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REDEFINING **GLOBAL DANCE CULTURE WITH**

THE RHYTHM OF CHANGE





QUOTE OF THE DAY The pioneer The party gave a B-form to Theenmar Mallanna, organised a huge rally and ensured his victory by convincing all sections. Will anybody hope for the loss of a party contestant? It is not proper to organise a meeting and scold other castes. I would welcome Mallanna if he scolds me but it is not right for him to scold the community

· Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Minister

TG's GST revenue sees 17% growth in January

Telangana's commercial tax revenue has shown a steady increase, with GST collections registering a 17% growth in January compared to the same month last year. However, while VAT revenue from petrol sales rose by 9%, VAT collections from liquor sales saw a 7% decline, raising concerns within the Commercial Taxes department. For the first ten months of the 2024-25 financial year (April to January), the State recorded Rs 62,858.55 crore in total commercial tax revenue, including GST, VAT and ...

Modi takes 'urban naxal' jibe at Rahul

In a scathing attack on Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said some people are openly speaking the language of urban naxals and asserted that those who "declare a war" against the Indian State can neither understand the Constitution nor about the country's unity. He also took a dig at Arvind Kejriwal and AAP a day before the Delhi assembly polls, saying "some parties are like 'AAP-da' for the future of the youth". Modi asserted that while his ..

Gold continues record-breaking rally

Gold prices extended the rally for the fifth straight session and rose Rs 500 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 85 800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid robust demand from iewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 85,300 per 10 grams in the previous session. In this year, gold has surged Rs 6,410 or 8.07 per cent to Rs 85.800 per 10 grams from Rs 79,390 per 10 grams on January 1. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also ...

-PAGE: 8

Varun added to Indian ODI squad

In-form mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy has been included in the Indian ODI squad after his heroics in the just-concluded T20I series against England as the team management wants the KKR mystery spinner to "keep up the momentum". There is a fair chance that Chakravarthy might just replace one of the four specialist spinners in the Champions Trophy (CT) squad. It could be one among Kuldeep Yaday or Washington Sundar, who could be axed to accommodate Chakravarthy before the final.

Conduct nation-wide caste survey: TG

Telangana Assembly urges Centre, adopts resolution

PNS HYDERABAD

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Legislative Assembly has formally approved the Social, Economic, Educational, Employment, Political and Caste Survey-2024 (Comprehensive Household Survey), marking a significant step towards data-driven governance. The resolution was passed on February 16, 2024, following the Cabinet's decision on February 4, 2024.

The Congress government

has convened a special session

of the Assembly on

Wednesday and presented the

socio-economic Caste Survey

report. The day witnessed a

war of words between the

treasury benches and the

opposition. Countering BJP

MLA Payal Shankar's criti-

Assembly, Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy said that

Shankar is trying to create myths. The CM said that BJP leaders are

speaking based on KCR's compre-

hensive family survey. There are dis-

crepancies in population details. As

per KCR's comprehensive family sur-

vey, BCs are 51 per cent. However,

BĆs are 56 per cent of the general population as per the caste census

survey conducted by the Congress

He said that the population per-

cism of the caste census in the

The survey was intended to collect authentic data on social, economic, educational, employment and political aspects to formulate targeted welfare policies for Backward Classes (BCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other weaker sections.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, while presenting the report, stated that the survey would serve as the foundation for policy-making and resource allocation, ensuring social

scientifically. The CM asked BRS

MLAs to reveal details of the com-

The CM said that KCR, T.

Harish Rao, KTR and BJP MP DK

Aruna and many others didn't par-

ticipate in the survey. KCR and the

others didn't participate in the caste

survey due to the column that

sought details about land owner-

WILL GIVE 42% SEATS IN LB POLLS

prehensive family survey.

BCs' population share increased in caste: CM

justice and fair representation. He emphasized that the initiative

was inspired by Rahul Gandhi's vision of proportional resource distribution based on population demographics. "Today will be remembered as a red-letter day in the fight for social justice. The caste survey in Telangana will pave the way for similar exercises across India," he declared.

The government issued GO MS No: 18 on October 10, 2024, and con-

stituted a committee under the leadership of Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy on October 19, 2024, to oversee the execution of the survey. The Planning Department was designated as the nodal agency, and the methodology was developed after studying similar surveys conducted in Karnataka and Bihar. The survey schedules were finalized after consultations with civil society organizations, social scientists, intellectuals, and other stakeholders.

Congress betrayed BCs: KTR

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao slammed the Congress government for failing to introduce a Bill providing 42% reservations for Backward Classes (BCs), and accused it of deceiving the community with mere statements instead of taking legislative action. He criticised the Congress

for announcing without enacting legal provisions, stating, "A mere statement cannot be called historic." KTR expressed disappointment

that despite expectations from BC communities across the state, the Congress Government did not bring a Bill in the special legislative session. He said the government had only issued a statement without taking any concrete steps to implement the promised reservations in local body elections.

Recalling past events, KTR pointed out that during the BRS government's Comprehensive Household Survey, Revanth had



Congress Government now refuse to recognize the data collected in an open and transparent survey?" he asked. He said that the Samagra

Kutumba Survey, conducted by the BRS administration, had identified BCs as 51% of the population and that it rose to 61% when BC Muslims were included.

KTR accused the Congress Government of

US deports illegal Indian immigrants

Sending military transport aircraft carrying them to India

PNS NEW DELHI

A military transport aircraft of the US is bringing a group of Indian migrants, in the first such deportation to India as part of the big crackdown on illegal immigrants by President Donald Trump in his second term at the White House.

on the deportation flight carrying the Indians, a spokesperson at the and Honduras.

US embassy in New Delhi said Washington is tightening immigration laws and removing illegal

The US action comes in the midst of India and the US finalising vari-

ous elements of a likely visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington from February 12 to 13.

It is learnt a C-17 Globemaster aircraft of the US Air Force is bringing the Indians. However, there is no clarity on the number of people on board the plane and its specific destination.

A C-17 aircraft can carry up to 140 people. There is no official word from India yet on the US action.

declined to provide details of the deportation flight but said: "The United States is vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants." "These actions send a clear message Illegal migration is not worth the risk," the official added.

The Trump administration has so Without directly commenting far used military aircraft to deport illegal migrants to Guatemala, Peru

> India emerged as the According to estimates, farthest of the around 18,000 illegal destinations to send military airimmigrants from India craft to deport people by the have been identified by Trump adminis-American authorities tration.

Following his phone conversation with Prime Minister Modi on January 27, Trump said India "will

do what is right" on the deportation of illegal migrants from the US. According to estimates, around 18,000 illegal immigrants from

India have been identified by American authorities. Days after Trump came to power

for a second term. India indicated its willingness to work with Washington to address issues relat-The US embassy spokesperson ing to illegal immigration.

BJP removed Sanjay, not Congress: Sridhar

government, the CM said.

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu launched a sharp rebuttal against BJP MLA Payal Shankar in the Assembly, dismissing allegations that the Congress was against Backward Classes (BCs).

He reminded the BJP that it was not the Congress but their own party that had removed Bandi Sanjay Kumar from the state BJP President post and sacked Bandaru Dattatreya from the Union Cabinet despite him belonging to a weaker section. During Tuesday's Assembly ses-

sion, Payal Shankar had attacked the Congress government over the caste census, calling it politically driven. Sridhar countered these claims, asserting that the Congress had always championed the cause of BCs and weaker sections.

He said that history is 'proof that the Congress gave top priority to marginalised communities and challenged Continued on Page 2

Why haven't BJP-ruled states conducted caste census: Uttam

PNS HYDERABAD

ship, he added.

centage of BCs increased in the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

caste survey which was conducted said the Congress

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy asserted that the percentage of BC population in Telangana has increased and accused the BRS of spreading lies by 'misquoting' statistics. He condemned the opposition for misleading the public with fabricated figures and reaffirmed that the Congress Government had conducted the caste-based socio-economic survey with total transparency.

The survey, completed within a year under the guidance of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is aimed at ensuring the empowerment of Backward and marginalised communities.

Responding to CPI MLA K. Sambasiva Rao, he said the Congress Government undertook the massive survey to assess the socio-economic conditions of various communities scientifically.



He dismissed the Intensive Household Survey (IHS) conducted by the BRS Government in 2014, stating that its findings were never officially published. He pointed out that some opposition MLAs were quoting figures from the 2014 survey, but as an MLA at that time, he confirmed that the IHS was never recognised as an official document.

3 groups, get 15% quota

59 SC groups categorised into

Govt rejects creamy layer recommendation

CM terms it special day

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has taken a significant step towards categorising Scheduled Castes (SCs) following the recommendations of the one-member judicial commission headed by Dr Justice Shameem Akhtar. The report was placed in the Assembly by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Tuesday.

The report, submitted on February 3, provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic and educational status of SC sub-groups and recommends their classification into three categories to provide reservations.

The government approved the recommendations to classify 59 SC communities into three groups: Group-I (Most Backward SCs), Group-II (Moderately Benefited



groups: Group-I (Most Backward SCs), Group-II (Moderately Benefited SCs), and Group-III (Better Benefited SCs)

SCs), and Group-III (Better

The report suggests a preferential model for filling job vacancies and implementing reservations based on the identified levels of backwardness within SC groups. However, the government has rejected the recommendation to introduce a creamy layer exclusion within SC reserva-Continued on Page 2

Assembly Secy issues notice to 10 BRS MLAs who joined Congress

PNS HYDERABAD

In a major development, notices have been issued to the 10 MLAs who had defected from the BRS to the Congress, as per the Supreme Court's orders. The Assembly

Secretary formally served the notices, asking the legislators to submit a written explanation regarding their party switch.

The BRS had approached the Supreme Court, seeking the dis-

qualification of these MLAs as per claims of by-polls, Chief Minister the anti-defection law after the Revanth Reddy said that a by-poll may be held in Sircilla as KTR is er ordered action within four committing suicide.

months. However, with no progress on the matter, the BRS took the matter to the SC, pleading for the immediate disqualification of the 10 MLAs. The notices mark a critical step

in the legal battle over defections, with

Assembly Secretariat now obligated to process the responses before taking further action. W h e n

asked about

Stage is set for Delhi battle PNS NEW DELHI

The stage is set for the high-stakes Assembly elections in Delhi, with over 1.56 crore voters eligible to cast their ballots from 7 am onwards on Wednesday.

Voting will take place across 13,766 polling stations in all the 70 Assembly constituencies to decide the fates of 699 candidates in a contest that could reshape the political landscape of the capital. Led by Arvind Kejriwal, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is seeking a third straight term, banking on its gover-nance record and welfare schemes.

On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is making a determined push to reclaim the capital after more than 25 years.

gle seat in the previous two elections. Polling will begin at 7 am on Wednesday and continue until 6 pm The Congress, which ruled Delhi under tight security arrangements. for 15 years till 2013, is striving to stage The Election Commission has a comeback after failing to win a sin-

The Election Commission has deployed 220 companies of

AAP eyes third term; BJP, Cong look at resurgence



itary forces, 35,626 Delhi Police ing drone surveillance, have been personnel, and 19,000 home guards to ensure peaceful voting.

Nearly 3,000 polling booths have been identified as sensitive, and spedeployed 220 companies of paramil- cial security arrangements, includ-

made at some of these locations. According to Delhi Police, additional police forces will be deployed for the sensitive booths where Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) will also be

paramilitary forces, 35,626 Delhi Police personnel, and 19,000 home guards to ensure peaceful voting

ĥas introduced a Queue Management System (QMS) app, which will enable the voters to check crowd levels in real time. Additionally, 6,980 out of 7,553

stationed to maintain law and order.

made for senior citizens and per-

sons with disabilities, with 733

polling stations designated for their

In an effort to streamline the

process, the Election Commission

accessibility.

Special provisions have been

eligible voters under the home voting facility have already cast their ballots. The campaigning, which official-

ly ended at 6 pm on Monday, saw a high-voltage battle between the three main contenders.

The AAP focused on its governance model, with Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi leading rallies across the city.

Morality in politics needs more than disqualification!

hat qualities are needed in public representahis party till his tenure ends. tives? Is morality needed in politics? Can disqualification stop the unlawful methods used to POINT acquire the required numbers in legislatures? These are the questions exercising both electors and the principal players of the system in the context of the immoral practices that frequently occur

Defections by elected representatives who crisscross between parties have made a mockery of democracy at the national and State levels. A person who was elected to a legislature on the ticket of a particular party has to serve the public on behalf of the party which gave him/her an opportunity to contest. The elected person has to represent

in democracies.

Shifting loyalties to another party after getting elected on a particular party's ticket is considered an offensive act. The Representation of People's Act of 1952 does not permit this shifting of loyalty and those who engage in it will lose their membership in the

The issue grabbed attention as BRS Working President KT Rama Rao approached the SC seeking the disqualification of seven BRS legislators who defected to the Congress in Telangana. KTR took up the issue due to the absence of the party's president K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) due to a recent hip surgery.

The SC asked KTR to take up the request for disqualification of the seven BRS legisla-

The issue grabbed attention as BRS **Working President KT Rama Rao** approached the SC seeking the disqualification of seven BRS legislators who defected to the Congress in Telangana. KTR took up the issue due to the absence of the party's president K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) due to a recent hip surgery

tors by clubbing it with the issue of another three legislators. These 10 MLAs were elected to the TG Assembly on the BRS's car symbol in the 2023 elections. The BRS had to face defeat at the hands of the Congress which granted statehood for Telangana. After the BRS's defeat, the 10 MLAs decided to join the ruling Congress for the sake of 'devel-

oping' their constituencies.

Actually, what has to be considered by the court to judge legislators? Should it simply apply the law? Is there anything like morality in politics? It will be interesting to know the grounds on which the court decides the disqualifica-

Why is this issue being discussed by political observers and all political parties? The reason is that all parties engage



in power games occasionally. The principal political players in the Telugu states have a track record of luring legislators of other parties to defect by offering them Cabinet berths, licenses to expand their businesses and assuring protection for their assets etc.

defections, there are many examples to see how these kinds of things have been made easy to secure desired results. The BRS whose Working President happens to be the petitioner in the present case of seeking disqualification is the accused for the same offence during its decade-old rule. The then principal opposition Congress was stripped of that status by the BRS by decimating it through defections.

After the bifurcation of

United Andhra Pradesh, the BRS got a chance to rule Telangana. After the BRS secured a simple majority in the Assembly with 60 plus seats, the party opened its gates to the legislators of other

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) which introduced KCR to wipe it out and almost all TDP MLAs decided to join the BRS. KCR's former TDP colleagues even requested him to allow his parent party to exist instead of wiping it out.

During its second stint, the BRS crushed the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) by making it lose its principal opposition status. Interestingly, the current TG Deputy Chief Minister, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, was the then Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the TG Assembly. The BRS allowed the LoP, K Jana Reddy, to continue during its first stint (2014-2018). But it stripped the LoP status of Dalit leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka during its second stint (2018-2023). Probably due to this, the Congress is now merciless towards the to politics lost its existence in BRS. During its first stint, the defected a minister showing the ugly face of defections.

The roles of victims and perpetrators on the issue of defections seem to have changed. Naturally, all political parties that seek the people's mandate do whatever is necessary to disturb the opposition. It is considered to be a show of supremacy at that moment. When it becomes the opposition it will cry foul.

As a victim of defections, the BRS is seeking strong action against those who defected from its ranks. Strictly speaking, the BRS is now opposing defections which it had promoted during its rule. The court may not ask the BRS why it encouraged defections when it was in power. But the people would welcome the case's outcome if it promotes morality in politics.

CM declares Feb 4 as **TG Social Justice Day**

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced in the Assembly that February 4 holds immense significance for Telangana, as it marks a historic step towards SC categorisation.

He recalled that on February 4, 2024, the state Cabinet had approved the decision to implement SC categorisation, and now, exactly a year later, the Cabinet has approved the SC categorisation report, paving the way for a long-awaited resolution to a decades-old issue.

Revanth proposed that February 4 should be officially recognised as Telangana Social Justice Day, marking the day when a permanent solution to a complex and long-standing problem was achieved. He assured the House that the government would soon introduce a law to formalise SC categorisation, providing a permanent legal frame-

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao has away."

accused the Congress

Government of failing 8,000

Singh,

police officer Thakur

whose plight has

become symbolic

of the crisis affect-

ing pensioners

Sharing his concern, Harish

said, "It is heart-

breaking to see the agony of this police

officer. After serving the

across the state.

Narayan

Harish slams Cong govt for not paying

Paying tributes to those who lost their lives in the struggle for SC categorisation, the Chief Minister stated that their sac-

rifices would not go in vain,

hopes. He reassured the people that no one would have to sacrifice their life for this cause anymore, as the government had taken action to deliver jusand the Congress government tice to SC communities.

BRS declares as 'Social Injustice Day'

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has termed February 4 as 'Telangana Social Injustice Day', accusing the Congress govern-ment of manipulating caste census data and betraying Backward Classes (BCs) and

Scheduled Castes (SCs). Speaking at the Assembly media point, BRS MLA KP Vivekananda Goud and former minister Jagadish Reddy alleged that the government rushed through the proceedings and failed to address key concerns of the marginalised communities. Vivekananda accused the Congress of deliberately reducing BC population figures in the caste census and failing to provide legal validity to the survey. He called the entire process a fraud against BCs, stating that CM Revanth Reddy had effectively buried the Kamareddy BC Declaration. He questioned why the government did not provide any clarity on BC welfare measures and why it remained

silent on the BC Sub-Plan.

Modi extends condolences to KCR

Congress government, calling ees, leaving them in financial retired employees. He emphaand medical distress. He sised that this is not just one pointed to the case of retired officer's problem but a lifeand-death issue for 8,000 retired government employees across

Telangana. He demanded Chief Minister Revanth Reddy immediately clear the pending retirement benefits of

government employees. He also urged the govgovernment for over 30 years, ernment to ensure that EHS he is now struggling due to (Employee Health Scheme) severe health issues, including and police health security kidney failure and is unable to cards are made functional in hospitals, allowing retired access his retirement benefits. When he approached a hospiemployees to receive medical tal for treatment using the govtreatment without hurdles.

retirement benefits to 8,000 employees on mother's death ernment-provided health security card he was turned PNS ■ HYDERABAD Harish lashed out at the Prime Minister Modi conveved his condolences to BRS

Chandrasekhar Rao on the demise of his mother, Cheeti Sakalamma. In a letter addressed to KCR, Modi expressed deep sorrow stating that the loss left a void that can never be filled. The Prime Minister

described Sakalamma as a compassionate person whose kindness nurtured her family. He emphasised that the values she instilled would continue to inspire those she left behind. "She will forever be remembered with affection and respect by all who knew her," Modi wrote.

Recalling the deep impact of her presence, he said that the memories of the time spent with her would provide solace to the grieving

Satyavathi, Vivekananda appointed BRS Whips

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

chief Chandrasekhar Rao appointed MLC Satyavathi Rathod as the party's Whip in the Legislative Council, while KP Vivekananda Goud was named the Whip in the Assembly.

The official communica-

tion regarding these appointments was submitted to the Assembly Speaker by BRS legislators and Council members under the leadership of KT Rama Rao. The decision is seen as an attempt to strengthen coordination among BRS legislators and to streamline Assembly proTheenmar Mallanna's remarks flayed conduct a meeting and scold Reddy said.

Stating that the people would decide the fate of politicians, Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that the party gave a B-form to Theenmar Mallanna and organised a huge rally and ensured his victory convincing all sections. Would anybody want the defeat of party contestant? Venkat Reddy asked.

other castes. Venkat Reddy said that the Congress party took a great decision for the sake of the BCs.

Venkat Reddy said that

Theenmar Mallanna won on Congress party ticket and was making allegations against Congress leaders and the government. "I welcome Mallanna if he scolds me but it is not correct ofo him to

PNS HYDERABAD

body elections.

Declaring that all political

parties are trying to hoodwink

BCs during elections, BJP

MLA Payal Shankar said the

government is trying to avoid

implementing 42 per cent reservations for BCs in local

Participating in a debate on

caste census in the Assembly

on Tuesday, Shankar said that

Telangana has 3.32 crore vot-

ers as per government web-

Stating that there is a need for a booklet to write the assets of KCR, Harish Rao and KTR, Venkat Reddy said that only Kavitha participated in the caste census.

Venkat Reddy said that Jadcharla MLÁ Anirudh Reddy is not only close to him but also close to Uttam Kumar Reddy and Mallu Bhatti

MLAs question Anirudh's meetings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A wave of curiosity swept through the Telangana Assembly as MLAs spotted Anirudh Reddy and immediately began questioning him about the recent meetings.

Congress legislators, eager for clarity, raised concerns over discussions taking place outside the official forum and demanded a Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting to address internal issues.

Many MLAs said that they had received calls regarding the meeting and also produced call logs to confirm their claims. First-time legislators were particularly inquisitive, seeking to understand where and how their colleagues had gathered. The matter gained momentum

questioning the need for parallel discussions instead of addressing concerns within the CLP.

Some MLAs openly admitted that they had grievances but insisted that they would not attend informal gatherings at hotels. "We will discuss our concerns only at the CLP meeting," they asserted. Others highlighted a grow-

ing disconnect with in-charge ministers, indicating that the lack of coordination was becoming a pressing issue within the party.

During an informal chat, MLA Rajender Reddy weighed in on the matter, defending the right of party legislators to hold discussions? If Congress among its MLAs.

as more leaders joined in, MLAs sit with leaders from other parties, that would be a problem. But why should anyone object to our party MLAs meeting among themselves?" he asked

> He also revealed that he had received a call from Anirudh Reddy regarding the meeting but chose not to attend. His remarks added another layer to the ongoing debate within the party, as leaders continue to press for a structured discussion under the CLP framework.

With growing murmurs in the Assembly and mounting demands for an official CLP session, the Congress leadership faces fresh pressure to address internal coordination meet. "What is wrong if MLAs and communication gaps

sites. He said that of this 62,32,564 are studying in various classes between Class 1 and Intermediate. Around

38,99,000 are aged between one month and five years. However, the caste census

less by 90 lakh: BJP said that there are 3,34,87,545 people in the state. It means that the government is claiming that the population is less by 90 lakhs, particularly the population of BCs, he said.

How can the population of

BCs decline in the last 14 years?, he asked. Shankar said the government should not deceive BCs to hold elections in a hurry and added that the government should conduct local body elections after six

months if necessary. The BCs have been facing injustice always and even now

they are facing injustice. The caste census tried to do the same injustice to BCs, Shankar

Hyd girl's 19th library at NIMS for cancer patients

PNS HYDERABAD

Marking World Cancer Day, Hyderabad Commissioner CV Anand, along with NIMS Director Dr Beerappa, inaugurated a library at NIMS Hospital set up by Akarshana Satish, a student of Hyderabad Public School.

Speaking at the programme, Anand highlighted the declining habit of reading books and newspapers, noting that many people now spend their free time on smartphones instead. However, he praised Akarshana Satish, an 8th-grade



student, for setting an inspiring example by establishing libraries in hospitals to encourage reading among patients and visitors. He urged people to donate books to support her initiative.

Govt must clarify on increasing quota for BCs in local polls: Kavitha

Govt showing population of BCs

PNS HYDERABAD

The government should provide clarity on increasing reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) in local body elections, BRS MLC Kavitha said.

Speaking in the Legislative Council on Tuesday during a discussion on the caste census, she questioned the government's approach and its lack of concrete steps for implementing reservations.

Kavitha pointed out that people had expected the government to announce its next course of action regarding the caste census. However, she criticised cabinet sub-committee chairman Uttam

Kumar Reddy for merely reiterating in the Council what he had stated in a recent press meet. She questioned the relevance of such statements without any concrete policy direction.

Referring to the Congress's pre-election promise, Kavitha demanded that the government should clarify whether elections would be held only after increasing reservations for BCs. She said that the government was attempting to differentiate between BCs and BC Muslims in population data, leading to doubts about intentional underreporting of the numbers of certain com-

TODAY **ALMANAC** Sukla Paksha Feb 05 02:31 AM to Feb 06 12:35 AM Ashtami Navami: Feb 06 12:35 AM to Feb 06 10:53 PM Nakshatram: to Feb 05 08:33 PM Krithika Feb 05 08:33 PM to Feb 06 07:29 PM Rahukalam 12:30 PM to 1:55 PM 08:15 AM to 09:40 AM Yamagandam: 08:01 AM to 09:33 AM Varjyam: 11:05 AM to 12:30 PM Amritakalam: 04:00 PM to 05:31 PM Abhiiit Muhurtham: NIL

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Updated: February 4, 2025 5:00 PM

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 34°°

Humidity: 39%

Sunrise: 6:46 AM

Sunset: 6:13 PM

'Conduct nation ...

Continued from page 1

The survey process was extensive, covering 1,12,15,134 households across 94,261 enumeration blocks, with 1,03,889 enumerators and supervisors deployed for data collection.

The house-listing phase took place from November 6 to 8, 2024, while the actual survey was conducted from November 9 to December 25, 2024, spanning 50 days. The survey achieved a 96.9% completion rate,

with 3,56,323 households, primarily in GHMC and other urban areas, remaining not surveyed due to various reasons. The final population count recorded through the survey stood at 3,54,77,554 individuals. Among them, SCs comprised 17.43% (61,84,319 people), STs 10.45% (37,05,929 people), and BCs

(excluding Muslims) formed the largest share at 46.25% (1,64,09,179 people). The Muslim population was recorded at 12.56% (44,57,012 people), with BCs among Muslims accounting for 10.08% (35,76,588 people). The Other Category (OCs), including Muslim and non-Muslim communities, made up

In addition to adopting the survey report, the Telangana Assembly passed a resolution urging the Centre to conduct a nationwide caste census.

15.79% (56,01,539 people).

59 SC groups ...

Continued from page 1 The Telangana Government has

approved the categorisation of 59 Scheduled Caste (SC) communities into three groups based on their level of backwardness.

Group-I includes 15 communities classified as the most socially, economically and educationally backward, with a population share of 3.288%, and a recommended reservation percentage of 1%. Group-II consists of 18 communities that have received moderate benefits, making up 62.748% of the SC population, with a 9% reservation allocation.

Group-III comprises 26 communities that have gained better access to opportunities, constituting 33.963% of the SC population, with a 5% reservation share.

The commission also suggested a preferential model for filling job vacancies to ensure balanced representation. If vacancies remain unfilled in Group-I, they will be offered to Group-II candidates

before being allocated to Group-III. Similarly, any remaining vacancies in Group-II will be transferred to Group-III. If no suitable candidates are available within a group, the vacancies will be carried forward for the next recruitment cycle.

Justice Shameem Akhtar's report proposes a new roster system for SC reservations, ensuring fair representation across all subgroups. Additionally, the committee recommended that vacant posts should be carried forward within the respective categories before being filled by candidates from the next group in the hier-

The Telangana Government has assured that legislative measures will be taken in alignment with the Supreme Court's directives on SC categorisation.

With this decision, Telangana becomes the first state to take proactive steps following the Punjab Vs. Davinder Singh Supreme Court judgment, setting a precedent for structured SC categorisation.

BJP removed ...

Continued from page 1

the BJP to present its record of empowering BCs. Sridhar emphasised that the caste census was being conducted under the guidance of Rahul Gandhi, aligning with his vision for social justice and equitable represen-

"This survey is being carried out with the sole objective of helping BCs, ensuring that they got their rightful share of opportunities," he said. He also took a dig at the BJP's leadership structure, pointing out that the party has a 'history of sidelining' BC leaders. "Unlike your party leaders, we do not have a problem when a BC leader rises to power. We welcome it," he remarked.

Addressing Shankar directly, he said, "As a BC leader, I sincerely hope that you will rise in politics. But instead of opposing a good initiative like the caste survey, you should be supporting it." He urged the BJP to wake up to reality and recognise that the Congress has always been on the side of BCs, warning that misleading narratives would not be able to fool the people.

BCs' population ...

Continued from page 1

will provide 42 per cent reservations for BC in local body elections.

He assured the Congress will give 42 per cent seats to BCs in case it is not possible to amend the Constitution to provide 42 per cent reservations to BCs in local body elections.

Replying to the debate on the caste census on Tuesday, the CM said it is the Congress Government's commitment and asked the BRS and the BJP to reveal whether they will give quotas in the same manner or not.

Congress betrayed ...

Continued from page 1

manipulating statistics, questioning how the BC population had suddenly dropped from 51% to 46% in the current survey. He also alleged that a Congress MLC had called for burning the current official survey report, raising concerns over data transparency.

Highlighting growing dissatisfaction among BC organizations across Telangana, KTR said that the government must be held accountable for misleading the public. He said the Congress had not only failed to provide reservations for BCs but had also failed regarding its promise to create a BC Sub-Plan, which was expected to help the community.

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Speaking And Ouizzing **Programme**

By Ipshita Mahapatra Venue

Ravindra Bharathi February 5, (9 am to 5 pm)

Cultural programmes

by Pavani & Team

Ravindra Bharathi February 5, (6 pm)

Workshop

TED-Ed community Venue

Lamakaan February 5, (10:30 am)

Stage Coach

English Movie with English subtitles

Venue Lamakaan February 5 (7 pm)

Live Musical Orchestra

By Spandana Arts Creations

Sri Thyagaraja Gana February 5, (4:30 pm)

Poll schedule for GHMC standing panel announced

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has announced the selection of 15 members to the Standing Committee for the year 2025. The election notice was issued by the GHMC Commissioner on February 1, calling upon the 146 ward members of the Corporation to participate in the electoral process.

According to the election programme, the nomination process will commence on February 10, and conclude on February 17. The candidates are asked to submit their nominations between 11am and 3 pm on these days, excluding February 16 (Sunday). The nominations must be filed at the office of the Secretary, GHMC, located on the first floor of the Head Office, Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad.

The scrutiny of nominations will take place on February 18, starting at 11am. The final list of valid nominations will be published on the same day. Candidates will have the opportunity to withdraw their nominations until 3pm on February 21, after which the list of contesting candidates will be

released. The polling is scheduled for February 25, from 10 am to 3 pm at the Office of the Commissioner, GHMC (HO), Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad. The counting of votes will commence after 3 pm on the same day, with the declaration of results expected upon completion of the counting process.

City Pioneer



7,142

applications

received at

Prajavani

A total of 7,142 grievance

applications were submitted during Prajavani on Tuesday at Mahatma Jyotiba

Officials reported that a

Housing

majority of applications,

4,860, were for the

Scheme. Other submissions

included 1,861 applications

(ration cards) related to

Civil Supplies department, 175 for the Panchayati Raj

and Rural Development

department, 135 for the

Electricity department, 46

for revenue-related issues,

and one for Pravasi

Prajavani and 64 for various

other departments.
State Planning Comm ission Vice-President Dr G

Chinna Reddy and Public

Administration Special

Officer D Divya participat-

ed in the programme and received applications.

PNS HYDERABAD

Phule Praja Bhavan.

Indiramma

, HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2025

efforts to recover pending dues.

the revenue boost, with VAT col-

lections rising to Rs 1,452.24

crore, an increase of Rs 119.62

crore (9%). However, liquor VAT

revenue dropped from Rs 1,330 crore to Rs 1,236 crore, reflecting

Officials expressed concern

over the shortfall in liquor VAT

revenue, which has seen a down-

ward trend instead of the expect-

revenue showed moderate

improvement, it fell short of

expectations. The Commercial

Taxes department had anticipat-

ed an 18% growth in fuel and liquor VAT, but the actual num-

While petrol and diesel VAT

a Rs 94 crore (7%) decline.

ed growth.

Petrol sales also contributed to

Awareness walk held on World Cancer Day at NIMS

PNS HYDERABAD

World Cancer Day was observed at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS)

To mark World Cancer Day, NIMS organised an awareness walk aimed at promoting sed an awareness walk aimed at promoting early detection, prevention and treatment of cancer. The event, inaugurated by Dr Beerappa (Director, NIMS), Dr Liza Rajshekar (Dean), Dr Satyanarayana (Medical Superintendent), and Dr Shantiveer (Executive Registrar), saw participation from over 400 individuals across various departments. Participants created awareness departments. Participants created awareness posters, with the best ones receiving awards.

Dr Beerappa assured that NIMS would continue providing comprehensive cancer care, including prevention, screening, treatment and palliative care free of cost under State health schemes.

The Department of Medical Oncology at NIMS has set up a Population-Based Cancer Registry (PBCR) for the Hyderabad area under the NCRP. The Crude Cancer Incidence Rate (CIR) per lakh population per year was 84.2 in males and 109.8 in females, with breast cancer being the most common among women and mouth cancer leading in men. Hyderabad also recorded the highest incidence of breast cancer in the country.

A significant portion of cancer cases were linked to tobacco use, affecting 42.21 per cent of men and 13.51 per cent of women. Pediatric cancers also showed a concerning trend, with Hyderabad reporting the highest proportion of childhood cancers among all southern PBCRs under the NCRP.

Dr Sadashivudu Gundeti, Professor and HOD of Medical Oncology, emphasised the importance of cancer registries and highlighted Hyderabad's cancer statistics.

LIQUOR SALES DECLINE BY 7%

TG's GST revenue sees 17% growth in January

Telangana's commercial tax revenue has shown a steady increase, with GST collections registering a 17% growth in January compared to the same month last year. However, while VAT revenue from petrol sales rose by 9%, VAT collections from liquor sales saw a 7% decline, raising concerns within the Commercial Taxes

For the first ten months of the 2024-25 financial year (April to January), the State recorded Rs 62,858.55 crore in total commercial tax revenue, including GST, VAT and professional tax. This marks an average growth of 9% compared to the Rs 57,727.54 crore collected during the same period in the previous fiscal year.

GST collections alone accounted for Rs 35,432 crore in the past ten months, reflecting an 11% increase over the Rs 32,044.87 crore collected in the previous year. VAT revenue from petrol, diesel, and liquor sales, com-

Kidney racket: Two donors,



bined with professional tax, amounted to Rs 27,425.84 crore.

Despite the overall increase, VAT collections fluctuated in recent months, with three months recording only 1% growth and two months seeing increases of just 3-4%. Officials noted that while the revenue growth is steady, it has not met government expectations. To meet the year-

end target of Rs 85,118 crore, the State still needs to generate Rs 22,000 crore in revenue by March.

In January 2025, GST collections rose significantly compared to December 2024, with total revenue reaching Rs 3,921.68 crore - an increase of Rs 569.80 crore (17%). Officials attributed this growth to stricter monitoring of traders, better enforcement of

Man arrested

for bomb threat

at Secretariat

A man from Langar Houz

was arrested on Tuesday for

allegedly making bomb

threats to the Telangana

According to the Police, the individual repeatedly

called the Secretariat, claim-

ing that a bomb had been

planted on the premises and

Tuesday, Secretariat author-

ities immediately alerted the

Telangana Special Police Force (SPF). The City

Security Wing (CSW) and Anti-Sabotage Teams con-

Using the phone number

admitted to making the

threats out of frustration over

the government's lack of

response to his plea regard-

ing a religious site.

PNS HYDERABAD

would explode soon. Following one such call on

PNS HYDERABAD

Secretariat.

bers have failed to reach that benchmark. Commercial Commissioner Rizvi has initiated a detailed review to analyze the reasons behind the VAT decline. particularly in liquor and fuel

One-day training programme for MLC poll personnel

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sudharshan Reddy announced that a one-day training programme for District-Level Master Trainers (DLMTs) was conducted on Tuesday in preparation for the upcoming MLC elections. The training aimed to equip polling personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills for

smooth election conduct. The Election Commission



Chief Electoral Officer C

of India has issued a notification for biennial elections to the Telangana Legislative

Council for the Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar Graduates Constituency and the Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar & Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Teachers Constituencies.

RDO and State-Level Master Trainer (SLMT) M Jayachandra Reddy led the training session. Two DLMTs from each district participated, representing 23 districts across Telangana.

one recipient discharged **DEEPIKA PASHAM** travel to their hometown; deepikapasham2015@gmail.com However, they were made to

HYDERABAD

The latest development in the case of the major kidney transplantation racket operated from Alakananda Hospital in Saroor Nagar is that two donors and one recipient have been discharged from Gandhi Hospital on February 3 after health officials issued orders that had initially kept the discharge process on hold.

According to sources at Gandhi Hospital, the donors -Nasreen Banu Elivash (22, Tamil Nadu) and Firdosh S (40, Tamil Nadu) - were in two days after the kidney racket was busted on January 21. Later, BS Raia Shekar (68, Karnataka), the recipient, was considered for discharge after their families requested to

wait for nearly two weeks before being discharged. 'We had orders from the

Director of Medical Education to keep the discharge on hold, and we believe this is due to the legal cases related to the kidney racket," said Gandhi Hospital sources. "The donors and recipients were kept in the dedicated ICU of the Nephrology department, as transplant patients are typically placed there because of the risk of infections from other patients. Since the donors were in good health, the recipients - who were left immediately

- needed additional assistance." One recipient, Krupala tha, who was also admitted to Gandhi Hospital, sought better treatment and was shifted to NIMS Hospital. However,

when The Pioneer reached out to officials at NIMS, they did not confirm if the patient had been admitted but did indicate that she would be However there is no clarifi-

cation if the four have left Hyderabad city already. When asked about the hold on discharges, the Director of

Medical Education did not provide any comment. The Rachakonda Police, who are investigating the illegal kidney racket at Alakananda Hospital, stated

that, until now, the donors and

recipients have not been added to the case. and after obtaining legal opinions if needed, they may be remanded; however, for now, they have not been charged

ducted a thorough search of firming there was no bomb. and location, the police tracked down the suspect in due to the surgeries they Langar Houz and took him into custody. During interrogation, the man reportedly

Youtuber Masthan Sai case: Another complaint filed On Tuesday, Complainant case was registered at Narsingi

PNS HYDERABAD

In the Youtuber Masthan case, the complainant has filed a fresh complaint on Tuesday.

The case saw the arrest of YouTuber Masthan Sai in connection with an alleged largescale cybercrime and sexual exploitation case involving illegally recorded private videos and hacked personal data of multiple women, including

against Shekhar Basha in Narsingi police station. She alleged that Mastan Sai and Shekhar Basha were trying to frame her in a drugs case.

As evidence, Lavanya submitted an audio recording to the police, claiming that they attempted to trap her by planting 140 grams of drugs in her

It is already known that a

Lavanya's previous complaint against Mastan Sai. She had alleged that he supplied drugs to young and married women, exploited them sexually and recorded their videos. Mastan Sai has a history of involvement in drug cases in

Lavanya remains an accused in two drugs-related cases, and the investigation is on.

Hyderabad and Vijayawada.

Odisha tourism dept promotes eco-tourism at Hyd Roadshow

PNS HYDERABAD

Odisha Tourism department strengthened its Regional Outreach Strategy promoting eco-tourism at the Hyderabad Roadshow. Organised in association with FICCI, the event saw over 40 travel operators

and tourism stakeholders engage in B2B interactions at Taj Krishna on Tuesday. Odisha is actively promoting its

tourism sector within domestic markets by showcasing its cultural heritage, waterfalls, wildlife,

circuits. This effort is further enhanced by the Eco Retreat Odisha, a three-month glamping festival that has gained recognition. Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha, Pravati Parida emphasized Odisha's growing impor-

tance on India's tourism map.

She highlighted the state's

commitment to driving invest-

Three offenders held, Rs 28.62 lakh seized

ment and creating opportunities for businesses.

Meanwhile, Commissionercum-Secretary Tourism Balwant Singh discussed Tourism Odisha's extensive tourism potential, focusing on its strong road network and



Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha Pravati Parida addressing the Odisha Hyderabad Roadshow on Tuesday

cuisine, hills and Buddhist efforts to attract domestic and

international travelers. The event included Q&A sessions with stakeholders, discussing Odisha's inclusion in Tourism Plazas and the promotion of wellness tourism. Odisha Tourism also held B2G meetings with over 12 potential investors to explore tourism infrastructure devel-

Carpenter

PNS HYDERABAD

Karkhana Police crime team arrested a suspect in a major theft case and recovered stolen property worth approximate-Rs 35 lakh. The accused, identified as Aadesh Guptha, was apprehended in connection with it.

Aadesh Guptha had been working as a carpenter at the residence of P Sundaram, son of late P Satyanarayana, in Gunrock Enclave. During his employment, he discovered the keys to an almirah inside the house. Seizing an opportunity when the house was unoccupied, Guptha used the keys to unlock the almirah and stole gold ornaments along with a significant amount of cash.

Health platform launched for sports care

Advanced data-driven musculoskeletal health platform was launched for preventive

spine and sports care. The platform was announced by nSure Healthy Spine in partnership with Nordic Health, Finland. State-of-the-art biomechanically optimised exercise therapy devices for spine, shoulder, hip and knee health will be incorporated at India's first Centre for Spine and Sports Health (CSSH) at Kotak Pullela Gopichand Badminton

As part of this collaboration, nSure Healthy Spine hosted

Nordic Health, Finland's technology inventors, Arno Parviainen and Sirkka Parviainen, at CSSH,

Hyderabad. Their visit focused on integrating advanced assessments and targeted muscle-strengthening programmes to prevent injuries and enhance musculoskeletal health.

An expert in rehabilitation technology, Arno stated that this technology will be a gamechanger for spine and sports health in India. Meanwhile, Sirkka emphasized its role in preventive care, helping individuals improve strength and movement.



Students design, build, test their own rockets

SAMUEL JOSHUA

samuelmjoshuamjmc@gmail.com ■ HYDEŘABAD

Teenage students design, build and test their own rockets and aircraft at the Hyderabad-based SpaceGen Aviation in Begumpet. When asked, the founder of

SpaceGen Aviation Pvt Ltd, who was also in civil aviation, Captain Vego, said that this initiative helps students transform education from grades 6 to 12 by bridging the gap between academia and industry in aviation and rocketry. He noted that students go beyond textbooks and engage in hands-on

learning by designing their own rockets and aircraft, including single-stage and multi-stage rockets, right from their school grounds, enabling them to turn their ideas into reality. He also noted that they have trained 400-500 commercial pilots who completed the 12th grade.

Captain Vego mentioned that they are in collaboration with the Aeronautical Society of India, the Paramotor and Paragliding Association and that they have their own runway for testing and practical training. He added that trained students will receive aviation experience certificates.



Teenage students experiencing the flight simulator of the SpaceGen Aviation

Captain Vego stated that while many school children are exposed to AI, ML, and various games, they exclusively provide a flight simulator expe-

taxi, take off and land aircraft just like real pilots. They also gain exposure to aircraft engines, electrical and jet-fuelbased propulsion systems. He mentioned that students go on

officials from international airports, the Air Force and space agencies. He highlighted that members of the aviation club visited NASA, Smithsonian Museums and even flown real light-weight aircrafts in Dubai. He also said that teenage students have designed commer-

field trips and interact with

allow for joint sealing without the need for gaskets and noted that they have their own manufacturing plant. Meanwhile, Prasanth from

cial aircraft wing flanges, which

the aviation club mentioned that course fees start at just Rs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD February 1. According to the Police, the Mahankali Police arrested three arrested individuals were identified as Muralidar Mohanlal Sharma from Maharashtra.

offenders involved in a shutterlifting theft at Deep Engineering Company, Kandjarguda, Old Bhoiguda, Secunderabad. The accused forcibly lifted the

Chandrabhan Patel from Uttar Pradesh and Udayraj Singh from Uttar Pradesh, Police also shutter and stole Rs 30.20 lakh seized Rs 28.62 lakh in cash from a locker in the intervening and four mobile phones from night of January 31 and them. Two police teams, led by

SHO K Parashuram and Deputy Inspector YK Prasad, tracked the accused through CCTV footage and mobile records. The suspects were caught at Sitara Lodge, Secunderabad. During interrogation, they said they turned to crime after suffering financial losses in their textile business during the

arrested for theft in Karkhana

In a swift operation, the

rience, where students can



HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Five fruit vendors arrested on charge of murder

PNS ■ NARAYANPET

A group of fruit vendors allegedly lynched a youth for stealing fruit here on Monday morning. The incident came to light after the police arrested vendors on Tuesday.

According to police, a fruit vendor had noticed that fruits were being stolen daily. On Monday, he kept a watch and caught a youth, named Vikram Singh, who hailed from Rajasthan, while he was allegedly stealing a fruit. Vikram Singh used to do tile laying

After catching Vikram Singh, fruit vendor Gopi and his friends allegedly beat him with iron rods and plastic pipes. Gopi and his friends took Vikram Singh to the hospital after he lost consciousness to hospital where the doctors declared him dead. The fruit vendors reportedly fled the

Following a complaint by Vikram Singh's relatives, the police arrested five individuals in connection with the murder, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Lingayya

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Hyderabad Disaster Response

and Assets Monitoring and

officials carried out demolition

operations at Shamshabad in

Rangareddy district follow-

ing complaints of illegal

encroachments in two loca-

According to reports, a

complaint was lodged with

HYDRAA regarding the occu-

pation of a 998-yard park in

Southern Paradise (Sri

Now, police on lookout for **Maoist leaders from TG**

Though the Communist Party of India-Maoist is a shell of its former self, leaders from Telangana have so far been able to evade the police net

PNS WARANGAL

The People's War Group (PWG), which was once strong in the northern Telangana region, merged with the Communist Party of India- Maoist primarily operating in areas of Chhattisgarh. Now, the Communist Party of India-Maoists is a shell of its former self.

By the time the COVID-19 crisis ended, the Telangana State Committee used to conduct activities in all districts in north Telangana. The total number of active Maoists, working in various capacities under these committees, is said to be in the range of several hundred according to police records.

The police are now concentrating on tracing the Maoist leaders from Telangana. Most of them, according to sources, are still

Maoists from Telangana would often work in committees of other states, while the party cadre from other states would join the



For representation purpose only

Telangana committees. In January of last year, the anti-Maoist operation "Kagar" led to encounters in Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. So far, more than 300 Maoists have died in various encounters, including members from Area Committees to Central

Committee. On the border areas of Chhattisgarh-Telangana, an encounter on January 16t killed over 12 Maoists. Just a few days later, a similar encounter in Gariaband district in January 2024 claimed the life of central committee member Ramachandra Reddy alias Chalapathi.

After these encounters which claimed the lives of several Maoist

leaders, including those from Telangana, the police are making inquiries whether the party has its base in the State and the total number of active cadre in the State. In September 2024, there was an encounter in the Bhadradri Kothagudem district, which eliminated the Palwancha-Manuguru Area Committee. Similar incidents in December 2024 in Mulugu district, and earlier in March 2024 in Gadchiroli district weakened the Narsampet-Illandu, Aeturunagaram-Mahadevpur, Indravelli, and Mangi Area Committees. The police have intensified their intelligence-gathering efforts for accurate and timely updates.

In the face of these frequent encounters, key leaders such as Koayada Sambayya alias Azad, Venkatesh and Mailarapu Dellu alias Bhaskar have managed to

Recently, a letter released by the Maoists confirmed that Telangana State Committee Secretary



PNS NALGONDA

District Collector Ila Tripathi emphasised that self-help group (SHG) women should become national-level entrepreneurs. She assured them that all government departments in the district would provide the necessary support for marketing the products made by

women's groups.

On Tuesday, she inaugurated the "Mini Saras Fair 2025", organised by the District Rural Development Agency, showcasing handloom, handicraft, and food products made by rural SHG women. Later, speaking at the Rural Development Officer Shekhar, she expressed happiness over organising Saras Fair for the first time in Nalgonda for the united Nalgonda district's women's

She suggested that products made by women's groups should also be marketed through social media and online platforms like Amazon. She cited examples of



many small-scale enterprises that later grew into large corporate companies through quality and marketing strategies.

The Collector also visited the stalls, inquired about the products, made purchases, and encouraged the representatives of women's

Speaking at the event, PW Johnson, Director of the Society for

Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) praised Nalgonda district's rural women's groups for leading in development.

The event was attended by G Koteswara Rao, Deputy Director of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; District Forest Officer Rajasekhar, District Women and Child Welfare Officer Krishna

TG village bans liquor, Rs 60k fine on violators

PNS KAMAREDDY

In the backdrop of new research in the US which indicates that not less than 5.4 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in the United States are attributed to alcohol consumption, people in a village in Telangana girded up their loins to drive out alcohol from their villages. The elders in the village have driven home the message against alcohol as it has been ruining the lives of people

and crippling families.

The people of Pothaipalle village under Lingampet mandal in Kamareddy district, have taken a sensational decision. The villagers have unanimously decided to ban alcohol in their village. They declared a war on belt shops in the village, which have made the youth and farmers addicted to alcohol, leading to financial losses and families falling into hardship.

Taking this into account, the village development committee members announced the imposition of an alcohol ban, which came into effect on February 1.

They also stated that anyone selling alcohol in the village after February 1 would be fined Rs 60,000. Not only that, the village development committee has also announced a reward of Rs 10,000 to anyone who informs the commission about selling alcohol in



The alcohol ban is not limited to their village alone; even people from neighbouring villages who consume alcohol in Pothaipalle and its sur-rounding areas would also be fined Rs

While this resolution sounds good, it is to be seen whether it can be implemented. In the past, there have been similar alcohol ban resolutions in several villages. Initially, the villagers take it seriously, and no one dares to touch alcohol.

But after a few days, the people slow-start going back to their old ways. If they can't sell alcohol in the village, they take precautions, but when it comes to drinking, how can anyone

Farmers elated over rise in turmeric prices

Farmers are expressing satisfaction with the turmeric prices in the Nizamabad market as they begin bringing in their new crop. On Monday alone, 8,000 quintals of turmeric were brought to the market, following 3,000 quintals the previous week.

Turmeric prices have reached a high of Rs 12,888 per quintal, while the lowest price is around Rs 10,000 per quintal. On average, the turmeric is fetching a support price of Rs 11,000 to Rs 12,000 per quintal, which officials consider a significant relief for farmers. The moisture content of the turmeric ranges from 15 to 30 per cent, higher than the prescribed 12 per cent.

Officials suggest that if farmers improve the quality of their turmeric, the support price could increase further. The implementation of e-NAM (electronic National Agriculture Market) rules ensures that traders must submit their prices online, preventing the formation

of price syndicates. Previously, syndicated traders often quoted Rs 8,000 per quintal, even when the market value was igher, causing losses to farmers.

The process now involves inspecting the turmeric's quality and moisture content before setting the minimum support price, which is then quoted online. If traders offer less than the set price, the portal will reject the bid. On Monday, the official price range was set between Rs 9,000 and Rs 10,000 per quintal, but traders quoted higher prices in some

Gurajala Kanna Reddy, a farmer from Mortad mandal, shared that he cultivated turmeric on four acres, investing Rs 80,000 per acre.

He harvested two varieties of turmeric-one yielding 25 quintals and the other 10 quintals

The first variety sold for Rs 12,888 per quintal, while the second fetched Rs 10,500 per quintal. He expressed great relief and satisfaction with the support prices for his crops.

Women SI, bank employee die in accident

PNS JAGITIAL

A tragic accident occurred on Tuesday morning in Jagtial district, a woman subinspector and a bank employee died. Sub-Shwetha (30) was returning to Jagtial from her native village Arnakonda when the

collision took place. Around 8:30 a.m., on the outskirts of Chilvakodur village under the Gollapalli

police limits, Shwetha's car crashed into mortem, and an investigation is undera motorcycle before hitting a roadside

in the District Crime Bureau Record (DCRB) in Jagtial, died on the spot. The motorcyclist, 26-year-old Naresh,

tree. Shwetha worked

a bank employee Mancherial district, also succumbed to his injuries at the The bodies have

been sent to the Government Headquarters Hospital in Jagtial for post-



HYDRAA launches demolition

driver in Shamshabad

Sampathnagar).

Additionally, another com-

plaint was received about a

fence being built, encroaching

Town-2 Colony, Ootpally vil-

firmed the encroachments,

HYDRAA officials took action

on Monday, demolishing the

fencing around the park and

a rake shed. The illegally con-

structed fence obstructing the

road was also removed as part

of the operation.

After an investigation con-

lage, Shamshabad mandal.

Nagarkurnool Collector Badavath Santosh interacting with children in a

Teachers asked to encourage students to attend classes regularly

PNS NAGARKURNOOL

District Collector Badavath Sanotsh visited the mandal Parishad Primary School in BK Lakshmapur village under the Amrabad mandal in Nagarkurnool district. The Collector examined the students' academic abilities. He questioned the teachers about the total number of students in the school and how many students attend school regularly. He instructed the teachers to ensure that quality meals are provided to the students every day according to the government's menu.

During the visit, the t Collector emphasised that teachers should take steps to increase student attendance

and ensure that all students attend school. He asked teachers to speak with students' parents to motivate them to send their children to school regularly. He also advised the teachers to focus on the development of basic skills of children, including language proficiency, for all

The Collector inspected the school's kitchen and store room, ensuring that students receive quality meals as per the menu.

The Collector suggested that teachers should clear students' doubts regularly and work towards the overall development of the students. He encouraged students to follow the teachers' advice and study well.

MP stresses importance of cancer awareness programme

PNS HANUMAKONDA

On the occasion of World Cancer Day, an awareness programme on cancer was organised by the Pratima Foundation, with actress Gautami attending as a special guest alongside Warangal Lok Sabha member Kadiyam Kavya.

The event began with a walk from Hanumakonda Public Garden to Kalpana Kala Kshetram, which was flagged off by MP Kadiyam Kavya.

Later, the MP stressed the importance

of cancer awareness. She emphasised the ments and medicines. She advised peoneed for everyone to be aware of cancer. She mentioned that organising cancer awareness programmes at the grassroots and detecting cancer in the early stages

would help in its prevention.
She also highlighted that the only way to protect oneself from the deadly disease is by taking precautions to avoid it. She stated that access to cancer treatment in government hospitals would be very beneficial for the poor and middle class. She urged both the Central and State governments to provide affordable cancer treat-

ple to stay away from alcohol, smoking, junk food, and other harmful substances. She also assured cancer patients that they need not fear, as with courage, cancer can be defeated. The MP praised the Pratima Foundation for organising the first-ever cancer screening camps in Warangal district.

The event was attended by Dr Harini, Founder of Pratima Foundation, Dr. Ramesh, Chairman of Pratima Institute, and Directors Dr. Prateek, Dr. Rahul, Dr. Avinash, and other medical profes



POCSO Act invoked against hostel warden

PNS KHAMMAM

A Deputy Warden of the Rellakoyalapalli Tribal Boys' Ashram School in the Karepalli mandal was on Tuesday booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Harassment Act.

The police arrested Deputy Warden, identified as Bhukya Venkateshwarlu, based on the

complaints filed by students. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) placed the

The school headmaster too inquired into the matter and recommended strong against the deputy warden.

He was transferred to Relakayalapally from Konijerla in Wyra mandal six months

Sangareddy Branch डियन के 🐔 Indian Bank Sangareddy APPENDIX IV (Rule 8(1))

POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)

Where as The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and is sercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Intere Enforcement Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated **95.11.2024** Calling upon the borrower 1)Mis Arhidhi Bricks (Proprietor Firm), (2)Mr Malagalla Swami Raju Sib M Malasha Proprietor), (3)Mrs. Malagalla Vijayakami Wło M Maliasham (Mortgagor & Guasantor), (4)M Aalagalla Maliasham Sło M Bhikshapathi (Guarantor), (5)Mrs. Malagalla Kistamma Wło N Bhikshapathi (Guarantor), (6)Mr. Baki Chandra Bhanu Sio Baki Rajaishi (Guarantor), with ou Bangareddy Branch to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 9,36,260f-(Rs. Nin aikh Thirty Six thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Only) as on D4/11/2024 with further interest an

cost within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is he reby given to the borrower and the ublic in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property describe erein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13 (4) of the said Act rea

with rule 6 and 9 of the said rules on this **1st day of Febraury of the year 2025.** The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the proper and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount o Rs. 9.36,260- (Rs. Nine Lakh Thirty Six thousand Two Hundred and Stoty Only) as on 04/11/202 and further interest, cost and charges thereon.

We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules fram there under which deals with your rights of redemption over the securities." DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY: The specific details of the assets in which security interest is cre-

Mortgaged Assets:Schedule 1- Sale Deed 5035/2012 Land in Survey number 233/ admossuring Acre 0.13 guntas and Shed for production block, boiler shed, security room administration block at Medinipur village, Kondapeka Mandal, Siddipel Dst with thereon belongir to Mrs. Malagalla Vijoyalaomi and bounded as follows North: Land of Malagala Mallesham ,Sout Approach Road East: Land of Buyer, West: Land of Seller

Schedule 2- Sale Deed 803/1960-Land in Survey number 203/A admissioning Acre 1.20 gunts and Shed for production block, boiler shed, security room, administration block at Medinipur village Kondapaka Mandal, Siddipet Dst with thereon belonging to Mrs. Malagalla Vijayalaxmi and bounded as follows: North: Land of Melegala Bhikshepethil, South: Approach Road, East: Land of Agamalla Narsalah, West Land of Purnachander Rac

Date: 01/02/2025



ACROSS THE STATES



President of UNGA Yang on 4-day visit to India

resident of the UN General Assembly Philemon Yang is Paying a four-day visit to India beginning Tuesday. Yang, who assumed the responsibility at the global body in September, previously served as the prime minister of Cameroon. The President of the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly (PGA) is visiting India at the invitation of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, according to an official readout. Under his presidency, the United Nations adopted 'A Pact for the Future' -- a vision document for realising "multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow". "During the visit, the external affairs minister and the PGA will discuss key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest," the readout said. Yang will also pay a courtesy call on President Droupadi Murmu. Apart from New Delhi, Yang will be visiting Bengaluru. "The PGA is scheduled to visit Infosys and the Indian Institute of Science, where he would have the opportunity to interact with experts on India's innovations in various fields such as sustainability, digital public infrastructures, etc," the readout said



Next round of talks with agitating farmers on 14th

he Centre on Tuesday informed Parliament that the sixth round of discussions with agitating farmers in Punjab and Haryana will be held on February 14. In the previous round held last month, the government had proposed a fiveyear plan for the procurement of certain crops at Minimum Support Prices (MSP), but did not reach a consensus on the farmers' broader demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP. Minister of State for Agriculture Ramnath Thakur, in his written reply to the Lok Sabha, said: "Next round of discussion with the farmers is scheduled on 14th February, 2025". The issues related to agitating farmers and their demands are also sub-judice in the Supreme Court and a committee has also been formed by the apex court, he noted. The Centre had initiated discussions with farmers on their agitation on February 8, 2024. Subsequently, discussions were held on 12th, 15th, 18th February 2024 and January 18, 2025, he added.



PM take holy dip at **Sangam today**

rime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Wednesday and take a holy dip at the Sangam around 11 am, his office said. Maha Kumbh 2025, which commenced on Paush Purnima (January 13), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. It will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said on Tuesday. Modi will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 on February 5 and take a dip at the Sangam and offer prayers to Maa Ganga around 11 am, it said. In line with his commitment to promote and preserve India's spiritual and cultural heritage, Modi has consistently taken proactive steps to enhance infrastructure and facilities at pilgrimage sites, the statement said. During his visit to Prayagraj earlier on December 13, 2024, Modi inaugurated 167 development projects worth Rs 5,500 crore, improving connectivity, amenities and services for the general public. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was in Prayagraj and the Maha Kumbh Mela area on Tuesday ahead

'India-EU relationship more important than ever'

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said a stronger India-EU relationship can be an "important stabilising factor" in a world that promises to be "so volatile and uncer-

Jaishankar also asserted that the relationship between the two sides is more important now than ever before.

Addressing the inaugural session of an annual seminar of IIC-Bruegel here, Jaishankar, without naming any country, said that "in our continent, international law has been disregarded with significant consequences".

"Even on a question like democracy and military rule, different standards have been applied to our neighbours in the East and our neighbour in the

"It is not my case that principles are dispensable or that we must be utterly into realpolitik. But the agenda can no longer be set by some, only to be observed by the rest. This applies to passing judgement on and interfering in the domestic politics of others as well," the external affairs minister (EAM) said.

Jaishankar further stressed that "we can all feel intuitively that the world is on the cusp of

Jaishankar further stressed that "we can all feel intuitively that the world is on the cusp of a big change". "Politics is only the tip of the iceberg. Whether it is energy or connectivity, mobility or technology, major shifts await us," he said.

a big change". "Politics is only the tip of the iceberg. Whether it is energy or connectivity, mobility or technology, major shifts await us," he said

Referring to the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks, the EAM said, "I think it is time we get along with it."

Jaishankar also said that in recent years, there has been a "more intensive engagement" with the European Commission and "we expect that to be even more in the coming days, in fact very soon".

"Deeper India-EU collaboration is clearly in our mutual benefit," he said Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran, and various diplomats and foreign policy experts, among others, attended the

"The world is currently witnessing two major conflicts, and these are often presented as matters of principle. We are told that the very future of the world order is at stake. Yet, record shows how selectively and unevenly these principles have been applied," Jaishankar said.

"We, in India, are yet to see aggression on our territory vacated after so many decades. Equally, terrorism has been overlooked when convenient," the minister said.

In his address, Jaishankar

of trade and digital technology, climate action, and their inter-

play with geopolitics.

Today there is much talk about the "world order unravelling", he said.
"There are North-South con-

tradictions as much as there is an East-West divide. Even these broad characterisations are no longer tenable in an era of sharper nationalism," the EAM

Both economic and political logic of an earlier era needs refreshing, he added.

"A perception grew that the trading system had been gamed for the benefit of a few. It was therefore no surprise -- except for those in denial -- that there would be a political backlash, Jaishankar said.

"It was easy to give a cultural twist to these insecurities as well. So, whether we go back to Brexit, look at political happenings in many other nations, including yours, or now considering the return of the Trump administration, let us appreciate that these consequences actually have causes," he added.

On trade and geopolitics, the foreign minister said, "We are witnessing a serious over-concentration of manufacturing in a limited geography, which has many ramifications.

CAMBATING CROSS-BORDER CRIMES

India expects cooperative approach from Bangla: Govt



PNS NEW DELHI

India has conveyed to Bangladesh that it expects a cooperative approach from the neighbouring country for combating cross-border crimes, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday

India has also informed Bangladesh that it is observing all existing agreements in this regard, including for fencing along this front, the government said.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in a written reply to Lok Sabha that the total length of the India-Bangladesh border is 4,096.7 km out of which 3,232.21 km has been "covered" with a fence.

The minister was asked if border fencing "impacted" bilateral relations between the two countries. "Construction of fencing is an important security measure for securing the border. Fencing helps to ensure a crime-free border by effectively addressing the challenges of cross-border criminal activities, smuggling, move-ment of criminals and traffick-

ing," Rai said. It has been "conveyed" to the government of Bangladesh that with regard to security measures at the border, including for fencing, India observes all protocols and agreements between the two governments and between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), the minister said.

Parl panel flags delays in youth empowerment programme



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A parliamentary report has flagged delays in fund allocations, lack of targeted outreach, and insufficient government action on key recommendations for the youths on disaster preparedness, skilling, and hostel facilities for women. The 360th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports, presented in Parliament on Tuesday, reviewed earlier recommendations on Rashtriya Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK), a key youth empowerment scheme. The committee expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation and urged the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to take urgent corrective steps. The report flagged concerns over the lack of a structured approach to youth volunteerism in disaster response, citing a 2022 United Development Programme (UNDP) assessment. It urged the government to integrate Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, or NYKS, volunteers into mandatory disaster management committees at the village and district levels and establish Disaster Risk Reduction Teams in every district.

While the Ministry reported that over 12,000 NYKS volunteers have been trained, the committee called for better coordination with disaster relief authorities to ensure effective deployment. The committee also criticised delays in transforming NYKS centres into District Youth Resource Centres (DYRCs), which could serve as hubs for skill development, employment, and entrepreneur-

Go ahead with 158 civil judges appointments: SC to Karnataka HC

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the Karnataka High Court to proceed with the recruitment of 158 civil judges despite a state government circular prohibiting it.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan passed the direction after being informed that the state government issued a circular in November, last year halting the direct recruitment process by making changes to reservations under the Karnataka Judicial Service (Recruitment) (Amendment) Rules 2024.

im measure we direct that the process of direct recruitment of 158 civil judges in Karnataka shall continue notwithstanding the circular ... issued by the state government. This order is subject to the final outcome/decision on the application," it said.

The CJI said the total sanctioned strength of judges in subordinate judiciary had risen from 21,000 to 29,000 in the country and the states, where the numbers rose significantly, would have to bear more expenses and increase the spending to meet the demand.

On the issue of residential accommodations for Delhi judicial officers, the bench directed the Land And Development Office (L&DO) of the Centre to file an affidavit detailing the present status of land at 206, Rouse Avenue in the national capital.

"The Union of India will file an affidavit on the correct position and status of the land located at 206 Rouse Avenue, order will be sent to the L&DO office. List in the week commencing April 1, 2025," it said.

The bench was hearing a 2006 plea related to the filling up of vacancies in the district judiciary and other issues including lack of infrastructural facilities in the country.

Modi takes 'urban naxal' jibe at Rahul, tears into AAP in LS

PNS NEW DELHI

In a scathing attack on Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said some people are openly speaking the language of urban naxals and asserted that those who "declare a war" against the Indian State can neither understand the Constitution nor about the country's unity.

He also took a dig at Arvind Kejriwal and AAP a day before the Delhi assembly polls, saying "some parties are like 'AAP-da' for the future of the youth". Modi asserted that while his

government's schemes saved lot of money, it was not used to build 'Sheesh Mahal'. Replying to the debate on the

Sabha, he made several veiled attacks at former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, saying those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring. Those who walk around with

pockets in Constitution, do they



know how they forced Muslim women to live in hardship. We brought in the triple talaq law to give right to them," Modi said.

"Today some people are openly speaking the language of urban naxals. The things that urban naxals say (are being said). These people who speak the language of urban naxals. who declare war against the Motion of Thanks to the Indian State, can neither underthe country's unity," Modi said.

Though Modi did not name anyone, his remarks were an apparent reference to Gandhi's comments last month that "we are now fighting the BJP, the RSS and the Indian State itself".

In a veiled jibe at AAP convenor Kejriwal, Modi said some leaders focus on jacuzzi and stylish showers while his government's focus of providing water to every household.

He also said that "some parties are like AAP-da for the future of the youth" as they promise various kinds of doles at the type of elections but never fulfil them.

"Some government schemes saved lot of money, but we did not use it to build 'Sheesh Mahal'," Modi said.

Without naming Gandhi, Modi took a swipe at him for his reaction on the President's address, saying those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring.

Soon after the President delivered her address to a joint sitting of Parliament on January Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were seen discussing the speech in the Parliament complex. During the discussion, Rahul Gandhi was heard asking Sonia Gandhi if the President's speech was "boring".

Shah reviews JK security situation with top officials

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir which has witnessed a few terror incidents in the recent past, sources said.

Top officials of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and intelligence agencies briefed Shah about the prevailing situation in the Union territory and ongoing operations against terrorists, they said. The meeting was held a day

after a terror attack in south

Kashmir's Kulgam district, in

which ex-serviceman Manzoor

Ahmad Wagay was killed and his wife and niece were injured.

Jammu and Kashmir

Army chief General Upendra

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, DGP Nalin Prabhat, Dwivedi and other top army, police and civil officials attended the meeting.
Shah is also likely to chair

another security review meeting with top officials of the paramilitary forces on Wednesday.

During the last review meeting on December 19, 2024, Shah had directed all security agencies to continue working in a coordinated manner to eliminate terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The government has maintained that there is a significant decline in terrorist incidents, infiltration and recruitment of youth in terrorist organ-

PM has lost connect with people, says Priyanka

PNS NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders on Tuesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address in the Lok Sabha with Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra stating it seemed from his speech that he has lost his connect with people and their needs.

Replying to the two-day discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the president's address, Prime Minister Modi hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying those speaking of fighting the Indian state can appreciate neither the Constitution nor national unity as he launched a counter-offensive in Lok Sabha against the Asked about the PM's

remarks, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi said, "I think he has lost his connect with people and their needs. This is what it seemed from his speech."

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor also hit out at Modi, saying he made a "typical election speech".

"It was a typical election speech with the Delhi elections tomorrow. Just a long laundry list of things the government has done. What is surprising is that, the opposition had raised very specific criticisms of the president's address and those criticisms were not answered by the prime minister," Tharoor said.

Most of Delhi's pollution locally created: Study

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi-NCR's pollution during October-November is largely of local origin, with stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana contributing 14 per cent to the over-all PM2.5 levels in 2022, a study

has suggested. Researchers, led by those at Japan's Research Institute for Humanity and Nature under the 'Aakash Project', said that changes in the national capital's air quality could be related more with the stepping up or down of the 'GRAP' anti-pollution mea-

The study, published in the journal 'npj Climate and

Atmospheric Science', analysed fine particulate matter (PM2.5) data, recorded during the September-November months of 2022 and 2023. For the study, 30 sensors were installed across Punjab, Haryana and Delhi-NCR. Stubble burning, a common practice for clearing land following rice harvest, is often blamed for the sharp and sustained rise in PM2.5 levels, seen in the national capital region during the October-November

However, the analysis showed that emissions over Punjab from burning stubbles "contributed only a meagre (nearly) 14 per cent to the overall PM2.5 over



Delhi-NCR during October-November 2022"

Further, PM2.5 levels remained stable in Delhi, even as stubble fires in Punjab and Haryana (as recorded by satellites) declined by at least 50 per cent during 2015-2023, the authors said.

"This indicates that there exists only a very weak coupling between PM2.5 mass over Delhi-

NCR and the (crop residue burning) over Punjab, highlighting the effectiveness of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in controlling air pollution in the region," the authors wrote.

GRAP refers to the set of antipollution measures, implemented in a staged manner in response to air quality levels. GRAP-4 is the most stringent, imposed when air quality index (AQI) crosses 450 and reaches 'severe plus' category. The researchers observed that PM2.5 levels varied in line with the stepping up or down of the GRAP "The decrease of PM2.5 levels in Delhi-NCR was main-

ly attributed to GRAP IV when

road traffic and construction activities, among other sources, were reduced. However, a rise in PM2.5 load was recorded after the revocation of GRAP IV for 2022 and 2023," they wrote.

"With the measurements at a network of about 30 sites covering Punjab, Haryana and Delhi NCR, we are able to separate the contributions of paddy straw burning to Delhi's PM2.5 variations on the basis of characteristic PM2.5 events and at weekmonthly averages," said author Prabir Patra, the leader of Aakash Project and principal scientist at Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology.

Rajnath: India will support Bhutan in enhancing defence prowess

PNS NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday reaffirmed India's readiness to support Bhutan in boosting its defence preparedness, including through the supply of military hardware and

Singh conveyed this to Chief Operations Officer of Royal Bhutan Army Lieutenant General Batoo Tshering in a meeting. The top Bhutanese military commander is on a sixday visit to India from Saturday.

The defence ministry said Singh and Lt Gen. Tshering held discussions encompassing a

variety of issues on bilateral relations.' "The defence minister reaffirmed India's readiness to support Bhutan in capability enhancement for defence preparedness, including provisioning of defence equipment and assets to augment capacities of Bhutan, as per its national priorities and in line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy," it

On his part, Lt Gen. Tshering appreciated India's continued support and thanked India in assisting Bhutan in augmenting its defence capacities and imparting training on Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) personnel.

FIRST COLUMN

A DARK CLOUD BEFORE THE GOLDEN DAWN

Are we past the point of no return, or is there still hope for a new dawn?



RAJYOGI BRAHMKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

I one of us would deny the fact that the whole world is in chaos today. The human race is in more pain and suffering than ever before. The root cause of this is, because three key powers i.e., religion, politics and science that run the world have miserably failed to function by their essential characteristics to look after the wellbeing of people at large. These powers have deviated from their normal course, lost their essential traits and degraded to the lowest level, which is quite visible from the sorry state of affairs across the world.

The power of religion which was meant to show human beings the righteous path which is necessary to maintain social harmony has today become a perpetrator of conflict. It's evident from the facts that religion has failed to uphold moral values in society which can be seen in the form of ever-increasing molestation and sexual assault cases at homes, workplaces, public places and even at schools and colleges that are considered temples of learning.

The historic Nirbhaya case is still very fresh in the minds of people who were shattered to see the height of barbarism to which a human can



go. Today the power of politics is also in a state of crisis. No government anywhere in the world can claim that they are free from corruption. Laws that are made for the benefit of the common public are turning out to be mere eyewash. People in power go scot-free despite breaking several laws, whereas a common man keeps paying penalties on various occasions for not abiding by the law.

On one side governments talk of clean fuels & make pollution checks mandatory, and on the other side, they continue to add a greater number of vehicles to roads each year to please the automotive sector. So, instead of reducing vehicular traffic by introducing greater modes of public transport, the government is making more and more cars accessible to the public at cheap rates. Is this right? Science, the third key power that runs the world, emerged as a result of man's search for a better life. It harnessed natural resources to channel them into means useful for human consumption. However, today the scenario is such that the energy tapped from nature has gone out of human control.

The use of science in violating the laws of nature has become the root cause of environmental imbalance leading to a rise in natural calamities which is evident by the recent report by the UN Panel on Climate Change making it crystal clear that large-scale global warming has triggered the melting of polar ice caps which is the biggest danger facing humankind. Modern scientific advancement that was meant to help humans live a better life has led to a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, endangering global peace and harmony. So, in short, we can say that three powers governing the world have gone haywire & they are steering us to mass destruction. But, what's more surprising is that despite ample knowledge of this phenomenon, nobody seems inclined to save the situation. Hence it won't be exaggerating to say that we have surely come to the point of no return, because with scarcity of non-renewable natural resources, spread of diseases, population explosion, social chaos and nuclear threat accompanied by natural disasters, the world scenario looks utterly scary. Under such darkness, the common man is bound to look UP to seek Almighty Supreme's help as the last resort to safety. Just imagine, when the world reaches its highest peak of unrest, it will be a sight that only a few of us would be able to bear because the kind of destruction that the world has prepared for is bound to shake the conscience of the most stone-hearted and guilty. Perhaps this impending destruction and clearing of human conscience is like a silver lining in the dark cloud which is perhaps the only way to the golden morning that we human souls have been endlessly waiting for. Remember !! Many hidden truths are often unobserved, not invisible. (Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

A fierce three-way battle for the capital's throne

With a closely contested fight and shifting voter sentiments, the Delhi election results could send ripples across the national political landscape

hilly Delhi, though, the blitzkrieg of a high-octane election campaign, not bordering on the sort of "AAPda" while going at hammer and tongs of Tu-Tu-Mai-Mai storm during a prime-time TV news show, for claiming Delhi Ki Kursi, has heated the political cauldron. A strong 1.55 crore voters of Delhi are basking in the sunvoters of Delhi are basking in the sunshine of campaign songs for the Delhi Assembly Elections 2025: "Bahane Nahi Badlav Chahiye..." rendered by BJP against the AAP's Bhojpuri-laced tagline "Babua Phir Se CM Hoyihe... Delhi Ke Badal Dihe Surat, Suhawan, Khubsurat Ho, A Rajaji..." From all per-spectives, who will win the ballot bat-

tle?
Will AAP score a hat-trick? Or will the resurgent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), relying on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its face, hit Mauka (anti-incumbency) Pe Chauka? Or will the Grand Old Party deliver the googly of "Har January Hari Puri Dilli Mair "Har Jarurat Hogi Puri, Dilli Mein Congress Hai Jaruri," an effort to regain its lost electoral ground in the triangular contest? The fate of Delhi will be sealed on February 5 when people granting the hair franchise. And the D ple exercise their franchise. And the Dday, February 8, when the results will be announced, will blow the conch of the new beginning of the 70-member eighth Vidhan Sabha.

The Phalodi Satta Bazar, which earlier showed AAP crossing the majority mark of 36, has revised its estimates. The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP—whose maintain of incompatibility is being the same and the same and the same and the same are same as a sa mainstay of incorruptibility is being challenged by the Congress and BJP, which have levelled allegations against its top brass leaders—could clock a significantly reduced tally this time

According to the latest revised estimates, the BJP—which looks bullish after its recent victories in Maharashtra and Haryana—may bag around 31 seats, a good 5 seats short of the majority mark. A projection of a wafer-thin margin of victory between the AAP-BJP fierce slugfest has made party workers and strategists somersault to pump up their tally amidst the Delhi election campaign hitting its last

voters, manifestos, guarantees and welfare schemes appear to be tearing apart the atmosphere of the city-state. The Delhi Assembly Elections 2025 appear to be a big freebie face-off. Mahila Samman Yojana, Sanjeevani Yojana, Sankal Patra, Ayushman Bharat Scheme, Yuva Udaan Yojana, Pyari Didi Yojana, et al—innocent voters find themselves in an Alicein-Wonderland.

BJP Resurgence Winning the Delhi assembly poll has become an Achilles' heel for the PM Modi-led BJP while the saffron juggernaut swept Delhi's seven seats in the Lok Sabha Elections in 2014, 2019 and 2024. Having last won the Delhi election in 1993, the BJP wants to turn the tide this time by dismantling the proverbial equation of Modi for PM and Kejriwal for CM. Riding on the cusp of being the only party among the three in 2020 to have recorded an increased vote share, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to repeat this achievement in 2025 as well. For the BJP, the road to victory runs through North and Northwest Delhi. In the



HAVING LAST WON THE DELHI **ELECTION IN** 1993, THE BJP WANTS TO TURN THE TIDE THIS TIME BY

DISMANTLING THE PROVERBIAL **EQUATION OF** MODI FOR PM AND KEJRIWAL FOR CM

Wazirpur constituency, Prime Minister Narendra Modi handed over keys to more than 1,650 flats to slum residents, creating a significant connection with local voters. Key areas like Chandni Chowk, Northwest Delhi, and Northeast Delhi have become pivotal grounds for the BJP's potential resurgence.
The BJP should prioritize the 38

constituencies where it secured over 40% of the vote share in 2020. Out of these, the party narrowly lost 17 seats to AAP by less than five percentage points but managed to win eight. These represent easier opportunities to gain ground. For the remaining 21 seats, the BJP will aim to capitalize on anti-incumbency sentiments against AAP to sway voters in its favour.

AAP Strategy AAP of 2025, which might dominate the elections as the C-Voter survey suggests, looks different from its 2020 avatar. The Lok Sabha Elections 2024 speaks volumes that APP, despite an alliance with Congress, drew nought in all seven parliamentary seats of Delhi. Kejriwal's AAP looks lacking in sympathy as experts opine. Besieged with corruption charges and stern anti-incumbency, AAP has meticulously evolved strategies to launch popular welfare schemes to outweigh the allegations.

The party leaders are burning the midnight oil to retain floating voters who keep changing allegiance during the Lok Sabha polls and assembly elections. Kejriwal's poll manoeuvre is trying hard to win the hearts of Dalit and Muslim voters. AAP has

viscerally attracted voters from the Purvanchal community—a key demographic in Delhi hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand that account for around 40 per cent of the electorate and holds a significant sway on 27 seats—by connecting the community on the ground level as the party, according to media grapevine, has held around 600 meetings in this context.

Congress Revival With nothing to lose, Congress, which went from dominating Delhi's electoral landscape from 1998 to 2013 to not having a single MLA since, has entered the poll fray late yet remains determined to lock horns with AAP and dislodge the Kejriwal-led establishment from power, avenging the campaign that cost the UPA government heavily over a decade ago. The results of the 2022 Delhi Municipal polls, in which Congress won five wards in the Northeast district areas that were hit by the riots, buttress the perception that the minority community is disillusioned with

This electoral scenario could reinforce the poll fortune of the BJP, especially the vote bank of Muslims—21.6 lakh in the national capital—who have Congress in their heart and AAP

The Muslim voters could play a key role in six assembly seats: Babarpur (35 per cent), Okhla (43 per cent), Seelampur (50 per cent), Matia Mahal (48 per cent), Mustafabad (36 per cent), and Ballimaran (38 per cent). In that sense, if Muslims—accounting for 12.86 per cent of Delhi's pop-

ulation—are divided between Congress and AAP, BJP will have the upper hand. The Delhi Elections 2025 is deemed the cynosure of all states' eyes.

The domino effect of its results, which will be declared on February 8, could rattle the poll pitch in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Kerala, where assembly polls are slated to take place in 2025-26. If BJP wins, it will boost the image of the National Democratic Alliance, positioning BJP on top to record a hat-trick after winning Maharashtra and Haryana. On the other side, the victory of AAP will zoom out the political credibility of Arvind Keiriwal as a principal challenger to PM Modi. Also, if it loses the poll battle, the ramifications of which will give a jolt to Punjab, where AAP is in power. Trying to make the high-decibel contest triangular, Congress has put a concentrated campaign in the boroughs dominated by Dalits and minorities. If the grand old party succeeds in regaining the space it had in 2013—after being relegated to the third position behind BJP and AAP, bagging only eight seats— Congress will muster the courage to reach the position it held in 2008 when it secured 43 seats with around 40 per cent of the votes. So far in the campaign, there is no Kejriwal wave, nor is BJP having tailwinds. In the BJP vs AAP battle, only February 8 will decide who will get the reins of the Delhi Sultanate.

(The writer is a senior journalist and currently working with PRP Group as Content Head; views

Budget 2025: Bold reforms and innovations to put startups on growth trajectory

Key measures, including an expanded Credit Guarantee Scheme, higher Mudra loan limits, position India as a powerhouse for entrepreneurship and self-reliance

he Union Budget 2025 has laid a strong foundation for a transformative leap in India's startup and MSME ecosystem. At a time when entrepreneurship is fueling economic growth and job creation, the government has introduced a series of strategic measures aimed at fostering financial inclusion, innovation, and global competitive-

A key highlight of this budget is the enhanced access to capital. The expansion of the Credit Guarantee Scheme will enable MSMEs and startups to secure funding without collateral, addressing a significant challenge for emerging businesses. Additionally, the substantial increase in the Mudra loan limit will allow early-stage entrepreneurs to scale their embraces a futuristic vision by opment. By easing compliance



ventures without financial constraints. Simplified tax structures, reduced corporate tax rates, and streamlined GST compliance will further ease cash flow issues, enabling businesses to reinvest in growth.Beyond financial incentives, the budget

integrating infrastructure development with digital transformation. The allocation for plug-and-play industrial parks and logistics hubs will provide businesses with ready-to-use infrastructure, significantly reducing setup costs and expediting time-to-

The establishment of e-commerce export hubs will open new global opportunities, particularly benefiting sectors such as manufacturing, agritech, and handicrafts. Furthermore, a renewed focus on AI-driven automation and deep-tech innovation ensures that Indian startups remain competitive on a global scale. A crucial aspect of this budget is its emphasis on regulatory simplification and skill develnorms, streamlining FDI regulations, and encouraging private sector collaboration in skilling initiatives, the government is fostering an environment where startups can concentrate on scaling rather than navigating bureaucratic complexities. These measures position India as a dynamic startup hub, reinforcing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Ankit Kumar, CEO of Skye Air, lauded the government's initiatives, stating, "The Union Budget 2025 strengthens India's startup and MSME ecosystem with a Rs 10,000 crore fund, ensuring better access to capital and innovation support. Simplified tax structures and compliance reforms will further ease operations, fostering growth and scalability. By integrating dig-



ital infrastructure with financial incentives, the budget paves the way for startups and MSMEs to expand, innovate, and compete globally." The budget also provides a significant boost to innovation and research.

The extension of the period of incorporation for startups by five years is expected to

encourage entrepreneurship. Additionally, the allocation of Rs 20,000 crore to support private-sector-driven research and infrastructure expansion at IITs will create a fertile ground for technological advancements.

The introduction of the Credit Guarantee Startup Scheme (CGSS) and the Customised Credit Card for Micro Enterprises (ME-Card) will improve access to credit for startups and MSMEs, fueling growth and development. Ashish Gupta, CEO of Fretbox, remarked, "The Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME) will facilitate collateral-free loans, giving a major boost to the manufacturing sector. These initiatives will

empower the next generation

of entrepreneurs, researchers, and innovators, and we look forward to seeing the tangible

results of these efforts." By enhancing geospatial data capabilities, this initiative will equip businesses with better insights for logistics, infra-structure, and resource management. Saurabh Rai, CEO of Arahas Technologies, highlighted its impact: "Leveraging AI and advanced computing, startups can drive innovation in sectors like agritech, smart mobility, and climate tech. The mission's open data-sharing framework will reduce dependency on foreign sources, fostering self-reliance and accelerating growth." The budget also prioritizes

boosting exports and manufacturing. Dr. Mahesh Gupta, CMD of Kent RO, praised the

ing easy access to export credit, cross-border factoring support, and tackling non-tariff measures, the government is addressing critical pain points for exporters.

initiatives, saying, "By facilitat-

The customized credit cards for MSMEs, fund of funds for startups, and expanded fundof-funds will undoubtedly improve capital access and stimulate growth. Enhancing investment and turnover limits for MSMEs will also provide a much-needed boost to their operational efficiency."

Overall, the Union Budget 2025 signals a bold commitment to making India a global leader in entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation.

(The author is seniro technical writer at Ksolves, views are personal)

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Delhi decides

A 'do-or-die' for AAP, a prestige battle for the BJP and a fight for survival for Congress—Delhi heads to the polls today

n a battle of promises, power and prestige, Delhi votes today. The stage is set for the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, with voters heading to the polls today and results expected on February 8. With 1.56 crore voters across 70 constituencies, the political atmosphere in the national capital is charged, reflective of the high stakes involved. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by Arvind Kejriwal, aims for a third consecutive term while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress vie to reclaim relevance and power in the capital. The month-long campaign was intense, marked by fiery rhetoric and personal jabs. The BJP leaders accused AAP of corruption, branding their governance as 'AAP-da' (disaster). In return, Kejriwal took aim at the BJP, accusing them of law and order failures and even alleging that the BJP-led Haryana government "mixed poison" in the Yamuna, framing it as a 'genocide' attempt. The Congress, meanwhile, targeted both AAP and BJP with accusations of corruption and inefficiency. This elec-



tion, like many others, saw a flurry of promises aimed at wooing voters with tangible benefits. AAP pledged monthly payments to temple priests, free bus rides, and extensive schemes for youth and students. Both BJP and Congress promised subsidised cooking gas cylinders and financial support for women and unemployed youth. The BJP additionally promised Rs 21,000 for expecting mothers, while Congress offered Rs 8,500 per month to unemployed youth.

Security for the elections is tight, with over 30,000 police personnel and 220 paramilitary companies deployed across the city. Nearly 3,000 polling booths have been marked as sensitive. While assembly elec-

tions are a state matter, the fact that this election is taking place in Delhi, the nation's capital with a cosmopolitan character, gives it national significance. A win for AAP could solidify Kejriwal's model of governance and offer a template for other states and bolster its claim in other states, while a victory for BJP might signal a resurgence of the party in urban governance, reinforcing Modi's narrative of efficient governance. For Congress, a good showing could be the much-needed revival signal after a series of setbacks. As the voters cast their ballots, the outcome of these elections will not just shape Delhi's immediate future but could also influence the national political discourse. The Delhi elections, while significant, are not an ideal model for other states to replicate. The city's unique status as the national capital, with a mix of local and national issues influencing voter behaviour, creates an electoral landscape unlike any other. Additionally, the campaign narratives in Delhi tend to be dominated by highpitched rhetoric and personality-driven politics rather than substantive policy debates. This makes the Delhi election an exception rather than a benchmark, highlighting the need for states to focus on governance models that prioritise long-term development over short-term electoral gains.



Labourers plant paddy saplings in a field, in Nadia

of meaningful connections

The digital age and the decline

Imbuing warrior ethos through strength In Narendra Modi's cabinet, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh enjoys the optics

of seniority, but not necessarily the authority that should come with it

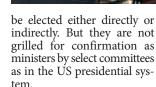
n Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is de jure numero uno. He sits next to him at meetings and in Parliament and like most another minister, regularly invokes Modi's greatness and vision. The optics of seniority are excellent. So is his pedigree. He is a Thakur, dyed-in-the-wool Sanghi and twice President of BJP. His political graph starts as Education Minister to UP, CM Kalyan Singh. As Education Minister in 1992, his signal achievement was ending a regional malaise - copying in exams, sometimes with a knife dug into

Like infiltrators across LoC, invigilators feared to cross the red line. He had an ordinance passed making copying a non-bailable offence – the onus of proving oneself innocent was on the accused. Fourteen and 15-yearolds were sent to jail on charges of copying. The pass percentage in the UP high school board examination for Class X in 1991 was 58.03. In 1992, after the anticopying law was put in place, it slipped to 14.7. He lost the 1993 assembly elections.

A great believer in astrology Singh was ambitious and usually took his cue from RSS leadership. He rose to become chief minister of UP, the second Thakur to do so. As president of BJP, he was asked to inform seven times MP, former Finance, Defence and Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh that he was no longer a member of the BJP (expelled). Jaswant had written the offending book - Jinnah -Partition Independence.

Following a stint as Home Minister, he became defence minister after Modi had shuffled around Arun Jaitley, Nirmala Sitharaman and Manohar Parrikar as defence minister. military and economic Last month at the Republic Day NCC rally he revealed he was in NCC and a physics teacher. His any catch-up with China, its fondness for Dabang – strength main enemy. It hopes to make and power – is well known but his up the deterrent and capabilassociation with the redoubtable Raja Bhaiyya of Kunda, famous for rearing crocodiles in his pond - is less known.

In the Westminster Parliamentary system cabinet ministers are selected by the PM and have to



Otherwise, few would clear the viva, especially for the Defence Minister. Last week former Fox News commentator, Pete Hegseth former Army National Guard who was President Trump's most endangered cabinet choice went through hell before the Senate Armed Services Committee for his confirmation. Poor Pete! he was facing multiple allegations of abuse including sex and alcohol.

He pledged to never drink alcohol if confirmed. Professionally he was well prepared, answering accurate questions on military equipment like the size of a 9mm bullet and the number of rounds in a carbine magazine. He told his examiners he would restore 'warrior ethos' in armed services. Americans have much to worry about as the Chinese are catching up in technology, prowess. Singh has no similar worries. India has abandoned ity gap through diplomacy as was evident from the meagre defence allocations (1.9 per cent of GDP) in last week's budget.

After inflation and foreign exchange fluctuations, mod-

ernisation funds have decreased. In a tweet, Singh described the budget as 'wonderful' and congratulated Sitharaman for fulfilling the resolve of PM Modi for Viksit Bharat. No defence minister, service chief or CDS has ever put his job on the line, asking for additional funds. Recently a French CDS did so. He had to resign when the Euro 1bn extra that he demanded was not provided. Later, President Macron reinstated him along

with Euro 1bn. For the last few years, Sitharaman has ceased mentioning defence allocation in budget presentations. The armed forces are expected to employ force multipliers like invoking Chanakya, imbibing ancient military craft and becoming contemporary through the fusion of past, present and future, as reflected by the new painting on this theme that replaced the once-in-1000-year surrender ceremony painting in the Army Chief's annexe. For all his virtues – injecting Hindutva in a hitherto secular armed force, venerating weapons with religious symbols and motivating triservice warriors by pledging mooh tod jawab, Singh has ceded his area of responsibility to PMO and NSA. Former Defence Minister AK Antony in contrast was the Rock of Gibraltar, never letting the NSA or even the PM bypass

So little reform got done. Singh is an affable team play-

er guided occasionally by a Defence Advisor, a retired Lt General. Recently at a function of the Directorate of Civilian Personnel of Naval Head Quarters, he eulogised the 'civilian in armed forces': "you are civilian before you join service; in some ways, you're civilian even while you serve; and civilian even after you have retired. Your families are also civilians". No mention of veterans! I envy Singh for his immaculately starched white kurta and flowing dhoti which reminds me of my era of razor-sharp starched olive

greens. Last month, Singh went to Madhya Pradesh accompanied by Army Chief Gen Dwivedi. At Ujjain they prayed at the Maha Kaal temple, Dwivedi kitted like Singh. Later Singh visited military institutions in Mhow. At the Army War College, he began reading his speech: "COAS, Gen Umeshji Dwivedi; Commandant Armedpause....kaun sa hai...? someone prompted "War". Pause...someone repeated "War". "Yeah. War College, Lt Gen JS Shahi..." Singh might infuse warrior ethos in the armed forces but as an aspiring politician, will remain the bridesmaid, never the bride.

(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 are personal)



THE ARMED

FORCES ARE **EXPECTED** TO EMPLOY FORCE **MULTIPLIERS** LIKE INVOKING CHANAKYA, **IMBIBING** ANCIENT MILITARY CRAFT AND **BECOMING** CONTEMPORARY THROUGH THE FUSION **PRESENT** AND FUTURE

E EDITOR

CANCER CASES RISING RAPIDLY

Madam — Cancer is a major health issue in Southeast Asia with high rates of incidence and mortality. WHO has reported that more than 2.3 million people are diagnised with cancer each year. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be an 85 percent increase in the number of new cancer cases and deaths in the WHO's South East Asia region. It is unfortunate. Among the new cases, breast, cervix, and lung cancer were the most frequently reported. Economic transitions, lifestyle changes, and rising obesity prevalence are increasing cancer risk in this region with existing risk factors such as tobacco and

cancer survival. Options such as breastconserving surgery and breast reconstruction surgery should be more available in the SEA region. Cervical cancer is the second most frequent cancer in the SEA

More actions are to be taken as tobacco and smoking are still the cause of many should be paid to less prevalent types of ment. There is an urgent need for continued efforts from clinicians, researchers, and policymakers to collaborate and find the most effective strategies to serve can-

(The author is a Dubaibased columnist and children's writing coach. She has published six books. Views



The reappointment of retired judges offers several advantages. Their vast experience and familiarity with legal procedures can enhance efficiency, especially in handling complex matters. Time-bound assignments ensure focus on specific case clusters, improving disposal rates without overburdening the regular bench. Additionally, this reduces the dependency on fresh judicial appoint-

a mere token of its gesture, and it falls too short of the fund it requires to generate 100 GW of power. In fact, this is the same case with other segments of renewable energy also. It needs a lot of political will to do away with the fossil fuels, as the investments and commercial interest of the pri-

vate players are huge. It needs a lot of social commitment towards the future generations to clear the climate challenges and pass on a safe earth to live in. All over the world, the power of profit is predominating over the safety of the people to live on this secured earth. Recurrent costs in nuclear energy are less, and it makes it the most economical one. But the amount of safety measures to be taken up discourages many countries from thinking of this segment. More than fear of falling lives, the fear of falling profits to the private players in the field seems to be dragging the government from going ahead at a speed it requires. There is a dire need to extend substantial subsidies and promote renewable energies, including nuclear ones

EGGS ESSENTIAL FOR NUTRITION

ments, which often face administrative

delays. However, concerns remain regard-

ing the potential impact on judicial

independence, as government approval

could raise questions about executive

interference. Transparency in the selec-

tion process, clear tenure guidelines and

defined performance metrics are essen-

tial to mitigate these risks. Moreover, the

absence of a concrete framework for lower courts highlights a critical gap.

Given that the bulk of pending cases lie

at the subordinate level, swift policy for-

mulation for these courts is imperative.

This initiative reflects the judiciary's

proactive stance in judicial reforms,

recognising that traditional measures are

inadequate for the scale of India's legal

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Madam —According to the data, around 35-40 per cent of children in rural areas in Maharashtra are underweight, and the highest rate of malnutrition is found in North Maharashtra. Lack of access to nutritious food is one of the major factors behind malnutrition. With this backdrop, it is surprising to learn why the state government dropped eggs from the mid-day meals. Egg is a major source of protein and its substitute, pulses, are costlier than eggs, so eggs should remain a core part of midday meals, and if any student does not want to eat it, he can skip it.

Earlier states like Madhya Pradesh and Goa also made such decisions, while it should be noted that a few states in Southern India have added the number of eggs given to children to ensure protein requirements are met. Such drastic decisions could prove detrimental to the families living below the poverty line.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



remembers former colleagues, distant relatives, neighbours who once lived are we losing in this hypernext door. And more than just remembering them, she stays connected yet increasingly in touch. impersonal world? At an age when many resign

fleeting digital exchanges. She

has loved.

Relationships today are often themselves to solitude, she sustained by a string of forpicks up the phone and calls warded messages, impersonpeople from decades ago. al likes on social media, and Not just text messages, voice notes, or hurried "Hope hastily typed responses to keep up appearances. In the you're well" followed by race for efficiency, we have silence. She calls, she converssacrificed depth.

es, she cares. It is a simple act, Consider this: How many yet in today's world, it feels times have we opted to send almost extraordinary. a WhatsApp message instead of calling, simply because it's Her phone conversations are quicker? How often do we not perfunctory check-ins; they are rich tapestries of reply with an emoji rather shared history, laughter, and than words that could convey updates on each other's lives. something deeper? I suspect And the warmth with which relationships have become more superficial, and perhaps she is received at the other we are to blame. It is easier to type a quick "Happy birthend of the line is a testament to the bonds she has nurtured over the years. She is rememday!" than to call and hear the person's voice. It is more conbered because she remembers. She is loved because she venient to react to a post than to ask, "How have you really It makes me wonder: What

And yet, watching my moth- about knowing that when er-in-law, I realise that relationships, like wealth, require investment. The bonds we forge and sustain over time are the greatest savings we make in life. They are the human equivalent of a wellkept treasure-present when we need warmth, support, and belonging.

One of the reasons we don't stay in touch is because we assume people are busy. They probably don't have time to talk. Or worse, we convince ourselves that if they really cared, they would call us too. And so, we let months slip into years, waiting for the other person to make the first move.

But my mother-in-law doesn't wait. She doesn't hesitate to pick up the phone, regardless of how long it has been. And what's more, people respond to her with the same warmth and eagerness. It reminds me that relationships are not about keeping score; they are about keeping the connection

A strong social network isn't just about having company for celebrations; it is also about having shoulders to lean on in times of need. It is

life throws its uncertainties at us, there will be familiar voices to comfort us, guide us, and remind us that we are not alone. And yet, many people find themselves growing lonelier with age, not because they lack family or friends, but because they did not nurture those bonds.

ASHA IYER KUMAR

What would it take for us to revive the lost art of staying in touch? It doesn't take grand gestures. It doesn't require hours of free time. Sometimes, all it takes is a simple phone call. A heartfelt message. A conversation that goes beyond the surface. So here's a small invitation:

Think of someone you haven't spoken to in a while-perhaps an old schoolmate, a former colleague, or a distant cousin. Instead of sending a message, call them. Ask about their life. Listen to their stories. Share something about yours. It may feel unfamiliar at first, but you may be surprised at how quickly the warmth

are personal)

indoor-outdoor pollution. Although cancer is a life-threatening disease, it can be prevented and treated if detected early. Screening programmes such as breast self-examination and mammography substantially increase breast

region, caused by high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV), and can be prevented by vaccination. Tobacco is another major cause of cancer and preventable deaths worldwide.

deaths in the region. Equal attention cancer. Governments need to include cancer treatment in national insurance as done in countries like Indonesia, not restricted to surgeries but allowing lifelong treatcer patients in the best way possible.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

PROMOTE RENEWABLE ENERGY

Madam— India's need and its policy related to power are yet to come close to each other. The allocation of Rs 20,000 crore is

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2025

IN BRIEF



Kenya expects 20 pc growth in tourist arrivals from India

enya is expecting 20 per cent growth in footfalls from India as it has received higher enquiries and planned promotional Campaigns in the Asian country, an official said. In 2024, Kenya hosted 106,863 visitors from India compared to 95,038 tourists in the previous year, a 12.4 per cent increase, according to the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) data. "Immediate feedback from the travel trade was positive, with lots of travel inquiries around Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) and leisure expected across the season. We are also stepping up our promotional activities in India to attract more visitors from the country. Therefore, we expect that there will be a 20 per cent rise in tourist arrivals from India this year from 2024," Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) Chief Executive Officer Fred Kaigwa said in a statement. The travel trade roadshows that have been conducted in the key cities of Ahmedabad, Bangalore, and Kolkata, have made Kenya's presence felt as a destination, which is likely to translate this into sales, he added.



INDIAsize to be released at Bharat Tex

he much-awaited 'INDIAsize' initiative, a study which aims to establish standardized measurements designed to better suit the Indian body types, will be released at the Bharat Tex event later this month, Textiles Secretary Neelam Shami Rao said on Tuesday. A set of anthropometric data will be released in the public domain for the industry to provide feedback on any required changes, before the standardised measurements are adopted for retail apparel. Presently, international and domestic brands available in India use measurements from the US or the UK for garments, having 'small', 'medium' and 'large' sizes. However, Western body types differ from Indians in terms of height, weight or specific measurements of body parts, which sometimes causes fitting issues. The Ministry of Textiles sanctioned the INDIAsize project to develop standard body sizes for the Indian apparel sector to address the prevailing disparities and inconsistencies in provided fits.



Govt selects JSPL, others for Financial Incentive Scheme

he government has selected three private entities, including Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL), under category II of the Financial Incentive Scheme to promote coal/lignite gasification projects. The government, on January 24, 2024, launched the scheme with financial outlay of Rs 8,500 crore to provide viability gap funding (VGF) to promote coal/lignite gasification projects for PSUs and private sector in three categories. The Request for Proposals for category-II was issued on May 15, 2024, and technical bids were opened on January 10, 2025. This category has an outlay of Rs 3,850 crore, the ministry said in a statement. The name of selected applicants for receiving financial incentives under category-II are Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL), New Era Cleantech Solution and Greta Energy Limited. The names of applicants selected in the category I and III of the scheme have already been announced earlier. PSUs come under Category I with a provision of Rs 4,050 crore.

to boost growth over next few years'

PNS NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday said the Budget for 2025-26 will boost India's growth over the next few years via domestic demand through income tax cuts and the country will achieve the targeted 4.4 per cent fiscal deficit despite hiking I-T

S&P said India's union Budget is in

line with its expectation of gradual fiscal consolidation that undergirds the positive outlook on India's sovereign ratings 'BBB-'. The deficit targets are also

consistent with S&P's projec-

"We believe India will hit its deficit targets despite revenue loss from lifting the threshold for minimum taxable income and slower economic growth. Support will stem from continued large dividends from the central bank and potential capital underspending," S&P said in a statement. The fiscal 2026 budget will boost growth over the next few years via domestic demand through tax cuts for households, it added.

"We anticipate consumer spending and public invest-

ments will maintain real GDP growth at 6.7 per cent in fiscal 2025 and 6.8 per cent in fiscal 2026. These growth rates continue to place India above sovereign peers at similar income levels and should continue to support fiscal revenue increase despite the income tax cuts," S&P said.

In its post-budget comments, Fitch Ratings said the govern-



ment's clarification of mediumterm debt reduction targets, if adhered to, could improve India's credit profile over time.

Fitch rates India at THE lowest investment grade 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. The government aims to maintain central government debt on a gradual downward trend, reaching close to 50 per cent of GDP by FY'31, roughly 7 percentage points lower than in FY'25. The focus on a mediumterm debt target should give greater flexibility to manage fiscal deficits, depending on eco-nomic conditions, Fitch said,

Domestic demand | GST Council to soon take decision on rates, number of slabs: FM

PNS NEW DELHI

The GST Council will soon take a decision on having fewer and lower rates as the review work is almost complete, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

Currently, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a fourtier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Luxury and demerit goods are taxed at the highest bracket of 28 per cent, while packed food and essential items are in the lowest 5 per cent slab.

The Council, chaired by Sitharaman and comprising her state counterparts, has set up a group of ministers (GoM) to suggest changes in GST rates as well as reduce

"To be fair to the GST and the ministers who are all in the council, the work on rationalizing and simplifying GST rates has already commenced. In fact, it had commenced nearly three years ago," she said at the India Today-Business Today Post Budget Round Table.

Sitharaman said later the scope was widened and now the work is almost complete.

Mentioning that she told ministers in the Council to have a more in-depth look at the rates since they relate to everyday items consumed by

common people, the minister said it was important to ensure that an opportunity was not lost.

'For me, it was also important that we don't lose an opportunity, that we can even bring down the number of rates, which is also the original intent that we wanted fewer rates and lower rates. So work has got to happen on that, and I hope the GST Council will decide on it

soon," Sitharaman said.

Days after presenting the Union Budget 2025-26 that also provides significant income tax relief to the mid-

dle class, the minister asserted the country's economic fundamentals are strong and there is no structural slow-

Tax relief in the Budget is a reflection of the prime minister's commitment to the taxpayers, Sitharaman said and refuted speculations that the move was aimed at Delhi assembly elections.

She also told the gathering that there is no proposal to "shut down" the old tax regime. On a question related to capital expenditure, the minister further said the capex has not come down, in fact it has increased to Rs 11.21 lakh crore which is 4.3 per cent of the GDP. For fiscal 2025-26, the Budget proposed to spend Rs 11.21 lakh crore towards capital expenditure (capex), higher than Rs 10.18 lakh crore in the Revised Estimates for FY25. It was Rs 10 lakh crore in FY24, Rs 7.5 lakh crore in FY23, Rs 5.54 lakh crore in FY22 and Rs 4.39 lakh crore in FY21. The Budget pegged a fiscal deficit of 4.4 per cent of GDP for FY26 and lowered the target for FY25 by 10 basis points to 4.8 per cent of

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taxed at the highest

Gold continues record-breaking rally

Moves closer to Rs 86k-mark

PNS NEW DELHI

Gold prices extended the rally for the fifth straight session and rose Rs 500 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 85,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid robust demand from jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 85,300 per 10 grams in the previous session.

In this year Rs 6,410 or 8.07 per cent to Rs 85,800 per 10 grams from Rs 79,390 per 10 grams on January 1. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed for the fifth straight session and gained Rs 500 to hit another record high of Rs 85,400 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Silver prices, however, snapped a five-day winning streak and fell Rs 500 to Rs 95,500 per kg against Monday's



Rs 94,222 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Comex gold futures for April delivery fell USD 17 per ounce or 0.60 per cent to USD 2,840.10 per ounce.

On Monday, the yellow metal futures had hit a fresh high of USD 2,872 per ounce.

According to Abans Holdings' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta, gold hit record highs on Monday

closing level of Rs 96,000 per amid fears of a global trade kg. war, uriving invested the safe-haven metal at high

> "Geopolitical uncertainty continues to rise as Trump's tariffs on Canada and Mexico are paused for a month following negotiations on stricter border enforcement.

> "Meanwhile, China's central bank increased its gold reserves for the second consecutive month in December, as central banks worldwide continue to hedge against economic

Govt framing schemes for **MSME** exporters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is framing schemes for MSME exporters to provide credit at easy terms, promote alternate financing instrument through strengthening factoring services for them, and offer monetary assistance to deal with non-tariff measures imposed by other countries, an official said on Tuesday.

The commerce, MSME and finance ministries are Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi told reporters here.

These schemes are being formulated under the export promotion mission, announced in the Union Budget for 2025-26.

The schemes are expected to be rolled out in about 4-5 months, he

Jammers, boosters hampering mobile services quality: COAl

PNS NEW DELHI

Telecom industry body COAI has written to the telecom department that illegal jammers and repeaters installed at educational institutes, homes and firms are deteriorating mobile networks ser-

vice quality, resulting in call drops and low data speed for consumers. The Cellular

Operators Association of India (COAI), whose members include Reliance Bharti Jio, Idea, etc, has

requested the Department of Telecom (DoT) to take action against the illegal jammers and boosters and write to all states, informing them that use of such equipment is an offence under the Telecommunications Act 2023, which should be stopped immediately.

COAI Director General SP Kochhar said that there are instances wherein during the India.

routine monitoring of the network, degradation in RSSI (Received Signal Strength Indicator) parameter is observed.

"Upon further analysis for such degradation, it surfaced that the degradation of RSSI



parameters is primarily due to installation of jammers by educational institutions/ schools without obtaining necessary approval from the competent authority and installation of boosters illegal households/companies, etc," Kochhar said. The industry body also shared link boosters allegedly being sold on Amazon

MKTS BOUNCE BACK

Investors' wealth surges Rs 5.95 lakh cr

Market investors added Rs 5.95 lakh crore to their wealth on Tuesday as benchmark indices rallied nearly 2 per cent after US President Donald Trump delayed tariffs on Mexico and Canada for a month.

The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,397.07 points or 1.81 per cent to settle at a month's high of 78,583.81. During the day, it surged 1,471.85 points or 1.90 per cent to 78,658.59.

378.20 points or 1.62 per cent to 23,739.25, a level not seen since January 3.

Following the sharp rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 5,95,996.51 crore to Rs 4,25,50,826.11 crore (USD 4.88 trillion).

"Indian equity markets witnessed sharp rally after US President deferred the planned tariffs both on Canada and Mexico by 30 days, providing a major relief to the escalating trade war," Siddhartha



Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd,

From the 30-share blue-

chip pack, Larsen & Toubro rallied nearly 5 per cent. Adani Ports, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement and Asian Paints were also among the major gainers. ITC Hotels, Zomato, Nestle

and Maruti were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended significantly higher.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.35 per cent and smallcap index surged 1.20 per

"India is likely to gain out of

from US-China trade war this trade war. Significant rise in

PNS NEW DELHI

The trade war between the US and China is expected to benefit Indian exporters in increasing their shipments to the American market, sources said.

They said the country was the fourth-largest gainer when the US imposed higher duties on Chinese goods during US President Donald Trump's first tenure.

After coming to power again, Trump on Saturday signed an order to impose stiff tariffs on imports from China, fulfilling a campaign promise but raising the prospect of increased prices for American consumers.

exports are expected from India," a source said.

Exporters have also stated that the imposition of customs duties by the US on imports from China provides huge export

opportunities for India to America. The tariffs would affect exports from China to the US as they would push the prices of their goods in the American market, making them less competitive. "The move can create opportunities for Indian exports due to the trade diversion effects as US buyers will seek alternative suppliers to avoid higher costs, Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said.

Fund of Funds Scheme to focus on mfg, high-tech startups

PNS NEW DELHI

The newly announced Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds Scheme (FFS) for startups, unveiled in the Budget, will focus on manufacturing and high-technology sectors, which require longer-term funding, a top government official stated on Tuesday.

Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Amardeep Singh Bhatia said this new scheme would be an entirely different fund that will address the needs of startups that lie between those dealing

with high-end technology and the ones focussed on improving public service delivery.

The government on Saturday announced a new FFS with Rs 10,000 crore corpus to promote growth of budding entrepreneurs in the country. In 2016 also, the government launched a similar scheme, with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crore, with contributions spread over the 14th and 15th Finance Commission

Bhatia said the first series of FFS has helped in building the AIF (alternate investment fund) ecosystem in the coun-



try which provided much-

needed capital to startups. For the second series, announced in the Budget, "We already had consultations with AIFs, with SIDBI...We expect that this should help in covering the large spectrum of startups which need longer duration of funds, which need dif-

ferent types of funding beyond the equity infusion," he added. He stated that the new scheme would not be topping up the already functional FFS. Through the first FFS

already been catalysed by Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) in more than 1,180

These AIFs are mobilising a corpus of around Rs 91,000 crore by raising funds from other investors. "We want to expand it (new

FFS). There was a 10-year limit in the first one, now we can make it for 14-15 years that will meet the longer funding requirements which are into high-tech areas, whose gestation period is more," the secretary said, adding that the per

launched in 2016 investment of startup cap can also be more than Rs 21,700 crore has relooked.

Debt funds are also an option under discussions, he added. Speaking at the briefing, Joint Secretary in the DPIIT Sanjiv said: "This will be different from the first one. We will try to bring something more. We will frame the scheme in a way so that 20 times fund mobilisation happens. In the

first, 10x fund was mobilised". The Budget also announced a FFS for Deep Tech Startups to enable patient capital, support disruptive innovations and for funding of larger tick-

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION "E" PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE NIT No. 52/E.E. 14/GHMC/2024-25 Dated: 04-02-2022

Indian exporters likely to gain

Name of work: Various civil Engineering work under Circle 14, Goshamahal, KZ GHMC. Estimate Amount/ ECV: Rs. 23.6 Lakhs, Start date / Last date & time to ecelpts of Bids: 05-02-2025 @ 11.00 AM / 10-02-2025 @ 11.00 AM., Name & Address officer: Executive Engineer -14, GHMC, 5th floor, Abids Parking Complex Abids, Hyderabad. For further details can be seen at e-procurement website nder.telangana.gov.in R.O.No: 9965-PP/CLIADVT/1/2024-25, Dt. 04-02-2025

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED TENDER SPECIFICATION No.01 /2024-25.

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864 Superintending Engineer, Sp. 0694-4940(MWT1080435, Dr. M-43-2035)

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Wednesday February 5, 2025

Redefining global dance culture with the rhythm of change

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

ance is more than just a movement - it's a language of the soul, a bridge between cultures, and a testament to dedication and artistry. Renowned Kathak dancer Ritika Arora embodies all these qualities, her journey weaving together tradition and innovation, discipline and creativity. From the vibrant city of Amritsar to the global stage, she has captivated audiences and inspired students through her mastery of Kathak and other dance forms.

Her love for dance began at a young age, influenced by the colourful Bollywood and Punjabi performances she grew up watching. Her passion soon transformed into a rigorous academic pursuit, as she earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Kathak from Guru Nanak Dev University This formal education laid the foundation for her professional career, allowing her to excel not only as a performer but also as a teacher and choreographer.

Her professional journey started in 2014 when she began working as a Dance and Yoga Teacher at KIDZ Camp Public School. Later, she took on the role of Studio Manager and Choreographer at Pankaj & Preeti Dance Academy, where her talent and leadership skills truly flourished. One of her most remarkable achievements came in 2015 when she choreographed a Guinness World Record performance featuring 8,726 children in Amritsar. This wasn't just a dance event; it was an anti-drug awareness campaign, using the power of movement to spread a vital social message. Reflecting on this experience, Ritika says, "The then Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Ravi Bhagat, highlighted that the record attempt was designed to raise awareness about drug abuse, which had devastated many lives in Punjab. The performance was a testament to how dance can be a force for

Beyond Kathak, Arora has explored a wide spectrum of dance styles, including Bollywood, Zumba, Bhangra,

Bharatanatyam, Hip Hop, Ballroom and Western dance. She attributes her ability to balance these diverse forms to a strategic approach focusing on precision, cultural understanding and creative exploration. In 2022, she took a bold step in her career by relocating to the United Kingdom, a move that expanded her artistic horizons and introduced her to new audiences. This transition, she explains, has had a profound impact on her creative vision. "International exposure has given me opportunities to collaborate with artists from different backgrounds. I now have an expanded audience and the chance to engage with the community on a deeper level. Teaching diverse age groups, including the differently abled and elderly, has reinforced my belief that dance is for everyone.

Embracing her role as a mentor and entrepreneur, she founded Nrityaritika Dance Studio Ltd in October 2024, based in Ilford, Essex. With over eight years of teaching experience, she designed her studio to be a hub of artistic excellence, offering classes in multiple dance forms for students of all ages and skill levels. The studio also provides specialized services such as wedding choreography and Zumba sessions. More than just a training center, Nrityaritika is a platform for cultural preservation and community engagement. "We conduct special free sessions for senior citizens and actively promote traditional Indian dance forms like Kathak and Bharatanatyam, ensuring that these art forms continue to thrive in a globalized world."

Her efforts to bridge cultures don't stop there. Ritika's collaboration with KSPARK Entertainment, founded by renowned dancer Karan Pangali, has further solidified her position in the international dance community. Additionally, her partnership with Madhu's Ltd Company has opened up exciting performance opportunities. Through corporate tie-ups, entertainment projects, and educational initiatives, she is

constantly exploring new ways to bring Indian dance to the culture internationally comes with its challenges, including

Organizing large-scale performances has been another defining aspect of her career. In addition to her Guinness World Record achievement, she successfully choreographed a Zumba and freestyle performance featuring 3,000 children. She recalls, "It was a monumental task that required meticulous planning, securing a venue, coordinating logistics, and ensuring safety measures. Collaborating with schools, community organizations, and volunteers was crucial. The event celebrated the energy and creativity of children while promoting health, unity, and the joy of

Setting ambitious goals is a hallmark of Ritika's career. Whether it's choreographing record-breaking performances or expanding her dance studio, she approaches each milestone with careful planning and perseverance. "Ambitious goals are best achieved by breaking them down into smaller, actionable steps. Engaging with the dance community for motivation and support is also essential. Self-reflection helps me assess my progress and refine my approach to

challenges.' As a classical Kathak dancer, she is deeply invested in the role of Indian dance in today's modern, globalized world. She believes that while Kathak preserves tradition, it also serves as a catalyst for innovation. "Kathak has shown remarkable

adaptability. Collaborations with Western dance forms like ballet and contemporary dance have led to importance of digital platforms in

innovative performances that highlight the universality of artistic expression." She also emphasizes the ensuring the preservation and accessibility of Indian dance for future generations Promoting Indian

Passionate about preserving Indian classical dance While embracing modern fusion, Ritika Arora, in an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, shares her vision for bridging cultures through movement, her challenges in promoting Indian heritage internationally,

and the power tool for social change

economic constraints, cultural preservation concerns, and audience engagement issues. However, Ritika has tackled these obstacles through digital outreach, collaborations with international institutions, and innovative marketing strategies. "We have adapted to changing audience preferences by making performances more accessible and engaging, often incorporating digital media and cross-cultural collaborations." One of her most fascinating artistic endeavors is her approach to integrating Kathak with contemporary dance forms while staying true to its roots. "Fusion must be approached as a research process. The key lies in preserving the intricate footwork, rhythmic patterns, and storytelling aspects of Kathak while experimenting with modern themes, technology, and cross-cultural elements.

Looking ahead, she has ambitious plans for her dance studio and artistic career. She is currently working on projects corporate partnerships, entertainment collaborations, and new dance classes. She is

particularly excited about her initiatives focusing on community engagement, ensuring that dance remains accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Despite her global aspirations, Ritika remains deeply connected to her Indian roots. Having worked extensively in both India and the UK, she hopes to bridge these cultures through dance. "By offering a wide array of dance styles. I create an environment where students can explore and appreciate both Indian and Western This exchange fosters understanding and appreciation between different communities.

For Ritika, dance is more than a profession it is a lifelong mission. "My ultimate goal is to promote inclusivity, creativity and cultural diversity through dance. I want to leave a legacy by contributing to the evolution of teaching methodologies and choreographic techniques."

She credits her biggest inspirations - Birju Maharaj and Madhuri Dixit - for shaping her artistic vision. Staying motivated in her craft involves a continuous process of learning, self-reflection and collaboration. "I attend workshops. engage with diverse dance communities and blend classical techniques with modern innovations. Most importantly, I never lose sight of why I fell in love with dance in the first place." To aspiring dancers, she offers

> invaluable advice: "Your greatest asset in dance is not technical perfection but your emotional authenticity and passionate commitment to the art. Embrace continuous learning, challenges as opportunities for growth and never lose sight of your love for dance

Through her artistry mentorship, and dedication to cultural preservation, Ritika Arora continues to make a profound impact in the world of dance. Her journey is a testament to the transformative power of movement - an art that transcends borders generations

HOW NETWORKING CAN ACCELERATE SUCCESS!



underestimate networking and view mentoring as a nice-to-have, but in reality, both are essential tools for long-term success. Archana's journey—from being a first-generation lawyer to co-founding and scaling VERTICES PARTNERS—was built on the strength of relationships, trust and shared knowledge with likeminded people. True networking goes beyond business card exchanges, and true mentoring is more than feel-good advice. Both are about strategic value creation. Networking must be seen as a sustainable investment where confidence and integrity are built over

Identifying key stakeholders in your industry and beyond and nurturing relationships proactively—even before you need them—can be game-changing.In her early days, she made it a point to engage deeply with clients, founders and senior leaders-not just for work-related discussions but to understand their long-term vision. These genuine relationships proved invaluable when launching the company, as many of my early clients and referrals came from this trusted network. To build meaningful connections, it is also valuable to attend industryspecific and cross-industry events with a clear objective. Follow up consistently with value-driven interactions, such as sharing insights, offering help. or making introductions. Keep a personal tracker wherein you share greetings, engage in a timely manner, and share potential synergy to nurture a lasting relationship.

Once you choose the right mentor, more than motivating you, they help you navigate your cognitive limitations, enhance your reach to a likeminded fraternity, and protect you from costly hurdles. Rather than looking for basic business coaching, look for mentors who help you wade through similar experiences from the past you are

currently facing. She was able to pave her path from an organised legal environment to entrepreneurship through invaluable insights from mentors who had built businesses from scratch. When the time came to pay it forward, she embraced the role of a mentor, guiding the young, rising entrepreneurs—mostly women—through strategic business growth advice, passing on valuable lessons, connecting networks, building platforms and preparing them with the skills that they required, navigating high-pressure moments and transitioning them to new horizons in their business undertakings confidently. More than merely seeking mentorship on broader lines, request guidance on a particular challenge. Leverage structured mentorship platforms like industry councils, accelerators, or invite-only business networks. As you grow, become a mentor yourself—teaching is a powerful way to refine your knowledge. The best ideas often come from outside your immediate industry. Expanding your network beyond your sector gives you a competitive advantage. She didn't limit her network to legal professionals; rather, she connected with entrepreneurs, investors, and thought leaders from various industries. This cross-sectoral approach gave her fresh insights on brandbuilding and audience engagement, which she applied back to her business. To benefit from cross-industry networking, join diverse industry forums, startup incubators, or global business organisations. For her, joining Asia's one of the largest Chambers of Commerce for

to your field. The most successful relationships are built on mutual value exchange rather than one-sided requests. You will be remembered when you help someone with their business-related hurdle by being a source to add value to help them overcome their hurdle. Throughout her career, she has ensured that she provide value first, be it for ice-breaking introductions, sharing legal insights, or simply being a sounding board. This approach has helped me bolster her relationships and organically brought many opportunities my way. Disengaging from transactional and taking up a relational networking mindset is the key. Making it a habit to help the fraternity grow collectively by helping know peers is certainly helpful to us in

the long run too. Follow up and nurture relationships—people appreciate when you check in with genuine interest. A successful mentorship program should be structured, with clear goals, accountability and feedback loops. Organisations should create internal mentorship frameworks to cultivate leadership from within. At the company, they ensure young lawyers don't just work on transactions but understand client strategy, business implications, and negotiation psychology. This hands-on mentorship approach accelerates their growth far beyond traditional training methods. Even in her role as a leader with certain Chambers of Commerce, she applied the same philosophy for the members and mentees. If you're a senior leader, implement mentorship programs within your company, ensuring mentees have clear milestones. As a mentee, set defined objectives with your mentor to track progress effectively. Use digital tools (like Notion, Trello, or Google Docs) to document key mentorship insights for reference. The real power of networking and mentoring is in its compounding effect—every

relationship nurtured today builds a foundation for

future success. Leaders who consistently invest in relationships and mentorship create an ecosystem where opportunities flow effortlessly. Many of her firm's breakthroughs came from long-standing relationships—clients, partners and referrals that grew organically over time. To maximise the compound effect, track your key relationships and periodically revisit them to stay connected. Take the long view—business success is rarely about one big break but about the cumulative effect of many well-nurtured relationships. Pay it forward—mentorship and networking thrive when leaders continue the cycle of support and knowledge-sharing. To sum it up, to be successful, one needs to be fortified with the shared strength of the networks and mentors that they build with time. Irrespective of whether one is a seasoned leader or a novice entrepreneur, establishing honest relationships and organized mentorship will govern your long-term success. As she reflects on her journey—from building a legal practice to

engaging with entrepreneurs and thought leaders and leading a chapter of an established chamber of commerce for women—she sees one constant: the right relationships open the right doors.

(The author, Archana Khosla Burman, is an entrepreneur, Founding Partner - VERTICES PARTNERS, FICCI FLO National Head -Collaborations, Partnerships and Associations.)

DECODING GUILLAIN-BARRÉ SYNDROME

How CSF analysis aids in early diagnosis

PNS HYDERABAD uillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a rare autoimmune disorder where the body's immune system attacks the peripheral nerves, leading to weakness, numbness, or even paralysis. This condition can progress rapidly, and early diagnosis is critical for timely treatment. One of the most reliable diagnostic tools for GBS is cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) analysis. This simple yet

other conditions, and guide treatment plans.

GBS often starts with symptoms such as tingling or weakness

in the hands and feet, which may spread to other

breathing difficulties or complete paralysis. While

parts of the body. In severe cases, it can cause

the exact cause of GBS isn't fully

infections, such as the flu or

understood, it is commonly triggered by

Since the symptoms of GBS mimic

disorders, accurate and

early diagnosis is

essential.

gastrointestinal illnesses, and, in rare

cases, by surgery or vaccinations.

other neurological

WHAT IS CSF ANALYSIS? Dr. Sameer Bhati, Director of Star Imaging and Path Lab Pvt. Ltd, explains to us, "Cerebrospinal fluid is a clear liquid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord, protecting and nourishing the central nervous system. CSF analysis involves extracting a small sample of this fluid, typically through a lumbar puncture (spinal tap), and examining it in a laboratory. This test is often used to detect infections, inflammation, or other abnormalities in the nervous system." essential test helps confirm the diagnosis, rule out For GBS, CSF analysis is particularly useful

UNDERSTANDING GUILLAIN-BARRÉ SYNDROME

because it helps detect unique markers associated with the condition, allowing doctors to distinguish it from other diseases. WHY IS CSF ANALYSIS CRUCIAL **FOR DIAGNOSING GBS?**

CSF analysis provides key information that is essential for confirming a GBS diagnosis:

1. Increased Protein Levels

A hallmark feature of GBS in CSF analysis is elevated protein levels without a significant increase in white blood cells, a condition known as albuminocytologic dissociation. The increase in protein reflects nerve damage caused by the immune attack, and this pattern is a strong indicator of GBS

2. Ruling Out Other Conditions

GBS symptoms can overlap with those of other neurological disorders, such as infections, multiple sclerosis, or spinal cord diseases. By examining the CSF, doctors can rule out these conditions. For example, if an infection were present, the CSF might show an elevated white blood cell count or the presence of pathogens, which is not typical in GBS.

3. Understanding Disease Severity

The degree of protein elevation in the CSF can also provide insight into how much nerve damage has occurred. Higher protein levels may indicate more severe nerve involvement, helping doctors determine the appropriate level of care and treatment.

4. Monitoring Progression

CSF analysis can also be used to monitor the disease's progression over time. By repeating the test during treatment, doctors can observe changes in protein levels and evaluate whether the patient is responding to therapy.

analysis begins with a lumbar puncture, a procedure in which a thin needle is inserted into the lower back to collect a sample of cerebrospinal fluid. While the idea of a spinal tap may seem intimidating, it is generally safe and minimally uncomfortable. Local anesthesia is used to numb the area, so the patient typically feels only slight pressure during the procedure," adds Dr. Sameer. Once the fluid is collected, it is sent to a laboratory, where it is examined for abnormalities, including protein levels, white blood cell counts, and any signs of infection or inflammation.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER CSF

ANALYSIS? The results of the CSF analysis are combined with the patient's symptoms, medical history,

diagnosis of GBS. If GBS is confirmed, treatment can begin immediately. **Common treatments for GBS include:**

· Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIg): This

and results from other tests to confirm the

therapy involves administering antibodies to neutralize the harmful immune response. • Plasmapheresis: This procedure filters harmful antibodies from the blood, reducing the immune attack on the nerves.

In severe cases, patients may require supportive care, such as mechanical ventilation, if their breathing is affected.

Why Early Diagnosis

GBS can progress rapidly, and without timely treatment, it may lead to longterm complications, such as chronic nerve damage or permanent disability. Early diagnosis through CSF analysis allows doctors to start treatments that can reduce the severity of symptoms and improve recovery outcomes.

Conclusion

CSF analysis is an essential tool for diagnosing Guillain-Barré Syndrome. By detecting elevated protein levels and ruling out other conditions, this test provides critical information that guides treatment decisions. If you or someone you know experiences symptoms like sudden muscle weakness or tingling, it's important to seek medical attention immediately. CSF analysis can help doctors confirm the diagnosis and ensure that the right treatment is provided at the right time, improving the chances of a full recovery.

what's brewing?

















launched at Jubilee Hills with the presence of Chef Aneesa Waheed, the incredible woman behind this exquisite place. Guests indulged in a delightful afternoon of aromatic Moroccan teas, fabulous food, warm conversations and a charming ambience. The guest list included socialites, entrepreneurs and many well-known bloggers and

influencers.



A BERRILICIOUS JOURNEY **AWAITS YOUR ARRIVAL** AT NATURALS ICE CREAM

erry lovers are in for a treat, as Naturals Ice Cream is back with their super-anticipated Berry Festival. In fact, every February marks the start of this Berrilicious Journey across all Naturals Outlets in India. An ode to the best berries from around the world, this limited-period annual festivity celebrates the unique characteristics of Raspberries from Serbia, Mulberries from Maharashtra, Gooseberries from Uttar Pradesh, Blueberries from the USA and Blackcurrants from Poland. Moreover, this year the legacy brand has more to offer than ever before. It's beyond the flavours of the exotic fruits alone. It's going to be big and juicy, not just in taste but also in experience. The source of the berries alone is enough to tell you that it's hands down the finest in business, and the store decor is sure to delight both your palate and

Besides, the flavours themselves are enough to make you fall in love. How could they not, when every berry is handpicked and made in small batches with the utmost care and attention to detail? Starting with selecting the source, churning the berries with their signature blend, to making sure each batch goes through multiple levels of scrutiny before hitting the shelves - every step is crafted to perfection. And the range of notes in the flavours offered is another win: from sweet, tart, citrusy, to sour, it's no less than a party for your taste buds. With so much to look forward to and so little time, it's best to keep your calendar updated. We suggest you block the month of love for the love of berries. Enjoy the choicest berry flavours only at Naturals Ice Cream. It's worth every rupee. Get on board with us for this berrilicious iourney.

> **WHAT: Berry Festival –** A Berrilicious Journey!

WHEN: 1st February onwards WHERE: Pan-India Naturals Outlets



ARCHIE















CROSSWORD



GARFIELD





NOW, I WASN'T THERE, BUT AS NANCY TELLS
IT-- THE TEEN-AGE
BULLY HIT NANCY IN
THE BACK OF THE
HEAD WITH A
HUGE SNOWBALL-

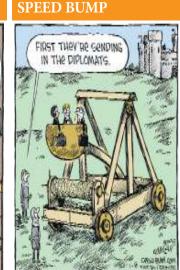








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12 Rescue

17 Below

18 Living 19 A very large hill

3 Shove

14 Paddle these boats

4 A flat kind of worm that

sucks blood

- games and training 7 Egg centres 6 The wives of emperors 8 Water vapour 11 A yellow fruit 9 Required
- 13 Record TV shows 10 Burn black by being with this too close to heat
 - 15 A round vegetable 16 Wide smile



GINGER MEGGS

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I AM OPEN TO DO ANY **ROLE: SAI RAM SHANKAR**



op director Puri Jagannath's brother Sai Ram Shankar is playing the lead in the film 'Oka Pathakam Prakaram', a crime genre. The film is releasing on February 7 and Sai Ram Shankar is pinning his hopes on this one. "I am confident that the story of this film is definitely a good one and after watching this one, people will

> Some films because of budget and some of them I didn't like. But I am getting a lot of offers these days," said Sai

Ram. He added that after this film he is going to act continuously. "I am open to any roles," he said. If the role is good and he likes it, then he is ready to do it. "I am not sticking to play only lead characters. I am open to any other role, but it should be prominent," he said.

Director Vinod Vijayan is a Malayali and did he know Telugu? "Yes, he knows Telugu and he speaks also," said Sai Ram. He added that the director has won a few awards for his film

Malayalam, he directed two films with Fahadh Faasil and at a young age he became a director. He is also a friend of

mine since the last 15 years," said Sai Ram.
Talking about the role, he said he is playing a criminal lawyer in it. "After the shooting started, for the first two days, I felt something wrong. So, I stopped and then did a workshop for nearly a month learning more about the body language and behavior of lawyers to get realistic." He added that they announced the cash prize of Rs 10,000 to any person if they identified the villain at the interval. "Actually, this announcement helps our film to get popular," he said.

Apart from the director, there are many Malayalam people who worked for this film and do they plan to release it there? "Not now, but once released in Telugu, we will definitely release it in Malayalam and Tamil," said the actor. He added that there are a few actors like Samuthirakani in the film.

like Samuthirakani in the film.

The climax fight which they shot nearly with 25 dogs is going to be the highlight.

"Yes, there was a big fight and we shot for nearly seven days. The dogs are not friendly ones, but regular breeds. While shooting for this fight, one dog came into my grill which scared me a lot. I called the action choreographer, but he was watching the scane on camera. To escape from it. scene on camera. To escape from it, I climbed the grill and in the meantime, the

dog master came to my rescue."
His elder brother Puri Jagannath is one of the top directors and when asked whether there was any chance of acting in his film? "No", said Sai Ram without giving any reason. This film is releasing along with Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi star-rer "Thandel'. "No, I am not competing with Thandel', but my film is releasing next to that film," said Sai Ram.

The actor said that he was also approached for a web series. "I am working for a mythological web series in which I am playing a 60-year-old man in it," he said. He added that another film 'Resound' and definitely helps is almost over and a few more projects are for this film. "In in the pipeline.



Hari Hara Veera Mallu is definitely up to expectations, says AM Rathnam

roducer AM Rathnam made 'Kushi' with Pawan Kalyan in 2001 and it was a huge blockbuster at that time and took Pawan Kalyan into the top league. After that he produced several films and marked his name as one of the top producers in South India. After a long gap, Rathnam is now making a film with Pawan Kalyan titled 'Hari Hara Veeramallu', a period drama.

Directed by his son Jothi Krishna, the film is all set to release on March 28. The film's shooting is almost complete, after Pawan Kalyan allotted his

dates to complete it. The film started a few years back with director Krish, but Pawan Kalyan was busy with politics and is now the Deputy CM of Andhra Pradesh. Krish is moving to another film and Rathnam's son Jothi Krishna has taken over the directororial job and completed it.

Niddhi Agerwal plays the female lead, while MM Keeravani provided the music for this film. There are high expectations on this film, because this is the first one releasing after Pawan Kalyan became the Deputy CM.

"Definitely, this film raises the standards and makes everyone proud. I am confident that this one is going to reach the expectations of everyone and Pawan Kalyan is going to create a new benchmark with this film," said producer Rathnam.

Pawan Kalyan sang a song in this film and it was released recently and it went viral everywhere. With the shoot nearing completion, the post production work is going on to reach the release date. This film is set to surpass Pawan Kalyan's biggest blockbusters across all

Prashanth Karthi is happy with the response to his film



any films are now directly released on OTT platforms, and 'Pothugadda' is one of them released in ETV Win recently. Directed by Raksha Veeram, the film is getting good response. Prashanth Karthi, who plays a character with different shades, expressed his happiness over the appreciation his role is receiving.

"Initially, the director asked me to grow my beard and also sport long hair. But for me reason. I had to remove the hair. So. I thought I lost this role. But after a few days I got a call from director Raksha, who had seen my original look and decided to go with it. So, my appearance in this film is very natural," said Prashanth Karthi about his role.

The actor said that he is getting positive response from everywhere for his role in it. "I got appreciation for my performance which has different shades in it," said the actor. Though he is getting a lot of messages, when people like Chandra Siddharth and Chandrashekar Yeleti appreciate his acting, it is something special for him. He also revealed that most of the film was shot in the nights and that too in winter. "But, we never felt uncomfortable as we had taken care of everything," said Prashanth. Talking about his upcoming projects he said, "I am working on a film with a Rayalaseema backdrop. It is an action drama and I will reveal more details soon," said Prashanth.



film being made in three parts? op director Rajamouli is now shooting with Mahesh Babu and Priyanka Chopra for his upcoming film and it is tentatively titled as SSMB29. Rajamouli is taking all the pre-

cautions not to leak anything about the film, even after the shooting started at the Aluminium factory in Hyderabad. But still, people are talking more about the film. Another news is doing rounds about the film is that Rajamouli is planning to make

three parts. Generally, Rajamouli is taking his own time to come up with a film. So, for this film he already told Mahesh Babu that it is going to be in three parts and he has to spend nearly five years for this project, says a source.

Rajamouli in his career made only 'Baahubali' in two parts. But now, he is extending it to three parts with Mahesh Babu for this film as the story has good potential to do it, added the source. He mentioned many times that the film is an adventure one like Indiana Jones, the Hollywood film. So, he wanted to come up with sequels to this film too. The shooting is now taking a break with Priyanka Chopra leaving Hyderabad to attend her brother's marriage. Once after the marriage, she will be

back for the shoot. The next schedule is going to be in South Africa, says the source.

MAZAKA POSTPONED TO SIVARATRI?

Ramesh and Sundeep Kishan are the lead actors in the film 'Mazaka' which is supposed to be released on February 21. Directed by Nakkina Trinadha Rao and produced by Razesh Danda, the film story was given by Bezawada Prasanna Kumar. The shooting of this film is almost complete except for a song and a few patchworks. Though the makers are confident about the film's release on February 21, they don't want to release it in a hurry. So, they want to postpone it to February 26 to mark Maha Sivaratri.

On the other hand, the distributors are also putting pressure on the makers to release it

on Sivaratri, so that it will get good openings. Ritu Varma and Anshu of 'Manmadhudu' fame are playing the female leads. The film has come out really well and the makers are very happy for the response where they have shown the film to their close people and they said that it is going to be a sure hit.

Zee Studios is also involved in the pro-

duction of this film and they already paid some advance to the producer. So, they want to release the film on February 21. Under these circumstances, the makers are going to take a decision in a few days. "Most probably, the film may be postponed to February 26," said the source.



Small films making a big impact: Raj Kandukuri

irector GD Narasimmha is coming up with a small film titled Bhavani Ward 1997'. According to him, the film has horror, suspense and thriller elements and it is releasing on February 7. Gayathri Gupta, Pooja Kendre, Sai Satish and many others are playing important roles in it. The film's pre-release event was held in the city and producer, distributor Raj Kandukuri was a special guest for it.
"I believe this movie has strong content and these days content-based movies are doing good," said Raj Kandukuri. He added that he actually launched the title post of this film sometime back and now attended the pre-release event.

"I am a big fan of horror films and I wish this film is going to be a good success," said Raj. He added that as the release date approaches, there is some tension within the team, because they are eagerly waiting for the audience response. "But these days small films are making a significant impact, and everyone should support this small film," he said.

Director GD Narasimmha said that all the actors gave good performances in the film and hope this film enthralls the audience. "I am sure, the music will send shivers down your spine, and the visuals are fresh," said the director. He added that the fans of horror films can enjoy this 'Bhavani Ward 1997'.



Varun Chakravarthy added to Indian ODI squad

PTI ■ NAGPUR

In-form mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy has been included in the Indian ODI squad after his heroics in the just-concluded T20I series against England as the team management wants the KKR mystery spinner to "keep up the momentum".

There is a fair chance that Chakravarthy might just replace one of the four specialist spinners in the Champions Trophy (CT) squad. It could be one among Kuldeep Yadav or Washington Sundar, who could be axed to accommodate Chakravarthy before the final squad is announced. A lot will depend on how he fares in the ODIs.

Chakravarthy, who got 14 wickets in five T20Is against England and was adjudged the 'Player of The Series', has not been picked for the three ODIs against England and the Champions Trophy later this

Chakravarthy was seen training and bowling in the nets on Tuesday.

"Yes, Varun Chakravarthy is part of the squad," India vice-captain Shubman Gill confirmed in a media interaction after the team's training. It is understood that head coach Gautam Gambhir

wants Chakravarthy to remain in rhythm and bowl to the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Rishabh Pant. With the deadline for squad changes



for the Champions Trophy set for February 12, he remains a strong candidate for selection. However, it is unlikely that he will be added to the CT squad without playing a

India have got three finger spinners - two left-armers (Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel) and one right-arm off-spinner in Washington Sundar.

Kuldeep Yadav, who is returning to the Indian team after undergoing a sports hernia surgery in October 2024, is the lone wrist spinner in the

squad. "As of now, the team management wanted Varun to bowl in ODI squad nets ahead of England series. Varun doesn't play red-ball cricket," a senior BCCI source said on

conditions of anonymity.
"With domestic white ball season already concluded, he does not have any assignments till start of IPL end March. He is in good rhythm and they want him to continue that," he

When asked if there is a possibility of him being selected for the ODI series and subsequent Champions

Trophy based on current form, the source replied, "The selectors have already picked four spinners and you only have three ODI games.
"But if team management wants

Varun, it will certainly have to speak to the chairman of selection committee. Whether they intend to or not, is still not known.

The Men in Blue don't have a second wrist spinner and Chakravarthy's strong form could work in his favour.

When he last played on the flatter tracks in Dubai during the 2021 T20 World Cup, Chakravarthy struggled to make an impact.

However, he has significantly improved since then, focusing more on over-spin to refine his variations. The English team has not read him well and in Champions Trophy, one of the opposition is Bangladesh, which was bamboozled by him in October during the T20I series. He could also be an unknown entity for most of the New Zealand and Pakistan teams.

Additionally, he has performed consistently on batting-friendly surfaces in the recent T20I series against England, finishing as the leading wicket-taker at an impressive average of 9.85. India are set to play all their league matches in Dubai.

Chakravarthy picked up 18 wickets for Tamil Nadu in the National One Day Championship.

Redeem Tlang, who hails from Shillong, has been one of the ISL's notable domestic

talents. With over 100 ISL appearances under his belt and having played a key role in NorthEast United's

historic Durand Cup victory in 2024, Tlang is thrilled about the league's arrival in

his home city.

"It's a very special moment for me personally and also for the people of Meghalaya to experience ISL matches in

Shillong," he said
"ISL is the top league in the country and to have it come

to your home is an incredible



Dimuth Karunaratne to retire from cricket

 ${
m F}^{
m ormer\ Sri\ Lanka}$ captain Dimuth Karunaratne is set to retire from international cricket after playing his 100th Test, which will be the second and final match against Australia starting here on Thursday.
The 36-year-old, one of the most prolific batters for Sri Lanka, has scored 7,172 runs

at an average of just under 40, with 16 centuries and 34 half-centuries in 99 Tests over nearly 14 years. He has also featured in 50 ODIs, scoring 1,316 runs with one

scoring 1,316 runs with one century and 11 fifties.
"It is difficult for a Test player to keep himself motivated to play four Tests for a year and maintain his form." Variantal 11. for a year and maintain mo-form," Karunaratne, who made his Test debut in 2012, was quoted as saying by

was quoted as saying by 'Daily FT'.

"In the last two-three years after the WTC (World Test Championship) was introduced, we have been having very little bilateral series. My current form is another reason; completing my 100 Tests, the end of the WTC cycle (2023-25), I thought is the right time to retire."

Karunaratne plans to relocate to Australia with his family next month. Having made his first-class debut for Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in 2008, he will play his final match for them against NCC in the SLC Major Club three -Day Tournament from February 14-16.

"I have some personal plans of my own. I've decided to retire after speaking to other senior players like Angie

(Angelo Mathews) and Chandi (Dinesh Chandimal)," he said.

"Rather than the three of us retiring at the same time, it will be better for us to go one by one. I thought I will retire first because I know I cannot go for my next target
- 10,000 runs - with the
lesser number of Tests being played.

"I am happy with what I have achieved so far. I want to announce my retirement with a happy moment like playing in my 100th Test." Karunaratne has been struggling for form of late,

managing scores of 7 and 0 in the first Test against Australia in which Sri Lanka slumped to an innings and 242 run defeat to go 0-1 down in the two-Test series. "Any cricketer's dream is to play 100 Tests and score 10,000 runs. It's a big achievement. When you start playing cricket, you don't think of those targets, but when you continue playing, you come across

different targets," he said.
"But as Sri Lanka are playing less Test matches for a year, getting to 10,000 runs seems far away. Appearing in 100 Tests I feel is an achievement," he added. He would look back at his

to its sheer longevity "Several players play Test cricket but only a handful

career as a satisfied man due

are able to go and play 100 Tests. To become a member of that exclusive club I am very happy. To become Sri Lanka's seventh cricketer to play in 100 Tests is also a happy moment," he signed

wanted to lead MI Cape Town: Rashid

PTI ■ GQEBERHA

 $R^{
m ashid}$ Khan said he wanted to lead MI Cape Town in the same manner as he led Afghanistan during the T20 World Cup and credited his improved leadership this season to his familiarity with the team, which helped secure player a spot in the SA20 playoffs.

After two forgettable seasons, MI CapeTown now sits at the top of the points table with 30 points from nine matches ahead of the playoffs.

26-year-old Afghanistan to a historic victory over Australia in the Super Eight stage of the T20 World Cup 2024, following which the team made it to the semifinals.

"I wanted to lead MI CapeTown the way I led Afghanistan in the T20 World Cup. Coach Robbie Peterson also encouraged me in this direction," Rashid, who captained MI Cape Town in the first season but missed out last season due to injury, said in a media interaction ahead of the first qualifier against Paarl Royals.

"I think this year I knew the players quite well and spent more time with them so I had the knowledge about which bowler to use at what point of

"The most important thing

communication with the players. To have what is happening in the mind of the captain and to know what is going through in their minds. I think I could have done better in the first year but you

just keep learning."
Rashid noted that every player has taken responsibility and risen to the occasion, marking a major shift from the previous

"In the last couple of years, we played good cricket, but it was just about that we haven't finished well. You know, we haven't hit those points where it was a matter of going to the result," he said.

"I feel like this year we just have done that well. It's an overall team effort. Whoever got the opportunity, they have contributed for the team. Even if it's like he goes for one ball or two balls to hit there, he did it for the team."

Praising the contribution from the bowlers, Rashid said: "Everyone has been contributing with the ball as well. So, I feel like this year, this is a massive difference. The biggest thing is we're enjoying ourselves. You know, we're having fun and we're not much thinking about what the result will be."

Rashid emphasised the importance of having a have clear leadership group in the team. way and I am getting

Shillong to become new ISL venue PTI ■ SHILLONG government extended their support to the move. NorthEast United forward

A new venue will be added to the Indian Super League (ISL) when Shillong hosts NorthEast United FC's 'home' match against Mumbai City FC on Friday at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

The football loving fans of Meghalaya have been waiting for this ISL's debut match with much anticipation.

The Guwahati-based Highlanders will also host Bengaluru FC and East Bengal at the same venue here on February 21 and March 8, respectively, as the fans look forward to witness Indian football's biggest stars, including Sunil Chhetri, Lallianzuala Chhangte and Naorem Mahesh Singh in action. NorthEast United CEO Tamhane Mandar

Tuesday shed light on how

the club's move to Shillong came about. "When we played the semi-final of the Durand Cup against Shillong Lajong here, it was an eye opener for me even though I've been involved in Indian football

"The online tickets were sold out in 12 minutes and there were 5km long queues for physical tickets. Fan parks in

for over 25 years," Tamhane

different districts were also jam-packed.

We are a club representing eight states and we always wanted to bring football to parts of the Northeast. Seeing the response we got for the Durand Cup, reaffirmed our decision to come to Shillong this season itself," he was quoted as saying by the official ISL website.

He said the Meghalaya



cern over Sanju Samson's lack of form PTI ■ NEW DELHI dismissed like this, is the Naman Awards that players Ashwin said a player is always bowler bowling well or do I should use their subconscious have a shortcoming? Will I be mind too. "Sachin Tendulkar also said

Former India spinner R
Ashwin has expressed concern at T20 batting star Sanju Samson's lack of form, saying his mind will start "playing tricks" with him if he does not find a way out of the current rut.

The 30-year-old Samson, who will be out of action for a month due to a fracture in his right index finger, endured a terrible series against England's express pace and short balls. He managed a mere 51 runs in

the five-match contest that India won 4-1.

"...If Sanju keeps getting dismissed like this, as a batter, the mind will be playing tricks," Ashwin said. "(It will force you to think) the bowler is bowling a certain

able to adapt? Once so many questions arises, then it becomes difficult," he explained.

Ashwin also advised out-offrom skipper Suryakumar Yadav to change his approach to come out of the form slump that he is also enduring right now. Suryakumar could only manage 28 runs in the justconcluded series against England.

understand it can happening in one or two games, but it is quite surprising," Ashwin said on his Hindi YouTube channel.

"...When you know you are being attacked in a certain way, there should be a different approach to that ball or just avoid it and force the bowler to bowl at your



strengths." "Suryakumar Yadav is a very experienced guy. He has a lot of ability. One can say he brought about a change of guard in Indian batting, showing the way. But the time has come for him to take some time out and change his approach," he added.

Ashwin said Samson, who has blown hot and cold throughout his run in international cricket, should take responsive actions to ensure that doubts don't creep into his subconscious mind. "But Ashwin cited legendary Sachin Tendulkar's advice during last week's BCCI during the (BCCI) awards function that (you must) do so many repetitions that you allow the subconscious mind to take over," he said.

"But if so much confusion comes over on the subconscious mind, then batting becomes a different

ball game altogether."
Ashwin said failing in T20 cricket is not the problem but the manner of dismissals can be a cause of concern.

"As an experienced cricketer I will not focus on someone failing in T20 cricket but on how is he getting out, what is his decision making is like, I will focus on that. They are good enough players to find solutions and they will think

over it," he said.

rated on his ability to handle pressure in the shortest formats. "T20 cricket is (all) about failures, you are bound to fail.

You will not be able to play

percentage cricket. As per this,

will think (about) the player who can handle pressure and can deliver wins," he said. "Those players can be given long rope because T20 cricket is not about consistency, it's about excitement, putting fear

in the opposition." Ashwin also expressed surprise at England's approach across formats, saying they are losing more than they are winning due to their

aggressive strategy.
"...If I was England, I would be really worried, because they play Bazball, one-day and T20 cricket... All that is fine," he

Virat, Rohit's form will be key to India's success in CT: Raina

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

They may have struggled in recent times but the form of skipper Rohit complement each other well, Sharma and his longtime and both have the skill to colleague Virat Kohli will be score big runs. If they key to India's success in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy, reckoned former batter Suresh Raina on

Tuesday. The Champions Trophy starts in Pakistan from February 19 and will concluded on March 9 but India will play all their matches in Dubai as per the hvbrid model agreement signed by the concerned parties.

Speaking to broadcaster Star Sports, Raina said, "Rohit Sharma's strike rate has improved significantly after the ODI World Cup in 2023. Since then, he has scored runs at a strike rate of 119-120, making him one of India's best ODI batsmen.

would say that when you have a strong record of past performances, it gives you a lot of confidence. They perform well, Champions Trophy campaign will benefit

India have been clubbed with arch-rivals Pakistan, Zealand New Bangladesh in the group stage of the tournament.

Speaking about the spin department and team combination, Raina said, "I think (Ravindra) Jadeja will definitely play because of his effectiveness in ODIs. Kuldeep (Yadav) has not played a match since his injury, but we also have Axar Patel, who has been consistently performing

offer some seam movement, and Jadeja need to be in top



"The pitches in Dubai will That's why Kuldeep, Axar, "For Rohit and Virat, I but spin will also play a role. form. Rohit's choice of team

combination will be crucial."

Trophy, India are also England, and Raina believed playing a three-match ODI it will help the likes of Kohli Before the Champions series at home against and Rohit to get some

valuable game time before the mega event.

"When it comes to whiteball cricket, Virat knows how to switch on and switch off. He has scored the most runs against England, so his energy will be at a different level automatically. The three ODIs will be played in Nagpur, Ahmedabad, and Cuttack -- all of which are high-scoring venues," Raina said of Kohli, who has struggled for runs in the Test

series in Australia. Sharing his thoughts on the upcoming series, Raina said Rohit should continue to go after the bowlers from the get-go as it has also brought him success in the last ODI World Cup in 2023.

Speaking on his expectations from Rohit, Raina said, "I think Rohit should play aggressively. You saw how he batted in the ODI World Cup -- he was attacking even in the final. So, I believe his approach

will remain the same.

"The key question is who will open alongside him -will it be Shubman (Gill)? I remember, whenever they play together, they maintain an aggressive intent.

Raina also lauded Rohit's captaincy. "Rohit Sharma is an

attacking captain. The way he utilises his bowlers is commendable - bringing in Mohammad Shami at crucial moments and relying on spinners strategically.
"When Rohit scores runs, it

also reflects in his captaincy. This could be his last ICC trophy as captain, and if he wins, he will become the first Indian player to win four ICC trophies.

"He has already won the T20 World Cup, and securing the Champions Trophy would remarkable achievement. He will be motivated to make it happen, but scoring runs will be crucial for him."