

**Govt has taken note of 'objections', says Khattar**



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**'CLIMATE FINANCE TAXONOMY SHOULD BE READY IN 6 MONTHS'**



8

**After Majaka, filmmakers know where I can fit: ANSHU SAGAR**



P11

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The pioneer

*It is surprising that KTR did not participate in the caste census. However, he and his family are now speaking about a re-survey. It is ridiculous on the part of KTR to speak about weaker sections. BCs were subjected to immense injustice during BRS's 10-year rule. The BRS and the BJP have compromised in MLC elections. The BRS does not have candidates to field in MLC elections. So it is indirectly supporting the BJP as it did during the 2024 Parliament elections*

**- B Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC Chief and MLC**

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**DON'T MISS...**  
**Projects under H-CITI must be people-first**

In a significant move to address Hyderabad's urban challenges, Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Principal Secretary M Dana Kishore chaired a teleconference with GHMC officials, engineers and city planners to review the progress of the Hyderabad City Innovative and Transformative Initiative (H-CITI). The meeting emphasised accelerating infrastructure projects to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance public welfare across Greater Hyderabad. Officials, including ...

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**How Yamuna issue sank AAP**

The Yamuna factor seemingly played a significant role in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, reshaping voter sentiment and helping the BJP script history by defeating AAP. A key driver of this shift was the backlash from Haryana-origin voters who viewed AAP's narrative on Yamuna pollution as an attack on their home state. The BJP, which bagged 48 out of 70 seats, fielded 14 candidates of Haryana descent and 12 of them won. The Aam Aadmi Party had 10 such candidates but...

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**Dry spell in Shimla worries farmers**

A prolonged dry spell has got Shimla farmers worrying about the apple crop, which is now threatened by a hampered production. Desired cooling hours (1,200 to 1,600 below 7 degrees Celsius) for traditional varieties and 600 hours for early varieties have not come by this season. Farmers were also restricted from new plantations due to unfavourable weather conditions. Fruit Vegetable Flower Growers Association President Harish Chauhan said on Sunday. About 90 per cent of apple orchardists...

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**New Zealand is one of strongest team**

Spin great R Ashwin has called India and New Zealand the strongest sides heading into the Champions Trophy but warned teams against taking Australia lightly despite the loss of key players to injuries as they "bring their A-game" into marquee tournaments. The ICC event starts in Pakistan on February 19 with India playing all their matches in Dubai under a hybrid model agreement. "India has the home advantage in Dubai, and it almost like every other team is playing an away match against..."

-SPORTS

# 31 Naxals gunned down

**Fierce encounter ensued between 650 cops and Maoists in Bijapur dist of Chhattisgarh**

PNS ■ BIJAPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

In one of the deadliest blows to Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, security forces on Sunday gunned down 31 rebels, including 11 women, in a fierce encounter in the state's Bijapur district, police said.

Two security personnel were also killed and as many injured in the face-off, they said.

More than 650 security personnel entered the Indravati National Park area from different sides and eliminated 31 Naxalites in their den, Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said.

With this success, 81 Naxalites have been neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year, compared to 219 in 2024.

CM Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh and the country is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of



Naxalism by March 2026, he asserted. The latest gunbattle took place on a forested hill along the border of Madded and Farsegarh police station areas when personnel from different security forces during an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj P said. Acting on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their national park area committee, personnel from state police units District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and Bastar

**CM Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh and the country is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of Naxalism by March 2026, he asserted**

Fighters had launched the operation on February 7, he said.

At around 8 am on Sunday, an intense exchange of fire broke out on the hill, a part of the Indravati National Park. The intermittent gunfight lasted till around 4 pm, he said.

"So far, bodies of 31 Naxalites, including 11 women, clad in 'uniform' have been recovered from the encounter site. **Continued on Page 2**



**Manipur CM Biren resigns ahead of no-trust motion**

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Amidst rumblings within the state BJP seeking a change of leadership, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, officials said.

The Governor accepted Singh's resignation, along with that of his council of ministers, and requested that he continue in office until alternative arrangements are made. The development comes hours after he returned from Delhi.

Earlier this week, a new controversy erupted after the Supreme Court sought a sealed-cover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence.

The tapes reportedly included conversations where Singh allegedly suggested that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition from the state government during the unrest, which has so far claimed 250 lives.

Singh in his resignation letter also requested the Centre to continue the "crackdown on border infiltration and to formulate policy for the deportation of the illegal immigrants and the fight against drugs and narco terrorism."

On Saturday, Singh convened a meeting with BJP-led ruling alliance MLAs at the CM Secretariat.

# BRS-Congress deal to defeat BJP in MLC polls: Sanjay

**'How can Muslims be included in BCs' list'**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS has joined hands with the Congress to defeat the BJP in MLC elections, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said. There is a quid-pro-quo deal between the BRS and the Congress, he added.

Sanjay said that the BRS has a tacit understanding with the Congress to ensure the victory of Congress candidates in the MLC elections as the Congress government did not arrest BRS leaders although they were stuck in scams and facing investigations. He called upon MLC election voters to expose the secret deal between the Congress and the BRS.

Attending Teachers' MLC Election Workshop in Nalgonda district on Sunday, Sanjay gave



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar addressing the media at Nalgonda on Sunday

directions to BJP workers. "How can Muslims be included in the BCs' (Backward Classes) list? What is your caste? Do you think this is your ancestral property? We wear bindis, we have birth stars, gotra (lineage) names, and we wear sacred threads. That is our identity. The Congress is a foolish party that cannot distinguish between different communities. What is common between Hindus and Muslims? Should Hindus beg? Do you want to turn them into beggars?" Sanjay said at the Teachers' MLC Election Workshop on Saturday.

He criticised BC organisations and their silence and accused them of supporting those in power. He warned that if this situation continues, Muslims will start contesting even in BC-reserved seats in remote areas of the state.

He said that when Muslims contested in BC-reserved seats during GHMC elections and committed injustice against Hindus, Hindutva supporters and BC organisations remained silent. **Continued on Page 2**

# CM must give Deputy CM post to BCs: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA T. Harish Rao demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy should give the Deputy Chief Minister post to BCs. He also demanded that the Congress should implement its 'Kamareddy BC Declaration' as per the word given to BCs.

Attending a function at the Sri Krishna Yadava Function Hall in Siddipet on Sunday, Harish said the Congress government had conducted a fake caste survey and

**Alleges Revanth is responsible for suicides of realtors**



Harish holding the CM responsible for suicides by realtors and that a few days ago, a realtor named Venugopal Reddy committed suicide and another realtor named Narsimha Goud committed suicide on Sunday.

reduced the number of BCs. He also asked the government to provide 42 per cent reservations to BCs in the local body elections.

He said that the CM did not do justice to even a single community. The government should hold local body elections only after providing 42 per cent reservations to BCs, he added.

Harish said that Revanth was sending money looted from

Telangana and that the CM could not even get an appointment to meet Rahul Gandhi. Revanth has mortgaged the honour of Telangana to his bosses, he added.

He said that Ministers are taking 30 per cent commissions if anyone goes with land disputes to them and that Bhumatha has become a Bhumetha. There is a fight between Ministers and Congress MLAs for kickbacks, he said.

Harish held the CM responsible for suicides by realtors and that a few days ago, a realtor named Venugopal Reddy committed suicide and another realtor named Narsimha Goud committed suicide on Sunday.

"It is unfortunate that the suicide culture has hit the real estate business. The CM must help the Narsimha Goud family," he said.

Declaring that the government should give 18 per cent reservations to SCs on the basis of their population percentage, Kadiam said the BRS government did not develop anything in the last 10 years.

He said the BRS Working President is enjoying the victory of the BJP in Delhi and that the AAP faced defeat due to its friendship with the BRS. The Congress and AAP would have come to the power in Delhi if they had an alliance, Kadiam said. He said the AAP lost due to the liquor scam and as it contested alone.

Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiam Srihari who joined the Congress after winning on a BRS ticket declared that he is ready to face a by-poll.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Kadiam said the disqualification petition is in Supreme Court and the verdict will come on February 10.

"I will follow the SC verdict. I will not run away if by-polls come. I will stand and fight. The BRS has no right to speak on defections. The BRS is the party which destroyed democracy in Telangana," he said.

**Prepared to face by-poll, says Kadiam**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

# 'Our population underestimated'

**Munnur Kapu demand resurvey, plan public meeting**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Munnur Kapu community has strongly condemned the underestimation of their population in the government's caste census. Munnur Kapu leaders said the government humiliated them by undercounting their numbers even though they constituted the majority.

The Munnur Kapu leaders decided to organise a huge public meeting with 10 lakh people in Hyderabad to protest against the survey conducted by the government.

Responding to the call of the Munnur Kapu Apex Council, prominent Munnur Kapu members held an emergency meeting on Sunday at the VHR Banquet Hall at the Sikh



Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra addressing the Munnurkapu meeting on Sunday at Sikh Village

Village in Secunderabad on the topic 'Caste Census Results - Mistakes Made.'

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Rajya Sabha Members Vaddiraju Ravichandra, Dr Kova Laxman, Karimnagar MLA

Gangula Kamalakara, MLC Teenmar Mallanna and others demanded that Chief Minister Revanth should order a resurvey immediately and said that they oppose the caste census survey.

Speaking at the meeting chaired by Apex Council Convener Sardar

Putam Purushottam Rao, Union Minister Sanjay said that as the Munnur Kapu community has a majority in the state, the BJP and the Congress have appointed Munnur Kapu leaders as state party presidents several times.

**Continued on Page 2**



BRS working president KTR addressing the media along with BC leaders on Sunday at Telangana Bhavan

**BRS plans public meeting of BCs**  
**Govt must conduct caste census again, demands KTR**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS will organise a public meeting of BCs, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said. BRS supremo K. Chandrasekhar Rao will also attend the meeting.

KTR made it clear that they will organise the public meeting at the same spot in Kamareddy where the Congress announced its BC

Declaration. He said the caste census report is a collection of mistakes and demanded that the Congress government conduct a re-survey. He said that KCR and his family would participate in the caste survey if it is conducted again.

KTR asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to apologise for reducing the population of BCs in the caste survey report. The Congress deceived peo-

ple during the 2023 Assembly election campaign and also after coming to power, he said. KTR warned that the BRS will not let go the Congress till it delivers justice to BCs and that the BRS will take the injustice meted out to BCs to the people.

Addressing the media after meeting BC leaders on Sunday, KTR said the Congress deceived the BCs by showing **Continued on Page 2**



# City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 10, 2025

03



## Illegal farmhouse, boundary walls demolished in Koheda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) carried out demolition operations in Koheda village, Abdullapurmet mandal, Ranga Reddy district on Sunday. The teams under police security, carried out the demolition of the farmhouse, boundary walls and a fencing. The action was taken following complaints from members of the Radhe Dhamam Layout Plot Owners Welfare Association and other plot owners, who alleged that Sammireddy Balreddy had encroached on their plots in Survey Numbers 951 and 952 of the village panchayat layout and blocked internal roads with unauthorised walls. After the verification land records, officials confirmed that the land in Survey Numbers 951 and 952 was part of a village panchayat layout established in 1986 by landowners K Ramulu, Peddaya and Esayya.

However, it was found that Sammireddy Balreddy had taken control of the land, constructed a farmhouse, claimed several plots as his own and obstructed internal roads. HYDRAA issued notices to both parties, requiring them to present all relevant documents. On February 8, both parties, along with revenue and municipal officials, submitted their documents for review. Tukkuguda municipal officials confirmed that the farmhouse, sheds, compound wall and fencing built by Balreddy had no legal permissions. The plot owners alleged that after selling plots as part of the layout, Balreddy fraudulently created records to claim ownership of the land. Following an inquiry with both parties and officials, HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath ordered the demolition of Balreddy's unauthorised structures.

**Annual Day Celebrations**  
By Euro Kids School  
Venue  
Ravindra Bharati  
February 10, 9 am to 1 pm

**Annual Day Celebrations**  
By Deepanjali  
Venue  
Ravindra Bharati  
February 10, 6 pm to 10 pm

**IRO Lit Festival**  
By Navatarangam Organisation  
Venue  
Ravindra Bharathi  
February 7, (6 pm)

**Abhinaya Arangam**  
6th India Reading Olympiad  
Venue  
Birla Planetarium and Museum  
February 10, 9 am to 7 pm

**Telugu and Hindi film songs concert**  
By Pushpanjali Rhythms  
Venue  
Sri Tyagaraja Gana Sabha  
February 10, 12noon

## Every project under H-CITI must be people-first: Principal Secy

Stress on infrastructure upgrades not only resolving traffic bottlenecks but also integrating flood mitigation measures to prevent water-logging during monsoons



MAUD Principal Secretary M Dana Kishore, along with GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi reviewing the progress of H-CITI project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant move to address Hyderabad's urban challenges, Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Principal Secretary M Dana Kishore chaired a teleconference with GHMC officials, engineers and city planners to review the progress of the Hyderabad City Innovative and Transformative Initiative (H-CITI).

The meeting emphasised accelerating infrastructure projects to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance public welfare across Greater Hyderabad. Officials, including GHMC Commissioner, Additional Commissioners, Zonal Commissioners, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers and City Planners were instructed to form dedicated teams and conduct field visits to all H-CITI project sites.

Principal secretary Dana Kishore mandated a thorough review of ongoing works, including flyovers, road expansions, underpasses, Rail Under Bridges (RUBs), Retaining Walls

(ROWs), and ROW Beautification Initiatives (RoWBs), to ensure the project's success with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's vision for a congestion-free, flood-resilient Hyderabad.

Every H-CITI project must prioritise maximum public benefit and long-term convenience. Dana Kishore stressed that infrastructure upgrades should not only resolve traffic bottlenecks but also integrate flood mitigation measures to prevent water-logging during monsoons.

Officials were directed to submit written suggestions for improvements, modifications, or additions to existing projects. The focus is on innovative solutions to eliminate traffic disruptions during construction and ensure minimal public inconvenience.

The Principal Secretary highlighted the need for coordinated efforts between departments to expedite work while maintaining quality. Projects like flyovers and road widening must align with Hyderabad's long-term urban development goals, ensuring seamless connectivity and sustainability.

## TGMC crack down on unauthorised medical practices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Medical Council (TGMC) conducted inspections in Sangareddy district on Saturday, uncovering three unauthorised clinics, an illegal diagnostic centre and an Ayurvedic practitioner illegally prescribing allopathic medicines. The council has announced that cases will be filed against the fake doctors and notices will be issued to those violating medical regulations.

The inspection team, led by TGMC Vice-Chairman Dr G Srinivas, Public Relations Committee Chairman Dr V Naresh Kumar, and Member Dr Kadali Vishnu, identified three clinics Gemini Clinic in Fasalwadi, Manikanta First Aid Centre in Ahmed Nagar (Rajampet Road), and Srinivasa Clinic near the old bus stand



Telangana Medical Council (TGMC) officials conducting inspections in Sangareddy

operating without government approval. The individuals running these clinics were found practicing allopathic medicine without any recognised qualifications, administering antibiotics, painkillers and steroid injections to patients without proper authorisation. Legal proceedings are being initiated against the owners of these clinics, D

Gopal, D Malka Goud, and Kishan Rao, for violations under the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act and the Telangana State Medical Practitioners Registration (TSMPR) Act, confirmed TGMC Vice-Chairman Dr G Srinivas.

During the inspection, a large stock of allopathic medicines was discovered at Gemini Clinic, stored without approval from the Drugs Control Authority. TGMC member Dr Kadali Vishnu stated that a formal complaint will be lodged with the Sangareddy District Drug Inspector regarding this violation. The officials also found that an Ayurvedic doctor S Ravinder Patil, who runs Venkateshwara Clinic near the old bus stand, was illegally practicing allopathic medicine and administering antibiotics and steroid injections.



The inauguration of International Interventional Pulmonology Conference

## EXPERTS AT BRONCHUS-2025

## Early detection of lung cancer crucial

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After COVID-19, respiratory illnesses have risen, making early detection of lung cancer crucial, said health experts at an International Interventional Pulmonology Conference held by Yashoda Hospitals on Sunday.

BRONCHUS-2025 was the 4th edition of BRONCHUS series. World Association on Interventional Pulmonology with more than 60 international faculty, more than 150

national faculty and more than 3,000 pulmonology doctors in this International Interventional Pulmonology Conference and live workshop.

Speaking on this occasion, Yashoda Group Hospitals Managing Director, Dr GS Rao, said that the lung medicine department, which is modernising and expanding its scope, has become a platform for sharing medical knowledge among medical experts from different countries to focus on

the latest innovations in medical science.

Lung cancer kills more people than any other cancer type, with an estimated 1.8 million deaths worldwide. Lung cancer is diagnosed very late, mostly in stage 3 and 4 due to lack of early diagnostic advances. In India, lung cancer accounts for nearly 8.5 per cent of cancer cases and is one of the top three leading cancers, said the Yashoda Hospitals Senior Interventional

Pulmonologist Dr Harikishan. During Covid-19 and after it was like air ambulances dropping patients with lung illness and awareness of early prediction can reduce it. Leading physicians around the world are Prof Felix Herth - Thorax clinic (Germany), Prof Kyle Hogarth - University of Chicago (USA), Dr Michael Pritchett (USA), Dr Pallav Shah (UK) and other foreign physicians who participated in the programme.

## THROUGH HER ORGAN DONATION Bhumika Reddy's tragic accident gave new hope to five people

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dr Bhumika Reddy, a 24-year-old house surgeon from LB Nagar, tragically lost her life in a road accident. Despite her untimely passing, she gave hope to five people through organ donation. She succumbed to her injuries at Continental Hospitals in Gachibowli, after a severe crash on the Outer Ring Road (ORR). In a final act of generosity, her heart, liver, lungs and kidneys were donated to save lives.

The only child of Nangi Nandakumar Reddy and Lohitha, Dr Bhumika was a promising young doctor training to become a surgeon. She completed her MBBS from a prestigious medical college and excelled in her studies. She later interned at Kamineni Hospital in LB Nagar, gaining valuable experience.



In her honour, Continental Hospitals staff paid their respects as her body was taken for organ donation. The Chairman of Continental Hospitals, Dr Guru N Reddy expressed deep sorrow at her loss and appreciated her family's selfless decision to donate her organs. Dr Bhumika's lungs were donated to KIMS Hospital, her heart to Apollo Jubilee Hills, her liver to Continental Hospitals, one kidney to NIMS Hospital, and the other to Continental Hospitals. Her legacy of kindness and service will continue to inspire many.



## 75TH INDIAN DENTAL CONFERENCE

## IDA Deccan Branch wins 8 National Awards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Dental Association (IDA) head office won eight national awards at the 75th Indian Dental Conference. IDA values its local branches as its backbone, supporting its initiatives and running independent programmes to promote oral health. These awards recognise excellence, encouraging branches and members to enhance IDA's visibility and improve access to dental care.

The awards were presented at a ceremony following the annual general meeting at the Chennai Trade Centre. Dr M Raveendranath, President of IDA head office, and Dr Ashok Dhoble, Secretary of IDA head office, presented the awards to

Dr S Niranjan Reddy, Dr Aditya Sandeep and Dr S Anuraga from the IDA Deccan branch.

Dr A Srikanth, Secretary of IDA Deccan, congratulated all awardees. IDA Deccan Branch Awards: All-Round Activity Local Branch: Dr VM Veerabahu Runners-Up Trophy. Best Local Branch President: Dr K V Ramana Reddy. Best Local Branch Secretary: Dr Ala Srikanth. Scientific Activity: Dr Keki Mistry Trophy. Best Council of Dental Health Activity: IDA Runners-Up Trophy. Student Activity: Dr Ramakanth Venson Award. School Dental Health: Dr Achyut Deodhar Trophy. 3rd Best Young Member: Dr S Anuraga (Dr Ratan H Doctor Award).

## Chilkur priest mangled by 'descendants' of Ikshwaku clan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chilkur priest CS Rangarajan was allegedly manhandled by individuals claiming to be descendants of the Ikshwaku clan. A police complaint was filed and the case being investigated.

According to Dr MV Soundararajan, convenor of the Temples Protection Movement and father of Rangarajan, these individuals sought to establish their version of Rama Rajya using private armies to punish those who did not support their mission.

## Collector's initiative brings cinema to residential schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an effort to engage students and broaden their perspectives, Vikarabad District Collector Pratheek Jain has launched a unique initiative Movie Clubs in residential schools. At a time when children often feel homesick and have limited recreational activities, this programme offers them not just entertainment but also valuable life lessons through cinema. What began with one school has now expanded to 16, with educational and inspirational films which are available on OTT platforms such as October Sky, Hidden Figures and Dargal being screened. Students have expressed their excitement, prompting the district administration to explore more films that can have a positive impact.



Children in various residential schools watching the movies

"The goal is to show children movies that can shape their thinking and instill a sense of responsibility," said Collector Pratheek Jain. "We were initially con-

cerned about parental reactions and whether students would grasp the deeper messages. So, we carefully researched and selected each film. There will be situations in films and sometimes we may know that children cannot grasp the meaning. So, we will try and intervene to assist and explain the scenario of it," added Pratheek Jain.

The district administration has invested Rs 60,000 to Rs 65,000 on each movie set, consisting of a laptop, screen and necessary cables. With 16 sets in place, each set is shared among five residential schools, rotating weekly. Films are screened during free periods, ensuring that academic schedules, especially for Class 10 students, remain undisturbed.

## FOR UNDER-PRIVILEGED CHILDREN Drive launched to provide free cleft lip and palate surgeries

DEEPIKA PASHAM  
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

In a collaborative effort to support children born with cleft lip and palate, Himalaya Wellness, in association with Smile Train NGO, have launched a 45-day campaign to provide free surgical interventions. The surgeries will be conducted by expert surgeons from Basavarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, Hyderabad.

This initiative aims to assist children from economically disadvantaged families with an annual income of less than Rs 8 lakh, offering them access to these life-changing surgeries which are typically expensive in corporate hospitals. The programme also includes transportation assistance from various districts to the hospital.

Dr Rambabu, Plastic Surgeon at Basavarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital, told The Pioneer, "Cleft lip and palate affect approximately one in every 700 live births. While earlier efforts focused on raising



The officials of Himalaya Wellness, in association with Smile Train NGO, launching the drive at Basavarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, Hyderabad

awareness, the emphasis has now shifted to ensuring timely treatment. Our hospital has successfully performed nearly 5,000 cleft lip and palate surgeries free of cost." Cleft lip and palate can result from multiple factors, including nutritional deficiencies, genetic predispositions - such as consanguineous marriages - and inappropriate medication use during pregnancy. In some cases, the condition can be detected prenatally through ultrasound imaging.

Under its Muskaan 2025 initiative, Himalaya Wellness aims to transform the lives of children affected by cleft conditions. The company's outreach vehicles will raise awareness across

Telangana, while Smile Train NGO offers a toll-free helpline to guide families through the process. Following initial assessments, eligible children will be directed to Basavarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital for appropriate surgical intervention, adhering to the recommended age guidelines for cleft surgeries.

Rajesh Krishnamurthy, Business Director of the Consumer Products Division at Himalaya Wellness, and Mamta Carroll, Smile Train's Senior Vice-President and Regional Director for Asia, confirmed that all districts in Telangana would be covered during the 45-day campaign.

## 'Cong govt committed to providing basic amenities in villages'

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

The state government is working towards providing basic amenities in villages, along with the implementation of welfare schemes, said Minister for Excise, Tourism, and Culture Jupalli Krishna Rao.

The Minister, along with local MLA T Megha Reddy, laid the foundation stone for various developmental works worth Rs18.71 crore, including roads and drainage systems, in several villages of the Peddamandadi mandal under Wanaparthy constituency.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister emphasised that the development of villages is essential for the progress of the country. He mentioned that the state government is particularly focusing on providing basic infrastructure in rural areas. He highlighted that improving sanitation and road transportation in rural regions would lead to a higher standard of living.

MLA Megha Reddy, speaking in Veerayapally village, assured the people that all pending works would

be completed by December this year. He also promised to grant Indiramma houses and ration cards to every family without a home.

In the Chilatonni Pali village of Peddamandadi mandal, MLA Megha Reddy laid the foundation for a side drainage system, with an expenditure of Rs 9.5 lakh. Subsequently, the foundation stone for drainage works worth Rs 15 lakh was laid in Veltor village panchayat. In Gatla Khanapur, works for constructing the Alwal Mangampalli BT road at an estimated cost of Rs 3.20 crore, as well as drainage works worth Rs 10 lakh, were also inaugurated.

Along with local legislators, the Minister Krishna Rao, also laid the foundation for BT road works from Ampalli to Peddamandadi via Solar Plant.

The event was attended by Revenue Divisional Officer Subrahmanyam, Peddamandadi MRDO Saraswati, MPDO Sadguna, Single Window Director Sai Charan Reddy, and Panchayati Raj DE Lakshminarayana.



Minister for Excise Jupalli Krishna Rao laying the foundation stone for developmental works in Wanaparthy constituency on Sunday

## 'Drunk man' kills son in Yadadri Bhuvangiri dist

PNS ■ BHUVANGIRI

A 14-year-old boy died allegedly after his father kicked in the chest on Saturday night. A small issue led to such a brutal act by father against his son, according to police.

The incident took place at Aregudem under Choutuppal mandal in Yadadri Bhuvangiri district. Katta Saidulu and his wife, who belong to the village, are farmworkers. They have three children. They want their children to be successful and so they work hard and provide them with quality education in private schools. They are raising their children with discipline to ensure they do not go astray. Until now, everything was going well.

However, in recent times, Saidulu allegedly became addicted to alcohol. He started coming home daily after drinking, disturbing his family. This had been going on for some time. Meanwhile, his youngest son Bhanu (14) was studying in 9th grade at Anna Memorial School in Choutuppal. On Saturday, the school organised a farewell party for the 10th-grade students, and Bhanu participated in it. The party caused a slight delay, so when Bhanu arrived home, it was already night, the police said.

By then, Saidulu, who was already intoxicated, became furious and started beating his son, asking why he was late. In his drunken state, he



Bhanu

struck Bhanu hard in the chest. As a result, Bhanu lost consciousness. The family immediately took him to the government hospital in Choutuppal. The doctors confirmed that Bhanu had already died by the time they examined him.

However, Saidulu told his wife not to reveal that he was the reason for their son's death. The family decided to take Bhanu's body from the government hospital in Choutuppal and bring it home without informing anyone, as they thought there was no need for a post-mortem. The hospital staff also did not inform the police.

The next morning, the family tried to bury Bhanu's body secretly, but the villagers found out and immediately informed the police. The police arrived and stopped the burial process, leading to a verbal confrontation between the police and the family.

## Cong celebrates caste census, sub-categorisation of SCs

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA Veerapalli Shankar and Congress leader from Medak Neelam Madhu Mudiraj participated in celebrations held at Nandigam mandal Centre on Sunday, marking the approval of Scheduled Castes classification and Backward Classes caste enumeration in the Telangana Assembly. The event witnessed the presence of several local leaders and community representatives, highlighting the significance of the decision for marginalised communities.

Addressing the gathering, Shankar expressed his satisfaction over the Congress government's move to introduce and pass the Scheduled Castes classification bill in the Assembly, fulfilling a long-pending demand of the BC communities after decades of struggle. He commended the Telangana government for honouring the promise made by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi regarding caste enumeration before the Assembly elections. Shankar emphasised that the Congress people's government, under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, was taking a historic step by conducting a Backward Classes caste census.



Shadnagar MLA Veerapalli Shankar and party leader Neelam Madhu Mudiraj participating in celebrations at Nandigam in Rangareddy district on Sunday

Neelam Madhu Mudiraj criticised certain political figures, including former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and his family, for not participating in the caste census survey.

Several prominent leaders participated in the event, including former ZPTC member Shyam Sundar Reddy, former

MPP Shiva Shankar Goud, President Narasimhulu, former MPTCs Kommu Krishna, Kumaraswamy Goud, Chandrapal Reddy, Ram Reddy, Youth Congress State General Secretary Ande Mohan, Harinath Reddy, Krishna Reddy, Shekhar, Srikanth Goud, Yadaiah, Ramulu, Chennaiya, and Jagan.

## Three ministers participate in Maha Kumbhabhishekam

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

In the Kaleshwaram Trilinga Temple, three Ministers offered special prayers. The Ministers visited Kaleshwaram for the Maha Kumbhabhishekam ceremony. Ministers D Sridhar Babu, Konda Surekha and Ponnamp Prabhakar performed pujas. Under the leadership of Sri Sri Satchidananda Saraswati Swami, the significant event concluded on Sunday.

The three-day event was conducted with grandeur, accompanied by the chanting of Vedic mantras. The Kumbhabhishekam Mahotsavam was organised by the Department of Endowments. On the final day, Kumbhabhishekam was conducted at the temple's Rajagopuram.

The grand Maha Kumbhabhishekam ceremony, held over three days, concluded on Sunday at 10:42 AM, with



Ministers D Sridhar Babu, Ponnamp Prabhakar and Konda Surekha at Maha Kumbhabhishekam in Kaleshwaram on Sunday

the Purnahuti ceremony marking its completion, as reported by the temple authorities.

Devotees had the opportunity to visit and offer prayers to Sri Kaleshwara Mukteswar Swami and Shubhananda Devi

amma. The Maha Kumbhabhishekam was organised under the guidance of the head of Tunji Tapovan, Sri Sri Satchidananda Saraswati Swami.

The temple echoed with

the sound of Vedic mantras, and the authorities took necessary measures to ensure that there were no inconveniences for the large number of devotees who participated in the event.

## Bag carrying Rs 23 lakh stolen from private bus

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A man travelling by a private bus from Vijayawada to Hyderabad lost Rs 23 lakh under suspicious circumstances.

According to reports reaching here, a bag containing Rs 23 lakh was stolen by miscreants while the passenger had gone for breakfast after getting off the bus.

The incident took place near a hotel on the national highway, near Narketpally in Nalgonda district.

The victim filed a complaint with the police, who have initiated an investigation. According to the police, a young man named Venkatesh from Bapatla was travelling from Vijayawada to Hyderabad by a private travel bus with Rs 23 lakh in his bag.

At around 9 am, the bus stopped at a hotel near Narketpally for breakfast, and Venkatesh got off along with other passengers.

However, he left the bag containing money on the bus and went inside the hotel for breakfast.

When he returned to the bus, he found that the bag with the money was missing and filed a complaint with the police.

The police registered a case and are investigating the matter.

## Auto driver thrashed for attempted rape

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

In Bhadradri Kothagudem district, an auto-rickshaw driver attempted to assault a young woman. He took the woman to a secluded area after she boarded his auto-rickshaw and tried to sexually assault her. Along with another person, he engaged in this dreadful act.

The woman managed to escape from their clutches and told her relatives about the incident. The relatives then caught the accused and handed him over to the police.

According to police, a young woman from a village in Bhadradri Kothagudem district came to Kothagudem bus station on Saturday to visit her relatives. She had trouble speaking properly, so the address she mentioned was not clear to auto-rickshaw driver Guguloth Kumar. Another nearby driver called the woman's mobile

number, figured out the address, and informed Kumar.

When the woman got into the auto-rickshaw, another person was already inside. However, instead of taking her to the address she gave, Kumar took her to a secluded place area near the railway gate on Hemachandrapuram Road.

Noticing this, the woman questioned the driver about where he was taking her. In that moment, driver Kumar and the other person tried to assault her. The woman managed to escape from their clutches and ran towards the railway gate. She informed a railway employee about the incident. The railway employee then called the woman's number and informed her relatives about what had happened. The woman's relatives arrived at the scene and inquired further about the incident.

## Tummala underlines importance of winning local body polls

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nagaswara Rao here on Sunday emphasised the need to ensure the victory of the Congress party in the forthcoming local body elections.

He was participating in a preparatory meeting held to discuss strategy for local body elections.

During the meeting, he mentioned that the local body elections should be taken as a challenge and urged the party cadre to work for the success of the party in the elections. He assured all help to the cadre.

He said that the local body elections should be taken as a challenge, and efforts should be made for victory. Those who work towards the success of Congress would be honoured, he said. Leaders should work with dedication, he said and added that strict action would be taken against those who violate party discipline.

The government under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy implemented



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nagaswara Rao participating in the preparatory meeting for the local body elections, in Khammam on Sunday

several welfare programmes. Despite the lack of Central assistance, the Chief Minister continued to implement the welfare schemes with courage. The goal is to make

Khammam district a progressive one. A permanent solution to the Munneru flood issue would be found. Election committees should work collectively according to the

party's decisions.

Nageswara Rao made it clear that the local body elections were crucial for strengthening the Congress party in Khammam.

## Illegal car racing on ORR causing nightmares

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A CCTV video showing two cars performing dangerous stunts on the Outer Ring Road (OR) near Shamshabad has gone viral, raising concerns about road safety and reckless driving.

The footage captures high-speed manoeuvres which may put not only the drivers but also other road users at serious risk.

Authorities are now under pressure to take stricter actions to prevent such dangerous and reckless driving and ensure the safety of commuters. The incident highlighted the need for enhanced traffic monitoring and more rigorous enforcement of road safety laws, it is felt.

On Sunday morning, youths engaged in high-speed racing, performing dangerous stunts by suddenly stopping their cars and making sharp turns. The reckless driving created



A CCTV video showing two cars performing dangerous stunts on the outer ring road in Hyderabad on Sunday

chaos on the ORR, posing a threat to other road users.

The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed along the ORR. The footage, which has now gone viral on social media, showed the youths spinning their cars in circles, further endangering traffic.

Shamshabad RGIA Circle Inspector Balaraju stated that efforts are underway to identify and apprehend those involved in the incident.

Meanwhile, concerns have been raised over inadequate police patrolling on the ORR, which may have contributed to the rise in illegal activities like car racing. Authorities are now under pressure to take stricter measures to curb such incidents and ensure road safety.

## POCSO Act invoked against teacher for 'raping' two girls

PNS ■ SURYAPET

A government teacher, who was in live-in-relationship with a woman, has been accused of sexually assaulting his partner's daughters.

According to the Police, the young girls confided in their mother about the horrific acts committed against them after the teacher was diagnosed with HIV. Jatoh Sunil Kumar, a teacher at a local high school in Suryapet district, had been living with another woman since the death of his wife in 2018. The woman has two daughters, aged 19 and 15, who also live with her.

During the mother's absence, the teacher, who assumed a fatherly role, allegedly raped the minors.

He reportedly threatened to kill them if they disclosed the abuse, subjecting them to repeated assaults.

Following his recent medical examination, which revealed his HIV status, the girls became alarmed and informed their mother. Subsequently, both the mother and daughters reported the incidents to the police, leading to the registration of a case against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, with an investigation now underway, according to Inspector of Police B Raghava Teliparu.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Delhi dislodges AAP

In a landmark political shift, the BJP has stormed to power in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, marking its return after 27 years

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that ruled for ten years has been ousted by the BJP. It is one of the major setbacks that AAP has suffered since its inception. Despite its misadventures it always remained voters favourite in Delhi. Now with the BJP making a comeback it has suffered not only a big jolt to the party morale but also to the brand Kejriwal. In a historic political shift, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has secured a decisive victory in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, ending the AAP's decade-long governance in the national capital. This marks the BJP's return to power in Delhi after 27 years. The BJP won 48 out of the 70 Assembly seats, surpassing the majority mark of 36 seats. In contrast, AAP managed to secure only 22 seats, a significant decline from its previous tally of 62 seats in the 2020 elections. The Congress party failed to open account, continuing its decline in the region. Notably, AAP's prominent leaders faced unexpected defeats. Aam Aadmi Party chief



Arvind Kejriwal lost the New Delhi seat to BJP's Parvesh Verma by a margin of 4,089 votes. Similarly, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was defeated in the Jangpura constituency. Senior AAP leaders, including Saurabh Bharadwaj in Greater Kailash and Somnath Bharti in Malviya Nagar, also lost their seats. After ten years in power, AAP encountered strong anti-incumbency sentiments, with voters expressing a desire for change.

Legal troubles and corruption allegations against key leaders, including Kejriwal and Sisodia, further diminished public trust in the party. Meanwhile, the BJP successfully leveraged AAP's shortcomings, presenting

a development-driven governance model that resonated with the electorate. This electoral outcome serves as a critical juncture for AAP. The party must undertake a comprehensive introspection. Perhaps it is time it realised that it would be a good idea to remain with the INDIA bloc and playing solo is not always a good idea. One of the major reasons for its defeat might have been the division of votes. Congress though did not gain but pulled it down. Addressing the corruption allegations transparently and implementing internal reforms will be essential to rebuild credibility. Reassessing policy positions and strengthening grassroots connections can help the party reconnect with its core voter base. In his concession speech, Arvind Kejriwal acknowledged the defeat and extended his congratulations to the BJP expressing hope that the new government will fulfill its promises to the people of Delhi. The results of the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections send a strong and clear message to all political parties—governance, credibility and adaptability matter more than rhetoric. The political parties cannot rely solely on past achievements; they must continuously evolve and deliver on public expectations. Ultimately, there are no shortcuts to winning voters' trust—even freebies have their limits.

## PICTALK



Tourists take a ride on a hot air balloon, in Manali

## The new geopolitical communication era

With emerging technologies, evolving geopolitical alliances and the dominance of visual storytelling, the way messages are crafted and delivered is being redefined



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

One of the critical areas where visible changes will be witnessed post-January 2025 is the communication landscape geopolitically. This era is positioned to redefine the very speedways of global communication, with a pivotal question arising: Are we on the verge of a 360-degree transformation in communication delivery, content orientation, outreach mechanisms, and the tools we deploy? Geopolitically, the communication ecosystem will embrace a new language—a language of immediacy, focused messaging, results-driven delivery, and the prioritisation of measurable outcomes to identify realistic patterns and global impacts.

As the world steps into this new chapter of geopolitical shifts, communication strategies are becoming more sophisticated, dynamic and multidimensional. The need of the hour is to analyse the new alliances afoot in the shifting political landscape and the major geopolitical developments. The evolving political climate is challenging traditional paradigms, compelling communication specialists, diplomats, and policymakers to rethink how messages are crafted, delivered, and received on a global stage. The era demands a communication framework that not only transcends borders but also bridges divides with precision, creativity, and authenticity. In 2025, the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" takes on greater resonance. Visual communication has become the most impactful way to deliver messages. A single, well-composed image has the power to convey emotions, ideas, and narratives that words may struggle to encapsulate. Building on this, the explosion of short-form videos, and 30-second reels, for instance, has transformed the landscape further. Their brevity and emotional depth make them tools of unparalleled influence in shaping public opinion, mobilising support, and even defusing tensions. This evolution places immense responsibility on communicators in the geopolitical arena. Diplomacy, once conducted primarily behind



closed doors, is increasingly playing out in the public domain through curated visuals, symbolic gestures and strategic messaging amplified by digital platforms. For foreign policy, the challenge is to balance transparency and strategy, using these tools to build trust while maintaining sensitivity.

As social media continues its rapid rise, many ask whether traditional media can still hold its ground in the face of this digital juggernaut. Social media has undeniably globalised and democratised communication, giving individuals, governments, and organisations a direct channel to their audiences.

It thrives on immediacy, engagement, and the power to go viral, making it an essential tool in geopolitical communication. However, traditional media is far from obsolete. In an era of information overload, its role as a trusted gatekeeper remains critical. While social media is the messenger of the moment, traditional media provides depth, analysis, and context—elements that are crucial for informed decision-making. For communication to be effective in this new geopolitical era, the two mediums must complement each other, creating a holistic narrative that is both immediate and enduring.

The rise of artificial intelligence has added another layer of



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS UNDENIABLY GLOBALISED AND DEMOCRATISED COMMUNICATION, GIVING INDIVIDUALS, GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS A DIRECT CHANNEL TO THEIR AUDIENCES

complexity to global communication. AI-driven analytics enable unprecedented insights into audience behaviour, preferences, and sentiments, allowing for hyper-personalised messaging. These tools are invaluable for diplomats and foreign policy experts, who can now craft messages with immense precision and predict their impact with greater accuracy. However, with these advancements come ethical dilemmas. The line between strategic communication and manipulation can easily blur, necessitating robust frameworks to ensure accountability and fairness. As the communication landscape becomes more intricate, the demand for skilled specialists is growing. These professionals are not just channels for information, they are strategists, analysts, and creators who understand the nuances of messaging in a diverse and rapidly changing world.

Traditional media must evolve to remain relevant, embracing digital innovations and audience-centric approaches. Meanwhile, social media must grapple with issues of misinformation, polarisation, and echo chambers, striving to become a platform that unites rather than divides.

In this era, communication is no longer just about delivering a message; it is about shaping perceptions, building relationships, and driving action. As

the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to communicate effectively will be one of the most powerful tools in navigating the complexities of a neo-geopolitical era. In an era marked by shifting alliances and evolving global priorities, multilateral institutions face both challenges and opportunities.

The reworking of commitments by key nations to international frameworks has drawn notice to the fragility of global consensus, raising questions about the role and relevance of these institutions in addressing shared challenges like public health, climate change, and economic inequality. This shifting landscape calls for a more nuanced approach to diplomacy within multilateral spaces, with a renewed focus on collective responsibility. For these institutions to thrive in a complex geopolitical climate, they must leverage communication technologies to foster transparency, engage diverse stakeholders, and amplify their ability to drive action. Whether through the lens of a camera, the reach of a tweet, or the depth of an investigative report, the stories we tell and how we tell them will shape the world in ways we are only beginning to understand.

(The writer is a former civil servant. Views are personal. Inputs by Vaishnavie Srinivasan and Zoya Ahmad)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## WTO NEEDS REFORM

Madam — It is with reference to the editorial page article "WTO is at a crossroads; Reform or perish" - February 8. WTO is the world's largest international economic organisation, established in 1995 with 166 members representing over 98 per cent of the global trade and global GDP. Before the WTO, there was the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), a global trade organisation with 23 countries. Every member country is obligated to follow the laws and policies framed by WTO rules. India is a significant member of the WTO. Trade disputes are addressed by the WTO's dispute settlement process. It is the WTO that makes efforts to promote transparency in decision-making by encouraging participation and, in particular, the use of the consensus rule. As an international platform, the WTO regulates and negotiates additional trade liberalisation. In recent days, the WTO has been facing many challenges related to changes in the global economy and geopolitical context. Its members have not been able to agree on new rules on agricultural goals, highlighting the conflicting interests between developed and developing countries. Difficult trade relations between the two largest world economies and WTO members—the US and China—also put a strain on the WTO. Unilateral trade measures such as raising tariffs on iron and steel threaten the multilateral trading system. This highlights the WTO might need to be reformed to meet current concerns such as national security, environmental standards, and the impact of technology on trade. If urgent reforms are not undertaken, the global trading system may soon witness the demise of the institution once deemed indispensable.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

## ZERO SEATS FOR CONGRESS IN DELHI

Madam — It will be painful for the Congress for the massive loss in the Delhi elections when people voted against them consistently for the last 3 terms 0-0-0. The most pathetic observation is that they

## BJP returns to power in Delhi



The BJP's long wait of 26 years to return to power in Delhi has ultimately come to an end after it registered an emphatic victory in Delhi Assembly polls. In fact, Delhi was the only erstwhile BJP-ruled state where victory remained elusive for the BJP even under the strong Modi wave since 2014. Hence, this victory has come as a big relief for the saffron party, which faced unceremo-

nious defeat at the hands of the AAP in two consecutive elections. On the other hand, the way the almost top leadership of the AAP, including former CM and party face Arvind Kejriwal and former Dy CM Manish Sisodia, licked the dust in the election reflects the deep anguish of the voters against the party.

No doubt that the anti-incumbency of 11 years and the corruption charges have led to the defeat of the AAP. The arrest of Kejriwal and Sisodia in the liquor scam and the Sheesh Mahal controversy dented the party's image deeply. Interestingly, 'theatrics', the biggest tool of the AAP, also failed to impress the voters this time. But the BJP needs to be cautious, as the AAP, which was born out of the agitations, will prove to be a strong opposition.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

couldn't manage even a single seat in the last 3 assembly elections. Capital is Congress's home ground under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi.

The greed for power and dynastic politics made Priyanka Gandhi run all the way from Delhi to Wayanad to come back victorious in the by-election. There's a saying in the villages that 'If one has to assess the quality and power of a person in the village, ask the locals. The same yardstick proved right when there were no takers for Congress locally in Delhi and scoring 0-0-0 in their report card reflects that the quality of the Congress party is under a scanner. For the Congress to survive, the realistic approach must be to keep Rahul and Priyanka from the main limelight and keep them in a low profile so that the party can rebuild the faith for a better future of the party.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

## RBI CUTS INTEREST RATES

Madam — It is a first-rate cut in nearly five years by RBI and it signifies a shift in monetary strategy. With this cut, RBI has clear-

ly sent a signal that it wants to boost lending, stimulate consumer demand and nurture investment. In the recent months, core inflation has shown easing out, providing much-needed headroom to the RBI to implement this rate cut. And a slowdown in the economic growth forced the RBI to take the plunge now.

By lowering the borrowing cost, RBI wants to encourage businesses to expand, boost consumption, and help economic growth. Now banks will be happy to extend credit more freely, but they need to be wary of what they have witnessed with their microfinance and unsecured loan portfolios in recent months. In the real estate sector, SMEs will take a sigh of relief, and individual borrowers will see a reduction in their EMIs and, in turn, more money in their pockets, coupled with recent income tax cuts, which will create a positive environment for the consumption boom to take place.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Flying faster-than-sound travel closer to reality

Boom Supersonic successfully tested its prototype supersonic aircraft, proving that supersonic commercial travel is not just a dream but an imminent reality

A significant milestone in commercial aviation history has been achieved. Boom Supersonic, a Colorado-based startup, completed a successful test flight of its prototype supersonic aircraft XB-1, demonstrating that commercial air travel at faster-than-sound speeds is not only feasible but may soon be available for frequent flyers, cutting average intercontinental flight times in half.



They rewrote the rules of the game, overcame longstanding technical barriers and ignited fresh interest in supersonic flight. Established players like Boeing and Airbus often shy away from radical changes for fear of failing or canalising profitable products. Boom took calculated risks, embraced uncertainty, and refined each step through rapid data-driven iteration. Historically, supersonic jets are fuel guzzlers. Boom's approach combines aerodynamic optimisation with advanced high-performance materials and a propulsion system designed ground-up to minimise fuel consumption. The propulsion system (Symphony) will run on zero aromatic 100 per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for sustainable commercial supersonic flights. As a startup, Boom operates with lean teams. This contrasts sharply with the massive bureaucratic hierarchy within aerospace giants. Swift prototyping, quick feedback loops, and a willingness to pivot ensure that new technology is tested and integrated faster than what Boeing or Airbus might manage.

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The prototype aircraft smoothly transitioned through Mach 1 (the speed of sound) and touched Mach 1.1. This technology demonstration will help refine the design ahead of the company's next goal: launching a full-scale 60 to 75-seater supersonic jet called Overture. The founders' vision is that passengers can fly supersonically at tickets comparable to business class fares. Imagine cutting a 7-hour transatlantic flight to 3.5 hours. Suddenly, a business meeting in Delhi and a dinner date in London are feasible on the same day. Overture is being designed to fly 7800 km. It can fly nonstop on routes like Delhi to Frankfurt or New York to London. Faster travel time can be a game-changer for business travellers and high-priority cargo. While Airbus, Boeing, and other established players have the resources and legacy to make big moves, it often takes a nimble newcomer with a fresh perspective and first-principles thinking to challenge what's possible.

(The writer is an author, innovator and founder of NeuroEquilibrium; views are personal)



RAJNEESH BHANDARI



## FIRST COLUMN

### LIFE IS A MOUNTAIN: CLIMB YOUR PEAK, YOUR WAY

Just like climbing a mountain, life's true joy comes from the ascent, not just the summit



O P SINGH

I have come to believe life is a lot like climbing a mountain. It's not a race or a competition, and it's not about finding a shortcut. The absolute joy of life isn't standing at the summit—it's in the climb. It's in slipping on loose gravel, feeling the burn in your legs, and wondering halfway through if you should turn around. But when you catch your breath at a ridge or find your footing after a stumble, you realise something powerful: the climb isn't about the mountain—it's about who you become along the way.

Each of us has a mountain to climb. It doesn't need to be Everest or Kilimanjaro. It doesn't have to impress anyone else. What matters is that your mountain challenges you, excites you and pushes you to grow. And yes, the climb will be messy. The trail will disappear just when you think you're getting somewhere. The air will get thin. You might even feel like quitting. But that's the beauty of it—the mountain shapes you with every step. Every great climb starts with a dream—one so audacious it gives you butterflies. Don't let its enormity overwhelm you. Focus on taking the next step, then the one after that. Progress isn't about giant leaps but small, consistent efforts.

Moving forward, even a little each day, builds the path to big dreams. Mountains don't reward the fastest or most competent climber—they reward perseverance. Talent may get you started, but resilience carries you through fatigue, failure, and seemingly impossible moments. You don't need to be perfect; you need to keep climbing. Your journey is unique; not everyone will understand or agree with it. That's okay. When the trail disappears, create your path, even if it's messy.



The best routes are discovered through improvisation and authenticity, not by meeting others' expectations. Slips and falls are inevitable, and they hurt. Yet, each stumble teaches something valuable about the terrain, limits, and strength. Mountains don't demand perfection—they demand persistence. Learn from every fall, and rise stronger. The mountain doesn't care who reaches the summit first. It isn't about trophies or comparisons. The climb is about pushing yourself, growing beyond your comfort zone, and becoming someone who belongs at the summit.

True success is transformation, not competition. The best climbers don't focus solely on themselves. They lend a hand, share tools, and cheer others on. Life's peaks are more meaningful when shared. Those who help will often support you, making the climb richer for everyone. When you reach your summit, pause and reflect. Did your climb inspire others? Did you leave the path better for those who follow? Success isn't standing alone at the top; it's in the legacy you leave—the encouragement, improvements, and hope for others to climb higher. Ultimately, the climb makes life beautiful.

The summit is fleeting, but the slips, breakthroughs, lessons, and growth endure. These moments shape you into someone worthy of the top. If your mountain feels daunting, don't let the height scare you. Start small. Take one step at a time. You don't need to move fast or know the whole path. Just keep climbing. One day, standing at your summit, you'll look back and realise it wasn't about the peak. It was about the person you became along the way. That's the valuable reward of the climb—knowing every inch of it was unapologetically yours.

*(The author is DGP & Head of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau, with three books to his credit; views are personal)*



GEETA BHATT

Uttarakhand has led the way in formalising laws for women of different faith as equal, upholding the spirit of the constitution. Babasaheb Ambedkar would have been a contented man knowing that Uttarakhand has become the first state in India to have put an end to the disparity in legal protection provided to women, as till now, they were governed by their respective personal laws based on religion and customary state practices. By implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) from January 26, 2025, with less than 2 per cent of total land area and less than 1 per cent of total population, Uttarakhand has taken the lead in reinstating the ethos of social equality, part of our syncretic cul-

ture/constitution. The courageous step taken by this young state will pave the way as a paradigm for others to follow similar footsteps. For the first time post-independence, a legislative body has drafted rules for marriage, divorce, inheritance of property, and live-in relationships. UCC has been used as a political tool ever since it was

tabled for discussion in the Constituent Assembly when Babasaheb, as Chairman of Drafting Committee, had expressed need for uniformity in fundamental laws, both civil and criminal. UCC was placed under a sub-committee which proposed to list it as a non-justiciable right hence, making it non-disputable in the courts. Majority of the members of this sub-committee were in agreement with the proposal except Minoo Masani, Hansa Mehta and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who wrote to Patel stating, "One of the factors that have kept India back from advancing to nationhood has been the existence of personal laws based on religion". The dissent observed by the women members of the con-

stituent assembly got support from Dr BR Ambedkar, KM Munshi and Alladi K Aiyar. The opposition from the Muslim members ensued the UCC under Directive Principles Article 44, where the Constituent Assembly was not obliged to enforce the provision and at the same time, the provision could be implemented by the legislatures in the future. A compromise made between those in support and those in disagreement of the UCC. The changing social milieu has seen a trend in rigorous churning to shed away repressive, orthodox practices so as to evolve a social structure which believes in equal rights. This led to the codification of matrimonial, inheritance, succession and adoption laws for the

Hindus from 1955-56. The women's rights under Muslim Personal law were challenged by Shah Bano in 1985 demanding maintenance from her husband. The landmark Supreme Court judgement in favour of Shah Bano was later overturned when the incumbent Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government, under pressure, enacted the Muslim Women



(Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986. The lingering wait for gender rights saw a ray of hope after 30 years when on the plea filed by Shayara Bano and others, who were victims of matrimonial dispute, the Supreme Court declared "talaq-e-biddat" or instantaneous triple talaq as unconstitutional in 2017. This time the government of the day stood by the rights of Muslim women and vindicated the crusade undertaken by Shah Bano by legally prohibiting triple talaq and protecting the rights of married Muslim women by bringing The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act in 2019. Though the present government has asserted equal rights and status to Muslim women

by bringing this act, there are miles to go as social customs of polygamy and Halala still looms large. The judiciary has reminded the legislators to fulfil their obligation towards the Constitution and promote equal rights for women. A five-member panel constituted in the chairmanship of retired justice Ranjana Prakash Desai diligently worked on the draft for two years besides holding public interactions, taking suggestions from people of the state and internal meetings of the panel to discuss the points to be taken under the draft. The bill in its four parts covers marriage and divorce, succession, live-in relationships. The section 4 of the bill outlines that "neither party has a spouse living at the time of the

marriage" with marriage age of 21 and 18 for man and women respectively, making polygamy and child marriage illegal. The bill also requires compulsory registration of marriages within 60 days where the couple has equal right to dissolve the marriage through a decree of divorce only through court proceedings. The Bill says that marriages can be dissolved only through the provisions of the law "notwithstanding any usage, custom, tradition, [or] personal law of any party to the marriage." This bill provides legal safeguards to protect women who cohabit in a live-in relationship.

*(The writer is Director, Non Collegiate Women's Education Board, University of Delhi; views are personal)*

# Trump's vision for Gaza: Paradise or purgatory?



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

President Donald Trump's proposal for Gaza is more than just another audacious policy move—it is a collision of commerce, geopolitics and power



Everyone saw it unfold. This is the harsh reality of life in the Devil's paradise, where desires are transformed into laws, ambitions become twisted ethics, and behaviour is coerced into the very fabric of the system. The truth? To survive here, one must bow to the powers that be, no matter the cost. Conscience and integrity are irrelevant—praise those in power or face annihilation. President Donald Trump welcomed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—an alleged war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court—as the first foreign leader in his second term, declaring his grand vision to take control of Gaza, turning it into a "brave new Levantine Riviera" by cleansing over 2 million Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the proposal has sparked strong opposition. Saudi Arabia, a key ally of Trump, swiftly condemned it, insisting that no nation would recognise Israel without the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Jordan and Egypt also rejected the idea of accepting millions of displaced Palestinians. The mere announcement of this plan starkly illustrates the chaotic grandeur of Trump's vision. Yet, his proposal, however audacious, was no accident of rhetoric. It was a calculated, methodical blueprint crafted long before Trump's second term in office. With Netanyahu—a willing ally in these manoeuvres—Trump painted a picture of Gaza not as a refuge for the Palestinian people, but as a commercialised "paradise" defined not by its displaced residents, but by foreign investments and a transformation into a luxury resort.

Trump's proposition, laden with both visionary ambition and horrific repercussions, challenges the entrenched paradigm. This proposal, as reported, was not born of sudden whim, but the culmination of years of deliberation within Trump's inner circle—an enterprise in which his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, played a pivotal role in positioning the geopolitical and commercial components across Asia. Kushner's claim, in a recent interview with the Financial Times, that his "ability to see trends before others" uniquely positions him to capitalise on opportunities others find unpalatable, resonates with the underlying logic of Trump's plan. It's a logic that blurs the line between statecraft and property development, where geopolitical ambitions are pursued not merely for strategic suprema-



THE ARAB WORLD, ONCE INTOXICATED BY THE IDEA OF PAN-ARAB UNITY, HAS REPEATEDLY SUCCUMBED TO ITS INTERNAL FISSURES, NEVER ABLE TO OVERCOME THE CORROSIVE FORCES OF REALPOLITIK AND SELF-INTEREST

cy but also as a means to expand a business empire throughout Asia. This fusion of commerce and conquest is as disquieting as it is unprecedented, conjuring images of modern-day feudalism, where land and people are subjugated to serve the profit motives of a privileged few. What is truly striking, however, is that Trump's plan could offer a rare and pivotal opportunity for Arab nations, whose history of disunity has long hindered their collective potential.

Regional players—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Jordan, and others—have long danced to contradictory rhythms, using Palestine as a symbol to justify their betrayals, while failing to act with sincerity or consequence. These rivalries, cultivated over decades of political expediency, have reduced Palestinians from champions of an independent cause to mere pawns in a game that has been further complicated by internal rifts within Palestinian movements.

For far too long, the Arab states have abandoned Palestine's plight in favour of personal ambition and strategic alliances, turning the Palestinian cause into a commodity—moulded and shaped according to the whims of foreign powers. This latest manoeuvre must be understood within the context of the convoluted history of Arab disunity—an entangled web of colonial subterfuge, sectarian fragmentation, and a legacy of betrayal that has persistently eroded Palestinian sovereignty and reduced their cause to a tragic geopolitical instrument. The Arab world, once intoxicated by the idea of pan-Arab unity, has repeatedly succumbed to its internal fissures, never able to overcome the corrosive forces of realpolitik and self-interest. Behind the veneer of solidarity and proclamations of support for Palestinian self-determination, there lies a catalogue of secretive agreements, covert operations, and Machiavellian plots that have long entangled the region.

While the Sykes-Picot Agreement remains the most infamous symbol of colonial partition, it is far from the only clandestine accord that has shaped the fate of Palestine.

Lesser-known pacts, such as the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence, which promised Arab independence in exchange for rebellion against the Ottoman Empire, were later betrayed in favour of European imperial ambitions. Similarly, the post-World War II period saw Arab states engage in secret dealings with both Western and Soviet powers, each prioritising their strategic interests over Palestinian rights. Agreements such as the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine—purportedly aimed at regional stability—left the Palestinian cause sidelined in favour of Cold War allegiances, perpetuating cycles of betrayal.

And perhaps most insidious of all were the secret negotiations between Arab leaders and Israel, at times tacit and other times more explicit, often involving quiet exchanges of territory, economic support, or even military cooperation, all under the guise of broader diplomatic manoeuvres. These acts of realpolitik—often driven by the selfish interests of a few at the expense of the many—have left Palestine isolated, its sovereignty forfeited in a game of geopolitical chess. The fractured nature of Arab leadership, perpetuated by sectarianism and divergent national ambitions, only serves to deepen the wound. While leaders such as Egypt's Nasser sought to rally the Arab world under a banner of unity, his efforts were consistently thwarted by rivalries and internal conflicts.

Today, these past betrayals reverberate in the region's collective psyche, leaving Palestinian aspirations still choked by the suffocating embrace of powers both external and internal, with the dream of a unified Arab world and a free Palestine rendered ever more elusive by the cynical. Yet, it is precisely this history that

makes Trump's audacious proposal so paradoxically compelling. Here lies an opportunity for the perennial exiles—the Palestinians—not as pawns in a geopolitical chess game, but as potential agents for the reawakening of Arab unity.

For decades, Palestinian suffering has been wielded as a symbol of resistance, a poignant reminder of an exodus that began with the Nakba in 1948. However, the continued instrumentalisation of Palestinian tragedy by neighbouring Arab regimes—who have long used the plight of these people as a rhetorical tool without offering substantial solutions.

It is within this environment of ambivalence and simmering tension that Trump's proposal must be viewed as a paradigm-shifting moment. The convergence of statecraft and property development, epitomised by Trump and Kushner's ambitions, signals a departure from conventional geopolitical paradigms. We are stepping into an era where the shifting power of oligarchies is increasingly driven by the convergence of economic gain and political opportunism—a transformation with far-reaching consequences for the future of West Asia.

Whether this radical reimagining of Gaza could catalyse Arab unity remains uncertain, inherently tied to the unresolved contradictions within the region's historical legacy. Trump's Riviera dream for Gaza is as much a test of American resolve as it is a crucible for Arab unity—a proposition that, if realised, could compel the Arab states to transcend their long-standing acrimony and mistrust.

However, the likelihood remains that this bold gambit, with all its extravagant rhetoric and ambitious visions, will only serve to deepen existing rifts, leaving Palestinians once again at the mercy of external schemes.

*(The writer is a journalist and a policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)*

## Uttarakhand leads the way: The first state to implement Uniform Civil Code

Uniform laws that empower women will be the common thread binding the nation in oneness and uphold the constitutional spirit

Uttarakhand has led the way in formalising laws for women of different faith as equal, upholding the spirit of the constitution. Babasaheb Ambedkar would have been a contented man knowing that Uttarakhand has become the first state in India to have put an end to the disparity in legal protection provided to women, as till now, they were governed by their respective personal laws based on religion and customary state practices. By implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) from January 26, 2025, with less than 2 per cent of total land area and less than 1 per cent of total population, Uttarakhand has taken the lead in reinstating the ethos of social equality, part of our syncretic cul-

ture/constitution. The courageous step taken by this young state will pave the way as a paradigm for others to follow similar footsteps. For the first time post-independence, a legislative body has drafted rules for marriage, divorce, inheritance of property, and live-in relationships. UCC has been used as a political tool ever since it was

tabled for discussion in the Constituent Assembly when Babasaheb, as Chairman of Drafting Committee, had expressed need for uniformity in fundamental laws, both civil and criminal. UCC was placed under a sub-committee which proposed to list it as a non-justiciable right hence, making it non-disputable in the courts. Majority of the members of this sub-committee were in agreement with the proposal except Minoo Masani, Hansa Mehta and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who wrote to Patel stating, "One of the factors that have kept India back from advancing to nationhood has been the existence of personal laws based on religion". The dissent observed by the women members of the con-

stituent assembly got support from Dr BR Ambedkar, KM Munshi and Alladi K Aiyar. The opposition from the Muslim members ensued the UCC under Directive Principles Article 44, where the Constituent Assembly was not obliged to enforce the provision and at the same time, the provision could be implemented by the legislatures in the future. A compromise made between those in support and those in disagreement of the UCC. The changing social milieu has seen a trend in rigorous churning to shed away repressive, orthodox practices so as to evolve a social structure which believes in equal rights. This led to the codification of matrimonial, inheritance, succession and adoption laws for the

Hindus from 1955-56. The women's rights under Muslim Personal law were challenged by Shah Bano in 1985 demanding maintenance from her husband. The landmark Supreme Court judgement in favour of Shah Bano was later overturned when the incumbent Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government, under pressure, enacted the Muslim Women



(Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986. The lingering wait for gender rights saw a ray of hope after 30 years when on the plea filed by Shayara Bano and others, who were victims of matrimonial dispute, the Supreme Court declared "talaq-e-biddat" or instantaneous triple talaq as unconstitutional in 2017. This time the government of the day stood by the rights of Muslim women and vindicated the crusade undertaken by Shah Bano by legally prohibiting triple talaq and protecting the rights of married Muslim women by bringing The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act in 2019. Though the present government has asserted equal rights and status to Muslim women

by bringing this act, there are miles to go as social customs of polygamy and Halala still looms large. The judiciary has reminded the legislators to fulfil their obligation towards the Constitution and promote equal rights for women. A five-member panel constituted in the chairmanship of retired justice Ranjana Prakash Desai diligently worked on the draft for two years besides holding public interactions, taking suggestions from people of the state and internal meetings of the panel to discuss the points to be taken under the draft. The bill in its four parts covers marriage and divorce, succession, live-in relationships. The section 4 of the bill outlines that "neither party has a spouse living at the time of the

marriage" with marriage age of 21 and 18 for man and women respectively, making polygamy and child marriage illegal. The bill also requires compulsory registration of marriages within 60 days where the couple has equal right to dissolve the marriage through a decree of divorce only through court proceedings. The Bill says that marriages can be dissolved only through the provisions of the law "notwithstanding any usage, custom, tradition, [or] personal law of any party to the marriage." This bill provides legal safeguards to protect women who cohabit in a live-in relationship.

*(The writer is Director, Non Collegiate Women's Education Board, University of Delhi; views are personal)*





## 'My character in *Mission Grey House* is fearless and driven, just like me in real life'



**IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE PIONEER, ACTRESS PUJA SHARMA OPENS UP ABOUT HER INSPIRING JOURNEY FROM CUTTACK TO THE SILVER SCREEN, MAKING HER BIG-SCREEN DEBUT WITH *MISSION GREY HOUSE***



**I joined the gym to get physically fit and took action classes where I learnt kickboxing. Though my character doesn't have a lot of action sequences, I worked hard to perfect the ones I had**

TEJAL SINHA  
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**M**aking her big-screen debut with *Mission Grey House*, actress Puja Sharma is ready to captivate audiences with her compelling portrayal of a fearless cop. Having already made a mark in the entertainment industry through ad films and popular television shows like *Choti Sardarni* and *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, as well as web series such as *Johri* and *Dus June Ki Raat*, Puja's journey from Cuttack, Odisha, to the silver screen is nothing short of inspiring.

Initially, a career in entertainment was never part of her plans. Moving to Mumbai for her studies, Puja aspired to enter the corporate world. However, her adventurous spirit and eagerness to explore new opportunities led her down an unexpected yet rewarding path in acting and modeling.

"Since childhood, I always wanted to learn horse riding, kickboxing, and be aware of everything around me, which wouldn't have been possible in my hometown," she shares in this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*.

Her entry into acting was purely accidental. "A casting director approached me, and that's when I got to know how things work in acting and modeling," says Puja. Initially hesitant about how her family

would react, she found unwavering support in her sister-in-law. Encouraged, she participated in a beauty pageant - just for fun - only to emerge as the winner.

The victory brought unexpected recognition. "My story was published in newspapers, including my hometown's local press, and people started congratulating my parents. When I went back home, I was even felicitated by my school," she recalls. That moment made her realise she wanted to pursue a career in entertainment rather than the corporate world.

Upon returning to Mumbai, she actively sought opportunities in acting and modeling. "I got my first break in an ad film, and that's how things started out for me," she adds.

Every project she has worked on has contributed to her growth as an actor. While *Choti Sardarni* is widely known as her television debut, she reveals, "I haven't told this in any of my previous interviews, but before *Choti Sardarni*, I had worked on a web show in Goa. It never got released, and honestly, now I don't want it to," she laughs. "Back then, I was a fresh actor with no knowledge of anything."

Her role in *Choti Sardarni* was emotionally intense. "It was a very 'bechari' type role, full of rona-dhona, and I learned a lot about performing emotional scenes there," she explains.

Switching gears, she played a humorous role in *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah* as Popatlal's love interest. "When you see actors on-screen, you

don't realize how they work, but on set, you observe everything. Watching Popatlal, I noticed how his expressions would instantly change when the director said 'action' and then go back to normal once the shot was over. In real life, he is an introverted person, which is so different from what we see on TV," she shares.

Her versatility continued with *Dus June Ki Raat*, where she played a drug addict, and *Johri*, where she portrayed a love interest. "Both were fun and enriching experiences," says Puja. Now, with *Mission Grey House*, she steps into yet another unique role.

For her, *Mission Grey House* is a dream come true. "Every actor dreams of seeing themselves on the big screen, and I feel so lucky to get this opportunity so soon in my career," she says excitedly.

Playing a cop was particularly thrilling for her. "I didn't watch *Chandramukhi Chautala* as a kid, and I always felt that, given my height, I should play a cop at least once," she shares. However, her height initially posed challenges. "In television, most lead actresses are of short height, and I was often told that my height was too much-more than the lead actor's. I always thought I'd only get to play an inspector's role, and I didn't realize it was something I had manifested until I got this role in *Mission Grey House*," she says.

Her character in the film is a determined and confident officer who will stop at nothing to complete her mission. "She's

fearless and driven, which I relate to in real life as well," says Puja. In the film, veteran actor Rajesh Sharma plays her father, who assigns her and the lead actor to investigate a mysterious house where multiple murders have occurred.

To prepare for the physical and emotional demands of the role, Puja underwent rigorous training. "I joined the gym to get physically fit and took action classes where I learned kickboxing. Though my character doesn't have a lot of action sequences, I worked hard to perfect the ones I had," she explains.

One of the most cherished experiences from the shoot was working with Rajesh Sharma. "One day, I was exhausted from the heat and was sitting in my makeup room. He walked in, recited some shayari, and asked his spot boy to bring me butter-milk and nimbu paani. His positivity as a co-actor and a senior actor made a big impact on me," she recalls fondly.

While many cop dramas focus solely on the professional aspects of the role, she emphasizes that her character in *Mission Grey House* has multiple layers. "She's not just a cop - there are so many different aspects to her personality, which makes this role special," she explains.

Looking ahead, Puja is eager to explore more genres - especially horror. "I haven't done horror yet, but it excites me the most. I've actually completed a web series based on paranormal activities, which is currently in post-production," she reveals.

## Empowering women, sustainably

PNSHYDERABAD

Being a hotelier gave Mohit the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, each of whom has a distinct story and set of challenges. The tenacity, inventiveness and generosity of women who manage the responsibilities of the home, family and community, however, have continuously impressed him! These extraordinary people, in his opinion, should be given the chance to flourish, develop and follow their aspirations in addition to recognition. He is committed to establishing a workplace that embraces, encourages and inspires women and homemakers to thrive in their jobs and beyond, which is why he gave an exclusive interview to *THE PIONEER*. Notably, the director of Ananta Hotels & Resorts has also spearheaded two noteworthy projects in Udaipur: an inventive lavender laundry project and a state-of-the-art bottling plant.

**The effort to hire housewives and women is impressive. What prompted this choice?**

Beyond providing luxury, my idea also aims to promote empowerment and inclusivity. In order to reshape opportunities in the hospitality business and provide doors for individuals who have historically been underrepresented, the campaign to hire women and stay-at-home moms was born. In 2005, women accounted for just 8% of our workforce. They make up 15% now and by 2026, they want to make up 25%. This change has improved our workplace culture in addition to giving women greater financial independence and opportunities for professional advancement. Our conviction that diversity is crucial to creating a better future for hospitality has been strengthened by their distinct viewpoints and commitment, which have enhanced our guests' experiences with warmth, empathy and creativity.

**You're combining sustainable practices with powerful work with your lavender laundry initiative. Could you explain the project's underlying concept?**

The Lavender Laundry initiative is an example of the dedication to a considerate experience that blends sustainability with significant influence. In addition to its aesthetic appeal, the project gives local women and stay-at-home moms jobs that allow them to become financially independent and advance in their careers. Because sustainable procedures are used to limit the process's influence on the envi-



**The resort's natural attractiveness is enhanced by the Aravalli Hills, which provide a picturesque backdrop for The Ananta Udaipur. How does your approach to sustainability change as a result of your connection to nature?**

The Aravalli Hills serve as a constant source of inspiration and a reminder of the value of living in harmony with the natural world. The sustainability efforts, which range from installing solar energy and gravity-fed water systems to employing eco-friendly building materials, are motivated by this relationship. In order to improve biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint, we are also committing to planting 50,000 trees in Rajasthan each year. We make sure that our visitors can enjoy the natural beauty while understanding that their stay helps to preserve it for future generations by building our resort to blend in with the hills.

**While your family has a long history of hospitality, what personal legacy do you hope to leave behind?**

I want to leave a legacy based on sustainability and empowerment, even though the heritage of exceptional hospitality is a source of pride. This vision is embodied in the activities, such as the aim to eliminate plastic and our goal of having 25% of women in the workforce by 2026. The ultimate test of success, in my opinion, is building a company that not only provides top-notch hospitality but also improves communities, safeguards the environment and establishes new benchmarks for social responsibility and diversity. I want my ventures to be remembered by future generations as a trailblazer of significant industry transformation.

ronment, it also fits with an eco-conscious worldview!

**The hospitality business has historically been controlled by men. How have you managed to assure women's representation at all levels?**

I'm determined to dispel myths and redefine the hospitality sector as a welcoming one. Since the beginning, the ownership has placed a high priority on giving women chances since they understand how their involvement improves the teams and visitor experiences. My resolve to change the narrative is evidenced by my target of 25% female representation by 2026. We aggressively fund mentorship and training initiatives, empower women in leadership positions and maintain a positive work environment. I have personally seen improved teamwork, inventiveness and resilience as a result of promoting diversity—elements crucial for success in the cutthroat hospitality industry. The goal is very clear: empower women to empower hospitality's future.

**What difficulties do stay-at-home moms encounter when they decide to enter the workforce, in your experience?**

Homemakers frequently encounter major obstacles when they return to the market, such as a lack of recent work experience, self-assurance and the ability to manage family obligations. The hotel wants to close this gap by fostering an atmosphere that supports their special abilities, such as empathy, organisation and multitasking.



**DEWORMING IN CHILDREN:**

### A crucial step towards healthy growth

As parents, ensuring that our children grow up healthy and strong is a top priority. One often overlooked but essential aspect of a child's health is deworming. Intestinal worms are common among children, especially in regions with poor sanitation. These parasites can cause a range of health issues, including malnutrition, poor growth, and developmental delays. Regular deworming plays a critical role in maintaining your child's overall well-being.

**What Are Intestinal Worms?**

Intestinal worms are parasitic organisms that live in the intestines. The most common types of worms affecting children include roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, and whipworms. These worms can enter the body through contaminated food, water, soil, or contact with infected animals. In children, the risk of infection is higher due to their natural curiosity and tendency to play in unsanitary environments.

**Why is Deworming Important?**

**Deworming is essential because intestinal worms can seriously affect your child's health. Some of the key consequences of worm infestations include:**

- 1. Malnutrition:** Worms compete with the host for essential nutrients, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies.
- 2. Abdominal Pain and Discomfort:** Worms cause irritation and damage to the intestines, leading to stomach pain and discomfort.
- 3. Fatigue and Weakness:** As a result of nutrient deficiencies, children may appear lethargic and tired.
- 4. Diarrhea or Vomiting:** Some worms can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, leading to dehydration and loss of appetite.

**Signs Your Child Might Have Worms**  
It is not always easy to spot an infection, as some children may not

**show obvious symptoms. However, some common signs to look out for include:**

- **Itchy Bottom:** This is particularly common with pinworms, which cause intense itching around the anus, especially at night.
- **Abdominal Pain:** Complaints of stomach aches or cramps may indicate a worm infestation.
- **Changes in Appetite:** A sudden increase or decrease in hunger could be a sign.
- **Weight Loss:** If your child is losing weight despite a normal appetite, it may indicate the presence of worms.

**How Often Should You Deworm Your Child?**

The frequency of deworming depends on where you live, the local sanitation conditions, and your child's age. In many countries, health authorities recommend deworming children between the ages of 1 and 5 every six months. In areas with higher rates of worm infestations, children may need to be dewormed more frequently. Your doctor or pediatrician will provide guidance based on your child's specific needs.

**Treatment and Prevention**

Deworming treatment typically involves the use of anti-parasitic medications. These medications are safe and effective, and they usually come in the form of a single dose or a short course of treatment. Over-the-counter deworming medications are also available, but it's essential to seek professional advice before administering them to ensure proper dosage and safety. In addition to deworming, practicing good hygiene is crucial to preventing reinfection. Teach your children the importance of washing their hands with soap and water, especially before meals and after playing outside. Avoiding contaminated food and water and ensuring that your child avoids playing in dirty or contaminated environments can further reduce the risk of worm infections.

(The author, Dr. Parimala V Thirumalesh, is a Sr. Consultant - Neonatology & Pediatrics, at Aster CMI Hospital.)

# what's brewing?



The Glam Squad Ladies Club, by Shazia Bakal, had a dazzling pre-Valentine's Day Kitty Party with a stunning red theme. Held at a popular venue, the evening was filled with amazing food, refreshing mocktails, and fabulous fashion. Hosts Geeta, Humera, Fatima and Firozen ensured a memorable evening of fun, laughter, dance, gifts and elegance!

PARTY  
Photos by- SV Chary



The second season of its highly anticipated Flower Festival, a vibrant celebration of nature's beauty, was inaugurated by actress and Bigg Boss Telugu 4 fame, Divi Vadthya, at Lulu Mall in Kukatpally



Meridian School Madhapur was buzzing with energy and excitement as they hosted the most spectacular School Carnival 2025 - MERIVAGANZA! From thrilling games to electrifying performances, the event was a perfect blend for everyone. Students and parents alike enjoyed the thrilling bouncy castles, rides, interactive board games and lucky draws-Raffles.



Kausar Sayeed

EducationWorld successfully concluded its 12th Early Childhood Education National Conference 2025 and the EducationWorld India Preschool Rankings Awards 2024-25 at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Centre in Hyderabad. The event served as a platform for educators, policymakers and leaders in early childhood education to engage in discussions aimed at transforming early childhood care and education to prepare future generations

Prathima Reddy

Saloni

Megha

Rubi

Ahhiral

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



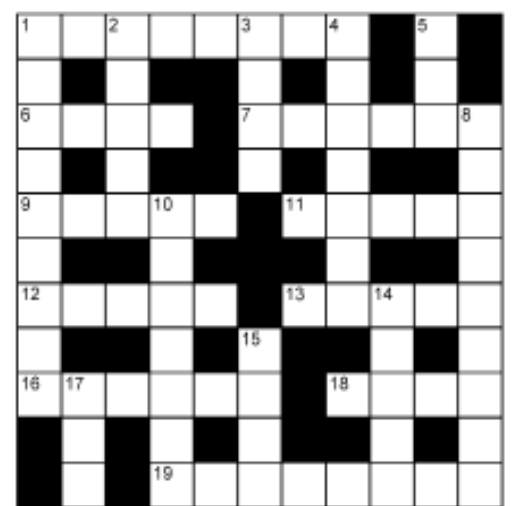
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



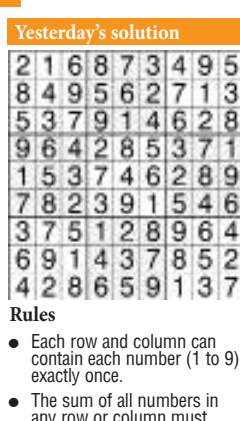
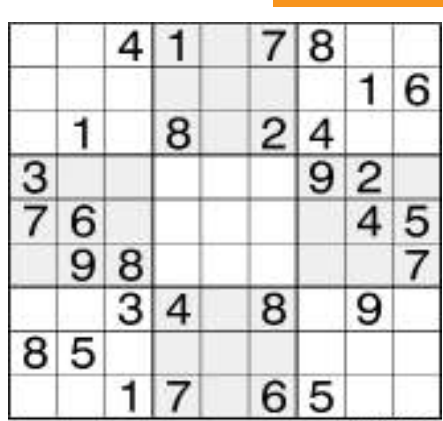
### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



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

### GINGER MEGGS



**ACROSS**  
1 A spring flower  
2 You might hear this on the radio every hour  
3 Actors with small parts to play in a film  
4 The planet we live on  
5 Sweeten food with this  
6 A large sea  
7 A snake's poison  
8 A light, soft type of cake  
9 A small round piece of medicine  
10 Freed from captivity  
11 A green salad vegetable  
12 A hot drink  
13 A way to cook eggs  
14 Someone who prepares a sports team for a match  
15 These grow on fingers  
16 Part of the foot  
17 A tame animal

**DOWN**  
1 Very unsafe  
2 Not as many  
3 A sword fight

**SOLUTION**

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

# After Majaka, filmmakers know where I can fit: Anshu Sagar

**MANMADHUDU FEMALE LEAD ANSHU IS BACK TO TELUGU CINEMA AFTER MANY YEARS AND SHE TALKS ABOUT HER SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE, HER STUDIES, MARRIAGE AND WHAT MAKES HER COMEBACK...**

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
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Remember the classic film 'Manmadhudu' that stars Nagarjuna and Sonali Bendre, directed by Vijay Bhaskar and written by Trivikram Srinivas. The film was released in 2002 and another actress Anshu also played a female lead along with Sonali and she made her mark with it. Anshu acted then in 'Raghavendra' opposite Prabhas. Later, she acted in a Tamil film and then she disappeared from the film industry.

After more than 20 years, Anshu is back to Telugu cinema and this time she is acting in a film titled 'Majaka'. She paired opposite Rao Ramesh in his entertainment film. When asked why people called her Anshu Ambani, Anshu Tiwari or with some other surnames, the actress clarified about it. "The surname Ambani is a very popular one as well as known, but I have never been an Ambani. I have no idea how they added it to my name. I am Anshu, I married Sachin Sagar and if you want to add my surname you can call me Anshu Sagar, but I would be happy if everyone called me Anshu," said the actress.

Anshu acted in only three films and she disappeared suddenly from the industry, though she was successful. "Yes, because I was very young when I did 'Manmadhudu' and I was not mature enough to think at that time. If I was 24, I may have taken my career seriously, but I was hardly 14 or 15 at that time. So, I concentrated on my studies. I married Sachin Sagar at 24. I have two lovely children and I did my masters and now I am a qualified psychologist. I have my own clinic. I don't have any regrets," said Anshu about her disappearance.

When asked what made her come back to films, Anshu said that it was after the rerelease of her film 'Manmadhudu'. "Actually, Annapurna Studios asked her to give a bite about 'Manmadhudu' and that's when Anshu changed. She came to India last February and did a couple of podcast interviews which went viral and people came to know that she was here. Actually it also opened up some doors and a few people contacted me for roles," said Anshu. That's how writer Prasanna Kumar contacted her and narrated this 'Majaka' in a zoom call.

When they saw Anshu's photos and also videos, they thought that she may fit in as the lead actress, sister or mother wherever she can fit. "When they asked me, I couldn't give



them an answer, because I don't know where I stand, I am not like Madhuri or Kajol. I am younger than Deepika Padukone. But after 'Majaka', filmmakers have an idea where they can fit me, which I feel helps me to take the right decision also," said Anshu.

To accept 'Majaka', Anshu said that she liked the story. "When Prasanna Kumar narrated me on Zoom, I was laughing continuously. There is a lot of scope to perform and it's a heavy role. People might say that 'she is back' and I tried my best," she said. She added that the first day of the shoot where she faced the camera, she was nervous. "I haven't worked in a movie in the last 23 years, so I was very nervous and like a newcomer. But everyone was really nice on the sets, I know about the makers of the film, because they are doing good films. After day two and three, I was fine and continued shooting without any trouble," said Anshu. She said that the biggest challenge she faced while shooting this film was 'language'. "I am taking Telugu lessons now. My teacher Surekha teaches me Telugu and I want to work for a long time, I want to connect with the Telugu audience fully. I am a British Indian, but now I am learning Telugu, and will keep doing my best," she said.

Talking about her role in this film, she said she played the role of Yashoda. "She is headstrong and stubborn, arrogant woman and at the same time she is emotional also. I just got into the character of Yashoda and tried my best to play the role," said Anshu. She paired opposite Rao Ramesh in the film. "He is such a gentleman, he is very sweet. He has completed his dubbing. He saw my performance and told me that I did very well, which I feel very happy about," said Anshu.

The actress said that a lot changed from then to now in these 23 years. "When I came back to London I was doing my studies and I wanted to sign up for an agency for any roles in British or American films. They would decline my applications, what films you did, we never heard about them, no value of South Cinema. But now, things have changed so much, it has become more united," she said. She added that her husband is now watching Telugu and Tamil films even though he doesn't know the language. "He is enjoying watching South films," said Anshu. Her family members are coming next week to watch her film here in Hyderabad.

"Whether I am playing a mother, lead actress or sister, if the role has some substance, then I just want to act again," she said the kind of roles she is looking for. Talking about the food, "Once or twice in a month, I had Hyderabad biryani and it's very good," she said. "I love doing the gym," she added. She did 'Raghavendra' with Prabhas and asked about him, Anshu recalls and that Prabhas has changed, but he didn't change much as a person. "He came in his second film after 'Eswar', I came after 'Manmadhudu'. At that time he was so sweet, shy, kind and calm. He is so good," said Anshu. She added that he is definitely a humble star.



## Allu Arjun is still feeling nervous

The film 'Pushpa 2' released on December 5, 2024 was a successful one. Allu Arjun played the lead, while Sukumar is the director. Mythri Movie Makers is the producer. Though the film released more than two months back, the team didn't celebrate its success till now. Because, there are few incidents that happened after its release. A woman passed away at the Sandhya theatre stamped, after a few days Allu Arjun was arrested and he spent one day in Chanchalguda jail, making the makers not to hold any event of the film.

On Saturday, the makers held a success meet in a hotel, but it went quiet. Generally Allu Arjun event means, it's more like loud noise from his fans, a lot of activity and so on. But this success meet went without any big noise as many of the actors and other unit members attended and spoke about the film's success.

Though the venue was decided a couple of days back, the actor or the film PR didn't reveal about the venue even to the media. They revealed the venue at the last minute and requested not to forward the venue details to anyone as the fans may come in large numbers. So, they have taken every precaution for this success meet and it went smoothly. But if you look at Allu Arjun's body language, he

is still feeling nervous.

Speaking about the success, Allu Arjun thanked the producers for backing this film for five years. "The producers Ravi and Naveen made this film possible - without them, 'Pushpa' wouldn't have happened. They have taken care of us for five years," said Allu Arjun. He added that music director Devi Sri Prasad made his songs reach billions. The actor thanked director Sukumar and he is the man behind the success of this film.

"He always credits the team for success, but he himself is the reason behind it. My performance has received a lot of appreciation, and the credit goes to Sukumar. I am his biggest fan - I get excited whenever he narrates a scene. He is a genius director," said Allu Arjun about Sukumar. "Pushpa is not just a film, it is an emotion. The five years we spent on this film will be remembered for a lifetime," said the actor. He talks about 'Pushpa 3' and he said he doesn't know what is in store for it, but it is going to be extraordinary.

"I cannot make films without music director Devi Sri Prasad, and I never will," said Sukumar about DSP. Talking about Allu Arjun, he said, he believed in him even when he didn't have a proper story. "This entire success belongs to Allu Arjun," said the director.

## SWASIKA'S LOOK UNVEILED FROM SHAMBHALA

Pooja Vijay, better known as Swasika, is very popular in Tamil and Malayalam where she acted in many films. Now, she is doing this Telugu film, a horror thriller 'Shambhala', in which her look from the film is unveiled. Her recent Tamil film 'Lubber Pandhu' is very successful and even on OTT too it is a super hit. She is playing a very important role in the much-awaited supernatural horror thriller Shambhala: A Mystical World. The makers introduced Swasika's character, Vasantha, with a striking first-look poster that showcases her in an intense, gripping avatar. Swasika is also set to feature in Suriya's upcoming film directed by RJ Balaji and another Telugu film, Nithin's 'Thammudu' adding to her growing list of exciting projects. Talented actor Aadi Saikumar, known for his lively performances, is playing the lead in this project which has already generated excitement with its title and first look posters. The movie will see the actor in the challenging role of a geo-scientist. Directed by Ugandhar Muni, this film is produced by Rajasekhar Annabhimoju and Mahidhar Reddy under the Shining Pictures banner.



## Sid Sriram's magic once again worked for Neevalle Neevalle song



Sid Sriram has a special place when it comes to Telugu songs as he always creates magic with his voice. Whether it's 'Samajavaragamana' from 'Ala Vaikuntapuram Lo', or 'Srivalli' from 'Pushpa' or 'Leharayi' from 'Most Eligible Bachelor', not just one song there are many popular songs sung by Sriram. Now, the singer has come up with another one 'Neevalle Neevalle' from the upcoming film 'Tribanadhari Barbarik'. Directed by Mohan Srivatsa and produced by Vijaypal Reddy Adidhala, this film has an interesting cast by

Sathyaraj, Satyam Rajesh, Vasishta N Simha, Sanchi Rai, Udaya Bhanu, and Kranthi Kiran.

The film has music composed by the Infusion Band. The makers started the musical promotions by releasing the lyrical video for the first single, 'Neevalle Neevalle'. Lose yourself in the magic of the song, as the ever-magical Sid Sriram elevated it to extraordinary heights with his evocative and charismatic vocals. His voice lends the track an irresistible quality, making it an instant earworm. It's no surprise that this enchanting track is expected to top music charts in no time.

## I chose this story as a tribute to my grandfather: Rahul Yadav

After the successful films like 'Malli Raava', 'Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya', and 'Masooda', producer Rahul Yadav Nakka is coming up with 'Brahma Anandam', which is set to release on February 14. The film stars Brahmanandam and his son Raja Goutham are in lead roles, with Priya Vadlamani and Aishwarya Holakkal playing key roles. It is directed by debutant RVS Nikhil.

"We struggled to find a perfect title, finally decided as 'Brahma Anandam'. The co-directors in our team helped design the title.

I've produced every film of mine on my own, and this is no different," said Rahul.

He added that he liked the grandfather-grandson relationship in the story. "My own grandfather also wanted to see me succeed, but he passed away just before I could return. I chose this story as a tribute to him," he said.

"We approached several actors for the lead actor, but Brahmanandam recommended Vennela Kishore's name. We sent him the script, and after reading it, Vennela Kishore suggested that the character of Giri, a

friend, would suit him better than the lead actor. That's when Raja Goutham's name came up. Initially, I had doubts, but after meeting him, my opinion changed," said Kishore about how Raja landed in this film. "As for Brahma Anandam, I won't talk about hits and flops. Everyone will come for Brahmanandam, but they will leave talking about Raja Goutham. They'll talk about his performance and acting. I'm sure of it," said Rahul about Raja.

Rahul Yadav revealed that he is also working on a film titled 'Vibe' with Raja Goutham. The director who directed 'Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya', is going to direct this film.

## Madham is a raw and rustic film

These days many directors are giving importance to realistic stories and director Vamsi Krishna Malla is coming up with a film titled 'Madham'. Surya Devara Ravindranath (Chinna Babu) and Ramesh Babu Koya are the producers, while Harsha Gangavarapu, Latha Vishwanath, and Inaya Sultana are the lead actors. The film is set to release on March 14. "This is a raw and rustic film and is rare in Telugu cinema. Such content is more common in Tamil and Malayalam films. I truly connected with the story of 'Madham', and the climax is some-

thing that has never been seen in Indian cinema before," said the director. He added that to experience this film, one needs a lot of heart and courage. Inaya Sultana played a negative role in this film. "I love playing negative roles, and in this one, I had the privilege of portraying a significant character," said Inaya about her role. Another actress Latha Vishwanath said that she played a character very close to her real-life personality, so it was an easy and enjoyable experience. "I am thankful to the director and producer for giving me such a wonderful role," said Latha.



