pradesh Police and Punjab Police took place in Puranpur area of Pilibhit after three module members opened fire at the police

party.

DGP Yadav said the three have been identified as Varinder Singh alias Ravi (23), Gurvinder Singh (25) and Jashanpreet Singh alias Partap Singh

They are residents of Kalanaur police station and are accused of hurling a hand grenade at the Bakshiwala police post in Kalanaur in Punjab's Gurdaspur district on December 18, a Punjab police statement said on Monday. No one was injured in the Bakshiwala incident.

Terrorist organisation KZF had later used social media platform to claim the responsibility for this act of terror.

Amitabh Yash, Additional Director General (Law and Order), Uttar Pradesh Police said the trio was involved in the grenade attack on a police checkpoint

in Gurdaspur. The three sustained serious injuries in the encounter and were immediately rushed to CHC Puranpur for treat-

ment," he said. The ADG told PTI that the three suspects later succumbed to their injuries. Two AK-47 rifles, two Glock pistols

and a huge cache of ammunition were

seized from them, he said.

In a major breakthrough against Pakistan ISI-sponsored KZF terror module, a joint operation of Punjab Police and Uttar Pradesh Police led to an encounter with three module members involved in grenade attack at Police establishment in Gurdaspur, said DGP

According to a Punjab police statement, the DGP said said preliminary investigation has revealed that this terror module is controlled by Pak-based Ranjeet Singh Nita, the chief of KZF, and operated by Greece-based Jaswinder Singh Mannu, a native of village Agwan village in Kalanaur.

Accused Varinder alias Ravi, who was leading the module, also belongs to Agwan village. He was being further controlled and masterminded by UKbased Jagjeet Singh and was using assumed identity of Fateh Singh Baghi to also claim the responsibility of the grenade attack, the DGP said, according to the statement.

# Record govt jobs provided under 'mission mode': PM

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that his government has provided nearly 10 lakh permanent government jobs to youths in the last one or one and a half years which, he asserted, is a record.

Addressing recruits at a Rozgar Mela through a virtual event, where over 71,000 people were given appointment letters, he said never before in the tenure of any previous government jobs were provided in such a "mission mode".

The young population is at the centre of his government's policies and programmes, he said, adding honesty and transparency have driven the recruitment process.

Noting that a large number of recruits are women, Modi said it is the endeavour of his



government that they become self-dependent in every field.

The government's decision to grant 26-week maternity leave to women has helped them a lot in their career, he said, noting that women are the majority owners of the house constructed under the 'PM Awas Yojana'

Women-led development is taking place in the country, he

Modi said making maximum use of the Indian youths' abilities and talent is a priority of his government, noting that they are at the centre of a host of schemes, be it start up India, digital India or reforms in space and defence sectors.

The National Education Policy has taken steps for the development of youngsters, he

said, highlighting its emphasis on the use of mother tongues.

His government has ensured that language is not a barrier by ensuring that youngsters can take recruitment exams in 13

Indian languages, he added.

Noting that former prime minister Charan Singh, whose birth anniversary fell on Monday, stood for the development of rural India and for the country's progress, Modi said his government has followed this by creating job and selfemployment opportunities in villages.

Speaking at the event, Union minister Jitendra Singh said over 29 per cent of the 71,000 recruited came from the OBC

The backward classes recruitment has seen a 27 per cent rise under the Modi government compared to the



## Bangla requests India to extradite Sheikh Hasina

PNS ■ DHAKA/NEW DELHI

Bangladesh's interim government on Monday said it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi requesting for extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been living in India since fleeing Bangladesh in August.

Bangladesh's de facto foreign minister Touhid Hossain said Dhaka wants Hasina back to face the judicial process.

"We have sent a note verbale to the Indian government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Hossain told reporters in Dhaka. It is learnt that the diplomatic note or note verbale was handed over to India's external affairs ministry by the Bangladeshi high commission in

New Delhi. Indian government sources confirmed receiving the note verbale. "We confirm that we have received a note verbale from the Bangladesh high commission today in connection with an extradition request. At this time, we have no comment to offer on this matter," said a source. There was no comment from the ministry.

Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 when she fled the country following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime. Bangladesh-based International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against

#### Kharge to Modi: Fulfil promises to farmers



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday urged the Modi government to not do "further injustice" to farmers through its "anti-farmer" policies and fulfil its old promises.

Kharge paid tributes to former prime minister Charan Singh on his birth anniversary, which is marked as Kisan

"Farmers make India, they are the pride of the country. Warm wishes to all farmer sisters and brothers and farm labourers on Kisan Diwas. Respectful tributes to former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh ji, who fought for the farmers of the country, on his birth anniversary, Kharge said in a post in Hindi on X.

"It is hoped that the Modi government will not do further injustice to our farmers through its stubbornness and anti-farmer policies and will implement its old promises," the Congress president said.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also greeted farmers on Kisan

# BJP promises jobs, housing for Delhi's slumdwellers

PNS NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday organised a youth employment fair aimed at providing job opportunities to slumdwellers in Delhi.

Around 4,000 youngsters registered for jobs, the BJP said in a statee who secured jobs today

will receive their appointment letters in the next seven to 10 days. Around 1,445 youngsters will be provided jobs soon," the BJP's Delhi unit secretary Vishnu Mittal said.

Addressing the youngsters at the job fair, the BJP's Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva said, "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, 71,000 youngsters across the country were provided employment." "In Delhi, the BJP has been working to address employment issues in



slum clusters for the past 26 weeks, visiting slums every Sunday," he

Sachdeva laid stress on the importance of the Centre's internship programme that aims to provide opportunities for youngsters in major companies nationwide.

He also hit out at the AAP government, accusing it of failing to deliv-

ing the past decade. "The Arvind Kejriwal government has only deceived and scared slumdwellers," the statement quoted him as saying. Next week, 1,600 flats will be

er on promises made

to slumdwellers dur-

handed over to slumdwellers in Jailerwala Bagh, with additional flats central government scheme, Sachdeva said.

The BJP's South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri contrasted the AAP government's performance with that of the Madan Lal Khurana-led BJP administration. He claimed that while the-then BJP dispensation had provided essential services such as ration cards, mobile toilets, electricity and parks to slumdwellers, the Kejriwal government failed even to provide clean drinking water.

#### **UPSC CHEATING CASE**

# Delhi HC denies anticipatory bail to Puja Khedkar

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant anticipatory bail to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar who has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing of OBC and disability quota benefits in

Justice Chandra Dhari Singh said investigation was required to unearth the "larger conspiracy" to manipulate the system, which would be adversely impacted if the accused was grant-

Anticipatory bail plea is dismissed. Interim protection from arrest is vacated," Justice Singh said while ruling on Khedkar's anticipatory bail plea.

The civil services examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the judge said, was the most prestigious test and this case was a classic instance of fraud committed on a constitutional body as well as soci-

"In the instant case, it is prima facie established that the conduct of the petitioner has been solely driven with the motive to dupe the complainant UPSC and all the documents allegedly forged by her were done in order to reap benefits out of schemes introduced for the disadvantageous groups in the society.

PNS NEW DELHI

the civil services examination.

Ruling that a strong prima facie case was made out against Khedkar, ed pre-arrest bail.

# Experts claim latest govt data on India's forests 'inflated'



PNS NEW DELHI

Several experts have claimed that the latest government data on India's forests is "inflated" as it includes bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the forest cover.

The 'India State of Forests Report 2023' released on Saturday, after a delay of almost a year, said India's total forest and tree cover has increased by 1,445 sq km since 2021, reaching 25.17 per cent of the total geographical area in 2023.

However, the forest cover grew by

just 156 sq km and most of the gain (149 sq km) occurred outside the Recorded Forest Area (RFA), which refers to areas designated as forests

The overall results could have been stronger, especially since the government included bamboo and smaller trees (5-10 cm diameter at breast height) in the tree cover estimates for ISFR 2023. The assessment also expanded to 751 districts, up from 636 in 2021

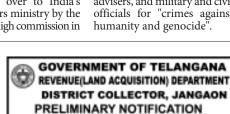
in government records. The overall results could have been stronger, especially since the government included bamboo and smaller trees (5-10 cm diameter at breast height) in the tree cover estimates for ISFR 2023. The assessment also expanded to 751 districts,

up from 636 in 2021. Experts including Kerala's former

principal chief conservator of forests Prakriti Srivastava, conservationist researcher Krithika Sampath and former National Board for Wildlife member Prerna Singh Bindra claimed that the government counted bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the forest cover and produced "another faulty report with inflated data". They argued that such areas do not offer any ecological value for biodiversity and wildlife conservation.

The increase in tree cover (1,289 sq km) is also mainly due to plantations of rubber, eucalyptus, acacia and mango, coconut, areca nut and shade trees in tea and coffee plantations.

Forest cover refers to all land that has a tree canopy density of more than 10 per cent and spans over an area of one hectare or more, regardless of the type of ownership or legal status. It includes natural forests as well as man-made plantations, orchards and tree patches in urban and rural areas that meet the size and canopy density criteria.



PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION FORM-VI (See Sub - rule (1) of rule - 19 and Section -11(1) of the Act-30/2013) Collector, Jgn, File No. G1/416/2024 Dated: 26-11-2024

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Distric Collector, Jangaon that a total of Ac.1-08 gts of land is required in the Ashwaracpaily Village of Raghunathapelly Mandal of Jangace District for public purpose, namely acquisition of land for the purpose of Excavation of Distributory 6L of High Level Right Main Canal of Gandiramaram Tank from Kin.0.000 to 0.5400 (T.E) unde J. Chokka Rao Godavari Lift Irrigation Project.

Spl.Dpty.Collector,Jn,File.No.B/335/2024 Dated: 07-11-2024

As per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency is and Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act No. 30 o 2013 the District Collector (appropriate Government) declares that the proposed acquisition is comes under exempted category a defined under 6(2) & 10(4) of the said act and as such the rovisions of Chapter-II and Chapter-III of the Act shall not apply to

Total (Nil) families are likely to be displace due to the land equisition. The Additional Collector, Jangaon is appointed a Administrator for the purpose of Rehabilitation and Resettlemen

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Ashwaraopally Village of Raghunathapally Mandal of Jangaor District a piece of land measuring, more of less Ac.1-08 qts of standard measurement, whose detailed description is as following is under acquisition. SCHEDULE

ä	mai	Name:	: D-6LI	HRMC	From Km.0.000 to 0.5400 T.8	Ε				
	Sy. No.	Type of Title	Type of Land	Area under Acquis ition Ac.Gis	Pattedar / Enjoyer	Treesi Struct unes, if any				
	Achieran and by Village of Donburgethough Manual									

From Km.0.000 to 0.5400 TE 1. Pilli Sallu Sio Veeralah

Г					le under the provisions of section 1 pensation and Transparency in L				
	G	rand T	otal	1-08					
1	232	Patta	Dry	1-08	Bata (0-01) Potapelli Avinash Rao S/o Amarender Rao Potapelli Mahender Rao S/o Jagannadha Rao				
l.		Patta		ŋ	Pilli Ramesh S/o. Veeralah     Pilli Lingam S/o. Veeralah				

Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act 2013 Act No 30/2013 to all whom it may concern Aplan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Jangaon & Special Deputy Collector, L.A. R&R rrigation Projects, Unit-I, Jangaon on any working day during the

working hours. The Government of Telangana / Collector-cum Appropriate Government, Jangaon is pleased to authorize officer Special Deputy Collector, L.A., R&R, Irrigation Projects, Unit-I Jangaon and his staff L. A to enter upon and survey land take level of any land dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section 12 of the said Act.

Under section 11(4) of the Act no person shall make any ensaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase etc. o create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objection to the acquisition if any may be filed by the perso interested with in 60 (sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided U/s 15 of the Act before District Collector langaon/ Special Deputy Collector, L.A.,R&R, Unit-I, Irrigation rojects, Jangaon.

Sdi-Additional Sd/- District Collector, Special Deputy Collector, Collector, LA. R&R Unit-L irrigation Projects, Jangao

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-----

# Attack and aftermath

Christmas market attack in Germany reigniting polarising debates about immigration and national security

recent attack on a Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, has reignited contentious debates about immigration and national security, with far-right groups seizing the moment to push for mass deportation of immigrants. The tragedy, which claimed the lives of five individuals and left dozens injured, has sent shockwaves across Germany, leading to both solemn remembrances and polarising political rhetoric. On the evening of December 20, a car driven by Taleb al-Abdulmohsen, a 50-year-old psychiatrist originally from Saudi Arabia, careened into a crowded Christmas market. The attack lasted three harrowing minutes, during which over 200 people were struck, leaving 40 with critical injuries. Authorities arrested al-Abdulmohsen at the scene, and he now faces multiple charges of murder, attempted murder, and grievous bodily harm. Despite living in Germany for nearly two decades, the suspect's motives remain unclear. Investigators have yet to establish any ideological or

political motivations. In the wake of the tragedy, far-right groups have amplified their calls for stricter immigration controls and mass deportations. On December 21, approximately 2,100 demonstrators gathered in Magdeburg to voice their outrage. Protesters, some wearing black balaclavas, carried banners with slogans like 'Reimigration Now" and "migration kills." The term 'reimigration" has become a rallying cry for far-right factions advocating the forced removal of immigrants and individuals deemed non-ethnically German. Chants such as "Anyone who doesn't love Germany should leave" and "We must take back our cities,

our villages, and our homeland" echoed through the streets. The incident has deepened divisions within Germany over immigration and integration policies. Critics argue that far-right groups are exploiting the tragedy to stoke xenophobia and advance their anti-immigrant agenda. Meanwhile, local communities have sought to counter the rhetoric of hate with acts of solidarity. A silent vigil was held at Magdeburg's Cathedral Square on the same evening as the protest, with participants lighting candles in memory of the victims. German authorities have called for calm and emphasised the need for a thorough investigation. Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed condolences to the victims' families and condemned both the attack and the use of such tragedies to spread divisive ideologies. The attack has reignited debates over Germany's approach to immigration and the balance between openness and security. While far-right voices call for stringent measures, advocates for multiculturalism warn against the dangers of collective punishment. This incident underscores the fragility of Europe's social cohesion in times of crisis. As Germany mourns, the challenge lies in addressing security concerns without succumbing to fear-driven policies that erode the values of inclusivity and tolerance that underpin the nation's democratic fabric.



People dressed as Santa Claus during Christmas celebration, in Chennai

# Macau: The glittering gem in Xi Jinping's China



For the Chinese Communist Party, Macau is a beacon of controlled capitalism, showcasing the potential of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework

hen Chinese President Xi Jinping landed in Macau, the world's gambling capital, the air was thick with anticipation. Macau, often dubbed the "Las Vegas of the East," is much more than a beacon of wealth and opulence. For Xi and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it is a sparkling gem in the palm of China's vast and complex economic system—a model of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework that allows capitalist practices to thrive under the watchful eye of a socialist regime. Xi's visit underscored the stark contrasts between theory and practice in the CCP's governance and the lessons it offers not only for China's neighbours but for the world at large.

Macau's significance lies in its unique identity. A former Portuguese colony, it returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999 under the promise of autonomy. Today, its glitzy casinos, luxury hotels, and sprawling Special Economic Zone (SEZ) generate billions annually, contributing substantially to China's GDP. But while the dice roll and fortunes are made on Macau's gaming tables, the CCP's control remains unyielding.

The irony is palpable. The CCP, a party built on anti-capitalist ideology, oversees the largest SEZ in the world in Shanghai, nurtures capitalism in Hong Kong, and allows gambling—once condemned as a moral vice—to flourish in Macau. This duality reflects the pragmatic philosophy first espoused by Deng Xiaoping: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice." This approach has been pivotal in transforming China into the world's second-largest economy. Yet it also lays bare the contradictions at the heart of CCP

Xi Jinping's Macau visit was not merely ceremonial. It was a reafadapt and wield capitalist tools while maintaining a tight grip on power. In Macau, Xi emphasised stability and loyalty to the central government. This aligns with his broader strategy of tightening control over regions that might



A vibrant hub of multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs), it has been at the forefront of economic globalisation. However, its recent struggles with political dissent and Beijing's heavy-handed responses reveal the limits of the "Two Systems" promise. The CCP's crackdown on prodemocracy movements in Hong Kong has sent a clear message: economic freedom does not translate to political autonomy. Macau, in contrast, has largely avoided such conflicts, partly due to its economic dependence on Beijing and the absence of a robust prodemocracy movement. Yet, this does not make Macau immune to the inherent tensions of "One Country, Two Systems."

Ás Xi extolled Macau's success, he also warned against complacency and stressed the need for "long-term stability," a euphemism for unwavering allegiance to the CCP.For the CCP, Macau and Hong Kong are not just economic engines; they are experiments in controlled capitalism. The success of these regions bolsters the



MACAU'S **SIGNIFICANCE** LIES IN ITS UNIQUE IDENTITY. A FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONY, IT RETURNED TO **CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY** IN 1999 UNDER THE PROMISE

OF AUTONOMY

party's narrative that socialism with Chinese characteristics can coexist with, and even benefit from capitalist mech-

The underlying contradictions are hard to ignore. The CCP's insistence on ideological purity clashes with its pragmatic embrace of market-driven policies. This duality is reflected in Xi's leadership, which combines Maoist centralisation with Dengist pragma-

For Maoists, Naxalites, and urban Naxals in India, as well as other ideologues clinging to rigid dogmas, Macau stands as a testament to the power of adaptation. The CCP's ability to evolve, to reconcile its Marxist-Leninist roots with the demands of a modern, globalised economy, has been the cornerstone of China's rise. This is a far cry from the ideological purism that often paralyzes leftist movements elsewhere.

India, too, can draw inspiration from Macau. As the world's largest democracy grapples with its development challenges, it must consider the role of SEZs, MNC headquarters, and even industries like gambling in driving economgrowth. While gambling remains taboo in much of India, the success of Macau shows how regulated gaming can become a major revenue

Similarly, expanding SEZs and creating hubs for MNCs can

E EDITO

transform India into a global economic powerhouse. At the heart of this debate is the question of whether ideology should dictate policy. The CCP's approach—that opinion is not an iron rod—offers a compelling case for pragmatism. Yet, the party's intolerance for dissent, as seen in its suppression of Mao's "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" campaign, highlights the dangers of unchecked authority. The CCP's success in economic management is undeniable, but its human rights record and stifling of democratic aspirations serve as stark reminders of the cost of its

iron-fisted rule.

As Xi Jinping departed Macau, the world was left pondering the paradoxes of modern China. Under his leadership, the CCP has doubled down on centralisation, curbing dissent while championing economic liberalisation. Macau's glittering casinos and towering skyscrapers are symbols of this duality, where capitalism thrives under the shadow of socialism. For Xi, Macau is more than a gem in China's palm; it is a symbol of the CCP's ability to adapt and endure. Whether in the neonlit streets of Macau or the corridors of power in Beijing, the CCP's experiment in controlled capitalism continues to shape the future of Chinaand the world.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

# Navigating the intersection of technology, law and human rights



ties can equip individuals with the knowledge and

tools needed to engage effec-

tively and securely in the

As the digital world contin-

digital world.

In a world increasingly shaped by digital technologies, the concept of 'digital arrest' has emerged as a controversial tool in cyberspace

he term 'Digital Arrest' often referred to as the restriction, monitoring, or apprehension of individuals through online mechanisms extends beyond the confines of traditional legal systems to encompass actions in cyberspace, such as freezing digital assets, blocking online accounts, or limiting access to certain platforms or limiting individual freedom in a virtual or online environment.

As technology permeates every aspect of life, the implications of digital arrest have grown even more significantly, offering both opportunities and challenges in governance, security, and individual rights in dismantling operations such as ransomware groups, hacking collectives, and online marketplaces for illegal activities. For instance, international efforts have led to the closure of dark web platforms such as Silk Road and the apprehension of their oper-

Cryptocurrencies and digital financial assets have brought about new forms of digital arrest, where govern-

ments or agencies freeze digital wallets associated with criminal activities thereby preventing the illicit flow of funds and supporting global financial regula-

While the concept is still evolving, digital arrest encompasses aspects of cybersecurity, legal frameworks, and the social consequences of living in a highly digitised world.

At its core, this kind of arrest involves leveraging technology to enforce restrictions or punish actions taken in the digital sphere. Various government agencies, corporations, and even individual users can ital rights and responsibili-

ues to evolve, so too will the methods of enforcement and resistance. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, may influence how digital arrests are carried out and

participate in acts akin to

digital arrest, raising ques-

tions about authority, power

dynamics, and accountabil-

To balance security and

individual rights in the dig-

ital era, taking measures

such as establishing trans-

parent and enforceable reg-

ulations that define the

scope of digital arrest; over-

seeing the use of digital

arrest mechanisms to ensure

accountability and prevent

misuse; developing univer-

sal guidelines for promoting

fairness and consistency

across jurisdictions and

most importantly raising

public awareness about dig-

ity in cyberspace.

challenged. Transparency in enforcement, the right to appeal, and global cooperation on ethical standards are essential steps in creating a just digital society. There is no denying that digital arrest represents the intersection of technology, law, and human rights in the digital age. While it offers tools for

enforcing order and combating crime, it also poses risks to freedom and privacy. As society becomes increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, the concept of digital arrest will likely continue to evolve, demanding thoughtful and ethical approaches to its implementation.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

#### **CONTROVERSY OVER AMBEDKAR**

Madam —The row over the insult to Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar is neither factual nor logical since the home minister never insulted Dr Ambedkar in his speech by words or intention; rather, the fact is that no leader from the BJP has ever insulted Dr BR Ambedkar publicly or in Parliament or state assemblies, whereas Congress has a documented history of opposition to Ambedkar. It is no secret that the first PM, JL Nehru, was never on good terms with Dr Ambedkar, and MK Gandhi too had an uncomfortable equation with Ambedkar, while it may be argued that the twin Congress leaders (Gandhi and Nehru) were right when it comes to national interest and the movement of Indian independence to oppose Dr Ambedkar.

Unfortunately, the national politics has reached the spot where Dr BR Ambedkar has been established as a godly figure, though he never participated in any struggle for Indian independence for which the Congress claims sole credit and abuses Bharatiya JanaSangh and BJP for their nonparticipation, never mentioning Ambedkar for his nonparticipation because that would be politically incorrect. Neither making Ambedkar the god nor considering the Constitution a heavenly document would be democratically or even consti-

tutionally correct. Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

#### **APATHY AT ITS WORSE**

Madam—This is our modern India. When a Jaipur gas tanker explosion left motor mechanic Radheyshyam Choudhary with 85 per cent burns. He bravely walked 600 meters while engulfed in flames, even calling his brother before succumbing to his injuries at SMS Hospital. Shockingly, by mid-morning, videos of the aftermath of the gas tanker explosion on the national highway were circulating online, with more than one showing a burning man struggling to stay on his feet as he scampered for help amid

# **Indian diaspora remits \$129 billion**



n 2024 Indian expatriates achieved a historic milestone by sending \$129 billion in remittances. This amount not only surpasses India's vast defence budget and foreign direct investment but also exceeds the combined budgets of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This flow of funds symbolises not just economic support but also the hard work, dedication, and unwaver-

the cacophony unleashed by the accident, but bystanders just filmed his suffering rather than offering aid. Pathetic. People believe in publicity rather than providing succour and relief. No wonder, actually; these days people do anything for a short time of fame. They will upload such videos to garner views and likes, maybe monetise. They keep refreshing their page to see like and comment sta-

tus anxiously. It's more horrible that in the quest for social media, people have forgotten to be human! Shame on us. People want to know that this is the reality of our Sanskar. We have read many cases like these where precious lives could have been saved by the onlookers instead of taking useless videos. It's high time that YouTube and Instagram stop paying people for videos. Moreover, big vehicles like tankers and buses should be given a separate lane. It's there in all developed countries. It's important to react with improvements so that such foolish

mishaps don't happen. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ing love of Indians for their homeland Remittances have unlocked new avenues for development in rural and urban areas, fostering investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. It has provided stability to rural economies while empowering small and medi-

Indians living abroad establish their identity on foreign soil through resilience and courage. By dedicating a significant portion of their income to the development of their families and nation, they exemplify cultural values and familial commitment. This inflow strengthens India's foreign exchange reserves and energises local businesses. With strong policy measures, the government can further enhance this success. Remittances are not merely economic contributions: they represent the collective effort and national pride of Indians across the globe.

RK Jain | Barwani

#### **ACTION AGAINST MINING MAFIA**

Madam — The operation of the mining mafia is a well-known fact for a long time to both the governments of Rajasthan and Haryana, including the efforts put forth by the general public in complaining against such acts with no stoppage of the bringing down of the Aravalli hills. However, a common man hesitates to lodge an FIR, as he is aware of the consequences he will face with negligible police protection for a limited time and the creation of animosity with the mafia, resulting in a threat to his life and discouraging him from fighting with such a large force. Sending inspecting teams to the blasted site from both the government is purely an eyewash in the eyes of the public until concrete action is taken at a national level involving the NIA. A strategic policy with amendments to the existing mining rules is required to be pondered upon to make it pragmatic and not theoretical to be effective.

R S Narula | Patiala

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## **FIRST COLUMN**

# SUCCESS THROUGH WORKPLACE INTELLIGENCE

It is the ability to adapt to the work environment through emotional and cognitive intelligence



SAKSHI SETHI

In today's dynamic work environment, workplace intelligence has become a cornerstone for achieving personal growth, team cohesion, and organisational excellence. Workplace intelligence refers to the ability of individuals and organisations to navigate, adapt, and thrive in the professional environment through effective understanding, communication and decision-making. It encompasses emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and cognitive intelligence blended together with technological advancements thereby creating a comprehensive approach towards addressing the root causes of toxicity and fostering a positive workplace culture. There is no denying that such intelligence not only plays a pivotal role in creating a healthy, harmonious and productive professional environment but also equips individuals and organisations with the tools to identify, mitigate and prevent toxic behaviours that can undermine morale, collaboration and overall success.

It is often believed that employees with high workplace intelligence can manage their tasks efficiently and adapt to new challenges with minimal disruption. By leveraging cognitive and emotional intelligence, they can prioritize effectively and maintain focus, leading to improved productivity. Also, social and emotional intelligence enables them to work harmoniously with others, promoting effective communication and minimizing conflicts. Strong teamwork followed by leaders with workplace intelligence inspires trust, and motivation and navigate through complex challenges with clarity and empathy. It even enhances creativity, innovation and the achievement of their collective goals and even reduces stress, boosts morale, and contributes to overall job satisfaction. In an era of rapid technological advancements and shifting market dynam-



ics, workplace intelligence equips employees and organisations with the resilience and adaptability needed to stay competitive. By fostering emotional and social intelligence, workplace intelligence helps identify and mitigate toxic behaviours, thereby ensuring a positive and respectful work environment

By promoting training and development, organisations can invest in training programmes that focus on emotional intelligence, communication skills and technological proficiency. Open and constructive feedback mechanisms help the employee grow and refine their workplace intelligence over time. Emphasising diversity and inclusion helps individuals develop social intelligence by interacting with people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Encouraging continuous learning and adaptability ensures that employees remain agile and open to new ideas and methods. Remember, a workforce with high workplace intelligence is more likely to generate creative solutions and drive innovation. Employees are more likely to stay in organisations where they feel valued, supported, and empowered. Today, companies such as Heineken, Cooley, Cruise Automation, Urban Company, Amazon, Chipotle and many more are known for fostering workplace intelligence to attract top talent and build trust with stakeholders.

By investing in the development of workplace intelligence, organisations can create environments that promote collaboration, innovation, and sustainable success, ensuring they remain agile and competitive in an everevolving world. As organisations continue to navigate the complexities of globalisation and digital transformation, the importance of workplace intelligence will only grow. Artificial intelligence, remote work and diverse teams are shaping new paradigms that demand a more nuanced understanding of interpersonal and technological dynamics but organisations that invest in fostering workplace intelligence will gain a competitive edge, as their employees will be better equipped to adapt, innovate, and lead in an ever-changing world.

NONG. (The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# A roadmap for financial sustainability of India Post



OBHASH CHANDR

India Post is at a crossroads. As private courier services continue to expand their market share with speed and convenience, it must adapt to stay competitive



ndia Post, a vital lifeline in connecting citizens across the country, needs to undergo a comprehensive review of its services. This reform should focus on introducing innovation, ensuring greater revenue generation for the Department of Posts (DoP), and maintaining affordability for the public. As private courier services continue to gain traction due to their convenience and efficiency, India Post must adapt to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing environment.

Rationalising Postal Tariffs and

Eliminating GST on Select Services
The current structure of postal services
includes highly subsidised offerings,
such as postcards priced as low as 50
paise. While such subsidies aim to make
communication accessible, they are often
exploited. For instance, during Lok
Sabha elections in 2019, political parties
used postcards extensively, resulting in
significant costs to the public exchequer.
Similarly, postcards are frequently misused for commercial purposes, such as
reminders by chit-fund companies.
These subsidised services, rarely used by
the common man, burden taxpayers
without corresponding benefits.

To address this, printed or rubberstamped postcards should be discontinued unless they are sponsored. The introduction of sponsored Meghdoot postcards priced at Re1 and printed postcards priced at Rs10 could ensure a sustainable revenue model. Similarly, the tariff for registered newspapers could be rationalised to Rs1, reflecting the increased cost of inputs for small news-

paper production.
Additionally, while normal postal services are exempt from GST, applying GST on premium services like Speed Post is counterproductive. It results in a redundant transfer of funds between government departments. Rationalising tariffs for Speed Post to Rs 20 or Rs 30 per 50-gram weight slabs and aligning other domestic and international postal tariffs in multiples of Rs 10 would streamline the system and reduce inefficiencies. International postal rates could follow a consistent structure, with uniform tariff increases per weight slab for air and sur-

Generating Revenue Through Sponsored Postal Stamps To boost revenue, the DoP should introduce sponsored postal stamps. These stamps, carrying advertise-

introduce sponsored postal stamps. These stamps, carrying advertisements or approved messages, could be issued in bulk to sponsors at a fixed charge per printed stamp. This initiative could attract businesses, encouraging them to utilise postal services over private courier companies.

Additionally, a new series of definitive postal stamps and stationery could be launched annually on the first day of the financial year. These stamps should maintain consistent color schemes for specific denominations while showcasing new designs based on a selected theme. Commemorative stamps, previously issued in arbitrary denominations like Rs 12 and Rs 41, should be standardised to denominations in multiples of Rs 10. Furthermore, the practice of printing stamps of different denominations on the same sheet, except for miniature sheets, should be discontinued as it complicates

Miniature sheets, being collectible items, should be priced higher than the face value of the stamps they contain. Such measures could not only enhance revenue through philately but also rekindle public interest in postal services.

Replacing "My-Stamp" with Sponsored Stamps

The "My-Stamp" initiative, which allows individuals to print personal images on postage stamps, has been misused. Reports indicate instances of notorious individuals obtaining stamps with their photos, tarnishing the program's credibility. Since no robust mechanism exists to screen applicants' backgrounds, the programme is susceptible to abuse. Discontinuing the "My-Stamp" concept in favor of sponsored stamps could address this issue. Sponsored stamps would

not only ensure better regulation but also offer a significant revenue stream.

Enhancing Consumer Convenience with Sticker Receipts

Currently, receipts issued by the Postal Department include a sticker only on the portion retained by the Department, leaving the consumer without one. Adding stickers to consumer receipts would eliminate the need for gum to paste them onto dispatch registers or documents. This small change could save public resources and improve the user experience, especially for organisations that rely heavily on postal services.

Introducing RTI Stamps and Rationalising Postal Orders

Postal orders in low denominations such as Rs 1, Rs 2, Rs 5, and Rs 7 were discontinued due to high handling costs. For example, the handling cost of a postal order in 2011–12 was Rs 37.45, far exceeding its value. To minimise losses, higher denominations like Rs 100, Rs 200, and Rs 500 could be introduced. Furthermore, RTI-specific stamps in denominations of Rs 2, Rs 10, and Rs 50 could replace postal orders for fees under the RTI Act, streamlining the payment process. This approach aligns with recommendations from the Central Information Commission and addresses the issue of unfeasible copying charges below Rs10 due to the absence of lowerdenomination postal orders.

Managing Inoperative and Matured Accounts

Unclaimed deposits in post office accounts often remain unnoticed due to deceased account holders failing to inform legal heirs. This creates a risk of fraud, as unscrupulous individuals may attempt to claim such funds in collusion with postal employees. To mitigate this risk, the Postal Department should send registered letters to account holders who have not operated

their accounts or claimed matured deposits for over three years. If no response is received within three months, the funds should be frozen in fixed accounts and made accessible only after rigorous verification. Publishing details of such accounts could help legal heirs claim their rightful amounts, subject to stringent scrutiny. The introduction of successive nominations, as practiced by LIC of India, would further safeguard deposits and simplify inheritance process-

Expanding Postal Services Through Bank Counters

The closure of post offices in key commercial areas, such as Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, has caused inconvenience for businesses that rely on Registered and Speed Post services. With banks increasingly adopting government savings schemes, their branches could be utilised for booking postal services. Offering banks a nominal commission for hosting these services would not only enhance accessibility but also integrate postal and banking ecosystems more effectively.

Revamping the Postal Ecosystem for Sustainability

India Post's transformation should emphasise efficiency, innovation, and customer-centricity. Rationalising tariffs, eliminating wasteful subsidies, and leveraging sponsored services are crucial steps toward financial sustainability. Additionally, addressing operational inefficiencies and improving service delivery will help India Post reclaim its position as a trusted and competitive communication medium.

By embracing these changes, India Post can not only secure its financial future but also continue serving as a cornerstone of India's communication network.

(The writer is a Guinness World Record holder and RTI Consultant; views are personal)

# India's math geniuses shine bright in international math competition 2024

India, a nation with a rich legacy of mathematical brilliance, added another feather to its cap by triumphing at the UCMAS International Competition 2024

THE 'MY-STAMP'

WHICH ALLOWS

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**INSTANCES OF** 

**NOTORIOUS** 

**INDIVIDUALS** 

STAMPS WITH

PROGRAM'S

CREDIBILITY

THEIR PHOTOS,

TARNISHING THE

OBTAINING

**POSTAGE** 

**REPORTS** 

**INDICATE** 

India has long been a land of great mathematicians, from Aryabhata to Ramanujan to Bhaskara, each leaving an indelible mark on the world with their mathematical ingenuity. Today, India continues to excel in the field, as evidenced by its stellar performance at the Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS) International Competition 2024 in New Delbi, where the

Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS) International Competition 2024 in New Delhi, where the country bagged both the highest individual and team trophies.

phies. The competition, the world's largest event for Abacus and Mental Arithmetic, brought together over 6,000 students from nearly 30 countries. Participants faced the challenge of solving 200 arithmetic questions in just eight min



SARIKA JHA

utes, relying solely on the Abacus or mental math techniques—a feat that truly felt like magic. For the second time, the World's Largest Abacus & Mental Arithmetic Event- UCMAS International Competition 2024 was held in India at the Delhi University Multipurpose Hall.

Multipurpose Hall.
Students from across the world competed with each other showcasing their men-

tal prowess in solving a very large number of mathematics problems in the quickest possible time to win the awards. This landmark event reaffirms its global significance in nurturing young minds in mathematics.

The competition aimed at promoting brain development, enhancing cognitive skills, and demonstrating the incredible abilities students can achieve through Abacus and Mental Arithmetic. Presenting the trophies to top performers, former Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi rightly said, "Smart brain produces smart solutions for every problem and prosperity is moving forward only when we have smart brains." Commending the efforts of the young participants, Lekhi emphasised

the importance of such initiatives and said, "UCMAS is enhancing cognitive skills and academic excellence." The blend of the ancient tool of the Abacus with modern teaching methodologies creates a unique educational experience.

Over 3 million children across the world have benefited from the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic curriculum, which encourages creativity, visualisation, and focus while developing strong arithmetic abilities.

In today's competitive academic environment, maintaining mental wellbeing has become an uphill battle for many children. The relentless pressure to excel often leads to stress, anxiety, and even depression. In some heartbreaking cases,



it drives students to take extreme steps, as seen in recent reports from Rajasthan's Kota district—a hub for competitive exam preparations. However, innovative educational programmes like the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic course are emerging as a ray of hope, helping

children manage stress while

fostering mental stability and

According to Dr Snehal Karia, CEO of UCMAS India, the course is designed to enhance children's mental stability by boosting their concentration,

self-confidence.

boosting their concentration, focus, and memory. It equips them with the confidence to understand and embrace their individuality, effectively reducing anxiety and depression. The Abacus & Mental Arithmetic program's key lies in its structured approach to building self-assurance through innovative teaching methods.

The encouragement and skills

The encouragement and skills imparted during the training play a pivotal role in shaping a child's bright future. The program comprises eight levels, each lasting three to four months. Children attend weekly classes guided by

trained instructors, working through specially designed books and activities. Unlike conventional education, the course serves as a supplementary learning system to enhance cognitive abilities. There is an urgent need to complement the school's curriculum by focusing on brain development. The course improves memory, sharpness, and alertness.

As a result, students perform

As a result, students perform better academically and approach challenges with greater confidence. In a world where competition often overshadows creativity and selfworth, programs like Abacus & Mental Arithmetic provide children with the tools they need to thrive—mentally, emotionally, and academically. Alexan Wong, CEO of

UCMAS International Corporation, said, "The competition not only tests their skills but also serves as a platform to demonstrate their creativity, visual memory, and focus—all of which will shape their future success." The competition itself is a testament to the transformative power of such programs, where students not only test their math skills but also demonstrate the broader cognitive benefits that shape their academic and personal growth.

Ultimately, the world needs such initiatives to nurture well-rounded individuals who are prepared to face the challenges of the future with confidence and creativity.

(The author is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal)

## IN BRIEF



#### **Retail inflation for farm,** rural workers eases

etail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers dipped to 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent in November compared to 5.96 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, in October this year. The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) registered an increase of 5 points each in November 2024, reaching levels of 1,320 and 1,331, respectively, a labour ministry statement said. The CPI-AL and CPI-RL were 1,315 points and 1,326 points, respectively, in October 2024. "The year-on-year inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL for the month of November 2024 were recorded at 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent, respectively, compared to 7.37 per cent and 7.13 per cent in November 2023. The corresponding figures for October 2024 were 5.96 per cent for CPI-AL and 6.00 per cent for CPI-



### **Parle Biscuits profit jumps** to Rs 1,607 crore

arle Biscuits has reported a twofold jump in profit at Rs 1,606.95 crore for FY24 while revenue from operations was up 2 per cent to Rs 14,349.4 crore. Total revenue was up 5.31 per cent at Rs 15,085.76 crore in FY24 helped by other income, according to financial data accessed through business intelligence platform Tofler. Parle Biscuits, a subsidiary of Parle Products, had reported a standalone profit of Rs 743.66 crore in FY23 and revenue from sale of products was at Rs 14,068.80 crore. Incorporated in September 1974, Parle Biscuits is a leading manufacturer of biscuits and confectionery. It owns popular brands such as Parle G. Parle Biscuits' advertising promotional expenses in FY24 were up 3.23 per cent to Rs 442.81 crore. This was at Rs 428.93 crore a year ago. Total tax expense of Parle Biscuits was Rs 499.4 crore in



#### TIL to invest Rs 20,000 cr to develop Vadhvan Port

awaharlal Nehru Port Authority on Monday said Switzerland-based Terminal Investment Limited Sarl (TIL) has proposed to invest an estimated Rs 20,000 crore for the development of the Vadhvan Port and the surrounding ecosystem. The facility, being developed near Dahanu in Palghar district of Maharashtra at an investment of Rs 76,200 crore, is being developed by Vadhvan Port Project Ltd (VPPL). VPPL is a special purpose vehicle, wherein Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) holds a 74 per cent stake and Maharashtra Maritime Board owns the remaining 26 per cent. JNPA said it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with TIL for this purpose, and the collaboration is a step further in improving port infrastructure in the country and turning Vadhvan Port into a world-class port of the future. According to the initial pact, TIL has proposed to invest an estimated Rs 20,000 crore for the development of the Vadhvan Port and the surrounding ecosystem, JNPA said.

#### ICAI to finalise int'l networking guidelines for **CA firms**

PNS NEW DELHI

ICAI expects to finalise the international networking guidelines for Indian chartered accountant firms this fiscal, its President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal said on Monday, as efforts continue to have big domestic CA firms that can compete globally.

Currently, there are no guidelines for international networking of Indian

CA firms.
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), which has more than four lakh members, is also working on ways as part of larger efforts to make the country a global accounting and auditing hub.

Agarwal said at a briefing in the national capital that the institute is working on the international networking guidelines as the target is to make Indian CA firms bigger and global. With respect to aggregation of CA firms, the institute has charted out some strategies and steps have already been taken in this regard.

For instance, if two CA firms are merging, they were earlier not allowed to demerge after five years of the merger.



# **New scheme to help farmers** transport farm produce: Min

The Centre and state governments are working on a new scheme to help farmers transport the farm produce to other states and markets, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion of the platinum jubilee of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (AERC), Singh said: "...the central government is working on a new scheme to deliver the farmers' products to distant places," according to an official state-

The contribution of the farm sector to the country's

government is working on many areas to further strengthen the sector, the minister said

He stressed the judicious use of natural resources and called for stopping the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

The need of the hour is to move towards natural farming, and we have to take this forward with full potential," he

The launch of the river-linking project on December 25 will benefit the farmers, he said and called for the development of a technology to irrigate more with less water.

The minister stated that there is a need to take lab work

GDP is 18 per cent, and the to fields and urged the researchers not to be confined to the lab.

A television programme, 'Modern Krishi Choupal' on the DD Kisan channel, has been launched to bridge the gap. This is a platform where farmers, researchers and scientists sit together and exchange their views on the problems and new opportunities in the agriculture sector, Chouhan

He emphasised that information related to the agriculture sector should not be limited to English language only and should be published in different languages so that the distance between labs to land can be bridged.

#### SUSTAINABLE INFRA PROJECTS IN INDIA

# ADB to provide \$500 mn loan

PNS NEW DELHI

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a USD 500 million (about Rs 4,250 crore) loan to support green and sustainable infrastructure projects aligned with the country's climate commitments.

The ADB loan, with a sovereign guarantee, will be extend-

ed to the India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL), the finance ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The signatories to the Financing

Environmentally Sustainable Growth in Infrastructure Project were Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for the Government of India, and Country Director Mio Oka for ADB.

"ADB financing will help IIFCL provide long-term capital for infrastructure projects focusing on connectivity and energy transition as well as under-resourced sectors like urban projects, education, and health care," said Oka.

To meet its net-zero commitments, the country needs

immense private capital investment that will require innovative financing platforms and risk-mitigation instruments to address inherent sector risks and market asymmetries, it said.

As a strategic development finance institution, IIFCL is well-suited to meet these needs, it said.

ADB has worked closely with IIFCĹ over



IIFCL has developed evolved, its operations are increasingly geared toward leveraging private sector resources that necessitate the

investors, it said. The project will build the institutional capacity of IIFCL to integrate green and best practices into the infrastructure projects, it said.

expansion of its product offer-

ings for potential institutional

Á sustainability unit and an environmental sustainability framework and scoring method to assess the sustainability rating of the projects will also be

#### **Data centre capacity to double** on rising digitalisation: Crisil

PNS MUMBAI

India's data centre capacity is set to more than double to 2-2.3 GW by 2026-27, led by increasing digitalisation as organisations increase their investments in cloud storage, Crisil Ratings said in a report

on Monday. Further, the report stated that rising penetration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) will

the drive demand over the medium-term. To support the

the incremental capital expenditure would be supported by a higher proportion of debt funding, which will result in a moderate increase in debt lev-

Data centres cater to the computing and storage infrastructure demand as enterprises rapidly shifting their businesses to digital platforms, including cloud, a trend that has accelerated post Covid-19 pandemic, it said.

The other major factor is that increased accessibility of high-speed data has led to a surge in internet usage, including social media, over-the-top (OTT) platforms and digital payments, it added.

Notably, mobile data traffic logged a compound a n n u a l growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent over the last five fiscals, standing at 24 GB per month at end-fiscal

expected to rise to 33-35 GB by FY26, the Crisil Ratings report said.

In addition to the ongoing demand, it said that the rapid advancement of GenAI, which requires higher computational power and low latency than traditional cloud computing functions, will also provide tailwind to the data centre

#### Trai mandates telcos to issue recharge voucher for only voice, SMS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai on Monday amended tariff rules to mandate mobile service providers to issue a separate plan for voice calls and SMS for customers not using data. The regulator removed the

cap of 90 days on special recharge coupons and extended it to up to 365 days. "...the service provider shall offer at least one Special Tariff Voucher exclusively for Voice and SMS with validity period not exceeding three hundred and sixty-five days," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in the Telecom (Twelfth Amendment) Regulations, 2024. The move will help consumers to pay for services which they generally use. During the consultation process, Trai came across various views, including several senior citizens, families having broadband at homes etc may not need recharge plans bundled with data for their mobile

# Claims ratio of non-life insurers dips to 82.52 pc: Irdai

PNS NEW DELHI

Net incurred claims to net earned premium (claims ratio) of non-life insurance industry stood at 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent in the preceding fiscal year, as per the Irdai's annual report.

According to the Annual Report 2023-24 of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), during 2023-24, the non-life insurance industry underwrote a total direct premium of Rs 2.90 lakh crore in India registering a growth of 12.76 per cent from previous

The contribution of public sector general insurers increased 8.88 per cent from Rs 82,891 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 90,252 crore in 2023-24.

Private sector insurers, including standalone health insurers, have underwritten Rs 1.88 lakh crore as against Rs 1.58 lakh crore in 2022-23.

The aggregate profit of the non-life insurance sector was



loss of Rs 2,566 crore in 2022-

During 2023-24, the aggregate net incurred claims saw a 15.39 per cent increase to Rs crore from Rs 1. lakh crore.

The incurred claims ratio (net incurred claims to net earned premium) of the nonlife insurance industry was 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent of the previous year," the report said.

The incurred claims ratio for public sector insurers was 97.23 per cent for 2023-24 as against the previous year's

Rs 10,119 crore as against a net incurred claims ratio of 99.02 per cent.

The incurred claims ratio for private sector general insurers, standalone health insurers and specialised insurers were at 49 per cent, 63.63 per ce and 66.58 per cent, respective-

and 73.71 per cent, respective-The report also said that the life insurance industry paid total benefits of Rs 5.77 lakh crore in 2023-24, constituting 70.22 per cent of the net pre-

ly, for 2023-24 as compared to

the previous year's ratio of

75.13 per cent, 61.44 per cent

# Gold climbs to Rs 78,700 per 10 gm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices recovered Rs 570 to Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid value buying by stockists and investors following a firm global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal ended at Rs 78,130 per 10 grams on

Silver surged Rs 1,850 to reclaim the Rs 90,000 per kgmark on increased offtake by industrial units and coin mak-

The white metal finished at Rs 88,150 per kg in the previous trading session.

The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 570 to Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. It closed at Rs 77,730 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday.

Value buying by stockists and jewellers for the ongoing wedding season supported the uptrend in both gold and silver prices, traders said.

Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday, gold contracts for February delivery slipped Rs 48, or 0.06 per cent, to Rs 76,372 per 10 grams.

In futures trade on the modities exchange.

However, silver contracts for March delivery climbed Rs 637, or 0.72 per cent, to Rs 89,029 per kg on the com-



Comex gold futures fell

USD 6.70 per ounce, or 0.25 per cent, to USD 2,638.40 per ounce in the overseas markets. "Gold and silver prices

recovered from one-month and three-and-a-half month

sion. The dollar index and the bond yields showed profit taking which supported pre-cious metal," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

However, Comex silver futures in the Asian trading session traded 0.72 per cent higher at USD 30.18 per ounce.

On the macro front, US CB consumer confidence data will be released later on Monday which will provide more impetus on the trajectory of the bullion prices, said HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities, Saumil Gandhi.

three levels and a time limit of

seven days. This ensures a

quick and efficient approval

system," the chief minister

said while highlighting the

state's efforts to simplify and

expedite the investment

#### Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply on Monday after five days of steep decline amid value buying at lower levels and a supequity market, traders said.

**Markets stage sharp recovery;** 

Sensex climbs 500 points

Equity benchmark indices

portive trend in global markets. Besides, bargain hunting in blue chip stocks like ITC, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries added to the optimism in the

# NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED CIN No.U40109TG2000SGC034119

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 08/ 2024-25 OF SE/OP/JANGAO/ WITH SPECIFICATION Nos. 01 / 2024-25. The sealed tenders are invited by the undersigned from the registered and valid contractors FGNPDCL for various works in Operation circle Jangaon as per terms and conditions prescribe

n detailed lander schedule. The details such as cost of lander schedule, date of sale of tende schedule, eligibility criteria etc., can be had from TGNPDCL website www.tgnpdcl.com. Sdf- Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, Jangaon Tender Notice No. 04/2024-25 with Specification No. 61 to 67 of SE/OP/BKGM Sealed Tenders are invited from TGMPCCL registered contractors of Bhadradri Kotheguden District for carrying-out of erection of 33KV interlinking lines for providing of alternate supply to

arious 33/11KV Sub-Stations in Bhadradri Kothagudem Circle. The details of works and othe information can be obtained from our website www.tgnpdcl.in Sd. Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, TGNPOCL, Bhadradri Kothaguden R.O. No.: 8279-PPICL/ADVT/112824-25, Dt. 23-12-3024

# SOUTHER POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF THUMITED SHORT TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NOTICE NO. 02 /2024-25

Works in Operation Division, Jadcherla in Mahabubnagar Circle. Issue Last date 31-12-2024 upto 17:00 Hrs., Submission Last date: 31-12-2024 upto 16:30 Hrs All Information can be obtained from the website: www.bssouthernpower.com Fax No.: 08542-233380 & Phone No.: 293419. Sdi- Divisional Enginee R.O. No.: 8347-PP/CLIADVTH/2934-25, Dr. 33-12-3934 Operation: Jadcherli

## GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Sealed Tenders are invited for procurement of 04 servers for Intelligence Department

## E- TENDER NOTIFICATION

Telangana, Hyderabad through e-procurement platform. Tender document available at https://tender.eprocurement.gov.in from 21.12.2024 and due dote online submission 08.01.2025 at 10.59 AM. Tender Opening on 06.01.2025 at 11.00 AM at Office of the Director General, Intelligence Telangana, Lakdikapool, Hyderabad if possible. Phone No

R.O. No.: 8273-PP/CLIADVTH/2034-25, Dt. 23-12-3024

issuance with a maximum of concept.

# Chhattisgarh receives investment proposals of Rs 15,000 cr

PNS NEW DELHI

Chhattisgarh has attracted investment proposals worth Rs 15,184 crore by top companies in various sectors, including semiconductor, EV and renewable energy, an official state-

ment said on Monday.
At the investors connect meet here, key industrialists from both India and abroad engaged in detailed discussion with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai to explore investment opportunities in the state.

The discussions were focused on exploring potential

investments that will boost the state's industrial growth and create thousands of employment opportunities, the statement from the state government said.

Investors from various sectors showed keen interest in setting up business in the state.

The highest investment proposal of Rs 11,500 crore came from Renew Power Limited. Company's Chairman and CEO Sumant Sinha said the proposal was for setting up pump storage and green

hydrogen projects in the state. Other investment proposals include Rs 1,650 crore by TWI



group for setting up manufac-1,134 crore from Polymatech turing unit for EV kits for Electronics Limited MD bikes, logistics centre of excel-Ishwar Nandan in the semilence and bamboo park; Rs

Johri shared an investment plan to set up a BPO centre by investing Rs 300 crore. Varun Beverages CEO

Teleperformance COO Ashish

Kamlesh Jain expressed his desire to invest Rs 250 crore in PepsiCo bottling plant, Praveen Gupta of Paramount Communications promised an investment of Rs 250 crore and ensuring about 1,000 jobs and Micromax's Rajesh Agarwal proposed an investment of Rs 100 crore in solar cell manufacturing unit.

The Industry Department has streamlined subsidy

process. He assured complete support to investors and also emphasised the state's commitment to providing timely approvals and facilitating ease of doing business. To encourage industrial development, the state government is offering a 30 per cent subsidy for private industrial parks under the 'minimum government'

# the pioneer derabad

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Tuesday December 24, 2024

# 'I've always been hungry for good roles and Kisko Tha Pata offered just that"

**TEJAL SINHA** teial.sinha30@gmail.com

shnoor Kaur's journey from a child artist to a leading lady in the entertainment industry is a testament to her immense talent, unwavering dedication, and passion for her craft. Known for her captivating performances and infectious energy, she has become a beloved figure in the hearts of audiences across the country. In this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Kaur opens up about her remarkable rise to fame, the challenges she's overcome and the experiences that have shaped her career. With her latest project, Kisko Tha Pata, set to release this Christmas, we take a closer look at the journey of this rising star whose future in the industry looks brighter than ever.
Reflecting on her career, she describes her journey as "incred-

ible" but acknowledges the ups and downs that have come with it. "There have been so many challenges and experiences that have only made me grow, not just as a performer but also as a person," she says thoughtfully. Growing up on sets, being surrounded by a vibrant and dynamic work environment, has deeply shaped her both professionally and personally. "It's real-

ly impacted the kind of person I am today," she admits.

When asked about her latest project *Kisko Tha Pata*, which she worked on while still in her second year of college, Ashnoor recalls how it came her way during a break from a long-term project. "It was a month-long schedule and I remember getting a call to meet the team," the *Jhansi Ki Rani* fame says. The narrative, centered around the character Shreya, drew her in immediately. Shreya's journey of finding love, facing dilemmas and navigating her career struck a chord with Ashnoor. "I've always been hungry for good roles and this one offered just that—an engaging storyline, a relatable character and the opportunity to showcase different facets of her journey."

Playing Shreya was an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for her. "It was a lovely experience," she shares. The Bade Achhe Lagte Hain actress recalls how she joined the project at the last minute, yet managed to immerse herself deeply in the role, thanks to her close collaboration with Ratnaa Sinha, the director. Shreya, Ashnoor explains, is a bubbly, relatable character—"the girl next Ashnoor explains, is a bubbly, relatable character—"the girl next door" who yearns for true love but faces challenges along the way. She embarks on a journey of self-discovery and career growth, balancing her love life with her passion for bikes and technology. "She develops her own apps, and there's a whole track in the story revolving around that," she explains.

There were plenty of memorable moments from the shoot that Kaur cherishes. "I remember a horse-riding sequence where the borse just wouldn't stay steady! It was quite a challenge"

the horse just wouldn't stay steady! It was quite a challenge," she laughs. There were also serene moments, like when she filmed a drone shot in the forest, capturing the calmness of nature. "We had some downtime there, just spending time on our own, which was very refreshing," the *Patiala Babes* star recalls. The team also shot at Raipur's Marine Drive, where Ashnoor enjoyed a bike ride with her co-star, Akshay, adding a personal touch to the shoot. "We bonded a lot during the outdoor shoots, staying in the same hotel, it felt like a family," she

The camaraderie with her co-stars, Akshay and Aadil, was another highlight for Ashnoor. She describes Akshay as a beautiful human being with great talent, while Aadil took a little time to break the ice with. "Once we did, it was like we were buddies. We

shared a very close bond, and the three of us had a blast shooting together," she shares with a smile. The Pari Hun Main star describes

the project as a perfect family entertainer, ideal for a holiday watch. "It's a full entertainment package, with drama, romance, action—everything," she says. The story is relatable, "especially for today's youth," and Ashnoor believes the audience will connect with the characters and their journeys. The movie is set to release around Christmas, making it an excellent choice for families to enjoy together.

When asked about the project releasing directly on TV, well, she is enthusiastic. "I think it's great because TV has such a wide reach. It's an excellent medium to connect with more people and bring

our work to a larger audience," she says.

One of the most iconic roles Ashnoor has played is in *Saath* Nibhana Saathiya, where she portrayed a young girl called Panna. Offlate, a scene from the show where she runs behind Gopi and Ahem's car shouting 'Gopi Ben...' has been all over on social media. Ashnoor reflects on it with a sense of amusement. "When I first did it, no one knew how big it would get. It's funny to see how people still enjoy it every few months. It's become such a trend," she chuckles.

When it comes to choosing her roles, she is particular about the content. "Content is king today. There's more supply of content than demand, so it's important to choose projects wisely," she explains. She looks for roles that challenge her as an actor, "Something that pushes me to perform, something tricky and enjoyable," she says. Ashnoor is passionate about working with a good team, believing that the environment on set plays a significant role in shaping her craft and her understanding of the project.

Looking ahead, Ashnoor expresses interest in exploring genres she has yet to dive into. "I'd love to do a fantasy action drama, like something with a Disney setting. I think it would be really fun and challenging," she says eagerly.
As for what's next, Ashnoor is busy with multiple projects.

"I'm currently working on a show, and there's another OTT project in the pipeline that will be out next year, possibly in May," she shares. While she can't reveal much about it yet, she is excited for what the future holds. "There's a lot more to come, and I'm looking forward to what's next," she concludes, her enthusiasm for her craft shining through. Ashnoor Kaur's journey continues to inspire fans and her ded-

ication to her craft promises an exciting future ahead.

**Known for her** infectious energy and captivating performances. **Ashnoor Kaur is all set** to woo the audience yet again with her upcoming project *Kisko Tha Pata.* In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she speaks about her remarkable journey in the entertainment industry, her experiences working

on her latest project

and more



Make DEI priority: Just like a compelling vision statement, educational institutions must underscore DEI as one of their strategic guiding principle of operations. The recruitment campaigns, outreach and communication must highlight the University's DEI policy and its intent to hire inclusive leaders from across cultural, ethical and racial backgrounds. This strategy will attract potential candidates from diversified backgrounds and encourage them to apply for leadership positions in institutes that follow DEI as one of the core tenets of their operating philosophy.

Train selection teams: DEI hiring is significantly different from conventional hiring, mandating the need for trained professionals to conduct the selection process. Selection committees formed for hiring DEI leadership must undergo rigorous training to avoid any implicit bias during the selection process. Further, the selection team must be fully aware of DEI hiring priorities and should have representation from across socio-economic, gender, ethnic and racial denominations. Experts suggest that universities should encourage stakeholders such as parents, policymakers and student committee representatives to observe the selection process and share their opinions on how to make the hiring process more effective.

**Hire non-traditional candidates:** To truly champion DEI. universities can opt to hire leaders from other professional backgrounds or industries. This unconventional approach can help by bringing a completely new perspective to the table. For example, leadership recruitment from the consultancy space can help education institutes reinvigorate their research, innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). Universities can also hire former bureaucrats. administrators, or policymakers for leadership positions to strengthen their global accreditation, benchmarking compliance and administrative efficiency while boosting their DEI credentials significantly.

Make data-based decisions: Technology can be a great enabler for effectively implementing DEI policy while hiring for leadership positions in higher education. Especially while filtering candidates in preliminary rounds of selection, insights offered by data can be of immense use. Al and ML can be used to get into the depths of the cultural backgrounds, ethnic orientations, and socio-economic conditions of potential candidates. This information can be shared with the selection committee so that the right candidates representing the true values and ethos of DEI pass through.

Collect and integrate feedback: Not only collecting but also integrating feedback on the hiring process is critically important for improving DEI integration in the leadership selection process. Universities should segment the feedback into different categories and then extract the actionable information to aid the decisionmaking process. It's important to collect the responses from every interviewed candidate as the information can play a crucial role in optimising the selection process in the future. The feedback from the students, employees and other stakeholders should also be integrated to refine DEI goals and make them one of the KPIs of the

(The author, Kalpesh Banker, is a Managing Partner at EduShine Search Partners.)

# GROOVING TO THE BEATS OF 2024

2024 HAS BEEN A YEAR FULL OF VIBRANT AND GROOVY TRACKS THAT HAVE SET THE TONE FOR PARTIES, CELEBRATIONS, AND DANCE FLOORS AROUND THE WORLD. FROM INFECTIOUS BEATS TO CATCHY RHYTHMS. THIS YEAR'S MUSIC SCENE HAS DELIVERED A PERFECT BLEND OF HIGH-ENERGY DANCE NUMBERS AND FEEL-GOOD ANTHEMS.



#### Nain Matakka

Nain Matakka is a vibrant and electrifying dance number that brings together the infectious energy of Varun Dhawan and the elegance of Keerthy Suresh. The song is characterized by its peppy beats, catchy lyrics, and a rhythmic composition that blends traditional Indian sounds with modern musical elements. Its high-octane tempo and foot-tapping rhythm make it a perfect addition to festive playlists, ensuring it resonates with audiences as both a cinematic highlight and a dancefloor favorite.

#### Aaj Ki Raat

Aaj Ki Raat, featuring Tamannaah Bhatia, is a sizzling and vibrant track



that radiates energy and glamour. The song's infectious beats, pulsating as a chilling anthem for the film, leavrhythm and modern composition make it a quintessential dance number. perfect for high-energy party scenes. Tamannaah's captivating screen presence and electrifying dance moves add an extra layer of charm and dynamism to the song, making it a visual delight. The track's irresistible vibe ensures it remains a favorite for music lovers and dance enthusiasts alike.

#### Tauba Tauba



Vicky Kaushal's effortless charm and dynamic dance moves combined with Karan Aujla's composition, brings a vibrant energy to the visuals, making the track an engaging watch. The composition combines modern beats with desi influences, creating a soundscape that is both contemporary and rooted in fun, youthful exuberance. With its lively choreography and infectious rhythm, Tauba Tauba is a track that leaves listeners humming along and tapping their feet, adding an undeniable spark to any playlist.



Aayi Nai from Stree 2's eerie melody, paired with pulsating beats, creates an atmosphere of suspense and intrigue while retaining a quirky, playful undertone that matches the spirit of the Stree franchise. Its lyrics cleverly intertwine humor and fear, reflecting the movie's signature blend of horror and comedy. The haunting visuals and sharp chore-ography add depth to the track, making it both a narrative-driven piece and

ing audiences captivated and eager to unravel the mystery that it hints at.

#### Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya



Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uliha Jiya, featuring Kriti Sanon and Shahid Kapoor, is not just a romantic ballad but a track that effortlessly makes us groove with its infectious rhythm and heartfelt charm. The playful yet emotional lyrics capture the complexity of love, and the subtle groove in the music mirrors that emotional tug, creating a magnetic energy. Kriti and Shahid's chemistry adds a layer of warmth to the visuals, as their effortless movements svnc with the track's rhythm, making it visually captivating. It's a perfect combination of romance, rhythm, and energy, making Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uliha Jiya a track that's bound to get stuck in your head and on your feet.

Naina from Crew is a captivating dance number that expertly blends



emotional depth with an infectious rhythm. Despite its introspective lyrics, the song's music is designed to get people on their feet, with a balance of energetic percussion and catchy melodies that make it ideal for dance floors. The rhythmic energy and fluid dance moves in the visuals add to the track's dynamic appeal, showcasing its versatility as both a reflective and celebratory anthem. Naina strikes a unique balance, offering a compelling mix of emotional expression and irresistible energy that makes it a dance number with an emotional twist.

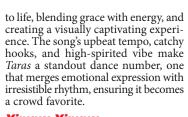
#### What Jhumka

What Ihumka from Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani is an exuberant dance number that effortlessly blends traditional Indian sounds with modern beats, making it a perfect track for the dance floor. The catchy chorus and whimsical lyrics, centered around the



charm of the jhumka, add a fun and cheeky element to the track, while the energetic choreography and vibrant visuals elevate its celebratory mood. With a perfect mix of foot-tapping beats, colorful visuals and spirited dance moves, What Jhumka is designed to get everyone up and dancing, making it the ultimate party anthem. Its fusion of old-world charm with contemporary music gives the song a timeless appeal, ensuring that it will have audiences swaying to its rhythm.

Taras from Munjya, featuring Sharvari, is an exhilarating dance number that effortlessly combines rhythm, energy and emotion. While the song conveys a sense of longing through its lyrics, the upbeat, rhythmic music gives it an energetic and playful twist, making it ideal for a dance floor. Sharvari's dynamic performance and smooth choreography bring the track



#### **Yimmy Yimmy**



Yimmy Yimmy's playful and peppy vibe makes it impossible to resist moving to its groove. Jacqueline Fernandez's charismatic presence and impeccable dance moves elevate the track, bringing an added layer of charm and excitement.



# what's brewing?



IT Minister Sridhar Babu inaugurated the WeWork, a new coworking space at MPM Mall in Ameerpet, marking a shift in IT spaces from he western part of the city to central Hyderabad.





The grand wedding ceremony of Shaik Arif Ahmed, son of Shaik Ateeq Ahmed and the niece of Habeeb Abdul Kader

Al Hamed, daughter of Habeeb Abdullah (Faisal), was held at the Classic Convention Three in Shamshabad, Hyderabad. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries including Mohammed Mahmood Ali, MLC and former Home Minister of Telangana, community leader Iftekhar











National Mart has launched its 12th store in Hanamkonda, marking a significant milestone in its expansion journey. The grand opening ceremony marked the presence of Naini Rajender Reddy, MLA, Warangal (West), Gundu Sudha Rani, Mayor, GWMC, Warangal and other local dignitaries, business leaders and community members, who inaugurated the store.







The 7th Annual Entrepreneurship & Youth Conference of Sanathana Entrepreneurs Association (SEA) was successfully held at the Marigold by Greenpark Hotel. The event was attended by Advisors of Telangana Government Harkara Venu Gopal Rao, former MLC N Ramachandra Rao and Ex-Union Minister Venugopala Chary



Photos by- SV Chary

#### ARCHIE









#### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**



REALITY CHECK

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CONFISCATE THESE

WHEN ARE THOSE



SPEED BUMP



**CROSSWORD** 



#### **GARFIELD**













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#### **GINGER MEGGS**







Hyderabad | Tuesday December 24, 2024



**SURESH KAVIRAYANI** sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

dhere have been reports over the last few days that the Telugu Film Industry is planning to shift to Andhra Pradesh. With numerous incidents, including a stampede at Sandhya Cinema theatre, a woman's death, an actor's arrest, and the industry's consolation of the actor after his release from jail. Under these circumstances, there are reports that industry representatives plan to meet with AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to

On Monday, producer Naga Vamsi held a media conference regarding his film *Daaku Maharaaj*, starring Nandamuri Balakrishna and directed by Bobby Kolli. When asked whether the industry is shifting to Andhra Pradesh, he clearly said, 'no'. "We have built our houses here with a lot of money, so what can we do if we go to Andhra Pradesh?" asked producer Naga Vamsi. He also added that he has no idea about meeting the AP CM. "I

idea about meeting the AP CM. "I don't have any information regarding a meeting with the Andhra CM," said Naga Vamsi.

The producer stated that the industry is not shifting anywhere. The Telangana Chief Minister and Cinematography Minister have clearly said that in the coming days, there will be no price hike and no there will be no price hike and no benefit shows for any films. When asked about the Telangana

diplomatic answer. "The FDC Chairman Dil Raju's film Game Changer is releasing first, and whatever benefits he receives for his film will automatically apply to my film, which is releasing after-

ward," said Vamsi. The producer later clarified that his intention is not to entirely shift to Andhra Pradesh. "We will give equal importance to both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. We will shoot here and there as well," he said.

Director Bobby Kolli said that he portrayed Balakrishna in a different way in *Daaku Maharaaj*. When asked whether showing Balakrishna, an elected leader, in a negative light might prompt criticism from the audience, Kolli replied, "We all know that Balakrishna represents Hindupur, and we have shown how he reacts

The producer was reluctant to discuss the incidents that occurred over the last few days. However, he acknowledged that an unfortunate incident happened at Sandhya the-atre. Some fans damaged chairs and screens in several theatres and when asked about his film's release in many theatres during Sankranthi, he said, "We will be more careful." He added, "Generally, such incidents happen in a moment, and it's not possible to prevent them. Since the film is releasing in numerous theaters, we cannot monitor each theater individually."

Now, all eyes are on Dil Raju, the new chairman of the Telangana Film Development Corporation, who returned to Hyderabad last night. A significant task lies ahead for him after taking charge as

#### **TELANGANA EXHIBITORS WELCOME REVANTH REDDY'S DECISION**

he Telangana Exhibitors Association on Monday welcomed the decision of Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's decision, where he said that in the near future, there will not be any hike in ticket prices of any film. "This will definitely help single theatres to run for a longer period," said Vijayender Reddy, president, Telangana Exhibitors Association. He added that he welcomes the Chief Minister's decision not to hike ticket prices in the future. "We welcome the decision and will give full support for it," he said. He added that if single theaters also hiked ticket prices, audiences wouldn't come to see the films. There are two different sections of the audience, where one section watches films in multiplexes and the second section watches in single theatres. When single theatres too hiked prices, this section of people stopped coming; now, with the CM's decision, we can run theaters for a longer time," said Vijayender Reddy. Gorantla Srinivasa Rao, EC Member of Andhra Exhibitors Association, said that they are going to give a memorandum to the AP Government to reduce ticket prices. "We are planning to meet AP Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and appeal to them to reduce ticket prices in single theaters," said Srinivasa Rao. He added that single-screen theaters will survive only if ticket prices are normal. "We welcome the Telangana CM's decision and we want to implement the same in Andhra Pradesh," he said. He added that the recent film *Pushpa 2* had hiked ticket prices, and people didn't come to see it. "In the first week, many theaters were vacant because of the high ticket price. The audience didn't come to see it in the first week for this film,

Ram Prasad, President of AP Exhibition Association, said that he has full confidence in Pawan Kalyan, who always supports the development of cinema. "If ticket prices are fixed and normal, there is a chance that the film may run for many days. People will definitely come to theatres to watch films, even in the fourth week," said Ram Prasad.



### Rahul Ramakrishna takes back his statement in Allu Arjun case

ctor Allu Arjun's controversy has still been a talk-of-the town. The actor was arrested a few days back, A of-the town. The actor was affected a few sails country in relation to the Sandhya theatre stamped where a woman passed away. However, later he was released on bail. The film industry personalities visited his house to give their support. Actor Rahul Ramakrishna also posted a big note on his social media in support of Allu Arjun and questioned the authorities.

Later, the police commissioner CV Anand in a media conference presented the videos about what happened on the day of the Sandhya theatre stampede, Rahul Ramakrishna changed his opinion. The actor didn't delete the old posts and keep them in his social media, but posted another note that he was terribly uninformed about the entire event that took place.

"I was terribly un-informed about all the events that took place. I take back my statements that I made previously," said Rahul Ramakrishna in his social media.

Will other film personalities change their opinion on Allu Arjun arrest just like Rahul Ramakrishna?

## 'It was Mega Star Chiranjeevi, who encouraged us'

harma and Aishwarya Sharma will be seen as the lead pair in *Drinker Sai*, which is produced by Basavaraju Laharidhar. Kiran Tirumalasetti is the director and the movie is based on real events. The film is releasing on December 27. Producer Basavaraju Laharidhar talks about his film and the inspiration.

Bayasaraju said that he doesn't have any experience in the film industry, but his father knows Chiranjeevi very well. "My father, Basavaraju Srinivas, was a key member in the PRP party floated by Chiranjeevi and he has long association with him. We shared this film story with Chiranjeevi and after hearing it, he gave us his blessings to go ahead. With his encouragement, we began work on the film," said Basavaraju. He added that he showed the songs to Chiranjeevi and got good appreciation.

Laharidhar said he started working on this film in 2019, but because of the pandemic he had to put it on hold. "We started again last year with few modifications to the story," said the producer. He added that director Kiran worked earlier with Maruthi and made his debut as director with this one. Talking about the lead pair, he said Dharma trained at Satyanand in Vizag and roped in Aishwarya with an audition. He said that the theatrical and OTT business for small films is somewhat sluggish at present. "However, we are confident that our film's content will be appreciated and confident about the success," he said. He added that his main focus is on Drinker Sai and once it's released, he will begin preparations for his next project.





# Siddharth lends his

# voice for It's Okay Guru A ctor Siddharth is known for his best performances as an actor and has also occasionally proved to be a great singer. The actor first began singing with his film *Chukkallo Chandrudu*, nearly 18 years back and continued his virging is Theorem 17.

tinued his singing in Telugu and Tamil films. Now, the he has lent his voice for the film It's Okay Guru.

Charan Sai and Usha sri are playing the lead roles in this film, produced by Suresh Anapurapu and Baswa Govardhan Goud.

lyrics penned by Rahul Red Infinity. Siddharth gave his energetic and mellifluous voice. The song expresses intense emotions of love, with lyrics that convey the depth of devotion. The song exudes a beautiful, heartfelt love vibe.

# Anandhi's *Garividi Lakshmi* inspired by real-life

delugu girl and actress Anandhi has made her mark both in Telugu and Tamil films. She is known for her powerful performance in films like Poriyaalan, Kayal and many other Tamil films. She was last seen in Itlu Maredumilli Prajaaneekam and Vidhi. Now, the actress's new film was launched in style, not in Hyderabad, but in Adoni, in Andhra Pradesh. She brings depth to her characters, is set to deliver another impactful portrayal in this film, produced by TG Vishwa Prasad and TG Krithi Prasad. The title is also interesting. Gowri

Naidu Jammu is the director. The ceremony saw the presence of actors from the film including Anandhi, VK Naresh, Rag Mayur present for the launch. The film portrays the inspiring story of the iconic Burra Katha artist Garividi Lakshmi from North Andhra and tackles the theme of women's identity theft. The shooting is scheduled to commence in the third

week of January in Adoni. TG Krithi Prasad, the daughter of renowned producer TG Vishwa Prasad, is making her debut as a producer with this film.



# Shami not fully fit yet, ruled out of remaining two Tests in Australia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**▼**ndia pacer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of the last two Tests against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said on Monday.

Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November, 2023, made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month.

With calls for his selection growing, Shami played all nine games for Bengal in the subsequent Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy. He is also part of Bengal's squad for the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy but did not play the opening game on Saturday against Delhi.

His fitness has been a subject intense debate and

India skipper Rohit Sharma had asked the physios at the National Cricket Academy to provide clarity on the matter following the Brisbane Test. Shami had developed swelling

in his knees while playing the SMAT, and the clarification in that regard finally came on Monday. "Based on the current medical

assessment, the BCCI Medical Team has determined that his knee requires more time for controlled exposure to bowling loads. Consequently, he has not been deemed fit for consideration for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," said the BCCI in a release. "Shami will continue to

undergo targeted strength and conditioning work under the guidance of the medical staff at BCCI's Centre of Excellence



of the longest format of the game. His participation in the Vijay Hazare Trophy will depend on the progress of his knee."

The medical team said the veteran fast bowler has fully recovered from the heel injury that kept him out of action after the ODI World "The BCCI Medical Team at

the Centre of Excellence has been working closely with Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami on his recovery and rehabilitation after his right heel surgery. Shami has completely recovered from this heel problem.

However, his left knee has exhibited minor swelling due to increased joint loading from his bowling workload.

and build his bowling loads The swelling is on the needed to meet the demands expected lines, owing to the expected lines, owing to the increased bowling after a prolonged period," the BCCI said.

Shami bowled 43 overs in his comeback game in the Ranji

Trophy.
Following that, he played in all nine games of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT), where he also "engaged in additional bowling sessions on the sidelines to build his bowling volume in order to get ready for the Test matches."

The 34-year-old has taken 229 wickets in 64 Tests, 195 scalps in 101 ODIs and 24 wickets in 23 T20 Internationals.

With India relying heavily on Jasprit Bumrah in Australia, Shami's presence in the bowling attack would have provided a much needed

**Indians unhappy** 

practice pitches

rhe Indian team has

L expressed dissatisfaction

with the practice pitches ahead

of the fourth Test against Australia here, blaming their

variable bounce for the hit that

Rohit Sharma took on his knee

but MCG curator Matt Page

has defended the tracks by

"standard

saying that "standar protocol" has been followed.

Rohit developed swelling on his left knee as he tried to play

a throwdown from support

staff member Dayanand

Garani and didn't take further

part in the nets on Sunday.

The side opted not to practice

It was learnt the skipper

needed icing at night and the

team think-tank held the used

pitch's uneven bounce

responsible for the injury

with 'used'

**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE



# Strike rotation and solid defence key to face Bumrah, says Simon Katich

**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

Former cricketer Simon Katich has advised Australian batters concentrate on rotating the the red ball that moves strike and maintaining a solid defence to succeed against the peerless Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

Katich noted that since Bumrah rarely bowls loose deliveries, the Australians they go about it. You're not must be strategically good in their approach.

"I know all the talk having more positive intent, and I think that's all well and good and it is certainly something they have to be mindful of. But against someone like Bumrah intent is not about just blazing him for fours, because he doesn't maiden call-up ahead of the bowl many bad balls," Katich told SEN 1116.

"So a lot of that intent has to be about rotating strike and being able to defend really well, because you're not gonna be able to play with any intent if you aren't there after the tenth over. That's the challenge for all of these

guys," Katich added. To illustrate his point, Katich made a reference to Marsh's inability to bowl the Australia's second innings in expected volume of overs the third Test at Brisbane, where the hosts attempted an aggressive approach but ultimately lost their wickets. 'We saw it in the second innings in Brisbane.

really positive intent, trying to score more quickly and look what happened, 7/80 in no time.

"It's not easy to do against around off the seam in a wearing wicket which the Gabba was starting to become with cracks.

"The top order has to be very careful and mindful of how so good," he added.

For the remaining two Tests, Australia has opted to place their trust in teenage sensation Sam Konstas, replacing opener Nathan

"I know the young kid's (Konstas) got a lot of potential, and a lot of ability, but it'll be a challenge because not many guys around the world have been able to do that to that quality of bowling," Katich said. Marsh should make way for

Webster Katich also felt Mitchell suggests he isn't "100%" fit and should be replaced by uncapped rookie Beau Webster for the Boxing Day Test against India.

Marsh has been dealing with Australians came out with recurring back stiffness

since the white-ball tour of the UK in September. During the Perth Test, he bowled 17 overs in total, taking two wickets on the opening day but later pulled

up sore. In Adelaide, he bowled four overs while in Brisbane he rolled his arm for two overs. "I've been saying for a couple Tests, Mitch Marsh has not been able to bowl the volume going to score many runs if of overs that everyone you're trying to take him on off the length, because he is conditions and given he is a wicket taker," Katich said on 'SEN Breakfast'.

We saw that in Perth, he bowled well on day one. Took some key wickets and then struggled to back up. I mean obviously the Aussie hierarchy know better then we do around where his fitness is at.

"But for him to bowl two overs the other day after Josh Hazlewood went down, that to me indicates something's not 100% right with him." After Marsh had pulled up sore, 30-year-old Tasmania all-rounder Webster was added to Australia's squad. "At the end of the day, Beau Webster deserves to be in

that squad," Katich said. "He's done very well for Tassie in the last few years, he's a genuine all-rounder given what his role is for Tassie and he plays that dual role with bat and ball," Katich added.

# Momentum on their side, India eye series win against West Indies

PTI VADODARA

Coming off one of their biggest wins in terms of runs, fancied India will look to guard against complacency when they take on a beleaguered West Indies side with an aim to bag the three-match series in the second Women's ODI here on Tuesday. India will be entering the game

on the back of a massive 211run victory over the visitors in the series opener in which the Harmanpreet Kaur-led team ticked almost all the boxes. Every match the teams play in the coming months will be significant as the ICC World Cup is scheduled to be held in

the country next year. India, who have never won a women's World Cup, are desperate to end their ICC title drought at home and they are aware that a strong build-up is extremely important for them to head into the mega event as one of the contenders alongside the 'usual suspects', Australia and England.

Though India have not begun their preparations for the big tournament in earnest, having suffered a 0-3 whitewash in Australia, they bounced back in style, albeit against a much weaker opposition in the West Indies.



In between the ongoing ODI series and the one against Australia, India registered a 2-1 victory in a T20I rubber against the team from the Caribbean islands, which was their their first home series win in the shortest format in over five years, but their failure to qualify for the semi-final of the last T20 World Cup has left a lot to be desired.

The team has been on a experimentation spree since the debacle in the UAE and has handed international debuts to as many as seven players, including Titas Sadhu, Priya Mishra and Pratika Rawal.

Playing in her first ever international match, Delhi's Pratika impressed with a 40run knock off 69 balls during a

century-plus partnership with vice-captain Smriti Mandhana.

The lone worry for India before the series opener was the fitness of Kaur, who missed the last two T20Is with a knee niggle, but with her clean hitting and running between the wickets, the skipper has laid all concerns to

Mandhana, who led India in Kaur's absence and struck three fifties in a row in the T20Is, was again in her element in the first ODI and made a classy 91 off 102 balls while laying the foundation for an imposing total.
The left-handed opener will be

keen to continue in the same vein in the remaining onedayers as well.

Play of the Match in the first ODI, Renuka Singh will be high on confidence having returned a five-for and she will once again look to inflict maximum damage on the Windies with the new ball. As far as the West Indies are

concerned, they will have to lift their game several notches and the likes of Hayley Matthews, Deandra Dottin, Shemaine Campbelle and Afy Fletcher, the squad's senior players with years of experience, will need to lead from the front.

Teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (captain), Smriti Mandhana (vice captain), Pratika Rawal, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetry (WK), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Tanuja Kanwer, Titas Sadhu, Saima Thakor, Renuka Singh Thakur.

West Indies: Hayley Matthews (captain), Shemaine (captain). Campbelle (vice captain), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilia Connell, Nerissa Crafton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Shabika Gajnabi, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar, Karishma Ramharack. Rashada Williams.

#### scare. The Indian team had sent its training schedule two months ago but the MCG curator stuck to the standard operating procedure of giving a new practice track only three days prior to the Test match, which begins on December 26 in this case.

on Monday.

"So for us, three days out, we prepare pitches for here. If teams come and play before that, they get what pitches we've had," Page told reporters about why India didn't get a pitch that would resemble the centre strip.

"So today, we're on fresh pitches. If we needed to play this morning, they would have been on those fresh pitches. Stock standard procedure for us, three days out. We do our pitches that we're going to have for our Test match," Page defended the move.

When asked if he has had the Indian schedule and BCCI had correspondence with Cricket Australia, he responded in affirmative.

"Yes, they gave us schedule. There has been correspondence between CA and Indian board and the There extent of those conversations, I don't know," Page informed. Pitch will help fast bowlers

The iconic MCG won't have the bounce of Perth or the seam movement of Gabba but it will still be pace-friendly with 6mm of grass covering.

# Tanush Kotian replaces recently retired Ashwin in India's squad

Tumbai off-spinner Tanush Kotian is Mumbai off-spinner lanush Rouan is set to join the India squad in Australia as a replacement for the recently retired Ravichandran Ashwin. It is understood that the 26 year old Kotian, who was part of India As tour of Australia, has also been added as a cover for Washington Sundar.

"Kotian has been added as a safety net and also to keep the squad number intact for the last two games. He only comes into the picture if either among Washy or Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) gets injured," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Kotian, who is currently in Ahmedabad for Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to leave Mumbai on Tuesday and will reach



Melbourne before the start of Boxing

Day Test.
The bowling all-rounder picked two wickets and scored an unbeaten 39 for Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Hyderabad on Monday.

Kotian has fond memories of the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he scored 44 batting at No. 8 for India A and looked the part.

He already has 101 wickets to his name and 1525 runs with two centuries in 33 first-class games.

Originally, Axar Patel was supposed to be summoned to Australia but as per sources, the left arm spinner had sought a break after first two matches of Vijay Hazare Trophy due to a family commitment.

Kotian has been added to the squad following Ashwin's surprise retirement from international cricket following the draw Test in Brisbane. The 38-year-old ended his glorious career as the second highest wicket taker for India behind Anil Kumble.

# The ability to take 20 wickets is not that good in Indian team: Cheteshwar Pujara

**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

The Indian team in Australia lacks a bowling attack that is good enough to take 20 wickets in a Test, Cheteshwar Pujara said on Monday and called it the side's biggest concerns heading into the last two matches of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The five-match series is currently levelled at 1-1 with everything to play for in the Tests in Melbourne

and Sydney. The visitors have been relying heavily on pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah to get them wickets and while he has been a great success with both the red and pink ball, the peerless fast bowler has not received enough support from the other end, something that has plagued India besides their top-

order batting woes. "My biggest question and the reason for a little bit of concern is that the Indian bowling is looking a little weak," Pujara told Star

Sports. "Batting is a little better, like the top five didn't do well, but the

middle order and lower middle order, Ravindra Jadeja, Nitish (Reddy), and even tailenders, Bumrah and Akash contributed with the bat.

"Now, there is a weakness in the

bowling, so what will you feed the

team? That is the biggest question, because you can't drop Nitish, you can't drop Jadeja, so what will be the team combination?" Pujara felt that Nitish Reddy and

Ravindra Jadeja are not able to do the job of being the side's fourth and fifth bowler. "Ashwin has taken retirement, so two spinners, I don't think they will play in Melbourne. So, how

will you strengthen the bowling? Because the three seamers are very good, but their supporting role, fourth and fifth seamer, Nitesh Kumar is the fourth seamer and Ravindra Jadeia is the fifth bowler. If you add both of them together, the bowling is not that

We will have to think about that, because if you want to win a Test match, then you have to take 20 wickets, and the ability to take 20



wickets is not that good, the stump. Every ball is hitting on the supporting role of the other good length spot. He is getting bowlers is not good, so we will have to improve that as soon as possible, and how that will be, I don't know, but that is a big question."

With the exception of opener KL Rahul, the top-order batting has also been a big letdown so far in the series, and Pujara said it has got to do a lot with their inability to see off Mitchell Starc's initial

spells with the new ball.
"He has been the best bowler for them in this series. And the way Mitchell Starc has played in the last 1-1.5 years, he has brought a lot of improvement. And he has a

lot of ability.
"If I talk about my personal experience, when he used to play in the last series in 2018 or 2021, I used to feel that if he plays against me, I will get runs.

"And now, it feels like he will take wickets. So what is the difference? The difference is that his line length, his accuracy has increased a lot. He is bowling very less loose deliveries. He is playing on the game well.

swing.

Starc has so far taken 14 wickets in the series, the most by an Australian bowler and only behind Bumrah across two teams. Pujara observed, "The change he has brought in his game has made him a different player. And he is looking more dangerous than Cummins and Hazlewood. So we will have to take care of his game, especially from the new games. "In the first five overs, his first

spell, he has taken the most wickets there. So if there is a good batting in the first five overs, bring him for the second or third spell Because he gets tired. So the batting of the top order so far, our top order has never played in the third or fourth spell.

'The ones who have played are the lower middle order and the tail enders. And there we saw that when Bumrah and Akash were batting, when Mitchell Starc was bowling, he was not that effective. So they will have to play their new