

The scrutiny of 80 lakh Indiramma Indlu applications will be completed by the first week of January. Later, the government will complete the selection of beneficiaries and start the construction of houses by Sankranti. The government would provide houses even if the Centre rejects the applications of some people. The state will take Central funds after accepting its guidelines

- Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister



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'New criminal laws becoming protectors of civil rights'

JOBS, FARM PRODUCTIVITY, FUNDS FOR INFRA BOOST FIGURE

Dharma proves his father WRONG!

DON'T MISS...

Dip in demand for property registrations

The Hyderabad residential real estate market moderated in November 2024, witnessing a 7% year-on-year decline in home sales, valued at Rs 3,495 crore, and a 12% drop in residential unit registrations to 5,516, according to Knight Frank India's latest report. However, the demand for high-value homes surged, with 14% of registered properties priced above Rs 1 crore, reflecting a growing inclination toward ...

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I am a victim of chit fund scam: Majhi

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Tuesday claimed that he was also a victim of chit fund scams and urged people to be aware of the activities of ponzi firms to save their hard-earned money. Majhi said this while addressing a function to celebrate the State Level National Consumers Day here. "I was also a victim of chit fund scams. Two firms had duped me in 1990 and 2002," the chief minister said, adding that he could not get ...

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'Economy on recovery path'

The Indian economy is recovering from the slowdown in momentum witnessed in the September quarter, driven by strong festival activity and a sustained upswing in rural demand, according to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin released on Tuesday. An article on the 'State of the Economy' in the December Bulletin noted that the global economy continues to exhibit resilience with steady growth and moderating inflation. "High ...

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Champions Trophy schedule announced

India will play all their matches of the Champions Trophy in Dubai with the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan scheduled on February 23, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Tuesday. PTI had reported last week that India will play all their matches in Dubai including the semifinal and final if they qualify. As has been the case with ICC events, India and Pakistan have been clubbed in the same group which also has New Zealand and Bangladesh. Group B comprises ...

-SPORTS

Allu Arjun grilled

Police pose 20 questions on the sequence of stampede leading to death of woman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The lanes of Chikkadpally saw hundreds of people gathering on Tuesday as Allu Arjun appeared for questioning in connection with the death of a woman in the stampede at Sandhya Theatre.

The interrogation at Chikkadpally Police Station ended after three hours.

Allu was asked nearly 20 questions and the police recorded his statement for three-and-a-half hours.

The police interrogated Allu Arjun by presenting videos and the CCTV footage collected by the police. They also asked why he had spoken to the media and described his claims as allegations.

The police said that they would issue notices again if necessary. The police told Allu Arjun that he would have to appear for interrogation again and that he should be available.

Senior police officials indicated that the interim



bail granted to Allu Arjun by the court will be challenged.

Meanwhile, the Chikkadpally Police have also added Mythri Movies Producers as A18. Some of the other accused are theatre owners Agamati Pedaramireddy and Chinnarami Reddy, M. Sandeep, Sumit, Agamati Vinay, Ashutosh Reddy, Renukadevi, Aruna Reddy, Nagaraju, Manager Vijaychander, in-charge of Lower Balcony, Allu Arjun, Santosh, Allu Arjun's PA Sarathbanni, Allu Arjun's Manager Ramesh, security team Raju, the security team, Vinay Kumar, Fans Association and Fawaz the bodyguard.

The eight-year-old boy victim of the stampede is unconscious but continues to have stable vital parameters on his own without any oxygen or ventilatory support, KIMS doctors said.

The boy's sensorium is similar to spontaneous eye opening and spontaneous

Continued on Page 2

Adani issue is not in our hands, says Revanth

Calls for documenting Telangana Movement's history

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy clarified that the Adani issue is beyond the control of his government and that previous administrations had signed agreements on defence and highway projects.

"We cannot cancel agreements made with private companies unilaterally due to legal constraints," he said, adding that the issue was not limited to Adani alone.

He emphasised that action should be taken against several individuals involved in defence equipment manufacturing.

In a wide-ranging address, the CM also spoke about the Telangana Movement and its historical context.

He highlighted the role of leaders like Yadava Reddy and Jaipal Reddy, praising their commitment

to the cause and their ideological contributions.

"Yadava Reddy's role in the Telangana Movement is commendable. He worked hard from the backdoors for statehood and played

a crucial role in discussions with Sonia Gandhi, helping to pass the Telangana Bill," the CM said.

The Chief Minister also stressed the importance of documenting the history of the Telangana Movement.

He called for the publication of a comprehensive book

that would cover various phases of the movement, from the Mulki Agitation to the formation of the state, and provide insights into the contributions of key figures.

Addressing national issues, the CM expressed concern about the situation in

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Shyam Benegal: A look at 10 pathbreaking movies by the filmmaker

5

Govt procures paddy worth Rs 10,903 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has delivered a significant boost to farmers by procuring paddy worth Rs 10,903 crore during the Kharif season, with a special Rs 500 bonus for fine varieties of rice (Sanna). This scheme, aimed at encouraging the cultivation of fine paddy, has benefited approximately 3.36 lakh farmers across the state.

So far the government has purchased 18.78 lakh tonnes of fine rice and disbursed Rs 591 crore of the Rs 939 crore bonus commitment. The bonus, coupled with a robust procurement mechanism, has enhanced the income of farmers, making this season particularly rewarding.

A total of 47.01 lakh tonnes of paddy has been procured in the state, including 28.23 lakh tonnes of coarse varieties and 18.78 lakh tonnes of fine varieties.

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Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy addressing media on Tuesday

GHMC's outstanding borrowings touch Rs 6,129 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has presented its budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26, emphasizing robust investments in infrastructure, green initiatives and better civic amenities.

The GHMC maintained its strong AA Stable Credit Rating despite outstanding borrowings of Rs 6,129.47 crore as of October 2024. The total budget outlay stands at Rs 8,885 crore, with equal allocations for revenue and capital expenditure.

A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to infrastructure projects like flyovers, bridges, comprehensive road maintenance and stormwater drain systems. These efforts align with the GHMC's vision to make Hyderabad a world class city. The budget also highlights the introduction of advanced technologies like GIS and FRS to enhance revenue collection and curb leakages. Green initiatives receive special attention with 10% of the budget allocated as per the Green Budget requirement under

Continued on Page 2

6,121 farmers ended lives in BRS rule: Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a sharp attack on the BRS, IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu accused the party of betraying farmers with empty promises and misuse during the past decade.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, Sridhar slammed the BRS for allegedly misusing Rs 25,672 crore under the 'Rythu Bandhu' scheme while farmers, especially tenant farmers, faced severe problems.

"The crocodile tears shed by BRS leaders for farmers are drawing ridicule from the public," Sridhar said and accused them of distributing 'Rythu Bandhu' benefits to ineligible individuals, including

those owning lands acquired for stone quarries, road construction,



and real estate layouts. He questioned the moral author-

ity of BRS leaders to criticise the Congress-led government's 'Rythu Bharosa' initiative, which he claimed is genuinely aimed at alleviating the plight of farmers.

Highlighting alarming statistics, Sridhar revealed that 6,121 farmers in Telangana ended their lives between 2014 and 2022 due to mounting debts and inadequate government support. Citing data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) presented in Parliament, he emphasized the devastating impact of BRS policies on the farming community.

"The plight of farmers under your rule was devastating," Sridhar said.

Continued on Page 2

Political leaders queue up at KIMS Hospital to visit Sri Tej

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

He was neither injured in a terror attack nor while taking part in a social activity but in a stampede at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad. But the political big shots of Telangana are continuing to visit Sri Tej at the KIMS Hospital where he is undergoing treatment.

Moreover, these political leaders are speaking volumes showing their concern for the boy after coming out from the hospital. They are also giving different versions about the

incident in which Sri Tej was injured. Earlier, political leaders like Cinematography Minister



Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who gave only Rs 25 lakh to the family

and many other Congress leaders, including several corporation chairpersons had visited Sri Tej.

However, the number of political leaders who visited KIMS Hospital increased on Tuesday. Mahbubnagar MP DK Aruna, Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender and Armour MLA Paidi Rakesh Reddy of the BJP, MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao of the CPI and former MLA Julakanti Ranga Reddy, state executive committee member DG Narasimha Rao and CPM state committee member visited KIMS Hospital on Tuesday.

The newly appointed Telangana Film

Continued on Page 2

Sanjay slams officials for delays in development projects

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A heated review meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) in Karimnagar and Sircilla districts saw the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, blasting officials over the delays and irregularities in executing various

projects. The two-and-a-half-hour meeting, attended by collectors, government officials and local public representatives highlighted a series of pressing issues and the minister issued stern warnings and directives.

Sanjay expressed frustration over the prolonged delays in completing road projects under schemes like



Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar participates in a review meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) in Karimnagar and Sircilla districts on Tuesday

Will implement Indiramma Housing Scheme fairly, says Ponguleti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy warned officials that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would not object if he took action against officials who make mistakes while selecting Indiramma Housing Scheme beneficiaries.

Addressing the media after attending a review meeting on Indiramma Houses on Tuesday, Ponguleti said that he will not hesitate to take action against officials who committed mistakes in implementing the Indiramma Housing Scheme.

He said the government would appoint a vigilance team to ensure the Indiramma Housing Scheme is implemented in a transparent man-

Warns officials against committing mistakes



Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy addressing media on Tuesday

ner. People should file complaints on the website if they find any irregularities in the selection of beneficiaries and other issues, he said. He said that they had appointed

33 Executive Engineer-level officers in all the 33 districts as project directors to supervise the construction of Indiramma houses. He said the government had

examined 32 lakh applications by December 23, that is, by examining 4.5 lakh to 5.5 lakh applications a day.

He said the checking of 80 lakh applications would be completed by the first week of January. Later, the government will complete the selection of beneficiaries and start the construction of houses by Sankranti, Ponguleti added.

He said that the Congress Government is going to strengthen the Housing Corporation as the BRS government weakened it totally. He said the government had already brought back 95 per cent of employees to the Housing Corporation.

He said that the construction of Indiramma Houses is a continuous process and

Continued on Page 2

Farmers won't face any problems in getting seeds, water: Ponnam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government will ensure that farmers do not face any hurdles in getting seeds and water for cultivation, Agriculture Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said.

Addressing a press conference at the Congress office in Saidapur Mandal on Tuesday, Ponnam addressed key issues concerning farmers like water allocations for the Rabi season and the progress in implementing the farm loan waiver scheme.

He said the Cabinet Subcommittee on Rythu Bharosa toured districts to gather feedback, and discussions were also held in the Assembly. A final decision is expected during the Cabinet meeting scheduled for January 30. He expressed the hope that Rythu



Bharosa benefits would be made available to farmers by the time sowing begins in January.

He said that for the Rabi season of 2024-25, water allocations have been planned for 6,97,708 acres

under SRSP Stage-1 and Stage-2, benefiting areas like Manakondur, Husnabad, Chiguru Mamidi, Saidapur, Elkathurthi, Huzurabad and downstream regions.

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Why BRS leadership is presently on shaky ground

Going by the concatenation of recent events, and those that are likely to follow in the days ahead, the Bharat Rashtriya Samithi's leadership appears to be on a shaky ground.

Let us begin with the situation that BRS working president and former minister K Taraka Ramarao (KTR) has been facing. What would happen if KTR is arrested in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Formula E race case? Will such eventualities translate into sympathy for him or BRS? The ongoing probe into the case has revealed details that cannot be wished away. The case has drawn wide attention in political and other quarters.

In the absence of former chief minister and BRS presi-

dent Chandrasekhar Rao's active role of late in Telangana's political space, KTR has become, by default, a synonym for the voice of BRS, whether within the Assembly or outside the House. KCR is Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Telangana Legislative Assembly. So, his non-participation in the proceedings of the House is visibly felt by leaders and cadre of the party.

After undergoing a hip surgery following a fall in the bathroom of his farmhouse a few months back, KCR has elected to remain confined to home. Desertions from the party appear to be a consequence of KCR's absence in the public life. Rubbing salt into his wounds, former Speaker of

For all practical purposes, KCR has handed over the reins of the party to KTR. In fact, KTR became more popular than his sister K Kavitha within BRS after she was arrested in the Delhi liquor scam case. That apart, KCR's nephew and a stalwart in BRS T Harish Rao has been marginalised within the party

Assembly Pocharam (Parigi) Sreenivasa Reddy, who once emotionally appealed to leaders and cadre to stick with KCR through thick and thin, switched to the Congress.

For all practical purposes, KCR has handed over the reins of the party to KTR. In fact, KTR became more popular than his sister K Kavitha

within BRS after she was arrested in the Delhi liquor scam case. That apart, KCR's nephew and a stalwart in BRS T Harish Rao has been marginalised within the party.

In a way, Harish-KTR duo can be compared with Shiv Sena's Raj Thackeray-Uddhav Thackeray duo in Maharashtra. A nephew of Siva Sena chief Bal Thackeray,



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Raj had toiled to build Shiv Sena by winning the hearts of masses in Mumbai's slums, who account for 40% of the population of India's commercial capital. After the party emerged as a state level orga-

nization, Uddhav entered the scene and took the reins of the party, virtually forcing Raj to leave the very party he had nurtured. Harish Rao too had worked hard for the party under the influence of his uncle KCR even at a time when KTR did not think about entering politics. At the time of BRS formation (then TRS) in 2001, KTR was employed in a firm in the US. Harish was sidelined after KTR took a plunge into TG politics. After inducting his son into cabinet, KCR had given clear signals to party functionaries and the official machinery about his successor. Harish had to swallow a bitter pill and declare his continued loyalty to KCR.

Although the Bharatiya Janata Party in Telangana had tried to take advantage of the situation by inviting him into

its fold, Harish publicly reiterated his confidence in KCR's leadership.

Now, the Congress government headed by A. Revanth Reddy has decided to probe the alleged irregularities concerning the execution of Formula E race. Initially the BRS had downplayed the scam, but later KTR expressed his readiness to go to jail. He said he would practice yoga in jail and take out padayatra after his release, perhaps believing that whoever goes on statewide padayatra would stand a chance to become the chief minister, going by the examples of Chandrababu Naidu and YS Jaganmohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh.

Now that the party is reconciled to KTR's possible arrest, the future of the party's leadership is not clear, should the

BRS working president be jailed. Of course, there is talk that KCR would resume his political activity in the New Year. That is, KCR may come out of his elective 'political hibernation' to fill the gap that may be caused by the arrest of his son. In that case, the next question is: Will KCR continue as the party chief? Or, will he make his nephew to lead the party? For, the chances of making his daughter Kavitha the party chief are bleak, considering she has returned from Tihar jail in Delhi, out on bail after spending five months there in connection with the Delhi liquor scam.

In these circumstances, resolution of the leadership vacuum in BRS in the eventuality of KTR's arrest would be keenly watched by political and other circles.

BJP is trying to change Constitution, alleges Mahesh

Congress conducts rally protesting against Shah's comments on Ambedkar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress organised a huge rally on Tuesday protesting against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks against Dr BR Ambedkar. The rally was organized under the leadership of TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud from Tank Bund Ambedkar statue to the Hyderabad Collector's office.



Addressing the media, Mahesh said the name of Ambedkar is just a fashion for the BJP. However, Ambedkar's name is a wor-

shipful name for the Congress. He said that the BJP and the Sangh Parivar is 'conspiring to enforce' Manusmriti and demanded that the Centre should dismiss Amit Shah from the Union Cabinet immediately.

Mahesh said that the BJP is trying to 'change' the Constitution. But the Congress will continue its fight till the BJP-led Centre takes action against Amit Shah. It is shameful on the part of the Centre to file cases against

INDIA for protesting against Amit Shah's comments.

He said that Prime Minister Modi should take action against Amit Shah at least considering people's sentiments against him. He said that the mask of the BJP is getting removed through the comments of Amit Shah about Ambedkar. The comments of Amit Shah against Ambedkar show his 'arrogance', he said.

Mahesh said the Congress will launch a movement against the BJP to 'protect' the constitution.

CWC member Koppula Raju, MP Anil Kumar Yadav, former MP V. Hanumantha Rao, Hyderabad DCC President C. Rohin Reddy and others also took part in the rally.

Kavitha reclaiming her political space after setbacks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kavitha is reclaiming her place in Telangana's political landscape after emerging from a challenging phase marked by her 170-day stint as a prisoner in Delhi's Tihar Jail.

She is learnt to have come up with renewed determination to address critical issues affecting the state. Doing away with the convention of talking about her jail life and the pain she endured at the Tihar Jail, Kavitha is avoiding sympathy.

Many politicians like Chief Minister Revanth Reddy often speak about their trauma in interviews and let the public know about that but so far Kavitha has kept her jail phase under wraps.

Govt clears bridge, check dam on Yashwanthapur Vagu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has granted administrative approval for the construction of a double-lane road bridge and check dam on the Yashwanthapur Vagu near Thatipamula village in the Thirumalagiri Mandal of Suryapet district.

The project, which is estimated to cost Rs 20.37 crore, aims to bolster connectivity and improve water resource management in the region.

The approval was accorded after a proposal from the Chief Engineer of Minor Irrigation in

Hyderabad. The project will benefit Thungathurthy and surrounding areas, addressing critical infrastructure needs and enhancing flood management capabilities.

The key directives for the project are obtaining hydrological clearance, ensuring the provision of flood banks in line with established guidelines, and verifying the accuracy of designs, drawings and hydraulic particulars of the check dam.

The Chief Engineer is also tasked with ensuring that the water spread does not overlap with adjacent water bodies

and that the estimates adhere to current rules and standards.

The project's expenditure will be debited under the designated head of account and executed within budgetary provisions, following FRBM norms and related guidelines.

The Finance Department has concurred with the decision, emphasising the importance of careful monitoring to ensure effective implementation.

Secretary Rahul Bojja issued the order on behalf of the TG Governor. The Chief Engineer, Hyderabad, has been directed to take steps for the project's timely execution.

Govt procures ...

Continued from page 1

This marks a significant increase compared to last year's 41.20 lakh tonnes, with a rise of six lakh tonnes.

The government has already paid Rs 10,149 crore for the procured paddy, benefiting 8.84 lakh farmers through 8,318 procurement centres set up across the state.

These centres were well equipped by the Civil Supplies Department to prevent losses due to unseasonal rains and strong winds, ensuring seamless procurement operations.

Districts like Kamareddy, Nizamabad, Medak, Jagtial, Peddapalli and Siddipet have led in paddy procurement this season.

The announcement of the bonus has significantly expanded the cultivation of fine paddy varieties. In the 2023 Kharif season, fine varieties accounted for 38% of total paddy cultivation, covering 25.05 lakh acres. This year, the area under fine paddy cultivation has surged to an unprecedented 61%, with 40.55 lakh acres of the record-breaking 66.78 lakh acres dedicated to paddy. The remaining 26.23 lakh acres were used for coarse varieties.

This strategic incentive not only supports farmers but also enhances the state's agricultural output, underscoring the government's commitment to empowering the farming community.

Revanth's ...

Continued from page 1

An impression that there were no other issues in the state except the Allu Arjun thing.

"Something disturbed the issue of sending suitcases to New Delhi and so it seems Revanth targeted Allu Arjun. There has to be a reason for Revanth to do anything. Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka must know the fact that there were many films in the past portraying the police as heroes.

Revanth Reddy raised the curtains to the new drama to make people think that they should approach him regarding the Congress's assurances," Aruna said.

Adani issue ...

Continued from page 1

Manipur, where he claimed sophisticated weapons were worsening ethnic conflicts. "Sophisticated weapons are the main reason for the genocide in Manipur. Private companies are encouraging the civil war to plunder the state's mineral wealth. Two tribal communities are fighting and killing each other using advanced weapons. Should Indian forces establish peace in Manipur or

not? If they think about it, can't they seize the weapons there? There is a need to discuss the atmosphere of terror prevailing in the country," he said.

He also spoke about China's growing aggression, pointing out the lack of discussion on these critical issues. "We need a serious debate on these matters to ensure peace and national security," he said.

The Chief Minister's comments reflect his commitment to both preserving Telangana's history and addressing national security concerns.

Harish accuses ...

Continued from page 1

neglecting grave issues affecting ordinary citizens. "Is the same zeal visible when dealing with matters affecting all sections of society?" he asked. Referring to the tragic deaths of over 50

Gurukul students due to the government's alleged negligence, Harish criticised the Congress Government for failing to provide even a single rupee as ex-gratia to the grieving families.

He also pointed at Revanth Reddy, who holds key welfare portfolios and questioned his accountability in the matter.

6,121 farmers ...

Continued from page 1

"Tenant farmers, in particular, faced insurmountable difficulties, and the families of those who committed suicide are left to suffer. The burden of these untimely deaths lies on your governance," he added. He also criticised the BRS for its financial mismanagement, which he claimed

Allu Arjun under house arrest?" he asked and added that not only the film industry but no industry would get frightened by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's threats.

Raghunandan said the Allu Arjun issue is now in court and no one should comment on the issue. However, Raghunandan asked the Hyderabad City Police Commissioner and the police to answer about Allu Arjun's 'house arrest'.

He said the government is in the hands of Revanth Reddy and he can do anything he wants. However, the CM is keeping the real problem aside and playing politics, Raghunandan said.

He said that he is ready to explain what issues should be discussed in the Assembly if the CM is not aware of issues that had to be discussed in the Assembly.

He said that CM did not have time to garland the statue of Dr BR Ambedkar, which is located just 100 meters away from the secretariat during his birth and death anniversaries.

Will implement ...

Continued from page 1

the government would give first priority to the handicapped and widows. The government's objective is to help the poorest of the poor first, he said. The Minister reiterated that the government would give houses even if the Centre rejected the applications of some people. He said the State will take Central funds accepting the Centre's guidelines and made it clear that the government will not go back on constructing houses for all the poor and the homeless.

He said that they would set up special wings in the CM's office and in his own office and in the offices of important officials. The Minister said that the government will announce rules for the construction of Indiramma Houses soon and that they would also set up a special wing to accept public complaints.

GHMC's outstanding ...

Continued from page 1

the GHMC Act. Funds will be allotted for developing parks, conservation of lakes and building water harvesting structures. Around Rs 345 crore has been earmarked for these projects, underscoring the commitment to environmental sustainability.

Property tax remains the largest revenue source, with projections of Rs 2,030 crore for 2025-26. Other significant revenue streams include town planning fees, advertisement charges and grants from state and Central Governments. However, challenges persist, such as pending payments to contractors from February

2024 and delays in stamp duty compensations since May 2019.

In terms of governance, the GHMC plans to settle the retirement benefits of 261 employees retiring in the next two years and expects new appointments would enhance operational efficiency.

The upcoming GHMC elections in 2026 also influence budgetary provisions, reflecting the need for increased public engagement and accountability.

Continued from page 1

left Telangana in debt. Despite this, Sridhar highlighted his government's fulfilment of promises, including waiving Rs 21,000 crore in farm loans as evidence of their commitment to farmers.

He urged BRS leaders to stop misleading the public with

"lies and media appearances" and called on them to engage directly with people to understand their challenges and work towards meaningful solutions.

"Step out of your media stunts and witness ground realities. Only then can you understand the positive impact of our governance," he remarked.

Sridhar's critique underscores the Congress Government's focus on addressing long-standing issues faced by farmers and ensuring their welfare through concrete policies. His statement reflects a growing push to hold the BRS administration accountable for its failures.

Political leaders ...

Continued from page 1

Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju also visited KIMS Hospital.

Later, speaking to the media, DK Aruna said the incident was painful and that the TG government and the cinema industry must help the victim's family.

Eatala Rajender stressed that tight security is needed for cricketers, political leaders and cinema stars as people can come in huge numbers to watch them.

He asked Allu Arjun to extend comprehensive support to the victim's family and the government to ensure that this kind of incidents are not repeated.

Stating that it is painful that a woman died in the Sandhya Theatre incident, CPI MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao stressed the need for tough decisions by the government to prevent similar tragedies.

Targeting Allu Arjun, Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said that the Censor Board should not have permitted films that encourage lawlessness. Telugu films are showing villains as heroes these days and misleading society, he said.

Former CPM MLA Julakanti Ranga Reddy said the Sandhya Theatre incident took place due to the fault of the theatre management and Allu Arjun's team.

However, TFDC Chairman Dil Raju said that he would work as a bridge between the Telugu film industry and the government.

Farmers won't face ...

Continued from page 1

The proposed allocation totals 44,480 TMC, with 13 TMC from Lower Manair Dam (LMD), 11 TMC from Mid Manair Reservoir (MMR), and an additional 5 TMC from SRSP. Despite these allocations, there is a shortage of approximately 15 TMCs, he said.

He said that water will be released from LMD through the Kakatiya Main Canal at a rate of 4,000 cusecs per day to address the deficit.

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy reviewed water availability from various projects and assured that the government is aware of water requirements for drinking and farming. He urged farmers to make efficient use of available water and to complete sowing promptly, as water will be supplied for 90 days on an on-and-off system.

On waiving farm loans, Ponnam clarified that loans up to Rs 2 lakh have been waived for eligible families, and those with loans exceeding Rs 2 lakh will receive additional support by March to complete the waiver.

He dismissed opposition criticism and asserted that the Congress Government has kept its promise to waive loans unlike the BRS administration.

Sanjay slams ...

Continued from page 1

approved until pending works are completed. Sanjay expressed disappointment over the underutilization of funds in programmes like the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Atal Tinkering Labs. He demanded accountability for the lack of results and asked officials to implement science awareness programmes in schools.

He criticized the use of wood stoves for preparing mid-day meals in schools, despite free LPG connections under the Ujjwala Yojana, and directed that all meals in Karimnagar and Sircilla districts should be cooked using LPG stoves within 15 to 20 days.

On PM SHRI schools, he called for proper utilization of allocated funds, noting the potential for these programmes to transform government schools.

Sanjay criticized the poor performance of NREGA in providing 100 workdays to labourers. He pointed out that only a small percentage of families in Karimnagar and Sircilla districts benefited from the scheme and attributed this to the inefficiency in project execution.

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03



SCR announces Special MMTS services

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the anticipated rush during the Christmas and New Year celebrations, South Central Railway (SCR) has announced the operation of special MMTS train services across various destinations in Hyderabad. These services aim to provide seamless travel options for commuters during the festive season.

Christmas services

- Lingampalli to Hyderabad: Departure: 12:00 noon | Arrival: 12:55 pm. Stops include Chandanagar, HYTEC City, Begumpet, Necklace Road, and Lakdi-ka-pul.
- Hyderabad to Lingampalli: Departure: 10:45 am | Arrival: 11:35 am. Stops include Lakdi-ka-pul, Begumpet, HYTEC City and Chandanagar.
- Lingampalli to Falaknuma: Departure: 12:05 pm | Arrival: 1:45 pm. Stops include Secunderabad, Kacheguda, Malakpet, and Huppuguda.
- Falaknuma to Lingampalli: Departure: 10:15 am | Arrival: 11:50 am. Stops include Kacheguda, Secunderabad, Begumpet and HYTEC City.

New Year watch night services

- Lingampalli to Hyderabad: Departure: 1:15 am | Arrival: 1:55 am. Stops include HYTEC City, Necklace Road and Lakdi-ka-pul.
 - Lingampalli to Falaknuma: Departure: 1:30 am | Arrival: 2:55 am. Stops include Secunderabad, Kacheguda, Malakpet, and Huppuguda.
- These services are expected to accommodate the increased passenger demand while ensuring a hassle-free commute during the festive period.



CITY EVENTS

Classical Dance

by Kalanitya Niketan
Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
December 25.
(1:30 pm to 5 pm)

Jolly Mistletoe

Christmas Brunch
Venue
Vivanta By Taj
December 25.
(12:30 pm)

Wednesday Night

With DJ Hritihik
Venue
36 Downtown Brew Pub
(Vapour)
December 25. (8 pm)

Odissi Performance

By Sasmitha Mishra
Venue
Shilparamam
December 25.
(5:30 pm)

Christmas Bazaar

Exhibition-cum-Sale
Venue
Lulu mall
Till December 31,
daily at 10:00 am

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK
Venue
Boulder Hills, Hyderabad
December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends
Venue
Culinary Guru Institute,
Hyderabad.
Till January 11, 2025.

370 grievances received at Prajavani in Praja Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 370 grievances were received during the Prajavani programme held on Tuesday at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan. The grievances pertained to various departments, with 107 applications related to Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, 80 concerning the Electricity department, 65 addressing revenue-related issues, 4 linked to NRI Prajavani and 114 involving other departments, as per officials.

The event was attended by State Planning Commission Vice-Chairman Dr Chinnareddy and Special Officer for Public Administration Divya, who personally reviewed the applications. They interacted with the complainants, seeking to understand their issues and ensuring prompt redressal. The programme continues to serve as a vital platform for addressing public grievances and ensuring citizen-centric governance.

GROWING INCLINATION TOWARD LUXURY LIVING

Hyd sees dip in demand for property registrations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad residential real estate market moderated in November 2024, witnessing a 7% year-on-year decline in home sales, valued at Rs 3,495 crore, and a 12% drop in residential unit registrations to 5,516, according to Knight Frank India's latest report.

However, the demand for high-value homes surged, with 14% of registered properties priced above Rs 1 crore, reflecting a growing inclination toward luxury living.

The city's real estate activity, spanning the districts of Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy and Sangareddy, demonstrated a shift in buyer preferences toward larger, premium properties. Properties measuring between 1,000 and 2,000 square feet dominated registrations, accounting for 69% of the total. Additionally, the weighted average price of transacted properties increased by 6% year-on-year, signaling robust confidence



among high-end buyers.

Medchal-Malkajgiri emerged as the leader in property registrations, contributing 42%, closely followed by Rangareddy with 41%, and Hyderabad at 17%. Notably, high-value transactions took centre stage, with the top five deals

exceeding 3,000 square feet and valued above Rs 6.3 crore, all recorded in premium locations such as Banjara Hills, Jubilee Hills and Somajiguda.

Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director of Knight Frank India, remarked, "The

demand for high-value homes remains robust, registering a 3% year-on-year increase. This reflects a growing aspiration for enhanced lifestyles and strong economic fundamentals. Developers are aligning with these trends by introducing upscale projects tailored to the evolving demands of affluent buyers."

While high-value segments thrived, properties priced under Rs 50 lakh experienced a decline in registrations, indicating a noticeable premiumisation trend. The report highlighted that 58% of transactions fell within this segment, compared to 61% during the same period last year.

Despite a dip in overall registrations, Hyderabad's real estate market continues to evolve, driven by luxury housing demand and rising buyer preferences for spacious and high-end properties. The upward momentum in the premium segment underscores Hyderabad's position as a favoured market for affluent homebuyers.

Malaysian team meets TG Women's Commission chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Malaysian delegation met Telangana Women's Commission Chairperson Narella Sharada on Tuesday at the Commission's office in



Buddha Bhavan to discuss the functioning and significance of the Women's Commission in the State.

The meeting was attended by TPCC president and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud, former

MLC Santosh and MBC Corporation chairman Vijay.

During the interaction, Chairperson Sharada explained that the Telangana Women's Commission was established to protect women's rights, eliminate discrimination and promote gender sensitisation initiatives. She highlighted the Commission's efforts in empowering women and fostering equality in society.

The Malaysian delegation expressed keen interest in understanding the Commission's role and its contribution to addressing women's issues in Telangana.

GRAND RECEPTION



Chief Minister A Revanthy Reddy at prominent badminton player PV Sindhu's wedding reception in Hyderabad on Tuesday

Woman duped of Rs 2.97 lakh in credit card scam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 30-year-old housewife from Hyderabad fell victim to a credit card scam and lost Rs 2,97,700 despite immediate action by her bank.

The victim received a call from an individual claiming to be from ICICI's Insurance department. The caller warned her that an insurance amount would be deducted from her credit card and provided a link to a mobile application, instructing her to enter her personal and credit card details to cancel the transac-

tion. Following the scammer's instructions, the victim entered her information but grew suspicious shortly after. She contacted her bank, which promptly blocked her



ICICI credit card. However, the scammer had already used her internet banking credentials to apply for a new ICICI Rupay credit card and withdrew Rs 2,97,700.

TG ready to back AI solutions with social impact

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Startups are at the forefront of driving innovation, and Telangana is poised to support artificial intelligence (AI) technologies that create social impact, said Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary of the Department of IT, Electronics & Communications, and Industries & Commerce, at Woxsen University's Future Tech Summit 2024.

Delivering the keynote as guest of honour, Jayesh Ranjan emphasised the importance of focusing on real-world applications of AI. "The Telangana government recently hosted



the Global AI Summit under the theme 'Making AI Work for Everyone.' Our focus is on using AI to benefit all sections of society," he said. He stressed the state's readiness to adopt AI technologies that enhance agricultural productivity, healthcare in rural areas and education in government schools.

Highlighting the role of startups, Ranjan pointed out their agility and innovation compared to traditional institutions. "Startups, with their ability to move quickly and attract talent, are driving significant change. Telangana's strategic support to startups through data access, mentoring and

funding has yielded great results. We welcome collaborations with educational institutions and foreign universities to further boost the startup ecosystem," he added.

The Future Tech Summit 2024 at Woxsen University brought together thought leaders, industry experts and innovators to explore AI's transformative potential across healthcare, sustainability and education.

Discussions revolved around topics such as energy-efficient technologies, generative AI and AI applications in aviation safety, smart healthcare and medical robotics.

64% crime rate jump in Cyberabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Highest crime jump was witnessed in Cyberabad compared to two other commissionerates with 64 per cent in 2024. The police registered 37,689 cases this year. The highlight remains Traffic Police imposing fines worth Rs 111 cr and cyber victims losing Rs 793 crore as cyber crime accounted for 23 per cent of total crime.

The data was released during the annual press meet. Avinash Mohanty, Cyberabad Commissioner of Police said, "Our first priority was free registration of cognizable crimes and later investigat-

ing them. Traffic department's efforts have reduced the road accidents by nearly 5 per cent. A total of 842 people died in 805 road accidents this year."

Overall cybercrime cases increased by 112 per cent as 11,914 cases were booked in 2024. The types of crime included part-time job frauds - 3,267, trading fraud - 1,686, he added. Narcotics offences jumped by 51 per cent.

Avinash said, "As the Cyberabad police are seizing a bulk quantities of drugs, these days the drugs peddlers have started transporting in smaller quantities but we have an eye on everybody."

Cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 2024 saw a surge to 421 in 2024, a substantial rise of approximately 51 per cent.

In 2024, a total of 275 cases were disposed of, involving the destruction of 7,291 kilograms of ganja, 45,769 kilograms of ganja chocolates, 10,945 litres of hashish oil, 177,254 grams of MDMA, 118.01 grams of cocaine, 10,010 kilograms of Alprazolam, and 27,361 kilograms of other drugs. The total value of the disposed drugs amounted to Rs 19.08 crore.

Under the Women & Children Safety Wing (W&CSW), the SHE Teams received 1,135 petitions through direct and social media channels, resulting in 81 FIRs, 1,613 petty cases were booked and 1,633 respondents were counselled. Additionally, 1,470 individuals were caught red-handed and nine child marriages were stopped.

In 2024, the number of road accidents rose to 3,829, with 805 being fatal.

A breakdown by road type shows that National/State Highways continue to be the most accident-prone, with 1,288 accidents in 2024.

ICBM-SBE conducts convocation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

ICBM-School of Business Excellence (ICBM-SBE), one of Hyderabad's premier PGDM colleges, successfully conducted its 17th convocation ceremony of the 2022-24 graduating batch, marking a significant milestone in their academic journey. The ceremony commenced with a welcome address by Prof. Shamshuddin Zarak, Director-Principal of ICBM-SBE, followed by an inspiring speech by Prof. P Narayan Reddy, Director General of the

Institute. Chief Guest Dr TV Rao, Chairman, TVRLS, shared his wisdom on leadership and career growth.

Guest of Honour Srinivas CR, CHRO & Vice President, Human Potential Development & Admin, NACL Industries Limited, emphasised the importance of fostering talent and innovation.

Other guests of honour were Ned Mody, Country Head & Executive Managing Director, Newmark and Shalini K, Global Strategic Marketing - Digital Industries, APAC, Siemens AG,

who is also an Alumni of ICBM-SBE, highlighted the latest trends in digital marketing and its relevance to future leaders. The convocation oath, underscoring ethical conduct and responsible leadership, was administered by Dr Ritu Zarak, Chairperson of ICBM-SBE. He informed that ICBM-SBE is SAQS accredited, AICTE approved and holds MBA equivalent from the AIU.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Dr Jitender Govindani, Dean - Academics.

NRSC data to be utilised for mapping buffer zones

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) and Lake Protection Committee have conducted a meeting with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to examine decades-old satellite imagery and discuss measures for lake protection.

NRSC Director Prakash Chauhan and Deputy Director Srinivas joined the discussion with AV Ranganath, Chairman of Lake Protection Committee. They have decided that NRSC's data images from 1973 to 2024 combined with high-rainfall data would be utilised to map buffer zones for water bodies.

Ranganath highlighted the critical role of NRSC's high-resolution satellite images in determining Full Tank Levels (FTLs) of lakes, identifying encroachments and safeguarding government lands. He stated



Officials from HYDRAA, Lake Protection Committee and NRSC hold a review meeting

that these images are instrumental in identifying low-lying areas, flood-prone zones and assessing the impact of heavy

rainfall on water bodies. Ranganath emphasised the need for precise data to address encroachments on lakes, parks,

government lands and canals. He urged NRSC to actively collaborate in lake protection efforts, a proposal welcomed by

NRSC officials. They discussed lake preservation strategies with engineering officials from GHMC, HMDA, and irrigation and revenue departments across Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Medak districts. He stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and adhering to strict protocols for FTL and buffer zone identification to prevent disputes.

HYDRAA has already collected data from Survey of India, Survey of Telangana and rural maps. Combining this with NRSC's satellite imagery, the Commissioner outlined plans to create an error-free system for protecting water bodies and connected canals.

Ranganath instructed officials to develop clear policies and ensure meticulous measures in FTL determination, leaving no room for legal challenges.

Arrest of top Naxalite weakens Moists

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The Maoist movement has once again suffered another setback in the united Karimnagar district following the arrest of Balmuri Narayana Rao, a senior leader in the Communist Party of India-Maoist the Chhattisgarh police. He is closely related to another prominent Naxalite leader, Muppalla Lakshmana Rao, who was the general secretary of the CPI (Maoist) and also originates from Birpur village.

Narayan Rao, who had been in hiding for over four decades, was one of the early leaders in the Maoist movement, having joined the Naxalite party in 1984. He played a significant role in the movement across multiple states and became a key figure in the Dandakaranya region. His arrest followed years of monitoring by national intel-



Balmuri Narayana Rao

Narayan Rao's arrest is considered a major blow to the Maoist movement, especially in light of the significant losses the group has suffered in recent encounters, particularly in Bastar and Abujmadu. Senior Maoist leaders from the undivided Karimnagar and Warangal districts, including Cheemala Narasayya, A Gola Kanakayya, Sridhar, Asobu, and Mohan Rao, were killed in encounters

ligence agencies, particularly due to his association with Ganapati's family from Beerpur. Over the years, Narayan Rao had remained elusive, hiding in regions like Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and

Chhattisgarh. Narayan Rao's arrest is considered a major blow to the Maoist movement, especially in light of the significant losses the group has suffered in recent encounters, particularly in

Bastar and Abujmadu. Senior Maoist leaders from the undivided Karimnagar and Warangal districts, including Cheemala Narasayya, A Gola Kanakayya, Sridhar, Asobu, and Mohan Rao, were killed in encounters.

Muppalla Lakshman Rao alias Ganapati remains a leading figure in the Maoist movement and continues to operate. Other prominent leaders such as Pulluuri Prasad Rao (Chandanna), Mallajula Venu Gopal Rao, Tirupati, Kosa alias Kadari Satyanarayana Reddy, and Ranchandra Reddy are still active in the central committee. However, the number of key leaders from the undivided Karimnagar district has significantly come down due to ongoing encounters and surrenders.

Balmoori Narayan Rao, who had been active in the Maoist movement for over 40 years, was deeply involved in the logistics

and political operations of the movement.

From 1984 to 1994, he operated in Andhra Pradesh, followed by work in Madhya Pradesh until 1997.

He then served in the North Bastar and Koylibera areas (1998-2005) before being part of the Dandakaranya special zone committee from 2005 until his arrest. Narayan Rao, who had been in ill health, was reportedly receiving treatment from sympathizers at the time of his capture.

The police had long pursued Narayan Rao, offering a reward of Rs 25 lakh for his capture.

His arrest is a significant victory in the fight against Maoist activities in the Bastar division, marking a turning point in the movement in the region, particularly for the leadership associated with Beerpur and surrounding areas.



Minister for Transport Ponnab Prabhakar interacting with children at the Social Welfare Residential School in Husnabad on Tuesday

Minister visits social welfare residential school, interacts with children

PNS ■ HUSNABAD

Minister for Transport Ponnab Prabhakar visited the Social Welfare Residential School for Girls in Husnabad on Tuesday and he spent quality time with the students. He surprised them by singing songs and sharing inspiring stories. During his visit, he encouraged the students to set goals early and work diligently toward achieving them.

The Minister joined the students for lunch, standing in line with them to receive food, and then had community lunch sitting on the floor with them. He assured them of the government's continued support.

In his address, the Minister highlighted the recent hike in diet charges

and he inquired about the quality of the food provided. The students said that the school authorities were supplying quality meals as per the prescribed menu. They mentioned that the breakfast, which included eggs and bananas, as well as the evening snacks, were of good quality.

The students expressed their happiness over the Minister's two-hour-long visit, which was filled with motivation and encouragement. The Minister urged them to set their goals early, work hard, and overcome obstacles to achieve success. He also advised them to make their parents, village, and the state proud by excelling in both academics and sports.

AMIT SHAH'S 'DEROGATORY' REMARKS AGAINST AMBEDKAR

Cong leaders take out a protest march in RR district

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Congress leaders took out a massive protest march in Kongarakalan under Adibhatla Municipality on Tuesday, in response to a call given by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to condemn Union Home Minister Amit Shah's controversial remarks on BR Ambedkar. The march culminated with the submission of a memorandum District Collector C Narayana Reddy, urging the dismissal of Amit Shah from the Union Cabinet and demanding a public apology for his statements.

The event saw prominent Congress leaders such as District Congress MLAs Kasireddy Narayana Reddy, Veerlapalli Shankar, former Minister Pushpalila, Congress District President Challa Narsimha Reddy, Urban Finance Corporation Chairman Mal Reddy Ram Reddy, and State Road Development Corporation Chairman Mal Reddy Ram



Congress leaders, led by Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar submitted a memorandum to Rangareddy District Collector C Narayana Reddy in Shadnagar on Tuesday

Reddy leading the charge. They organized the rally, which was supported by hundreds of Congress activists and party ranks.

Before presenting their petition, the leaders paid homage to . Ambedkar by garlanding his statue and leading a "Samman March" in Kongarakalan. The protest was marked by the participation of notable figures, including Gaddi Annaram Market Committee Chairman Chiluka Madhusudan Reddy, Adibhatla

Municipal Chairman Marri Niranjan Reddy, Former ZP Chairperson Thigala Anita Reddy, Ibrahimpatnam Market Chairman Gurnath Reddy, and Congress leaders Abhishek Reddy, Shekhar Goud, Potti Ailaiah, and Gauni Balaraju. The Congress leaders demanded immediate action against Amit Shah, asserting that his comments had deeply hurt the sentiments of people across the country. They vowed to continue their protests until justice is served.

Officials told speed up Indiramma Housing scheme survey

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector Ila Tripathi on Tuesday conducted an inspection of the Indiramma Housing survey in several villages under Chandampet mandal, which is part of the Devarakonda Revenue Division in Nalgonda district. The Collector visited various locations in Gagillapur village to check the progress of the ongoing survey and inquire about the details.

The survey teams informed the Collector that delays were occurring due to network issues in the area. When asked how long it would take to survey one house, the survey teams reported that under good network conditions, it would be sufficient to complete the survey in about 8 minutes. During the inspection, the Collector interacted with the people, asking if they were aware of the purpose of the survey. She also asked

whether they knew why the survey was being conducted.

The Panchayat Secretary, Shekhar, informed the Collector that out of 621 applications in the village, 138 had been surveyed so far. Delays were mainly due to residents being absent and network issues. The Collector emphasised the need to raise awareness among the villagers about the Indiramma Housing survey, urging officials to announce it in advance in the villages.

For those whose applications were not uploaded, the Collector advised them to reply through the MPDO office or the e-Seva center.

During the visit, the Collector met with Buya Pullamma, an applicant, and inquired about her survey. Pullamma confirmed that she was applying for a house and mentioned that she had a piece of land where she would build the house.

Theft at temple foiled, burglars caught in no time

PNS ■ NIRMAL

Thieves are becoming more brazen by the day. They are targeting both temples and schools without making any distinction. They target residential areas. In the dead of night, they have started targeting locked houses. Then, they became even bolder, starting chain snatching. They began snatching chains from women walking alone on the streets.

Now, they are targeting temples for thefts. They are choosing temples with inadequate security to carry out their crimes. A similar incident happened in Nirmal district, but the thieves were caught.

Recently, a theft took place at the Rajarajeswaraswamy temple in Kubeer mandal of Nirmal district. Two thieves took away the hundi from the temple.

The incident, which happened on Sunday night, was recorded by the CCTV cameras installed at the temple. A man and a woman sneaked into the temple at night and tried to steal the money from the hundi. However, when they could break open the hundi, they took it away. They carried it to the car parked in front of the temple and placed it in the car's trunk before driving off. But as if by divine intervention, the car got stuck in a ditch and the tyre got punctured.



Nalgonda Collector Ila Tripathi interacting with people in a village under Chandampet mandal in Nalgonda district on Tuesday

Collector assures all help to flood-hit people

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

In Achampet constituency of Nagarkurnool, District Collector Badavath Santosh assured the flood victims of the Nakkalagandi project that the government would take all steps for their welfare. He emphasised that political affiliations would not come in the way of extending aid to the people in the flood-affected villages which included Nakkalagandi Thanda, Marlapadu Thanda, Keshya



Nagarkurnool Collector Badavath Santosh speaking at a meeting

Thanda and Mannevari Palli. The Collector stated that the government had identified

suitable government land in Hajipur village under Achampet mandal for rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) of the affected people. The government would provide a model colony with all necessary amenities and construct houses for the displaced families through the R&R package. He urged the residents of the submerged villages to cooperate with the district administration and the government.

The Collector assured that the district administration, along with the local MLA, would discuss with the state government to address the

demands of the people from the flood-affected villages and ensure the necessary arrangements. The Collector urged the people of the affected villages to cooperate fully with the district administration.

In this regard, Achampet MLA Vamsikrishna advised the people of the flood-affected villages to cooperate with the state government.

The meeting was attended by the RDO Madhavi, DSP Srinivas, Tahsildar Chandra shekhar and officials.

Onion, garlic prices still remain high Khammam market

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Prices of onions and garlic have been soaring in the open market. In Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts, some farmers are growing these crops in small quantities to meet local household needs. As a result, consumers are increasingly reliant on imports from Madhya Pradesh.

Onions and garlic are brought in wholesale from Madhya Pradesh to Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts, and traders in towns such as Madhira, Sattupalli, Wyr, Kothagudem, Illendu, Paloncha, Manuguru, Bhadrachalam, and Aswaroopeta are heavily dependent on import of the produce.

Currently, onion prices range between Rs 50 per kg, down from

Rs 70 just a fortnight ago. However, onion remains unaffordable for many, particularly in rural areas where retail prices are even higher.

Given that onions are a staple ingredient in most dishes, the escalating prices have become a significant concern for consumers. Traders note that onion prices are fluctuating unpredictably, making future price forecasts difficult.

Similarly, garlic prices have been consistently high, ranging between Rs 350 and Rs 400 per kg for the past year. About a month ago, the price surged to Rs 500 per kg, putting garlic beyond the reach of the middle class and the poor. Local traders mostly rely on imports from Madhya Pradesh for garlic, with fresh supplies expected to

arrive in January. Only then, traders believe, will the prices start to ease.

Farmers in Madhya Pradesh often store garlic in cold storage, releasing it only when market prices are favorable.

Factors such as a reduced yield, the growing demand for garlic due to its use in non-vegetarian dishes, and its increasing role in weddings and celebrations are driving up the cost of garlic.

In Khammam, approximately 1,486 tons of onions and 119 tons of garlic are traded each month. Meanwhile, in Bhadrachalam, monthly sales of onions and garlic are estimated at 1,133 tons and 58.92 tons, respectively.



Historical Nizam Sugar factory still in limbo

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

It was once a historical factory, recognised as the largest sugar factory in Asia. For the people of this region, it was a dream coming true. However, over time, the management, unable to bear the burden, declared a lay-off in the middle of the night. As a result, the factory was shut down, and the workers were left high and dry. During the election campaign, Bharata Rashtira Samithi chief K Chabndrashekar Rao had promised that if his party came to power, the Nizam Sugars factory would be nationalised. He promised to do so within 100 days of coming to power. However, that promise remained unfulfilled and the workers continued to struggle with financial hardships. Meanwhile, the factory's management had declared a lay-off, and it has

been nine years since then, but for political leaders, it remains just an issue for electoral propaganda.

When the Congress government came to power, the leaders promised to reopen the factory, and this raised the hopes of both the workers and farmers. The Nizam Sugars factory, which had earned fame in Asia, has been shut down due to the lay-off and has brought hardship to the lives of sugarcane farmers. Once a thriving sugar factory that brought light into the lives of thousands of workers and farmers, today it has become a symbol of despair. The privatisation and mismanagement by previous governments are blamed for its downfall. The TRS government had promised to restore the glory of Nizam Sugars, but despite being in power for years, they failed to bring any

change. Since the 2014 elections, the Nizam Sugars issue has remained a prominent plank for the political campaigns in Nizamabad district, particularly in the Bodhan constituency. All major political parties used it as a tool for their election strategies. The TRS leaders had repeatedly promised to restore the factory to its former glory, making it a government entity. However, it remained just a promise. Despite claims from various political leaders, no real progress has been made for the factory in the past nine years.

In December 2017, the private management of the Nizam Sugars factory declared a lay-off, and since then, thousands of workers have not received their wages. They are left unemployed, and their families are struggling. Sugarcane farmers, with no other alternatives, have abandoned sugarcane cultivation. A few farmers who still decided to cultivate sugarcane have had to send their produce to sugar factories in Maharashtra and other private factories in the Kamareddy district. Farmers long for revival of Nizam Sugar factory.



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
Office of the Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, HYDERABAD
FORM-F
Notification by the Collector (LA), HAML
(See rule 7 (c))
No. C6109/2024-LHS(101 to 125) Dated: 24-12-2024
Where a notification was issued vide No. C6109/2024-LHS (101 to 125) dated 07-12-2024 and published in the Gazette Hyd.-HAML No. 40 dated 07-12-2024 for acquisition of the property for the public purpose for Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Phase-II, from MGIBS to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, situated at Shar-E-Hyderbad Village, Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District.
In response to the said notification, the following affected persons (property owners and others) have come forward to settle their claims through Negotiation. The details of the selling affected persons are as follows:

Name and address	Sketch No.	Premises No.	Extent in Sq. yds.
1	2	3	4
Sri. Farooq Hussain S/o Hydr Hussain, R/o 22-3-228/2, Elebar Chowk, Channarayana, Hyderabad	102 LHS	22-2-228/1 to 3	128.60

It is hereby notified calling for claims and objections if any, to be filed before the District Collector, Hyderabad District/ Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad within the seven days of publication of this Notification [LA, 33-12-2024].
Signature of: Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad. Date: 24-12-2024
DPR RD NO. 517/LA/PP-Advt/Agency/2024-25

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
O/o the Superintending Engineer, I & CAD DEPARTMENT, Irrigation Circle, PEDDAPALLY.
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No. 07-11/2024-25. Date: 21-12-2024
05 nos. of works in Peddapally Dist. Tender schedules and any other details can be obtained from the O/o the Superintending Engineer, I & CAD Department, Irrigation Circle, Peddapally, from 27-12-2024 to 10-01-2025 and participate from the date of issue. Contact No: 9530690989, Mail ID: seicpdpl@gmail.com. Further details will be available @ e-Procurement market place: www.tender.telangana.gov.in.
DPR RD No: 824/PP/LA/VT/2024-25. Date: 24-12-2024

Indian Bank
KHAMMAM BRANCH, 2-3-326/13, PSR ROAD GANDHI CHOWK, KHAMMAM, TELANGANA-507003
Mob: 798900947 Email: khammam@indianbank.co.in
APPENDIX-IV-A [See provision to rule 8 (6)]
Sale notice for sale of immovable properties
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (5) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Khammam branch, under Zonal Office, Karimnagar Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 24/01/2025 for recovery of Rs. 49,95,000/- (Rs. Forty Nine Lakhs Ninety Five Thousand Ninety Four Only) (as on 15/05/2024 with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon) due to the Indian Bank, Suryapet branch, Secured Creditor, from 1. Borrower: Mrs. Gande Vijayanthi (W/o. Gande Chandra Sekhar R/o. H. No. 1-6-141/146/2/5/1, Srinam Nagar, Near Vidyarthi Bandhuvu School, Suryapet, Telangana 508213). Co-Borrower: Mr. Gande Chandra Sekhar S/o. G. Lingamurthy R/o. H. No. 1-6-141/146/2/5/1, Srinam Nagar, Near Vidyarthi Bandhuvu School, Suryapet, Telangana 508213
The specific details of the property intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below:
Detailed description of the Property: All that part and parcel of Open Plot No. 13, in Sy. 797 of Suryapet Revenue Village, addressing an extent of 331.00 Sq. Yards, Manasa Nagar, Near Anjanapudi Colony within the limits of Suryapet Municipality, Suryapet Dist., Suryapet Sub-Registration Dist., Nalgonda Registration Dist., Telangana bounded by North: Open place of D. Papalash and Others South: 30 Feet Wide Road, East: Open Place of S. Anantharamulu and others West: 30 Feet Wide Road.
Encumbrances on property if any: Mortgaged to Indian Bank
Reserve Price: 56.50 lakhs (Rupees Fifty Six Lakhs Fifty Thousand Only)
EMD Amount: 5.66 lakhs (Rupees Five Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Only)
Bid incremental amount: 0.10 lakhs (Rupees Ten Thousand Only)
Date and time of e-auction: 23/01/2025 10:30 AM TO 04:00 PM
Property ID No: CIB18856750492
QR CODE: The intending Bidders/Purchasers are requested to register with online portal: (https://www.eb3xy.in) using their mobile number and email id. Further, after completing their eKYC, the intending Bidders/Purchasers have to transfer the EMD amount in their e-Wallet by 21/01/2025. Let before the e-Auction Date and time in the portal. The registration, eKYC and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction.
Place: Khammam Date: 24-12-2024
Sd-Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

ACROSS THE STATES



President Murmu greets citizens on eve of Christmas

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday greeted citizens on the eve of Christmas and hoped that the "forces of trust and forgiveness" will be strengthened around the world, bringing people closer to each other. "As we celebrate this sacred day, let us imbibe Jesus Christ's message of love and harmony in our lives. His teachings of brotherhood and welfare of all continue to light the path to a better world. This festival inspires us to foster unity and peace," she said. In this season of peace, "I hope the forces of trust and forgiveness will be strengthened around the world, bringing people closer to each other," Murmu said. The President extended her warmest greetings and best wishes to all Indians, especially Christians, according to a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.



Jharkhand hikes DA of employees by 3 pc

The Jharkhand government on Tuesday hiked the dearness allowance (DA) of its employees to 53 per cent of basic pay from the existing 50 per cent, effective from July 1 this year, an official said. The dearness relief to pensioners was also increased by 3 percentage points to 53 per cent. The proposal regarding the hike in DA to state government employees and dearness relief to pensioners was approved at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Hemant Soren. The hike will benefit over three lakh employees and pensioners in the state, officials said. A total of 10 proposals were passed by the cabinet, including administrative approval of Rs 99.56 crore for the multi-disciplinary education and research university (MERU) in the campus of Vinoba Bhawe University (VBU), Hazaribag, under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) "We are ready to move ahead with a visionary mindset for Jharkhand's betterment," Soren said.



Snake in Mumbai courtroom disrupts proceedings

A snake was found on a heap of files in a courtroom in Mumbai on Tuesday, disrupting the proceedings for about an hour. It was business as usual in room number 27 of the magistrate court in Mulund till noon when a policeman spotted a 2-foot-long snake while going through files. A lawyer present in the courtroom said the incident caused panic among persons present in the courtroom, forcing the judge to temporarily stop the proceedings. Snake-catchers were called and they diligently rummaged through the courtroom packed with loads of old files and cavity-ridden walls and floor. But the snake was not found, the lawyer said, adding that it might have slithered into one of the holes in the room. The court proceedings resumed after an hour. Interestingly, the spotting of snakes in this courtroom, surrounded by vegetation, was not an isolated incident.

'New criminal laws becoming protectors of civil rights'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the three new criminal laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam - are becoming protectors of civil rights and the basis of 'ease of justice'.

Chairing a review meeting here on the implementation of the three criminal laws in Uttarakhand, Shah asked Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama to put into effect the new laws 100 per cent as soon as possible.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, which came into effect on July 1, replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 respectively.

During the discussion in the meeting, Shah said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the three new criminal laws are becoming the protectors of civil rights and the basis of 'ease of justice', an official statement said.

Shah said the new laws are victim and citizen centric and they need to be implemented promptly with this spirit.

He said the Uttarakhand government should make efforts to fill the gaps in technology and other areas for 100 per cent implementation of the new laws.



The home minister said the Uttarakhand government should give priority to 100 per cent implementation of the new laws in all police stations and jails in areas where more FIRs are registered.

The meeting reviewed the implementation and current status of various new provisions related to police, jails, courts, prosecution and forensics in Uttarakhand, the statement said.

Emphasising on the use of technology, Shah said more than one forensic mobile van should be available in every district of the state.

He said for forensic visits, teams should be divided into three categories - serious, normal and very normal, so that resources can be utilised better. Along with this, the home minister also emphasised that a protocol should be made to decide the designated place for video conferencing and the cameras installed at all places should be of excellent quality.

He said there should be regular and continuous monitoring of how many of the accused named under the Zero FIRs registered have been brought to justice and how many FIRs have been transferred to the states.

Shah asked Dhama to review the progress of implementation of the three new laws every 15 days and the chief secretary and DGP once a week with the officials of all the departments concerned.

He suggested to the DGP of Uttarakhand to ensure that all the Superintendents of Police investigate the cases within the prescribed timelines.

Besides Shah and Dhama, top officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Uttarakhand government attended the meeting.

'BSF to step up surveillance at India-Bangla border'

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The BSF will step up surveillance along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, Nadia and Murshidabad districts with an increased focus on the unfenced stretches, its Director-General Daljit Singh Chaudhary said on Tuesday. Chaudhary said this after chairing a high-level meeting of the border-guarding force near Kolkata. "It has been decided that in districts such as Nadia, Murshidabad and North 24 Parganas, surveillance will be increased and unfenced stretches of the border will be under increased scrutiny," he said.



"There will be more CCTV surveillance and patrolling will be intensified, particularly along sensitive spots, and intelligence networks will be further strengthened," he added. Chaudhary said the BSF was working in perfect coordination with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) to prevent illegal border crossings.

The DG was visiting Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas to meet the 20 female BSF personnel who completed the 53-day Ganga River Rafting Expedition, covering 2,500 km from Gangotri to Gangasagar -- where the river meets the Bay of Bengal. It was organised by the BSF and the National Mission for Clean Ganga. The all-women expedition started on November 2, to spread the message of women empowerment and keeping the Ganga clean, and concluded on December 22.

'Notice for my removal was a rusted knife'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said one should not use a vegetable-cutting knife for bypass surgery and asserted that the notice for his removal from the post was actually a "rusted" tool.

In his first reaction on the notice submitted by the opposition INDIA bloc, Dhankhar said, "Just look at the notice against the vice president. Just look at the six links they have given."

"You'll be shocked. Chandra Shekhar ji once said, 'Never use a vegetable-cutting knife for bypass surgery.' The notice wasn't even a vegetable-cutting knife; it was rusted. There was haste."

The notice was rejected by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chair Harivansh. "When I read it, I was aston-



ished. But what surprised me more was that none of you read it. If you had, you wouldn't have been able to sleep for days," he told a group of women journalists.

Dhankhar said any constitutional position has to be vindicated by commitment to sublimity, sterling qualities and constitutionalism. "We are not in a position to set-ple the scores. Because for the success of democracy, two things are inalienable: expression and dialogue," he said, according to an official statement.

Cautioning against orchestrated efforts to harm national interests, the vice president said these are fuelled in an orchestrated manner by forces that are determined to be inimical to the interest of the country.

'Give up stubbornness, talk to farmers'

■ PUNJAB CM MANN TO CENTRE

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday urged the Centre to give up its "stubbornness" and hold talks with farmers who are protesting at the state's border over various issues, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops. Farmers led by Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 after their march to Delhi was stopped by security forces.

Farmer leader from Punjab Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been on a hunger strike at the Khanauri bor-

der since November 26 to put pressure on the Centre to accept the farmers' demands.

Doctors have described Dallewal's health condition as "critical" as his fast entered the 29th day on Tuesday. In a post on X, Mann said the central government should give up its "stubbornness" and open the way for talks with the farmer organisations. "If Modi ji can stop the war between Russia and Ukraine, then can't he talk to the farmers sitting 200 kilometres away (from Delhi)? What time are you waiting for?" he asked.

Later, in a statement, Mann slammed the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government for "meting out step-motherly treatment to the farmers by not



even giving them an opportunity to air their genuine demands".

The chief minister alleged that "self proclaimed global leader Narendra Modi is more worried about intervening in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine but is apathetic towards the food growers of the country". Mann said the Union government has been "blatantly ignoring" the genuine demands of the farmers of the country which is highly "deplorable".

"It is unfortunate that the prime minister is more worried about emerging as 'global leader' by intervening in international affairs rather than resolving the issues faced by the countrymen," the AAP leader said.

I am a victim of chit fund scam too: Odisha CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Tuesday claimed that he was also a victim of chit fund scams and urged people to be aware of the activities of ponzi firms to save their hard-earned money.

Majhi said this while addressing a function to celebrate the State Level National Consumers Day here. "I was also a victim of chit fund scams. Two firms had duped me in 1990 and 2002," the chief minister said, adding that he could not get back his money as the process of recovering the money



was too cumbersome and too lengthy.

Claiming that he lost the investment in two ponzi firms, the chief minister said he was influenced by the sweet talks made by the firm agents and arranged money to deposit in certain schemes. "However, when the maturity period came, I could not find the companies where money was deposited," he said.

The chief minister said there has been a lot of change now as the Centre has formulated and strengthened regulations to stop cheating and duping of consumers.

Bengal Governor gives convocation a miss amid row

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Tuesday gave a miss to the convocation of the prestigious Jadavpur University with the Raj Bhavan maintaining that due formalities were not followed in organising it.

Bose, who is the chancellor of the state-run varsity, on Monday had written to officiating vice-chancellor Bhaskar Gupta, stating that the convocation was convened flouting several rules and laws, and was "illegal".

Chancellor's nominee to JU's Executive Council Kazi Masum Akhtar told PTI after attending the convocation that the Raj Bhavan was "frustrated" and the governor was "upset and felt insulted" by the rules not being followed. "With no permanent VC at the helm, and no prior



notice given for the mandatory court meeting, the governor considers the convocation -- the date of which was decided at the meeting of Executive Council, as illegal and fraught with malpractices," he said. Akhtar said that though December 24 has been the date for the convocation for years, there are provisions to defer it in exceptional situations.

"I have come to today's event after seeking permission from the governor," he said.

He said the allegations of some mass communications students that their exam papers were not properly evaluated should also have been addressed before the function. A similar situation happened last year as well and then interim vice-chancellor Buddhadev Sau had to finally resign from his post.

People struggling with rising prices: Rahul

■ Says govt sleeping like 'Kumbhakaran'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that the people are struggling with rising prices and are forced to compromise on small things of daily needs while the government is sleeping like 'Kumbhakaran'. Gandhi shared a video on his social media handles on his recent visit to a vegetable market in Giri Nagar here and interaction with housewives who narrated their ordeal due to rising prices of food items.

"A few days ago, I went to a local vegetable market and while shopping with customers, I talked to the vendors to know how the budget of the common people is deteriorating and how inflation has troubled everyone," Gandhi said in his post accompanying the video.



Shyam Benegal: A look at 10 pathbreaking movies by the filmmaker

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Filmmaker Shyam Benegal, who passed away in Mumbai at the age of 90, heralded a parallel cinema movement in the 1970s and 1980s with his realistic portrayal of societal issues.

Here's a look at some of the most iconic movies of the legendary director.

Ankur (1974): Benegal made a powerful debut in 1974 with "Ankur", a searing and impactful portrayal of class, caste, power and exploitation in rural India. It also marked the first feature film of Shabana Azmi, who went on to become Benegal's frequent collaborator.

The film follows the story of an

upper caste son of the village landlord, played by Anant Nag, who becomes involved with his lower caste servant's wife (Azmi). It explores themes of oppression, infidelity, and retaliation by the oppressed.

Nishant (1975): Once again set in a village, "Nishant" revolves around a group of powerless villagers who are unable to take a stand against the corrupt feudal system.

This movie reunited Benegal with Azmi and introduced another stalwart of Indian cinema, Naseeruddin Shah, who went on to work with the director in many of his later films.

How women were the main victims of village politics and patriarchy was a theme Benegal touched



upon in the movie. Also starring Girish Karnad, Amrith Puri, Mohan Agashe, Nag and Smita Patil, the film was selected to compete for the Palme d'Or at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival.

Manthan (1976): It was inspired by the groundbreaking milk cooperative movement by Dr Verghese

Kuriyan that transformed India into one of the largest milk producers in the world.

"Manthan", or "Churning" in English, was financed by 5 lakh farmers of Gujarat 48 years ago who contributed Rs 2 each. The opening credits of the movie read: "500,000 Farmers of Gujarat presents."

Shyam Benegal cremated with full state honours

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal, the pioneer of the parallel cinema movement in Indian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s, was cremated on Tuesday with full state honours and a three-gun salute here. Benegal, known for films such as "Ankur", "Mandi", "Nishant", and "Junoon", died on Monday at a hospital here due to chronic kidney disease. The last rites of the filmmaker, who celebrated his 90th birthday on December 14, were held around

3 pm at Dadar's Shivaji Park crematorium. His body was wrapped in the national flag and decked with garlands. Benegal's cinema contemporaries, colleagues and younger generations of actors and artists accompanied wife Nira and daughter Pia in paying their last respects to the icon, whose movies captured the many realities of India. Naseeruddin Shah, Rajit Kapoor, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, and Ila Arun, who starred in many of Benegal's films, were present to bid adieu to the director.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL DEPUTY COLLECTOR, LA, HAML, HYDERABAD
FORM-F
Notification by the Collector (LA), HAML (See rule 7 (c))
No. C6/48/2024-LHS (51-75) Dated: 24-12-2024
Where a notification was issued vide No. C6/48/2024-LHS (51-75) dated 16-11-2024 and published in the Gazette Hyd. - HAML No. 23 dated 16-11-2024 for acquisition of the property for the public purpose for Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Phase-II, from MGBS to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, situated at Shar-E-Hyderabad Village Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District.

In response to the said notification, the following affected persons (property owners and others) have come forward to settle their claims through Negotiation. The details of the willing affected persons are as follows

Name and address	Sketch No.	Premises No.	Extent in Sq.yds
1	2	3	4
Sri. Mohammed Yakub S/o Late Chotey Sab R/o 22-3-638/1, Mir Alam Mandi, Charminar, Hyderabad	55 LHS	22-1-637 22-3-638 11,635, 636	124.89

It is hereby notified calling for claims and objections if any, to be filed before the District Collector, Hyderabad District/ Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad within the seven days of publication of this notification i.e., by 31-12-2024.

Signature of:
Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad.
Date: 24-12-2024

DIPR No. 513/LA/PP-Advt/Agency/2024-25



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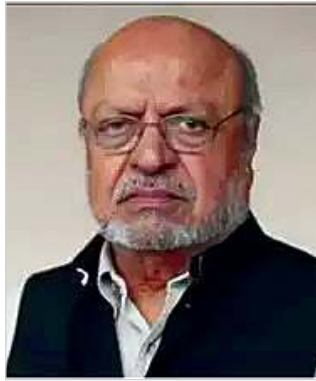
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Adieu Shyam Benegal

With passing of Shyam Benegal, Indian cinema has lost a luminary, but his films will continue to illuminate and educate

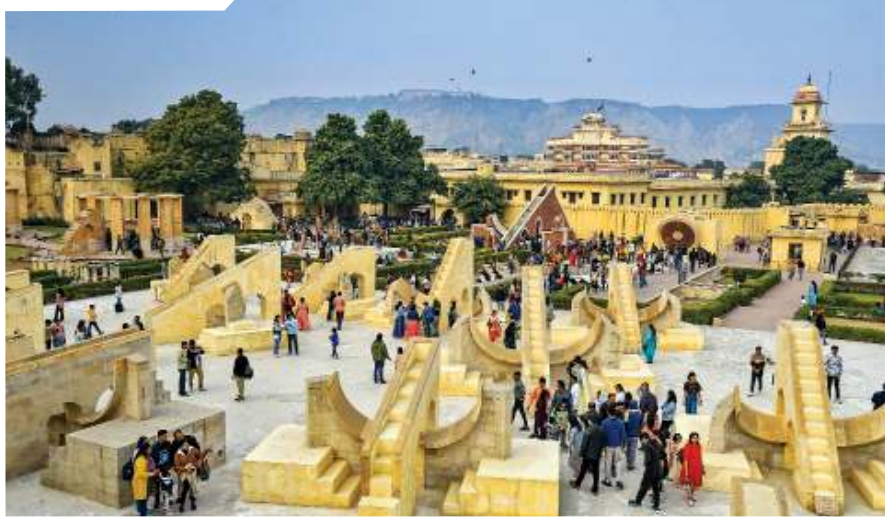
The curtains have fallen on one of the most illustrious chapters in Indian cinema. Shyam Benegal, the pioneering filmmaker who redefined storytelling in Indian cinema, passed away at the age of 90 on December 23, 2024. He succumbed to chronic kidney disease at Wockhardt Hospital in Bombay Central. Known as the father of Indian parallel cinema, Benegal's legacy remains etched in the heart of Indian filmmaking, his films celebrated for their realism, depth, and transformative impact on society. Born on December 14, 1934, Benegal celebrated his milestone 90th birthday just days ago, surrounded by close family and friends. Yet, even in his twilight years, the veteran filmmaker remained deeply connected to his art. Benegal's career was marked by his groundbreaking contribution to the Indian New Wave movement in the 1970s and 1980s. With films like 'Ankur' (1974), 'Nishant' (1975), 'Manthan' (1976), and 'Bhumika' (1977), he charted a new cinematic course that delved into realism and social commentary, a stark contrast to the formulaic escapism of mainstream Bollywood.



His films gave voice to the marginalised and explored themes of gender, class struggles, and rural India, bringing to light the unseen facets of Indian society. 'Nishant', a harrowing tale of oppression and resistance, and 'Manthan', inspired by Dr. Verghese Kurien's milk cooperative movement, became cult classics. The latter, crowdfunded by 500,000 farmers, stands as a testament to Benegal's ability to connect with grassroots realities. The film, India's official entry for the 1976 Academy Awards, exemplified his commitment to blending art with advocacy. Benegal's films also became a platform for some of India's finest acting talents. Actors like Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah, Smriti Patil, and Om Puri found their early footing in his films. Azmi, who debuted in Benegal's 'Ankur', recently shared a poignant moment from his 90th birthday celebrations, underscoring the indelible bond they shared. His collaboration with screenwriter Vijay Tendulkar produced narratives that were both poignant and thought-provoking, winning multiple National Awards. From Junoon to 'Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero', Benegal's oeuvre showcased an unmatched versatility, spanning historical dramas, rural sagas, and contemporary commentaries. Earlier this year, 'Manthan' was restored and screened at the Cannes Film Festival under the Cannes Classics segment, reiterating the timeless relevance of Benegal's vision. Despite his declining health, the event underscored his enduring influence on global cinema. Benegal's storytelling was never confined to entertainment. His films were instruments of change, questioning societal norms and sparking dialogues. His pioneering approach laid the foundation for generations of filmmakers who sought to marry art with social responsibility. Rest in peace, Shyam Benegal, the maestro who showed us the soul of India through his lens.

Rest in peace, Shyam Benegal, the maestro who showed us the soul of India through his lens.

PICTALK



Tourists visit the historical Jantar Mantar, in Jaipur

Across cultures and ages: The beauty of unexpected friendships

The unexpected joy of forging meaningful friendships in middle age defies the common belief that the best opportunities for connection are behind us

Your hat is fantastic. It makes you look more Bavarian than any of us, the concierge quipped as I entered the venue for the coffee-and-cake event at a resort in southern Germany. Although he was stretching the truth — I have neither blonde hair nor blue eyes — I accepted the compliment with a coy smile. "Danke schön," I said, tipping my woolen hat. Just then, another guest remarked, "That's a pretty pin on your hat," pointing to the delicate hand-crafted Edelweiss flower. A cherished gift from my friends, Wolfgang and Amelie, the pin symbolised a friendship that began just a year ago, in this very Bavarian town of Schliersee.



For youth. Our paths crossed serendipitously during an evening walk. A casual exchange of pleasantries evolved into deeper conversations about life, culture, and shared interests. What began as polite conversation in an Alpine countryside ended with an exchange of coordinates and it continued with texting in the months after. It is widely held that the friends we make in our formative years are the ones who stay, while those forged later in life are fleeting, superficial, or driven by necessity. This belief may hold some truth; adulthood brings with it obligations, scepticism, and wariness. We become cautious in extending ourselves. The innocence of youthful camaraderie gives way to guarded interactions, and we convince ourselves that the window for profound friendship has closed. Yet, the Wolfgangs remind me that this window is not sealed shut — it merely takes a little more effort to open. Friendships formed in middle age are special not despite our life experiences, but because of them. We bring to these connections a deeper sense of self-awareness, empathy, and appreciation. There's no rush to impress or to conform. The pressures of youthful identity-building are gone. In their place, we find sincerity, authenticity, and the willingness to value people for who they truly are. They remind us of the universality of human warmth and curiosity. Meeting someone from another country — someone whose life, traditions, and language are different — can feel like discovering an entirely new world. And when such encounters lead to genuine friendship, they break down the invisible walls that geography and culture often build around us. There is also a profound joy

in the intentionality of these connections. In our younger years, friendships are often born of proximity — classmates, neighbours, or college roommates. As adults, friendships require deliberate effort. This intentionality infuses middle-aged friendships with a depth and resilience that can be even more rewarding than the bonds of our youth. I think back to the pin on my hat — that delicate Edelweiss — and I see it as a metaphor for these kinds of friendships. The Edelweiss, a rare Alpine flower, thrives in challenging conditions. It symbolises courage, devotion, and the willingness to climb new heights. Like the flower, friendships made in middle age might take more effort to cultivate, but they are hardy, resilient, and precious. A year after that first meeting, I found myself once again in Schliersee last month, sharing coffee and cake with the Wolfgangs, laughing over our language blunders and cultural quirks. It is never too late to make friends.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)



ASHA KUMAR IYER

India recalibrates Myanmar strategy

The stakes are high for India, balancing its Act East policy, border security and competition with China, all against the backdrop of a fractured Myanmar



ASHOK K MEHTA

After four years of civil war in Myanmar, India has quietly changed its policy towards the Junta from one of total and unflinching support following its coup against democracy to one of nuanced support. Junta leader General Min Aung Hlaing has been advocating holding elections for the last four years but only now with China's assistance, they are slated for 2025. China is playing with both sides: supporting the Junta as well as some EAOs (Ethnic Armed Organisations) especially in the north contiguous with its Yunnan province. India too has shifted the goalposts but less perceptibly and engaging some EAOs and the National Unity Government (NUG) after the Junta lost its control in the Rakhine and Chin territories along India and Bangladesh borders.

Last week the Junta's control of the ground began crumbling further with the loss of Ann, Headquarters Western Military Command, the second military command to fall to resistance groups. Junta has lost two airports — Thandwe (Rakhine) and Lashio and 75 towns and cities out of some 340 of them. It has also lost control of six border trading posts. 40 of 70 towns in Rakhine have been captured by the Arakan Army which is part of the Three Brotherhood Alliance, the other two being MNDAA and TNLA.

Two critical seaports on the west coast — India-operated Sitwe and Chinese-owned Kyaukphyu — are on AA's target list next year unless Beijing can dissuade it from attacking Kyaukphyu though the loss of Ann has opened the gates to it. Magaung is the other target in Rakhine.

On the Thailand border, the Karen National Union took Manerplaw, the Junta losing possession after 30 years. A humanitarian corridor with Thailand has existed with the help of the Junta. In the North, TBA has been persuaded by China to go slow against the Junta, and not support NUG and the People's Defence Force. The Kachin Independence Army has seized Bemo and Mansi, popular tourist areas in the



northeast. In the central Sagaing region, Mandalay, the second largest city after Yangon, came under rocket attack last month and National Highway 3 from Mandalay to China border, was under resistance control. In sum, the Junta controls less than 50 per cent of the land but has the majority of the population in it. These are Bamar-predominant areas in Sagaing, Irrawaddy Delta, the new capital Naypyidaw and Yangon. They are likely to lose more ground next year despite pressure from the Chinese on EAOs. Beijing is the key player in Myanmar's economy and is deeply invested in business and industry. Beijing is nursing the Junta and its leader, Hlaing. He was invited to meet PM Li Qiang after attending the Greater Mekong Subregional Summit at Kunming last month. China is replenishing the Junta's military arsenal — so is Russia — including three fighter jets with assured ammunition supply. It wants to locate a private security company (like in Pakistan) for the protection of its strategic assets like China Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) containing oil and gas pipelines along with a railway link from Kunming to Kyaukphyu. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is a frequent visitor to Myanmar though most people resent Chinese support for the Junta and its presence. The Chinese consulate in



LAST WEEK THE JUNTA'S CONTROL OF THE GROUND BEGAN CRUMBLING FURTHER WITH THE LOSS OF ANN, HEADQUARTERS WESTERN MILITARY COMMAND, THE SECOND MILITARY COMMAND TO FALL TO RESISTANCE GROUPS

Mandalay came under attack recently. Theoretically, an election could be held contingent upon the ground situation in November next year. Even with low turnout and rigging an election will be manipulated. ASEAN's problem is Myanmar after the failure of its five-point consensus peace formula. Many meetings have been held with and without Myanmar representation without any light at the end of the tunnel. During the 18 December talks in Bangkok, with Myanmar's neighbouring countries, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, a former Ambassador in Myanmar, discussed prospects for elections with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Than Shwe.

There was a separate set of talks with stakeholders from non-neighbouring countries. India's stakes are high given competition with China, a disturbed situation in its northeast and a troubling relationship developing with Bangladesh. Myanmar is a pivotal land bridge for its Act East policy, the Asean Trilateral Highway and the security of its Eastern frontier. The Junta's loss of control in Rakhine and Chin states has created an adverse situation along the border with Mizoram and a broken Manipur. While India is not proactive like China, its new policy pronouncement — old wine in a new bottle — is "immediate cessation of violence, peaceful resolution of

the ethnic issue through a genuine federal democracy where the process should be Myanmar-owned and Myanmar-driven. While Delhi has taken its time to engage resistance groups, it did organise one-and-a-half track meetings with select EAOs and Junta separately. In November, it first engaged Junta officials followed by EAOs who met the Joint Secretary (Bangladesh-Sri Lanka-Myanmar) at the Indian Council for World Affairs. In September, it had met representatives from Chin, Rakhine, Sagaing and Magwe who are already in refugee camps in Mizoram.

While India has not opened humanitarian corridors to these areas it is providing food, fuel medicines across the border. But that is not enough as they also want weapons and cash. Delhi does not want to annoy the Junta with which it has little leverage, unlike China. NUG was not invited to Delhi though it is being engaged back channel. India has to get real; be proactive, take risks and support AA and Chin rebels as its Act East policy is pivoted in areas under their control. It can't dump the Junta as it will be a key constituent of any outcome.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STRENGTHENING INDIA-KUWAIT TIES

Madam — The two-day visit of PM Narendra Modi to Kuwait will further boost the bilateral ties between two historically friendly nations. This is the first visit by any Indian prime minister to the Gulf nation in 43 years. Though India and Kuwait have enjoyed traditionally friendly relations, which date back to the pre-oil era of Kuwait when maritime trade with India was the backbone of its economy, India and most Arab countries, especially Kuwait, have enjoyed very cordial relations based on mutual trust and people-to-people contact, nurtured over several millennia. Till 1961, the Indian rupee was the legal currency tender of Kuwait till it introduced its currency, the Kuwaiti Dinar (KWD). This was a symbol of enduring economic and cultural centuries between two brother nations.

PM Modi was conferred with Kuwait's highest civilian honour, the prestigious "Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer. The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer" is a knighthood order of Kuwait. It is awarded to heads of state and foreign sovereigns and members of foreign royal families in a sign of friendship and has been previously awarded to foreign leaders like Bill Clinton, Prince Charles, George Bush, King Salman Bin Saud, and King Hussein of Jordan. This visit of PM Modi holds great significance as current global volatility requires better cooperation and stability among nations, especially among regional players, for energy security, and India's desire for stability in the Gulf region, beside Kuwait, holds significant strategic importance. The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has the world's oldest and fifth largest sovereign wealth fund, valued around US \$1 trillion, which has US \$969 billion in assets under its management. This visit of PM Modi has heralded a new era of friendship, which will further boost trade, cooperation, and peace at a time when economic concerns and regional stability dictate are of the foremost importance in the formation of political alliances.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

PV Sindhu marries Venkata Datta Sai



Indian badminton star Pusarla Venkata Sindhu, a two-time Olympic (silver and bronze) medalist, is married to Venkata Datta Sai in Udaipur. Sindhu, a five-time World Championship medalist, a few days ago, clinched the Syed Modi India International title and announced her engagement via an Instagram post on December 14, 2024, that captured a memorable moment with the couple holding their rings and smiling from ear to ear. The wedding festivities began on December 20th

in the lake city of Rajasthan at the reclusive and majestic Raffles Udaipur Resort. Pre-wedding festivities included sangeet, haldi, and mehendi ceremonies. The families, long-time acquaintances, planned the wedding swiftly to accommodate Sindhu's training schedule.

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat (shockingly, he was wearing a black kurta in an auspicious ceremony, even as a Hindu party leader) shared a captivating photo of the couple, offering his blessings. Now the reception is scheduled in Sindhu's native city, Hyderabad, on December 24. Congratulations to the darling daughter of Mother India, P.V. Sindhu, and her husband, Venkata Datta Sai. Best wishes to the newlyweds for a wonderful & eternal married life. Whatsoever, the first image of the wedding has already captivated hearts, setting the tone for the couple's happily ever after.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

POPCORN PRICING DEBATE

Madam — The recent decision by the GST Council has turned popcorn from a simple snack into a focal point of economic debate. Under the new rules, salted popcorn is taxed at 5 per cent, packaged popcorn at 12 per cent, and sugar-flavoured popcorn at 18 per cent. This decision raises questions about the priorities of the tax structure while adding complexity to people's daily lives. Will samosas, tea, and water also be classified into tax categories based on taste and packaging? The tax determination for popcorn signals that the government is exploring every possible avenue to increase revenue. The aroma of popcorn in cinemas might now bring concerns about tax slabs before the joy of taste. Popcorn, once a symbol of social equality, has now become a marker of class division due to the 5 per cent and 18 per cent tax differential. This decision could negatively impact the Rs 1,200 crore popcorn industry, pushing people toward cheaper alternatives. The government must recognise that such decisions add to the burden on citizens already grap-

pling with inflation. Popcorn is no longer just a snack but a representation of the complexities of policymaking.

RK Jain | Barwani

TRIBES PROTECT NATURE

Madam — It is a great irony that all the well-educated and better-placed-in-life populations are destroying nature and damaging the environment; it is the indigenous tribes across the world who are supposedly backward and primitive who are doing their best to protect it. The bond between nature and her people has all but broken down in all urban centres, and the city dwellers do not think twice about their lifestyles, which is slowly destroying the environment. After all, we, the human race, are not the sole inhabitants of the planet, and other living creatures are co-inheritors too. It is time for all the nations with tribal populations to learn from them on how to care for and protect the planet.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN THE ETERNAL WISDOM OF SUNDAR KAND

Sacred texts and mantras hold a timeless power to uplift the soul



RAVI VALLURI

The faithful recognise the profound benefits of chanting or reading sacred texts, mantras, and scriptures like the Hanuman Chalisa and Sundar Kand. These practices are especially embraced by large numbers on auspicious days such as Tuesdays and Saturdays. The vibrations generated by reading these sacred books and meditating on the mantras foster positive thoughts, beautify the mind, and empower us to overcome internal obstacles and dispel negativity clouding our perspective. Yet, many of us struggle to engage in these practices regularly, often citing demanding schedules and lack of time. As spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar observes, "The time given to the Divine is the least." Consequently, we neglect to devote quality time to the Lord, remembering Him only in moments of distress. Even when time is found, many face difficulties focusing, maintaining clarity, or chanting with proper intonation. The mind frequently drifts into worldly concerns.



To aid this practice, here is a simple version of Sundar Kand:

Ram Ram Jai Ram
Ram Jai Ram Ram
Peaceful, Compassionate, Sinless,
One served by Brahma and Shambhu,
One who appears in human form by Maya,
O Raghuvhar, I bow to you.
You are my innermost Self.
Liberate me, O Lord,
Instill devotion within me.
O Lord Hanuman, epitome of strength, knowledge, and wisdom, emboldened by Jambavanth's counsel, set out to cross the mighty ocean in search of Sita. He triumphed over the demoness Surasa and reached Lanka under the cover of night. Guided by divine intuition, he discovered Sita and presented her with Lord Ram's ring, bowing at her feet and seeking her blessings. Hanuman then wreaked havoc in Ashok Vatika—eating fruits, breaking branches, and shaking trees. Allowing himself to be captured by the asuras, he was taken to Ravana's court. There, he urged Ravana to repent and return Sita to Lord Ram. Ravana, consumed by ego, refused and instead set Hanuman's tail ablaze. In response, Hanuman used the fire to destroy Lanka's golden city. Before departing, Hanuman comforted Sita and took her Chudamani (jewel) as a token for Lord Ram. On returning, he presented it to Ram, who embraced him, deeply moved by his devotion and bravery. When asked how he accomplished the task, Hanuman humbly replied that nothing is impossible with the grace of Lord Ram. Lord Ram then instructed Sugreev to assemble the army and seek the ocean's permission to cross into Lanka. Meanwhile, Mandodari, Ravana's queen, warned him of the dire consequences of his actions and implored him to release Sita, but he refused. Ravana's virtuous brother Vibheeshan also advised him to repent, cautioning that even Lord Shiva would disapprove of his deeds. Ignoring all advice, Ravana's stubbornness led Vibheeshan to abandon Lanka and seek refuge at Lord Ram's feet. Recognising his righteousness, Lord Ram crowned Vibheeshan as the future king of Lanka. Ravana sent spies disguised as messengers to gather information on Lord Ram's plans. They returned with alarming news and urged Ravana to free Sita, but he remained defiant. With the help of Nal and Neel, Lord Ram constructed the Setu bridge to cross the ocean. Along the way, he released the river Sarayu from its curse and advanced toward Lanka. This timeless Sundar Kand, penned by Tulsidas, continues to inspire and guide devotees on their spiritual journey.
(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Atal ji: The statesman with vision and resolve



NARENDRA MODI

Today, as we mark the 100th Jayanti of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, we celebrate the life and legacy of a statesman whose vision and leadership continue to inspire generations



Today, 25th December is a very special day for all of us. Our nation marks the 100th Jayanti of our beloved former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. He stands tall as a statesman who continues to inspire countless people. Our nation will always be grateful to Atal Ji for being the architect of India's transition into the 21st century. When he took oath as PM in 1998 our nation had passed through a period of political instability. In about 9 years we had seen 4 Lok Sabha elections. The people of India were getting impatient and also sceptical about governments being able to deliver. It was Atal Ji who turned this tide by providing stable and effective governance. Coming from humble roots, he realised the struggles of the common citizen and the transformative power of effective governance. One can see the long-term impact of Atal Ji's leadership in so many sectors around us. His era marked a gigantic leap in the world of Information Technology, telecom and communications. This was particularly important for a nation like ours, which is also blessed with a very dynamic Yuva Shakti. The NDA Government under Atal Ji made the first serious attempt to make technology accessible to the common citizens. At the same time, there was foresight in connecting India. Even today, most people recall the Golden Quadrilateral Project, which connected the length and breadth of India. Equally notable were the Vajpayee Government's efforts to enhance local connectivity as well through initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Similarly, his Government gave a push to metro connectivity by doing extensive work for the Delhi Metro, which stands out as a world-class infrastructure project. Thus, the Vajpayee Government not only boosted economic growth but also brought distant regions closer, fostering unity and integration. When it comes to



ATAL JI PRESIDED OVER THE CREATION OF THE NDA, WHICH REDEFINED COALITIONS IN INDIAN POLITICS. HE BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER AND MADE NDA A FORCE FOR DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL PROGRESS AND REGIONAL AMBITIONS

the social sector, an initiative like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan highlights how Atal Ji dreamt of building an India where modern education is accessible to people across the nation, particularly for the poor and marginalised sections. At the same time, his government presided over many economic reforms which set the stage for India's economic surge after several decades of following an economic philosophy which encouraged cronyism and stagnation. A wonderful example of Vajpayee Ji's leadership can be seen in the summer of 1998. His Government had just assumed office and on 11th May, India conducted the Pokhran tests, known as Operation Shakti. These tests exemplified the prowess of India's scientific community. The world was stunned that India had done the tests and expressed their anger in no uncertain terms. Any ordinary leader would have buckled, but Atal Ji was made differently. And what happened? India stood firm and resolute with the government calling for another set of tests two days later, on 13th May! If the tests of the 11th showed scientific skill, the ones on 13th showed true leadership. It was a message to the world that gone were the days when India would buckle under threats or pressure. Despite facing international sanctions, the then NDA government of Vajpayee Ji stood firm, articulating India's right to safeguard its sovereignty while simultaneously being the strongest proponent of world peace. Atal Ji understood Indian democracy and also the need to make it stronger. Atal Ji presided over the creation of the NDA, which redefined coalitions in Indian politics. He brought people together and

made NDA a force for development, national progress and regional ambitions. His Parliamentary brilliance was seen throughout his political journey. He belonged to a party with a handful of MPs but his words were enough to rattle the might of the all-powerful Congress Party that time. As Prime Minister, he blunted the criticisms of the Opposition with style and substance. His was a career spent largely in the Opposition benches but never carried any trace of bitterness against anyone, even though the Congress stooped to new lows by going to the extent of calling him a traitor! He was also not one to cling on to power through opportunistic means. He preferred to resign in 1996 instead of following the path of horse-trading and dirty politics. In 1999, his Government was defeated by 1 vote. A lot of people told him to challenge the immoral politics happening then but he preferred to go by the rules. Eventually, he came back with another resounding mandate from the people. When it comes to commitment to protecting our Constitution too, Atal Ji stands tall. He was deeply impacted by the martyrdom of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Years later, he was a pillar of the anti-Emergency movement. In the run-up to the 1977 elections after the Emergency, he agreed to merger of his own Party (Jan Sangh) into the Janata Party. I am sure it would have been a painful decision for him and the others, but safeguarding the Constitution was all that mattered to him. It is also noteworthy how deeply rooted Atal Ji was in Indian culture. Upon becoming India's External Affairs Minister, he became the first Indian leader to speak in Hindi at

the United Nations. This one gesture showcased his immense pride in India's heritage and identity, leaving an indelible mark on the global stage. Atal Ji's persona was magnetic and his life was enriched by his love for literature and expression. A prolific writer and poet, he used words to inspire, provoke thought, and even offer solace. His poetry, often reflective of his inner struggles and hopes for the nation, continues to resonate with people across age groups. For so many Bharatiya Janata Party Karyakartas like me, it is our privilege that we were able to learn and interact with a person like Atal Ji. His contribution to the BJP was foundational. In those days to spear-head an alternative narrative to the dominant Congress showed his greatness. Alongside stalwarts like Shri L.K. Advani Ji and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi Ji he nurtured the party from its formative years, guiding it through challenges, setbacks and triumphs. Whenever the choice came between ideology and power, he always chose the former. He was able to convince the nation that an alternative world view from the Congress was possible and such a world view could deliver. On his 100th Jayanti, let us rededicate ourselves to realising his ideals and fulfilling his vision for India. Let us strive to build an India that embodies his principles of good governance, unity, and progress. Atal Ji's unwavering belief in the potential of our nation continues to inspire us to aim higher and work harder.
(This tribute to the visionary statesman late former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee has been penned by PM Narendra Modi)

Dreaming of a White Christmas in New York City

The first snowfall and the twinkle of lights on the Rockefeller tree—there's a certain magic that makes Christmas in New York unforgettable

The first time I saw New York City during the holidays, I was 19, a college freshman on a whirlwind trip with my friends. It was my first real taste of winter—snow, bitter cold, and the kind of brisk air that turns your cheeks red. Coming from a place where Christmas meant palm trees with twinkle lights, the sight of NYC blanketed in snow felt like stepping into a new world. I didn't know it then, but that trip would spark a love affair with the city that would eventually bring me back here five years later. My First Snow, My First NYC Christmas I still remember how the snow caught me off guard. It wasn't the gentle, picture-perfect kind I'd imagined from movies. It was harsh, relentless, and



SHREYA DOYAL

absolutely freezing. Walking through Times Square that Black Friday, bundled up in layers that still didn't feel like enough, I saw the city come alive in a way that felt electric. It wasn't just the towering billboards or the endless sales signs luring shoppers into stores at all hours of the night.

It was the energy—the palpable hum of people chasing holiday deals while dodging each other in the snow. It was chaotic, overwhelming, and unforgettable. Somewhere in the madness of flashing lights and icy sidewalks, I knew I wanted to come back someday—not as a visitor, but as someone who belonged here. The Magic of NYC's Holiday Icons During that trip, we did all the things you're supposed to do when you're experiencing Christmas in New York for the first time. We saw the Rockefeller Center tree, towering above the skating rink, every inch of it glowing like it had been plucked from a fairytale. The cold bit at my fingers as we stood there, taking it all in. For a moment, the crowds

and the cold faded away, leaving only the soft twinkle of the lights and the awe of standing in front of something so iconic. The Met was another world entirely. As someone who'd only read about it in books, stepping into its grandeur felt surreal. Wandering through the exhibits, I found myself captivated by the way history and art came alive here. Outside, the snow was falling again, but I was too caught up in the beauty around me to notice the cold. The Broadway Moment That Changed Everything That trip wasn't just about the sights; it was about the moments that stayed with me long after I left. One of those moments was seeing Phantom of the Opera on Broadway.



Sitting in that theater, watching the chandelier crash and the Phantom's haunting story unfold, I felt a kind of magic I couldn't quite explain. It was more than just a show—it was a moment that made me feel alive in a way I hadn't before. Walking out of the theater into the snowy night, the sounds of

the orchestra still echoing in my mind, I felt a connection to the city that I couldn't shake. It was as if New York had opened its arms to me and whispered, "Come back." Coming Full Circle Five years later, I did come back. I'd dreamed of living in New York ever since that first

trip, and now here I was, not as a wide-eyed tourist, but as someone calling the city home. It's funny how those early memories still feel so vivid, like they're a part of me. Walking through Times Square today, I still think about that freezing Black Friday night when I braved the snow for the first time. Seeing the Rockefeller tree now brings back flashes of that first trip—standing in awe of its beauty and dreaming about a future that somehow feels like the present now. Even when I catch a Broadway show, I can't help but remember how Phantom of the Opera made me fall in love with this city in the first place. The Spirit of a NYC Christmas There's something timeless

about Christmas in New York. No matter how many years pass or how many times you see it, the magic never fades. The snow still glistens, the lights still dazzle, and the city still hums with that unmistakable holiday energy. For me, it's not just about the sights or the snow—it's about how this city makes you feel. It's about the way it wraps you up in its chaos, its beauty, and its magic, and leaves you with memories that last a lifetime. A White Christmas in New York City isn't just a holiday—it's a story. And for me, it's the story of a 19-year-old who fell in love with the snow, the lights, and the city that would one day become home!
(The writer is a researcher at Johns Hopkins University; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold falls to Rs 78,600 per 10 gm; silver jumps Rs 500

Gold price slipped Rs 100 to Rs 78,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had closed at Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. However, silver jumped Rs 500 to Rs 90,500 per kg against the previous close of Rs 90,000 per kg. The price of 99.5 per cent purity gold dipped Rs 100 to Rs 78,200 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February rose Rs 35 or 0.05 per cent to trade at Rs 76,179 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for March delivery went lower by Rs 87 or 0.1 per cent to Rs 89,031 per kg. Globally, Comex gold futures traded flat at USD 2,628.30 per ounce. "Gold traded steady in a holiday thin session with prices seen consolidating last week's fall but remained weighed by a stronger dollar in the overseas market," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

'Will come out with recommendations for satcom spectrum soon'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai will issue recommendations on rules for satellite spectrum allocation very soon, an official said on Monday.

The government will evaluate recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) and thereafter decide on allocating spectrum to satellite communication companies, which will pave the way for satellite-based broadband services in the country.

In response to a question on the recommendation on satcom spectrum rules during an event on National Consumer Day, Trai Chairman A K Lahoti said it will be issued "very soon". Trai concluded an open-house discussion on the terms and conditions for the assigning spectrum for certain satellite-based commercial communication services in the second week of November.

Telecom service providers like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel want spectrum for full mobility across the country should be allocated through auctions only. However, Elon Musk's Starlink and global peers like Amazon's Project Kuiper and other satellite communication companies back an administrative allocation of



satcom spectrum. With battle lines between terrestrial players and satellite aspirants clearly drawn, Trai's marathon open-house discussion stretched for several hours and saw telcos banding together and speaking in unison about the need for a level-playing field as India works out the norms for satcom spectrum.

Jio, which has made a case for the auction of satellite spectrum, on Friday said it is "not afraid of competition" but that 'same services same rules' must apply.

FIEO seeks govt support to boost exports to US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apex exporters' body FIEO on Tuesday said it has formulated a strategy to boost India's exports to America, aiming to capitalise on potential opportunities that may arise as the US President-elect, Donald Trump, has threatened to impose high tariffs on Chinese goods.

As part of its plan, the body has urged the government to provide financial assistance for Indian exporters to participate in exhibitions across the US, FIEO (Federation of Indian Export Organisations) Vice President Israr Ahmed told reporters here.

"We have identified five key sectors in the strategy -- apparel, electronics, toys, footwear, and organic chemicals -- as areas of focus to drive growth in exports to the American market," he said. Ahmed emphasised the need for aggressive promotion and visibility in the US market, stating that increased financial support would enable Indian exporters to showcase their products effectively and tap into emerging opportunities created by the shifting trade dynamics.

PM-ECONOMISTS MEET

Jobs, farm productivity, funds for infra boost figure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Job creation, improving farm productivity, and mobilising public funds for infrastructure development were some of the issues that figured during the interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and economists ahead of the 2025-26 Union Budget.

The Prime Minister on Tuesday met eminent economists and sectoral experts at NITI Aayog to hear their views and suggestions for the upcoming Budget.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Budget for 2025-26 in the Lok Sabha on February 1, 2025.

According to an official statement, the Prime Minister emphasised that Viksit Bharat can be achieved through a fundamental change in mindset, which is focused towards making India developed by 2047.

The participants shared their views on several issues, including navigating challenges posed by global economic uncertainties and



geopolitical tensions, strategies to enhance employment particularly among the youth, and create sustainable job opportunities across sectors.

Suggestions were also made on aligning education and training programmes with the evolving needs of the job market, enhancing agricultural productivity and creating sustainable rural employment opportunities, attracting private investment and mobilising public funds for infrastructure projects to boost economic growth.

Suggestions were also made for promoting financial inclu-

and boosting exports and attracting foreign investment, as per the statement.

Renowned economists and analysts present at the interaction included Surjit S Bhalla, Ashok Gulati, Sudipto Mundle, Dharmakirti Joshi, Janmejaya Sinha, Madan Sabnavis, Amita Batra, Radhika Desai, Chetan Ghate, Bharat Ramaswami, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Siddhartha Sanyal, Lavesh Bhandari, Rajani Sinha, Keshab Das, Pritam Banerjee, Rahul Bajoria, Nikhil Gupta, and Shashwat Alok, the statement added.



Subscribers warned against unfamiliar intl calls

The government has warned telecom subscribers against unfamiliar international calls and also asked mobile service providers to tag such calls for awareness of their customers, an official statement said on Tuesday. The Department of Telecom said that within 24 hours of launching 'International Incoming Spoofed Calls Prevention System' on October 22, about 1.35 crore or 90 per cent of all the incoming international calls with tempered Indian phone numbers were identified as spoofed calls and blocked by telecom service providers (TSPs) from reaching Indian telecom subscribers. The fraudsters, thereafter, have shifted their tactics and are using international numbers for their deceptive practices, the official statement said. "The DoT advises citizens that they should show caution with respect to answering calls from unfamiliar international numbers which are not starting with +91 and which claim to be from government authorities of India."

Swiggy plans to onboard 1 lakh women delivery partners

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Food delivery platform Swiggy on Tuesday said it is planning to onboard at least 1 lakh women delivery partners by 2030 and signed an initial pact with the NSE for rolling out a financial literacy programme for delivery partners, with special focus on women workforce.

The company signed the MoU at an event, attended by Swiggy MD and Group CEO Sriharsha Majety, NSE Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Ashish Kumar Chauhan, and Amruta Fadnavis, banker and wife of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Ten women delivery executives, who completed the highest number of orders in 2024, were felicitated during the event, with each recipient receiving a cheque of Rs 11,000. "Earlier this year, when we launched 'She the Change' programme, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman ji, made a very pertinent observation when she said in areas where women are visibly seen to be running more enterprises such as food and beverage businesses, crime and anarchy will gradually reduce."

'Economy on recovery path'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian economy is recovering from the slowdown in momentum witnessed in the September quarter, driven by strong festival activity and a sustained upswing in rural demand, according to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin released on Tuesday.

An article on the 'State of the Economy' in the December Bulletin noted that the global economy continues to exhibit resilience with steady growth and moderating inflation. "High frequency indicators (HFIs) for the third quarter of 2024-25 indicate that the Indian economy is recovering from the



slowdown in momentum witnessed in Q2, driven by strong festival activity and a sustained upswing in rural demand," it said.

The prospects for agriculture and hence rural consumption are looking up with brisk expansion of rabi sowing, said the article authored by a team led by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

India's GDP growth slowed to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent during the July-September period of the current fiscal year. The RBI said the views expressed in the bulletin are of the authors and do not represent the views of the central bank.

'Sops by states may divert funds away from infra development'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sops announced by several states in their 2024-25 Budgets may divert resources away from critical social and economic infrastructure development, an RBI article said on Tuesday. The gross fiscal deficit as per cent of budget estimate moderated in April-September 2024-25 over H1:2023-24 in case of both Centre and states, primarily on account of robust receipts, deceleration in their revenue expenditure growth and decline in capital expenditure, the article published in December RBI Bulletin said.

This provides fiscal room to them to boost capex in the latter half of 2024-25 which would aid in sustaining the post pandemic gains in expenditure quality and support medium-term growth prospects.

Sensex, Nifty settle almost flat in highly volatile trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note in a volatile trade on Tuesday, as investors preferred to stay on the sidelines awaiting further triggers amid persistent foreign fund out-

flows. After gyrating between highs and lows, the 30-share index declined 67.30 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 78,472.87. During the day, it dropped 142.38 points or 0.18 per cent to 78,397.79. The NSE Nifty dipped 25.80 points or 0.11 per cent to

23,727.65. As many as 2,019 stocks declined, while 1,977 advanced and 96 remained unchanged on the BSE. "The domestic market concluded flat ahead of the holiday, with metal and power stocks dragging performance while

FMCG and auto sectors gained from recent corrections. "The near-term market trajectory hinges on the outcome of Q3 results and the Union budget, but caution prevails due to a strong dollar, high bond yields, and concerns over rate cuts."

'Provide tech support for kirana stores: FRAI'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Federation of Retailer Association of India on Tuesday asked the government to provide enhanced technology platform to Kirana stores to enable them to compete with quick commerce firms.

"Such support would enable the kirana stores to remain competitive amidst the increasing encroachment into their space by quick commerce companies like Swiggy Instamart, Blinkit or Zepto," said Federation of Retailer Association of India (FRAI), which says that it represents about 80 lakh micro, small and

medium retailers from across the country with a membership of 42 retail associations.

Providing local kirana stores with a technology platform would allow them to compete on equal terms with quick commerce players, effectively creating a level-playing field, it added.

"With new technologies brought in by the government, like ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce), what is now required is a more focused approach in creating a specific solution for kirana stores that makes them as discoverable and accessible to customers, much like the way



quick commerce companies are operating," FRAI Honorary Spokesperson Abhay Raj Mishra said.

Essentially, the kirana stores should remain competitive by being empowered to tap into the growing digital market and meet new customer needs," said Mishra, who is

also Member & National Coordinator, Indian Sellers Collective.

Kirana stores are facing steep challenges due to the rise of quick commerce players, Lok Sabha member Praveen Khandelwal said.

"For shopkeepers, it is crucial to stay updated and embrace all channels to meet the evolving expectations of customers," he added.

FRAI said quick commerce platforms have "unfair advantage" over Kirana stores, which cannot match the heavy discounts offered by quick commerce giants who benefit from deep pockets, large warehouses and a huge customer base.

IOC to invest Rs 61,000 crore for naphtha project in Odisha

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) will invest Rs 61,000 crore to set up a naphtha cracker project at Paradip in Odisha, a statement said on Tuesday. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for this will be signed between the Odisha government and the IOCL in January during the 'Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha 2025' summit, it said. The foundation stone of the IOC's upcoming Rs 4,352 crore yarn project at Bhadrak will also be laid at that time, it added. The decisions were taken at a meeting between Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and IOCL Chairman AS Sahney in Bhubaneswar. "The Naphtha Project in Paradeep has received in principle approval and IOCL will invest over Rs 61,000 crore for the project. It is likely to be one of the largest projects in the sector in the country. The State Government is an equity holder of this project, and will earn dividends in addition to taxes," said the statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office.



to 5.7 million square feet from 5.5 million square feet. However, the demand fell in Chennai and Delhi-NCR. The gross leasing of office space in Chennai declined 35

per cent to 6.8 million square feet from 10.5 million square feet.

In Delhi-NCR, the office space leasing fell 16 per cent to 9.7 million square feet in 2024

from 11.6 million square feet in the previous year. The demand was driven mainly by technology firms and engineering and manufacturing companies, besides financial services providers.

On the outlook, Arpit Mehrotra, Managing Director, Office Services, India, Colliers, said the demand for office space in 2025 might "potentially stabilize at elevated levels". "An annual space uptake exceeding 60 million sq feet is likely to be the new norm over the next few years," he added. Madhusudhan G, CMD of Bengaluru-based developer

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ROADS AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer (R&M), District R&B Office, Suryapet District e-procurement/NIT No. 21(D1)PS to EE/S&P/2024-25, Dated: 19.12.2024.
1) Online tenders are invited for the work of "Providing Road safety interventions pertaining to (R&B) sub-division, Suryapet in Suryapet District" with approximate total cost of Rs. 39.63 Lakhs. Tenderers can download the bid documents from e-market place i.e. www.eprocurement.gov.in from 23.12.2024 at 3:00 PM onwards and up to 30.12.2024 at 3:00 PM. The last date for receipt of bids is on or before 30.12.2024 up to 3:30 PM. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place i.e. www.tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, District R&B Office, Suryapet District
DPR No. 053/PPCLAD/VI/2024-25 Dtd: 24.12.2024

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE MAINTENANCE WORKS
NIT No. 30/EE-T/45/CRZ/GHMC/2024-25 Dtd: 24.12.2024
Name of the Work: SI No 1 to 1, Estt. Cost: Rs. 9.56 Lakhs, Download Start Date & Time: 27.12.2024 at 02:00 PM, Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 31.12.2024 at 02:15 PM, Name & Address Officer Cell No: Sri G Ekambaram, EE (FAC), Santosh Nagar Circle-7, Channarayana, Maszati Ground, Darab Jung Colony, Santosh Nagar, Hyderabad, Ph. No. 7673951166. For further details can be seen at e-procurement at www.tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.O.No. 053/PPCLAD/VI/2024-25, Dtd: 24.12.2024 Santosh Nagar Circle-7, Channarayana, GHMC

Indian Bank
KHAMMAM BRANCH
2-2-32833, PSR ROAD
GANDHI CHOWK KHAMMAM
TELANGANA-507003 Phone: 08742-252805
APPENDIX IV (Rule-8(1))
POSSESSION NOTICE - (for immovable property)
Where as The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (1)(c) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 16/10/2024 Calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor-1/Borrower/Mrs. Mohammad Sharmila W/o Abdul Majeed H. No. 8-1-261, B.K.Bazar, Khammam, Telangana-507001. H. No. 15-7-578/A/1, Rotary Nagar Khammam, Telangana-507002. Co-Borrower/Mr. Mohammad Abdul Majeed S/o Abdul Nayim H. No. 8-1-261, B.K.Bazar, Khammam, Telangana-507001. H. No. 15-7-578/A/1 Rotary Nagar, Khammam, Telangana-507002. with our Khammam Branch to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 43,81,881/- (Rupees Forty Three Lakhs Eighty One Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Only) as on 16/10/2024 with further interest and cost within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property on 21/12/2024 described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 and 9 of the said rules.
We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules framed there under which deals with the rights of redemption over the securities by the borrower. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount of Rs. 43,81,881/- (Rupees Forty Three Lakhs Eighty One Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Only) as on 16/10/2024 and further interest, cost and charges thereon.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
All that part and parcel of land and residential house in Plot No. 15 part 9, No. 95 with H.No. 15-7-578/A/1 with built up area of 954.65 Sq.Ft Ground floor and 954.65 Sq.Ft in first floor on the permission plan) measuring an extent of net area of 133.17 Sq. Yards (total extent 150.00 sq.yds. Road effected area 16.83 sq.yds) as per permission plan, of Khanapuram Havili Revenue Village, within the limits of Khammam Municipal Corporation, Khammam Urban Mandal and Dist. Khammam Sub-Registration Dist., Khammam Registration Dist which is bounded by North:H.No.4-1-578 of Binji Veeranghulu in Plot No.15 part,South: H.No.4-1-580 of Shaikh Begum in Plot No. 15 part,East: Plot No.16,West:15 feet wide road.
Date:21/12/2024
Place:Khammam
Sd/-AUTHORISED OFFICER
Indian Bank

'Office leasing across top 6 cities hit record 66.4 mn sq ft'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Office space demand remained strong this year with gross leasing of workspace rising 14 per cent to a record 66.4 million square feet across six major cities, according to Colliers India.

Gross leasing of Grade A office spaces stood at 58.2 million square feet in 2023 calendar year.

Real estate consultant Colliers India on Tuesday released the data for India's six major office markets. The gross absorption does not include lease renewals, pre-

commitments and deals where only a letter of intent has been signed.

Among cities, Bengaluru saw a record office leasing of 21.7 million square feet in 2024, up 39 per cent from 15.6 million square feet in the preceding calendar year.

The gross office space leasing in Hyderabad rose 56 per cent to 12.5 million square feet from 8 million square feet.

Mumbai witnessed a 43 per cent increase in demand to 10 million square feet from 7 million square feet, while Pune saw a modest 4 per cent increase in office space leasing

from 10.5 million square feet to 5.7 million square feet from 5.5 million square feet.

However, the demand fell in Chennai and Delhi-NCR. The gross leasing of office space in Chennai declined 35

per cent to 6.8 million square feet from 10.5 million square feet.

In Delhi-NCR, the office space leasing fell 16 per cent to 9.7 million square feet in 2024

Sonnalli Seygall is currently 'enjoying' motherhood with 'no projects planned' till Feb

With a grounded perspective and an unwavering focus on her new role as a mother, Sonnalli Seygall is currently enjoying her motherhood phase. Her upcoming project, *Zindagi Milegi Dobaara* which she had already worked on previously, is having a direct-to-tv release. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Sonnalli Seygal opens up about the joys and challenges of embracing motherhood while balancing her career in the entertainment industry, her journey in the industry, her upcoming project and more

TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

With a diverse range of roles under her belt, she continues to impress with her versatility, carving a distinctive space for herself and earning recognition as one of the most promising actresses of her generation. Sonnalli Seygall is a captivating Indian actress whose talent and charisma have made her a rising star in both Bollywood and television. She shot to fame with her unforgettable performance in the *Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA* franchise, where her natural charm and impeccable acting skills quickly won over audiences. Known for her striking beauty, elegance and effortless style, Sonnalli has become a sought-after name in the entertainment industry.

In one of her first interviews since embracing motherhood, Sonnalli Seygal opened up about the whirlwind experience of balancing life as a new mom and her illustrious acting career. The actress, known for her versatile performances, shared

insights on her evolving priorities, her reflections on her journey in Bollywood, and her latest project that delves into the complexities of the digital world.

Sonnalli begins in this chat with *The Pioneer* and her voice brimming with the excitement of a new mother, "I'm slowly getting into a routine. There's slightly more free time now that I know her sleeping patterns, but it's still hectic—and amazing, of course."

When asked about how she plans to juggle motherhood and her career, the *Jai Mummy Di* fame had a pragmatic approach. "It's just a part of life," she explained. "Like any other profession, you take maternity leave. The beauty of our industry is that we can choose how long we want to take a break. For now, I know I won't be taking on any new projects until at least February. After that, I'll reassess, but right



I'VE LEARNED TO MOSTLY IGNORE THE NOISE UNLESS IT COMES FROM A CREDIBLE SOURCE. CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM IS WELCOME, BUT BASELESS OPINIONS DON'T BOTHER ME

now, I'm fully immersed in this phase of life."

Looking back on her career, Seygall expressed pride in her achievements. "I feel like I've had quite a journey, playing different kinds of roles in various genres. The opportunities were limited in the beginning, but they grew as I kept working and gained recognition. Getting the parts I truly wanted to play wasn't always easy as someone from outside the industry, but I'm proud of everything I've done."

She acknowledged the challenges of navigating the entertainment industry, particularly as an outsider. "More than the actual acting, getting those roles was often the bigger challenge. But I look back at it as a beautiful journey, filled with learning and growth."

When it comes to criticism, she revealed that she's been fortunate not to face too much negativity regarding her work. "Of course, there have been films that didn't do well, and that affects everyone involved, from the cast to the crew. But criticism and rejection are part of the profession. I've learned to mostly ignore the noise unless it comes from a credible source. Constructive criticism is welcome, but baseless opinions don't bother me."

Her upcoming project, *Zindagi Milegi Dobaara* marks a significant departure from her previous roles. "The genre itself is so refreshing. It's a topic I'm deeply passionate about—the impact of the digital world on our lives. While technology was created to bring ease and progress, it's often doing more harm than good. This film explores that duality in a relatable way."

Sonnalli plays Maria, a woman who runs a reform home aimed at helping individuals disconnect from the overwhelming influence of the digital world. "Maria is someone

who believes in reconnecting with nature and fostering real connections. She starts the home because of a personal loss and is determined to help others escape the digital trap. It's a character that resonates deeply with me."

The film, which will premiere on Zee Cinema HD, is a unique blend of entertainment and introspection. "It's unlike anything I've done before—there's no romantic angle, no songs or dances. It's an intense yet breezy narrative that I believe will appeal to audiences across age groups, especially Gen Z and Gen Alpha, who are deeply entrenched in the digital world."

The *Aseeg* actress hopes the film serves as a wake-up call. "The digital world has brought immense convenience, but it's also taking away a lot from our lives. I hope this film helps people realise the importance of balancing their digital consumption and staying connected to reality. It's something I consciously work on myself, especially as a mother. Small changes, like switching off Wi-Fi or using a basic phone around my daughter, make a difference. We can't escape the digital world, but we can become more mindful about how we engage with it."

Looking ahead, Sonnalli is open to exploring diverse roles. "I'm eager to take on everything the world has to offer. An action film is definitely on my bucket list. I'd love to dive into a physically demanding role once I feel agile enough for it. Reinvention is key and I'm excited about what the future holds."

With her grounded perspective on life and career, she continues to inspire as she navigates the complexities of motherhood, acting, and self-discovery. As she puts it, "Life is about embracing every phase with grace and passion."



REVOLUTIONISING EDUCATION!

Technology is the greatest leveler. The COVID 19 pandemic was a testament to this fact when all of a sudden everyone had to operate from restricted spaces and make do with only virtual interactions. It was almost like a tech pilot study where people realised how technology can be supportive and productive when myriad kinds of educational set ups went completely online right from the conduction of the classes to the conduction of exams. There were side effects too but the world discovered many more productive aspects of technology as well. Needless to say that the technology revolution is going to be constantly expanding and deepening its hold on all our lives in the days to come. With regards to India, this expansion is now spreading its roots and tentacles in tier 2 and tier 3 cities in a humongous way, especially in the education sector. There are many key trends that drive this forceful and impactful change. Factors like a renewed focus on regional languages, hybrid learning models, personalisation through technology, the fact that people now want to take up lifelong learning and upskilling, leading to market resilience and its growth potential contribute immensely to the development of the ed-tech sector. One of the ways, a country as diverse as India, attempts to close the digital divide is by encouraging the development of content in regional languages. This is true for educational as well as non-educational content. This method caters to people from various backgrounds as they are able to access quality educational content in the language of their choice thereby blurring the boundaries of privilege. This is a critical shift and increases accessibility for learners who might otherwise struggle with content that is dominated by one specific language – English, in the case of India. Availability of educational content in local languages empowers learners to continue their learning journey in their native language, consequently also making the whole set

up of education more inclusive. This also enhances the effectiveness of the learning that is being undertaken. The biggest plus of such an approach is that it not only caters to linguistic diversity but also deeply resonates culturally with learners from diverse backgrounds. In addition to the above, another major advantage that the edtech sector leverages on is an integration of learning models that allow both online and offline methodologies. A hybrid learning model also gives allowance for a more rewarding educational experience by combining the convenience of resources available online along with the elements of a face-to-face interaction. Different learning styles could be blended as well thereby helping maintain student engagement. Not only this but the needs and preferences of a broad range of students could also be accommodated through a hybrid model. The usage of artificial intelligence and machine learning hold within them the key to revolutionising how content is delivered within the edtech sector. They enable the curation of personalised learning experiences that are tailored to the needs of individual students and even customise their learning paths for them keeping in view their learning styles. Using the important insights offered by data analytics, areas of struggles can be identified by edtech platforms and offerings could be considerably improved. With the job markets continually evolving according to the rapid technological advancements, learners are also required to constantly upskill and reskill. The edtech sector can provide for this relevant and perennial need of training programs to help learners adapt to a job environment that is ever in flux. Learners do not even need to disrupt their ongoing careers in order to do these online courses and certifications.

(The author, Dominic Tomalin, is the Founding Headmaster, of Shrewsbury International School, India.)

'I do': Love, traditions and glamorous celebrations

The year 2024 has been a spectacular one for celebrity weddings, with many high-profile couples exchanging vows in intimate yet grand celebrations. The mix of traditional rituals, modern glamour and the presence of close family and friends has made these unions unforgettable, with social media lighting up with heartfelt wishes and behind-the-scenes glimpses.



Rakul Preet Singh and Jacky Bhagnani

Rakul Preet Singh and Jacky Bhagnani, who made their relationship public in 2021, tied the knot on February 21 in a stunning ceremony in South Goa. The couple took to social media to share pictures from their traditional Hindu wedding, captioning them, "Mine now and forever 21-02-2024 #abdonobhagna-ni." The intimate celebration, set against the scenic beauty of Goa, was a perfect blend of love, tradition and joy, leaving fans and well-wishers delighted.

SONAKSHI SINHA AND ZAEHER IQBAL

Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal, who dated for nearly seven years, tied the knot in a private ceremony in Mumbai on June 23. The civil wedding was an intimate affair, attended by their closest friends from the film industry, including actors Huma Qureshi and Saqib Saleem. The couple kept the celebrations simple yet elegant, cherishing the presence of loved ones as they embarked on their new journey together. The understated charm of the event reflected their close-knit bond and low-key approach to their special day.



KEERTHY SURESH AND ANTONY THATTIL

Tamil actor Keerthy Suresh and Antony Thattil tied the knot on December 12 in a picturesque wedding ceremony in Goa. The couple, who reportedly dated for 15 years, celebrated their union with both a traditional Hindu ceremony and a beautiful Christian ceremony, embracing their diverse cultural heritage. The intimate affair was attended by close family and friends, with Tamil superstar Vijay being one of the few notable guests present. The serene beaches of Goa provided the perfect backdrop for the celebrations, making it a memorable event filled with love, joy and heartfelt moments.

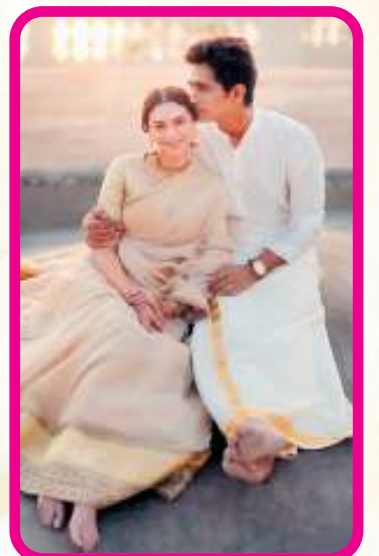


TAAPSEE PANNU AND MATHIAS BOE

Actor Taapsee Pannu married her longtime boyfriend, Danish badminton player Mathias Boe, in an intimate wedding ceremony on March 23 in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Fans discovered the news when a leaked video of Taapsee, adorned in bridal attire, walking towards her groom, surfaced online. The Udaipur celebration was a beautiful culmination of their journey, blending tradition and romance in a serene setting.

KRITI KHARBANDA AND PULKIT SAMRAT

After winning everyone's hearts as Bollywood's cutest couple, Pulkit Samrat and Kriti Kharbanda tied the knot on June 15, 2024. The couple exchanged vows in a beautiful beach wedding in Goa, surrounded by their close friends and family. The intimate ceremony was filled with love, laughter and the serene backdrop of the beach, making it a memorable celebration. Fans were thrilled to see their favourite couple begin this new chapter of their lives, as the newlyweds shared glimpses of their magical day on social media.



ADITI RAO HYDARI AND SIDDHARTH

Another surprise wedding for fans was that of Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth. The couple tied the knot on September 16 in a 400-year-old temple in Wanaparthy, Telangana, in a traditional South Indian ceremony. Embracing their love for heritage and culture, they later hosted a second wedding ceremony in December at the stunning Aila Fort Bishangarh in Rajasthan. The dual celebrations beautifully combined tradition and grandeur, leaving fans and well-wishers in awe of their picturesque and heartfelt union.



Shewtha **Sushila Bokadia** **Vijetha** **Sailaja Reddy**

Alekhyia Reddy **Deepthi**

PARTY

Socialite, entrepreneur and philanthropist Sailaja Reddy, through her NGO Sailaja Aryan Foundation, created a magical Christmas celebration for the children from REACH BEYOND, a program dedicated to first-generation learners from economically challenged backgrounds. The festive event took place at Barefoot Cafe in Banjara Hills, transforming an ordinary evening into an extraordinary experience of joy and fellowship.

Photos by- SV Chary

Villa Marie College for Women celebrated its annual day, 'Villa Festa', under the vibrant theme of "La MosaïqueGlobe-Symphony Embracing Change". The event brought together the college community, including its students, faculty for a day filled with joy, cultural expression and reflection on the institution's achievements.

Muzigal launched its state-of-the-art music academy in Hyderabad. Located in Nallagandla (Hyderabad), the academy will offer lessons in piano, keyboard, guitar, drums, carnatic vocals and more

Cremon Montessori Life School celebrated the Mithra Winter Fest to mark the Winter Solstice of 2024. The event was a heartwarming display of creativity, teamwork and the spirit of collaboration, as the school's children came together to create an unforgettable celebration.

Dr. Narendranadh Meda Endovascular & Podiatric Surgeon, has added a state-of-the-art Esaote's O-Scan MRI machine from Esaote to his hospital, further elevating the standard of care provided to patients in Hyderabad and surrounding regions.

Cremon Montessori Life School celebrated the Mithra Winter Fest to mark the Winter Solstice of 2024. The event was a heartwarming display of creativity, teamwork and the spirit of collaboration, as the school's children came together to create an unforgettable celebration.

FUN

ARCHIE

GRUNT!
STRAIN!

HEY I JUST NOTICED-- THERE AREN'T ANY GIRLS HERE TODAY!
YOU'RE RIGHT!

WHAT ARE WE KNOCKING OURSELVES OUT FOR?

CALVIN AND HOBBS

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, MAX! IT SEEMS LIKE AGES SINCE YOU'VE BEEN HERE.
I'LL SAY!

I DIDN'T THINK IT HAD BEEN SO LONG, UNTIL I SAW CALVIN. THIS GUY HAS REALLY GROWN.

SO KID, WHAT DO YOU SAY?
I SAY YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR STEP, 'CAUSE I'VE GOT A LIVE, MAN EATING TIGER AT HOME, AND IF I SO MUCH AS WINK, HE'LL RIP YOUR LUNGS OUT.
CUTE KID, BRO.

GARFIELD

BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!

GOOD TIMES!
I MUST BE MISSING SOMETHING

REALITY CHECK **SPEED BUMP**

IT'S ON MY PANTS! MY SHIRT! MY SHOES-- YOUR STUPID CAT HAIR STICKS TO EVERYTHING!
WEIRD! IT DOESN'T SEEM TO STICK TO ME!

WHAT THE @#% ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH AN OLIVE BRANCH NO ONE WANTS?!

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

SLUGGO NEVER WAS MUCH ON MANNERS-- BUT HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE HIMSELF AT HOME-- ANYWHERE--

NANCY-- THAT LITTLE RUFFIAN'S HELPING HIMSELF TO OUR ENTIRE KITCHEN--

I TOLD SLUGGO TO MAKE HIMSELF AT HOME

HE'S A NICE BOY, ALINT FRITZI-- HE JUST DOESN'T HAVE ANY MANNERS

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HOT COCOA BEFORE YOU LEAVE, SLUGGO?

MAW-- DAT COCOA KEEPS ME AWAKE-- THIS COUCH IS SO COMFY-- I THINK I'LL JUST BLINK DOWN HERE TONIGHT--

SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Sour-tasting
- A fruit with a stone
- Hit with your hand open
- Ran after trying to catch
- Assistants
- Went in
- Having a doze
- Very small
- Scramble, boil or fry these
- A light wind

DOWN

- Finest
- Go on a journey
- Mislaid
- Noon
- Reduce the length of
- Loosen or tighten nuts with this tool
- Store a car in here
- Make up your mind
- A slimy creature that eats lettuce leaves
- A rubber cover on a wheel

SOLUTION

W	A	L	I	N	G			
R	I	N	G	S				
M	A	D	E					
R	O	B	B	E	R	T		
A	R	O	B	B	E	R	T	
K	R	O	F	E	R			
S	O	A	P					
I	L	A	D					
A	N	G	E	S	T	O	R	S

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

GINGER MEGGS

FITZY, TELL ME, DID GINGER MEGGS CALL ME A WALKING HOUSEBRICK?

I REFUSE TO SAY ANYTHING, ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT MAY AFFECT MY HEALTH!

YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM MY SOLICITOR!

Chiranjeevi severs ties with PR managers over financial discrepancies

Mega star Chiranjeevi has sacked his public relations managers, GK Mohan and Bobby, who also serves as his personal manager. This sudden move has been a hot topic in the Telugu film industry for the past few days. According to a source, the reason behind this decision is attributed to financial discrepancies involving the two individuals. Chiranjeevi reportedly asked them to leave immediately after discovering the issues. In recent years, several events have taken place, including the documentation of Chiranjeevi's life. During these projects, the Mega star allegedly found irregularities in the financial management handled by GK Mohan and Bobby. It was infact discovered that they had failed to compensate their subordinate staff adequately. "A few employees working under them brought this to Chiranjeevi's notice and he conducted an inquiry, which revealed the fault lying with GK Mohan and Bobby," added the source. Furthermore, GK Mohan is allegedly involved in a personal relationship with a popular contestant from the Telugu reality show *Bigg Boss*. "There are some issues between the two and Chiranjeevi doesn't want these personal matters to affect his reputation, which is another reason he sacked GK Mohan," added the source. Notably, GK Mohan's wife holds a prominent position as business head at a Telugu channel and his daughter has recently worked as an assistant director in an upcoming film under a well-known director.



DIL RAJU, TURNS INTO A MESSIAH?

Top producer Dil Raju is back from the USA and has straightaway went to meet Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The producer went to the USA for his upcoming film *Game Changer* promotional event. After the recent case of Allu Arjun, the Telugu Film Industry has been looking for different alternatives to solve the problem as early as possible. The Telangana Chief Minister and the Cinematography Minister declared that they don't give permissions to benefit shows and they also said that they don't give ticket price hike. Three big films will be releasing in the coming Sankranti and Dil Raju is the producer for two of those films. Now, Dil Raju is the new Chairman for Telangana Film Development Corporation, so his first assignment is a big task. Now, the producer is trying to mediate between Allu Arjun and the Telangana Government, says a source. "I met Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and on his instructions I visited KIMS hospital to enquire about the health of Sri Tej, who was hurt at the S a n d h y a

Theatre Stampede," said Dil Raju. He said that Sri Teja health is improving and added that the incident was very unfortunate and these kind of incidents happened sometimes.

"Revanth Reddy appointed me as FDC Chairman to bridge the gap between the industry and the Government. I came back to the city last night and on Tuesday, I straightaway met the Chief Minister," he said. He added that FDC will take care of Bhaskar, the husband of Revathi. "We will provide a job in the industry and we will take care of him and his family," said Dil Raju.

Well, he also stated that he would soon go and meet Allu Arjun. "Now, I'll be going to meet Allu Arjun," said Dil Raju. "It seems like this Allu Arjun issue may be solved in a few days as Dil Raju is going to mediate," said a source.



DHARMA PROVES HIS FATHER WRONG!

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Not just his father, but many of his friends initially suggested Dharma not to get into acting. But it was his zeal and confidence he had about himself that turned him into an actor. After making his mark with *Sindhooram*, the actor is back with another film, *Drinker Sai*, where he will be seen playing the lead. The film directed by Kiran Thirumalasetti, is releasing on December 27.

Now, Dharma has his fingers crossed for this film as he has worked hard for his role in *Drinker Sai*. "I wanted to be an actor since my childhood. I used to participate in many cultural events in my school. While growing up, many people told me that your father can make a film with you," said Dharma.

Initially, Dharma wasn't aware about his father Kakani Venkateswara Rao, being a producer in the Telugu Film Industry. "I don't know, but later I got to know that he produced many films and also distributed them," said Dharma. He produced a film *Punya Dampathulu* that stars Sobhan Babu and Suhasini. "He stopped producing films long back, but I don't know, he never encouraged me when I wanted to become an actor. He asked me to study first and later look after my business," said Dharma about his father. His father felt that acting is not an easy job and if a film flops, many go into depression. "I feel that's the reason, he never encouraged," said Dharma.

After completing his schooling in Hanuman Junction, Dharma completed his Engineering in Guntur. "Just post that I started a small business with my friends for my pocket money and luckily it did very well," he said. He added that his father owned a few theatres in Hanuman Junction. His grandfather had the first theatre there and his father expanded it. "I decided to look after the theatres as I want to be an actor," he said.

Dharma is a huge Prabhas fan; so much that he even researched on where Prabhas got his training for acting. "I got to know that he trained at Satyanand sir school in Vizag and somehow I got his number and joined his school for training," said Dharma. "It was Satyanand sir, who suggested me to do *Drinker Sai*," said Dharma.

The producer of this film called Satyanand and asked for the lead actor and Satyanand suggested Dharma's name. "Producer Basavaraju and Satyanand sir were good friends, so he called Satyanand

sir," said Dharma. This film's story is based on some real incidents, said the makers. "Yes, it is true and I spoke to the person, where my director took the story," said Dharma.

Dharma also did his kind of homework before getting into the character. In his training institute they told him that for any character it is better to observe the real characters. In this film, the director told me that he should smoke a lot and his character is a drinker. "I never drink and smoke, so I went to many liquor shops, belt shops and bars to observe the people. With this I get to know how a drinking person behaves, talks and his attitude," said Dharma.

For another question, Dharma said that the movie is not completely about a person drinking. "There is a good message in the film and there is some interesting story in the film. To attract the youth, we put the title like this, but the film has some good content and I am confident that this film definitely tastes successful," said Dharma.

The actor said don't judge with the title as this film is not a negative one and the film has some message. "Once you watch the film, you definitely liked it and also appreciated it," said Dharma.

Asked about his father's response, he shared, "I showed the film to my father and he appreciated it. He never praises me till now, but after watching this film, he praises me and asks me to continue my work in the film industry."

The actor has big inspiration from Chiranjeevi for the songs. "He has the grace, when you watch Chiranjeevi garu songs, it's not like dancing and it's like watching music and the way he dances, simply superb. I really admire Chiranjeevi garu in dancing," said Dharma.



Actor Dharma is all set to once again entertain the audience with his upcoming film *Drinker Sai*. Ahead of the release of his film, he speaks to the media here sharing insights about the film and his journey.



Saiee's first look from *The India House* is 'aww'dorable

Saiee Manjrekar, made her Telugu debut with Ghani and then acted in the Pan Indian film *Major* opposite Adivi Sesh. After that she got another chance to play a key role in Ram Pothineni's *Skanda*, but the film didn't do well at the box-office. Now, the actress gets another big chance, where she is playing the lead actress in the film *The Indian House*. This film is a period drama and Nikhil Siddhartha is playing the lead, while Ram Vamsi Krishna is the director. Celebrating her birthday on Tuesday, the makers released her look from the film. The interesting thing about this film is, Abhishek Agarwal is producing this one with top actor Ram Charan. Presently the shooting is going on. Saiee Manjrekar plays the character of Sati and her traditional avatar perfectly complements the name. Draped in an elegant saree and adorned with jewellery, Saiee is seen sitting gracefully, gazing into the distance. She looks absolutely stunning in this captivating pose. This period drama is set in 1905 and it delves into themes of love and revolution. Nikhil and Saiee Manjrekar's love story is going to be one of the biggest attractions. Anupam Kher will be seen in a pivotal role in the movie.

Telugu cinema's forgotten legend, Krishnaveni turns 101!

Chittajallu Krishnaveni, popularly known as Krishnaveni, a renowned actress and producer, celebrated her 101st birthday on Tuesday. Krishnaveni holds the distinction of introducing the legendary Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao (NTR) to the film industry with the movie *Mana Desam*. She not only launched NTR's career but also paid him a remuneration for the film. Additionally, Krishnaveni introduced many other actors through her films.

As the only living legend associated with Telugu cinema, Krishnaveni's life spans a period even longer than the history of the Tollywood industry itself. Born on December 24, 1924, she began her career as an actress, appearing in both Telugu and Tamil films. In 1939, she married the Mirzapur Zamindar and later produced films under the banner of Sobhanachala Studios, which belonged to her husband.

Krishnaveni's daughter, Anuradha, followed in her mother's footsteps and produced several films featuring prominent stars like Akkineni Nageswara Rao and Murali Mohan. Anuradha expressed her pride in her mother's achievements, stating, "I am proud that my mother introduced a legendary actor like NTR. My father was also a



producer and a generous person, who donated many acres of land for the Gannavaram Airport at that time."

Regrettably, the Telugu film industry failed to acknowledge and celebrate Krishnaveni's remarkable milestone. Anuradha noted, "Only Murali Mohan called me and conveyed his wishes to my mother on her birthday." Ironically, the industry is currently celebrating the centenary of late NTR, while overlooking the 101st birthday of Krishnaveni, who not only introduced NTR to the industry but is also still in good health.

Mohan Lal in city promoting *Barroz*

Malayalam superstar Mohan Lal is in Hyderabad promoting his film *Barroz*. After many years in the industry, the legendary actor of Malayalam Cinema is making his debut as director with this film. "For the last four decades, I was part of the film industry and I always feel it is an honour. As an actor, I have been part of different stories, different roles and had become close to many people. Now, I am directing a film *Barroz* and it is a 3D film," said Mohan Lal.

The actor said that the film is made with Native 3D and from the last 40 years, no one tried in this format to make a film. "In this film the story telling is different and everyone can watch this one. This is a children-friendly movie," said Mohan Lal. He added that one of the best cinematographers Satosh Sivan has worked for this film. The actor specially mentioned about the background Score which is very good for this film. "I definitely assure you that you can enjoy watching this film," said Mohan Lal. Mythri Movie Makers are releasing the film in Telugu.



Modern-day greats figure out their own path: Rohit backs Kohli

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

With a smile, India captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday played down concerns around Virat Kohli's struggles outside the off-stump in Australia and backed his longtime teammate to the hilt, saying "modern-day greats figure out their own path."

Kohli's five innings in this series Down Under read 5, 100 not out, 7, 11 and 3 for a total of 126 runs at an average of 31.50, not something the team or the batting maestro himself had hoped for before embarking on the challenging tour.

But Rohit, who is also battling poor form, is not losing his sleep over the lack of runs and is confident of a turnaround. When a question about Kohli's struggles was posed to him with some sugar-coating, the skipper added a dash of his own humour in his response.

Do you say something or leave a modern-day great alone, the scribe asked.

"You only said he is a modern-day great. Modern-day greats figure out their own path," said a smiling Rohit as others broke into a peal of laughter.

Kohli was one of the earliest to enter the nets at MCG and Rohit was last among the recognised batters to get a knocking. The India skipper played just two shots in the last 20 minutes and left everything else, as he tried to curb his natural instinct to push forward.

The desperation to control his conditioned reflex of moving hands towards the fourth stump delivery was evident.

"Harshit, is jagah se jaa rahi hai (the ball is landing here)?" he pointed out at an imaginary fourth stump line while trying to know from the young pacer about the line which looked just around six inches outside off-stump. This line has been Kohli's Achilles Heel in the ongoing tour.

When Prasidh Krishna came on, he was told to bowl on the "channel" as he wanted to leave balls. Prasidh dug one short and



he just about defended. Then, the lanky Karnataka man hit the channel, and the batter withdrew his willow in the nick of time.

The 500-odd people present inside would let out a collective sigh. They made noise and once Kohli was also seen telling them to

keep quiet and let him concentrate.

When Rohit batted, he was heard telling throwdown specialist

Raghavendra, "Tappa sahi pakadna padega (get the length right)." He also got beaten by a throw that reared from length.

"Rohit bhai, pull maaro naa (play the pull shot)," yelled one of the demanding young fans from outside. Rohit just left the next delivery.

With the chatter about his form gaining decibels and rumours about an imminent retirement post Sydney gaining traction, Rohit's answers about himself were short. When someone has one double digit score in five innings, he wants to be left alone but then commitments needed to be honoured.

Asked about his batting position, he was borderline irritated.

"Let's not worry about that. I think you bats where, we should be discussing that within ourselves and I shouldn't be answering this question in every press conference," the skipper said, trying to hold his composure.

At the onset, he informed that his knee which was hurt while batting on an old practice track, was

"fine".

Then next question was a "flighted query" on where he stood with regards to his batting form.

"After last Test (in Brisbane) we had two sessions. What could have possibly changed in two days?" he countered with a wry smile.

As usual, he didn't give away anything about whether playing two spinners while factoring in the Melbourne heat was feasible or not.

The inimitable Rohit was back lacing everything with a bit of humour when asked what led to the selection of Tanush Kotian over Kuldeep Yadav.

"Well Kuldeep didn't have visa," he smiled before informing that the wrist spinner is still not hundred percent fit.

"Axar couldn't travel as he has had a baby. I am not saying Tanush is bad but he is here more as a cover," he said.

The five-match series is levelled at 1-1 with all to play for in the remaining two matches in Melbourne and Sydney.



Gill needs to back himself, he's changed things up too much: Ricky Ponting

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India top-order batter Shubman Gill has made far too many changes in his batting approach, which is hindering his run-scoring ability on away tours, feels former Australian captain Ricky Ponting, adding that the way out for the young cricketer is to trust his instincts.

Gill missed the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth due to a thumb injury he suffered during India's simulated training game. In the second Test at Adelaide, he failed to convert good starts into big scores as Australia levelled the series 1-1.

The third Test at Brisbane saw him getting out for one in the first innings, putting India in a spot of bother before KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja struck half-centuries to halt the slide.

"I love watching him bat. When you're watching him bat and bat well, he looks as good as anyone in world cricket. But the numbers don't really stack up, do they, away from home?" Ponting said on ICC review on Tuesday.

Ponting said he had observed several changes in Gill's technique during the second Test at Adelaide, which were impeding his ability to score runs.

"I watched him a little bit in Adelaide and it almost looked like he changed things up too

much.

"Scott Boland was bowling and he changed his guard, he moved across to the off stump, presented his front pad to Boland, and Boland got him out with a full straight one," he said.

The Australian legend added that rather than making wholesale changes in his technique, Gill should fall back upon trusting his instincts to improve his batting.

Gill's composed 91 at the Gabba during the 2021 tour had helped India clinch a historic series win, but since then he has scored just one Test ton away from home - in Bangladesh in 2022.

Gill averages 23.8 across nine Tests in England, Bangladesh, the West Indies, South Africa and Australia but at home he has accumulated 1,177 runs and four centuries across 17 Tests at an average of 42.03.

"If anything, I think he needs to back himself a little bit more, needs to back his defensive technique a little bit more here in Australia and still find a way to be able to score and score quickly," Ponting said.

"I'm sure when he's at home or when he's generally scored runs anywhere around the world, he scores them in a nice, attacking mode and almost to the point where he's not really thinking about getting out - he's only thinking about scoring runs."

ICC announces Champions Trophy schedule, India-Pakistan clash on Feb 23

PTI ■ DUBAI

India will play all their matches of the Champions Trophy in Dubai with the marquee clash against arch-rivals Pakistan scheduled on February 23, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Tuesday.

PTI had reported last week that India will play all their matches in Dubai including the semifinal and final if they qualify.

As has been the case with ICC events, India and Pakistan have been clubbed in the same group which also has New Zealand and Bangladesh.

Group B comprises South Africa, Australia, Afghanistan and England.

The tournament opener will be played in Karachi on February 19 when hosts Pakistan face New Zealand and the final is scheduled for March 9. The premier 50-over event, last played in 2017, will have 15 matches with at least 10 games scheduled in



Pakistan. Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi will be the three hosting venues in Pakistan with the second semifinal to be staged at the refurbished Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

"Lahore will also host the final on 9 March, unless India qualify, in which case it will be played in Dubai. Both the semi-finals and the final will have reserve days," said the ICC in a statement.

India will open their campaign against Bangladesh on February 20 before taking on Pakistan three days later. Their final league fixture will be against New Zealand on March 2.

Group B action begins on February 21 when Afghanistan square up against South Africa in Karachi.

A big weekend then kicks off with rivals England and Australia clashing in Lahore on February 22.

The eight sides in the Champions Trophy are the teams that finished in the top

eight in the points table at ODI World Cup in India last year.

The ICC has kept reserve days for both the semifinals and the final.

The schedule was announced after a deadlock over the hosting of the tournament ended with the ICC keeping India's games at a neutral venue as desired while having a similar arrangement for Pakistan for ICC events in India till 2027.

The hybrid arrangement will also apply to the 2025 women's ODI World Cup in India and the T20 World Cup in 2026 in India and Sri Lanka before being extended to the 2028 Women's T20 World Cup which Pakistan will host.

India had refused to travel to Pakistan for the event due to security concerns. The Indians have not played in Pakistan since the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in which 150 people were killed. The two countries' last bilateral engagement was back in 2012.



Respect first half an hour: Gavaskar's advice to Pant

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar has advised India's flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant to "respect" the conditions before launching into his attacking strokes in the remaining two Tests of the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia.

Pant, who famously scripted a match-winning knock at the Gabba in 2021, has shown flashes of brilliance but has struggled to make a significant impact in the ongoing series.

The 27-year-old has managed scores of 37, 1, 21, 28, and 9 in his five innings across three Tests so far.

Known for his aggressive approach, Pant has often prioritised attacking shots regardless of the match situation. His adventurous decision to charge down the pitch against pacer Scott Boland on the very first ball of his innings in the Adelaide day-night Test drew considerable attention.

"What Rishabh Pant has to do, like everybody else, respect the first half an hour; respect a little bit when he gets in there, whatever the position, unless, of course, India is 525 for 3; then he can tee off," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

Commenting on the challenges posed by

Australian bowlers, Gavaskar added, "... They get the ball to angle across. Pat Cummins and even (Josh) Hazlewood give him a little bit of a problem; Scott Boland will give him a little bit of a problem because Boland bowls around that area as well."

He should have no fear in these conditions: Hayden Australian legend Matthew Hayden, a self-confessed admirer of Pant, urged the Indian batter to embrace his fearless approach, saying it could be a game-changer for the visitors.

"I have always been a fan of his. He's kind of a different cheese; there is no doubt about it. And I would like to just see him explore that as well because he should be coming in a situation where, as I mentioned before, there are lots of runs; and if so, that's a perfect scenario for him to be in."

"But it's also the perfect scenario for Team India. A little bit like Rohit Sharma, I think we haven't seen some counter-punching efforts from Rishabh, but he should have no fear in these conditions. I think in the absence of fear comes a great opportunity for Rishabh and Team India," said Hayden.

India will face Australia in the third Test at the MCG starting December 26.

Shaheen Afridi had requested PCB to not include him for Tests against SA

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's premier fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi had requested the team management and national selectors to not consider him for the Test matches in South Africa because of workload management since he wants to be "100 percent fit" for the ICC Champions Trophy in February-March.

After the Pakistan squad was announced for the two Tests in South Africa without Shaheen, the interim head coach and senior selector, Aaqib Javed, said that the left-arm pacer's workload is being managed to keep him fresh for the Champions Trophy.

"The truth is Shaheen



himself requested he not be considered for Test matches until the Champions Trophy is over," a source said.

He said Shaheen had also apparently informed the team management and

Pakistan board that he had got a lucrative offer from a franchise in the Bangladesh Premier League and he assured that he would manage his workload during the T20 league which will be

held from December 30 to February 7.

"He assured the management and board the money was very good and he would look after his fitness and workload during the event so he should be permitted to play in the league," the source said.

During this period Pakistan is playing two Tests in South Africa and two Tests at home against West Indies.

"Shaheen said he would be fully fit in time for the tri-series ODIs against New Zealand and South Africa followed by the Champions Trophy at home," the source said.

"Shaheen told Aaqib he can be selected for tests once the Champions Trophy is completed," he added.

McDonald defends dropping McSweeney for Konstas, says teenager will throw new challenge to India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald on Tuesday defended the selection committee's decision to drop Nathan McSweeney in middle of the series for Sam Konstas, saying the talented teenager will post a "new challenge" for India.

McSweeney, a makeshift opener, was dropped because of a string of low scores in the first three Tests.

Former Australia skipper Michael Clarke was very critical of the decision to sideline McSweeney. However, McDonald said tough calls have to be taken at times.

"We wanted to throw a new challenge at India. We believe Nathan is good enough for the Test level. We weren't sure about how the top order is functioning. So yeah we challenged ourselves with that decision," said the head coach ahead of the fourth Test.

"Whether it works or not, time will tell. There will be debate around this should he or shouldn't he. Selections are highly

debated."

Konstas, 19, will become the 468th Australian men's Test cricketer to don the Baggy Green when he takes the field in the Boxing Day game beginning on Wednesday.

Konstas, 19, will become the youngest Test debutant for Australia since 18-year-old Pat Cummins broke into the squad in 2011.

"We wanted clarity for our batting unit before the team meeting," McDonald said.

Selector Tony Dodemaide informed Konstas about his inclusion during training at the MCG here on Thursday.

Dodemaide informing Konstas about his inclusion was a departure from protocol as traditionally it's the Australian skipper who confirms the playing XI on match eve.

"It's (breaking the news) something we don't usually do because haven't had too many moving parts, but we thought we'd get that out of the way so everyone knows that he's in the



team," said McDonald.

"He (Konstas) has been very similar to what I've seen on the outside within (the team) - composed, relaxed, knows his game. And what he's shown is an array of shots, the ability to put pressure back on to opponents and he gets his opportunity," he added.

Khawaja will get runs

McDonald also brushed aside

concerns over Usman Khawaja's form.

"I think Usman is not a concern. The way he is preparing runs will come. He knows his methods and any good player following methods will return among runs."

Head clear for coach but medical team nod needed

Head, one of the in-form batters in the series with two centuries, experienced "a small strain to the quad" during the last day of the third Test at the Gabba.

The 'player of the match' in the last two Tests faced only throw-downs from assistant coach Brad Hodge rather than his fast-bowling teammates at the nets on Tuesday.

"I thought he looked good with the bat in his hands so obviously the skills are in good order. It will just be what risk is associated with that," said McDonald.

"But no concerns from my end, he's been able to do his running so I think he'll be functional come game time."

The coach did not speculate on who could fill the spot in the

middle-order if Head fails to prove his fitness. The uncapped pair of Josh Inglis and Beau Webster are the stand-bys in the squad.

However, pacer Scott Boland has been all-but confirmed to replace Josh Hazlewood, who is nursing a calf strain.

McDonald said with temperatures expected to soar to over 40 degrees during the Boxing Day Test, the pitch could end up being more batter-friendly.

"This wicket might offer the batters a little bit more in terms of the surface as the game draws on. If we didn't pick Scotty (Boland) here - and I know I'm not allowed to declare the team because that's Pat's (Cummins) job tomorrow - but I don't think I'm coming to the ground Boxing Day if Scotty's not in the eleven."

"We've got great depth in our bowling, and (all-rounder) Mitch Marsh is fully fit and able to bowl. But he (Boland) is ready to go and he'll play a role in this Test match with the ball more so than the previous ones."