

the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

By-elections will be definitely held in constituencies whose MLAs switched parties. The people of Telangana will teach the 10 MLAs who changed parties a lesson. Former Deputy CM Kadiyam Srihari who changed party will be defeated in Station Ghanpur. BRS candidate Thatikonda Rajaiah will become the MLA of Station Ghanpur. The remaining MLAs will also meet the same fate

- KCR, former Chief Minister



'Work does not disappear due to tech, its nature changes'

OIL RETAILERS

PICK 26 PACS TO SET UP RETAIL PETROL, DIESEL OUTLETS: SHAH

What Prudhvi said is completely wrong: Laila

DIRECTOR

DON'T MISS...

'Eating chicken and eggs is safe'

Amid concerns over Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) cases in some states, doctors and poultry experts have reassured the public that there is no need to panic and that chicken and eggs are safe to consume. Speaking to The Pioneer, Special Chief Secretary Sabyasachi Ghosh clarified that the recent Animal Husbandry department memo was only a precautionary measure to protect poultry in Telangana. "People can eat chicken and eggs. This memo is a precautionary step ...

-PAGE: 3

'India rolls out red carpet, not red tape'

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said India rolls out red carpet, and not red tape to investors and that there is broad consensus for sustainable economic development in the country. Inaugurating Invest Karnataka-2025 meet here on Tuesday, he said India has addressed the crucial point of policy uncertainty by creating a stable and predictable policy environment. "When I speak about the policy uncertainty, I want to emphasise a crucial point. Today across all governance...

-PAGE: 5

'65 pc of Indians used AI: Report'

Reflecting the swift adoption of artificial intelligence in India, a Microsoft study has found that 65 per cent of Indians surveyed have used AI -- more than double the global average. Microsoft on Tuesday unveiled the Global Online Safety Survey, which studies the growing influence of AI. The survey is based on a survey of 15,000 teens (13-17) and adults that was conducted in 15 countries between July 19 and August 9, 2024. '65 per cent of respondents have used AI (+26 per cent from 2023). This is more...

-PAGE: 8

Team India eye ODI clean-sweep

A big knock from Virat Kohli's currently silent bat along with a series clean-sweep over England will be on Team India's wish-list when the two teams square off in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday, marking the end of their Champions Trophy (CT) build-up. While India hold an unassailable 2-0 lead with identical four-wicket wins in each of the first two ODIs, Rohit Sharma's men will be extra motivated to get a win here at the Narendra Modi Stadium where they had suffered a crushing ODI World...

-SPORTS

Govt assures uninterrupted power supply during summer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government is fully prepared to meet electricity demand during summer. There will be no disruptions in supply, even for a minute, Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu assured on Tuesday. He was addressing a review with officials from the Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (SPDCL) at the Secretariat. Bhatti reviewed last summer's power consumption, the projected demand for this season, and the strategies being implemented to ensure uninterrupted supply. **Continued on Page 2**

7 TG pilgrims returning from Kumbh killed in mishap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A tense situation prevailed in Nacharam as seven individuals returning from the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh Mela to Hyderabad were killed when their mini-bus collided with a truck in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Tuesday morning. According to family members, a group of nine pilgrims had hired a mini-bus from Nacharam and left for the Kumbh Mela on Saturday. Most of them were from the same colony, with two or three mutual friends joining the trip. They had taken a holy dip at Triveni Sangam on Monday, but due to heavy crowds, they cancelled their planned visits to other places and decided to return home earlier than scheduled. A team from Nacharam Police has been visiting the victims' houses, consoling their families, and coordinating with the Jabalpur Police to arrange



for the transportation of the deceased, said DCP Malkajgiri PV Padmaja.

The accident occurred at around 8:30 am near Sihora town, approximately 65 km from Jabalpur.

Families were informed of the tragedy by one of the survivors around 10am, and since then, they have been desperately trying to contact their loved ones. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed deep shock over the tragic incident. Upon learning that residents of Nacharam, Hyderabad, were among the victims, he immediately instructed officials to ensure the best possible medical care for the injured and provide all necessary relief measures. According to Nacharam Police, the deceased are Rompally Ravi Kumar (59), Bowrampet Santhosh Kumar, Somavaram Shashikanth (39), Golconda Anand Kumar, Raju (38) the driver of the mini bus, Mallareddy (60) (RSS member Nacharam) and Prasad (50). Sunkaju Naveena Chary and Sriram Balakrishna (63) are undergoing treatment in Government Medical Hospital at Jabalpur.

CM assures SC categorisation

MRPS leader Manda Krishna meets Revanth, hails govt commitment

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a crucial meeting with Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) leader Manda Krishna Madiga on Tuesday, and their discussions focused on the categorisation of Scheduled Caste (SC) sub-groups. Manda Krishna hailed the Chief Minister's commitment to the issue and assured his support, stating that he would stand by the government like a brother in this process.

During the meeting, Manda Krishna highlighted the various challenges associated with SC categorisation and urged the government to ensure that the process remains free from political considerations.

Responding, Revanth reaffirmed that the Telangana government is committed to justice for the Madiga community and other SC sub-groups, emphasizing that their efforts are aimed purely at social welfare and not political gains. The Chief Minister elaborated on



the steps taken by the government, stating that the issue was discussed in the Assembly, followed by the formation of a Cabinet sub-committee and a legal commission to study the matter.

Reports were speeded up, leading to a Cabinet discussion and a final decision in the Assembly. "This approach ensures that there are no legal hurdles in implementing SC

categorisation," he explained.

Representatives present at the meeting recalled how Revanth had earlier fought for a resolution on SC categorization as an opposition MLA. The Chief Minister directed officials to take concerns and objections raised by various groups to both the Cabinet sub-committee and the legal commission for discussion.

Krishnaiah demands 42% quota for BCs, warns of agitation

National BC Welfare Association President Rajya Sabha MP R. Krishnaiah issued a strong warning to the government, declaring that there will be a full-blown movement if the quotas for BCs in local bodies are not increased to 42%.

Addressing a press conference at the Andhra Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday, he criticised the government for conspiring to avoid increasing reservations despite having received a detailed



Continued on Page 2



Defected MLAs will be defeated: KCR

Says by-polls sure in their constituencies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu (KCR) asserted that holding by-elections in the constituencies represented by MLAs who switched parties are inevitable and added that he is confident that the people of Telangana will teach them a lesson.

Addressing a gathering of BRS workers, he predicted that in Station Ghanpur Kadiyam Srihari will lose and Rajayya will emerge victorious as the MLA.

Meanwhile, former f Station Ghanpur and Dharmasagar ZPTC Member Keerthi Venkateshwarulu and several other activists formally joined

Continued on Page 2

Secrecy over BCs' commission report sparks outrage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The confidential submission of the Bhusani Venkateswara Rao Dedicated Commission report on BC reservations in local body elections has led to serious objections, with former Telangana State BC Commission Chairman Dr Vakulabharanam Krishna Mohan Rao accusing the government of betraying the BCs.

He said the government had a hidden agenda to refuse 42% reservations for BCs in local elections and asked why the report was not made public.

The commission submitted its report to Chief Secretary Shanta Kumari on Monday, but the government has not officially acknowledged receiving it, raising suspicions.

Dr Krishna Mohan Rao pointed out that in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and

Uttar Pradesh, similar commissions had submitted their reports transparently and their findings were put

The controversy comes at a time when Telangana's BC caste survey results indicated a decline in the BC population, sparking protests across the state

in the public domain.

He asked why Telangana is maintaining secrecy suggesting that the government was unwilling to uphold

its promise to the BCs. The controversy comes at a time when Telangana's BC caste survey results indicated a decline in the BC population, sparking protests across the state.

Last Saturday, BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar held discussions with BC leaders and intellectuals, assuring them that the government would positively consider their demands. However, after three days, the government secretly obtained the Dedicated Commission's report without addressing any BC concerns, leading to accusations of deception and betrayal.

The former BC Commission chairman questioned whether the recommendations in the report applied only to rural local bodies or also covered urban local bodies, a crucial aspect that remains unclear due to the government's secrecy. **Continued on Page 2**

Cong govt honeymoon over, will face people's wrath, warns KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao launched a blistering attack on the Congress government, warning that people would soon confront its leaders regarding their false promises and failures. He declared that the Congress' honeymoon period is over and that people will soon take matters into their own hands.

Speaking at a gathering of Khammam district BRS workers at the residence of former minister Puvvada Ajay in Hyderabad, KTR criticised the government for failing Telangana and accused it of incompetence during the floods in Khammam.

He said that Congress leaders fooled people with false promises to gain power, but now, the very same people are ready to hold them accountable. He said that Telangana is now realizing the loss it suffered



without KCR as Chief Minister.

He pointed out that when floods hit Khammam, people remembered Puvvada Ajay's leadership, while the Congress government did little to help. Highlighting the Congress gov-

ernment's inefficiency, KTR accused it of neglecting flood relief. He asked why ministers who use helicopters for birthday celebrations could not arrange aerial rescue operations during the floods in Khammam.

He recalled that during BRS rule, helicopters were dispatched even to remote villages in Bhupalpally to save lives. However, under the Congress, people were left stranded and a family even lost their lives in the floods. KTR also ridiculed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's flood visit, stating that after the waters receded he arrived in an open-top jeep, waved to the crowds like a celebrity, and left without even setting foot on the ground.

He said that anyone with an ounce of dignity would have drowned themselves in a bucket after hearing the public's abuse, but Revanth has no shame and simply brushes it all off.

Cong deceiving all sections: Alleti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Legislature Party (BJLP) leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said the Congress is deceiving all sections of people.

Addressing the MLC election preparatory meeting at Nirmal on Tuesday, Maheshwar asked the Congress to tell what it has done for unemployed youth to demand votes for their candidates in the MLC elections.

He said the Congress came to power giving several assurances, however, it forgot its assurances after coming to power.

Maheshwar said the Congress had assured that it would give jobs to the unemployed and pay unemployment allowance. However, it is not implementing it after coming to power. He said the government has been

deceiving its employees regarding pay scale and PRC. The government is also not caring for retired employees as it is not giving their money.

He recalled that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy made several allegations against the BRS government when he was TPCC chief, however, he is not taking any action against BRS leaders after coming to power. It shows that the BRS and Congress are one, he said.

Maheshwar said the BJP is exposing the Congress government's scams and playing its opposition role perfectly. He appealed to MLC election voters to teach a lesson to the Congress by voting for the BJP.

The BJP Graduates MLC candidate Anji Reddy, Teachers MLC candidate Malka Komuriah and Muthol MLA Ramarao Patil attended the programme.



Rahul's visit cancelled in a surprising manner

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi's, Tuesday visit to Telangana has been cancelled. Rahul was supposed to come to Hyderabad on Tuesday evening and



then go to Warangal. There Rahul was supposed to meet Congress activists. Later, Rahul was supposed to go to Chennai by train from Kazipet.

Rahul planned to have a chat with passengers during his journey from Warangal to Chennai and was planning to check the public's views on the Centre's plans to privatise the railways.

Before that, Rahul planned to have an interaction with the Congress activists of Warangal. However, Rahul's tour was cancelled. Party sources said Rahul's visit was cancelled due to the Parliament session. Another version doing the rounds is that Rahul's visit was cancelled due to security reasons.

Cancelled visit fearing backlash: BRS

Former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi cancelled his Telangana tour fearing public backlash.

Addressing a press conference at the Telangana Bhavan, he said that the Congress itself had announced Rahul Gandhi's visit to Warangal, but later withdrew it, fearing massive protests by farmers and the public.

Peddi Sudarshan Reddy said that all sections of society now feel deceived by the Congress.

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

ED completes restitution of properties worth Rs 79 cr to SBI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Hyderabad zonal office has successfully accomplished the process of restitution of properties worth Rs 79.20 crore to the State Bank of India in connection with a money laundering case against M/s Musaddil Jewellers Pvt. Ltd & others.

Based on ED's initiative, the State Bank of India (SBI) filed restitution applications under Section 8(8) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 before the Special PMLA Court of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Nampally, Hyderabad for release of moveable properties seized by the ED, Hyderabad Zonal Office. ED, Hyderabad urged the court to release

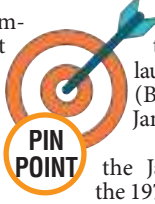
the seized amount to the rightful claimant, i.e. SBI in public interest.

The court vide orders dated 06.01.2025 and 03.02.2025 allowed the said petitions and ordered for release of moveable properties in the form of jewellery worth Rs 79.20 crore being closing stock seized from commercial premises of M/s Musaddil Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. ED has been investigating a money laundering case against Musaddil Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. & others who had deposited more than Rs 111 crore in demonetised currency immediately after the demonetisation of high value notes was declared.

ED investigation revealed that said demonetised currency was deposited under the pretext of receipt of advance money from around 6,000 fake customers.

A decade in power is a 'litmus test' for all parties

Rise and fall are common in politics. But how can one gauge the anti-incumbency in the minds of the electorate? It's natural for all political parties to face some anti-incumbency. There is no guarantee that the electorate will respond positively even if a party delivers good governance. One can conclude that a government would face anti-incumbency if it is in power for a decade. There are many examples for this. The Assembly elections in Delhi once again proved that a party would lose power if it rules for a decade. The BJP emerged victorious in Delhi after 27 years. Right from the beginning, elections in Delhi have been a matter of prestige for the BJP. The BJP lost the Delhi Metropolitan elections in 1982 to the Congress, which was very powerful then under the leadership of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It was



the first defeat of the BJP after its launch on April 6, 1980. (Before 1980, it was Jana Sangh which had become a part of the Janata Party during the 1977 general elections). BJP president Vajpayee had to quit taking moral responsibility for the Delhi defeat. The BJP managed to come to power in the Delhi Assembly polls in 1993. But it couldn't leave its imprint on Delhi although it was claiming to be a party with a difference under LK Advani who took over in 1986. During its five-year rule in Delhi the BJP had three Chief Ministers (Madanlal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma and Sushma Swaraj). The BJP had been criticising the Congress for changing CMs like playing cards. But eventually the BJP had to follow Congress style by changing its CMs. Later, the BJP made the same mistake in Madhya

The AAP tasted defeat as the public was angry with its policies, particularly its alleged involvement in the liquor scam due to which both the CM and the Deputy CM had to go to jail. The Delhi Assembly elections can be interpreted as a 'Capital Gain' for the BJP and a 'Capital Punishment' for the AAP

Pradesh where it had three Chief Ministers (Uma Bharati, Babulal Gaur and Sivaraj Singh Chouhan). After that, the BJP stopped criticising the Congress for changing CMs frequently. The BJP suffered continuous setbacks when the Congress registered a hat-trick win in Delhi during Sheila Dixit's tenure. After that, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) stormed into power pushing the BJP out. The BJP had to spend an agonising 10 years of AAP rule headed by Arvind Kejriwal who handed



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over Delhi to his colleague Aatishi in the end. Delhi, which has the maximum literacy rate in the country, has rejected AAP now and has voted for the BJP. The double-engine sarkar has become a reality in Delhi. The BJP may not change the CM this time. It may try to strengthen the BJP in Punjab where the AAP is ruling while deciding the Delhi CM. The AAP tasted defeat as the public was angry with its policies, particularly its alleged involvement in the liquor scam

mid-term polls. TDP's founder president NT Rama Rao won on both occasions. After two years of winning the 1985 polls, the TDP faced heat in the 1987 municipal polls and almost half the municipal bodies went to the Congress. Ultimately, the TDP lost power in the 1989 elections. The murder of Congress legislator Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga Rao (Vijayawada East) on December 26, 1988, turned the tide in Congress's favour. The TDP tasted defeat once again after its decade-long rule from 1994 to 2004. It came to power under NTR's leadership in 1994 but he was dethroned in an internal revolt led by N Chandrababu Naidu after eight months. CBN managed to retain power in 1999 after a tie-up with the BJP. Finally, he lost power in 2004 to the Congress led by Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy who retained power in 2009. After YSR's death in a helicopter crash on September 2, 2009,

the Congress ruled United AP with Chief Ministers K Rosaiah and N Kiran Kumar Reddy. The bifurcation of AP in 2014 left the Congress with no future in residual AP. It may be mentioned here that the Congress has been experiencing crushing defeats in both Delhi and AP. The Congress managed to bury itself in AP after it decided to bifurcate United AP. Thus the Congress deceived the people of Andhra who had given it two terms at the Centre by giving it 30 plus LS seats in the 2004 and 2009 LS polls. In Telangana, there was a positive vote for the TRS (later BRS) in the 2014 elections. The people voted for the TRS in the 2018 elections believing TRS supremo C Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) who portrayed the Congress as an enemy of Telangana. But finally anti-incumbency ended BRS rule in TG in 2023. The Congress which gave statehood to Telangana, bagged power after

being in the opposition for 10 years. The TRS had promised to make a Dalit the first Chief Minister of Telangana but backtracked. The BRS admin crashed due to public discontent on many issues including family rule. In most cases, 10 years is enough time for people to develop anti-incumbency. But there are exceptional cases where some rulers managed to survive after a decade in power. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath suffered heavy losses in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections when the BJP lost 40 LS seats and its LS majority. The continuous rule of Naveen Patnaik in Odisha, Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and that of the BJP in Gujarat are exceptions to this general rule. Finally, it can be said that if any party rules continuously for a decade it can land in trouble. A decade's rule can be considered the 'litmus test' for political parties.

KTR dazed after shock delivered by sister & cousin: Mahesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud said that BRS Working President KTR is now speaking in a daze after being shocked by his sister and cousin. He said that the CM and his team of ministers are leading the state towards development after 10 years of destruction by the BRS admin. The BRS, which has now split into three groups, will not be visible in Telangana by the 2028 Assembly elections, he said. In a statement issued on Tuesday, Mahesh challenged KTR by asking him whether he is ready for a debate on the 10-year rule of the BRS and the one-year rule of the

Congress. He said that KTR should stop speaking useless words and contest the MLC polls if he has the guts. "I am ready to discuss the BJP-BRS compromise deal in the MLC elections. I am ready to come anywhere to discuss the BC caste census and the SC classification issue. KTR has no moral right to talk about Revanth Reddy. Have you forgotten the fact that people taught the BRS a lesson in the Lok Sabha elections in constituencies once represented by your sister, cousin and father? You know that you will get only a donkey's egg in the MLC elections and so your party has not fielded candidates," the TPCC chief said.

SC asks EC response on pleas for EVM verification

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Election Commission of India's response on the pleas seeking verification of the burnt memory and symbol loading units in EVMs in compliance with its judgement. A special bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta asked the poll panel to refrain from erasing or reloading data during the verification process. The pleas sought direction to the poll panel to check and verify burnt memory/micro-controllers and the symbol loading unit (SLU) of electronic voting machines (EVM). The bench asked the poll panel to file its response within 15 days and explain the procedure adopted and posted the matter in the week commencing March 3. The bench issued notices to the poll panel on the interim application filed by NGO

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and a losing candidate Sarv Mitter, represented by senior advocate Devadatt Kamat. ADR in a fresh plea, said the standard operating procedure of the poll panel for verification of the EVMs was not in accordance with the 2024 judgement passed on its petition in the EVM-VVPAT case. On Tuesday, the bench asked the poll panel on the erasure and reloading of polling data. The bench said the judgement did not mandate such actions but merely required verification of the EVMs by an engineer of the manufacturing company. "What we intended was that, if after the polls somebody asks, the engineer should come and certify that, according to him, in their presence, there is no tampering in any of the burnt memory or microchips. That's all. Why do you erase the data?" asked the CJ.

Harish demands 42 pc quota for BCs before local elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao demanded that the Telangana government should implement 42% reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) in local body elections before conducting polls. Speaking at a religious event in Siddipet's Konayipalli village, he accused the Congress of failing to honour its commitments and warned that people would hold them accountable. Harish launched a sharp attack on the ruling Congress, stating that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had promised farm loan waivers, Rythu Bharosa and Indramma Bharosa by January 26, but farmers and other beneficiaries have not received even a single rupee. "This government has failed to keep its word. The Congress promised Telangana voters the world, but today, people realize they have been deceived," he

said. Referring to electoral setbacks in Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi, he said the Congress was punished for failing to deliver on its promises. "Voters in Karnataka and Telangana trusted them, but now other states are rejecting the Congress because they failed to implement their assurances," he added. Harish attended the Sri Padmavati Goda Sameta Sri

Venkateswara Swamy Kalyanotsavam at Konayipalli, where he conducted prayers. Speaking on the occasion, he recalled that KCR had a deep spiritual connection with this temple and that many key moments of the Telangana Movement were associated with it. "KCR developed this temple with Rs. 3.6 crore and ensured devotees from across states could visit," he said.

Highlighting KCR's commitment to temples, he pointed out that during BRS rule, Rs 75 crore was allocated for temple renovations in Siddipet alone. "But after the Congress came to power, for the last 15 months, not even a single rupee has been released for temple development. They have not even started new projects, and funds allocated earlier have stalled," he said.

Poll promises: Kavitha warns govt of strong action

BRS MLC and Telangana Jagruthi President Kavitha has issued a strong warning to the Congress government, demanding the immediate implementation of all promised welfare schemes for women. She accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of betraying women

by failing to deliver on financial assistance, gold and scooters as promised before the elections. Addressing Telangana Jagruthi's women's wing activists at her residence on Tuesday, Kavitha lashed out at the Congress for not keeping its word despite

being in power for 14 months. "The Congress promised Rs 2,500 per month to every woman. Now they owe Rs 35,000 to each woman. If they fail to implement these promises by Women's Day, we will launch a protest," she warned.

Uttam for strategic moves to make Congress win MLC polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy urged Congress leaders and activists to work strategically to ensure the Congress's victory in the Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar Graduates' constituency elections. He emphasised that these elections are prestigious for the party and will serve as a stepping stone for the local body polls. Addressing a video conference with public representatives from the erstwhile Karimnagar district on Tuesday, Uttam provided a clear roadmap for elections. Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Ponnamm Prabhakar,



MLC T. Jeevan Reddy, Government Whip Aadi Srinivas, MLAs K Satyanarayana, Raj Thakur, Dr. Sanjay, Velichala Rajender Rao, Medipalli Satyam, Vadithala Pranav, SUDA Chairman Komatreddy Narendra Reddy, and Government Advisor Harkal Venugopal Rao were present at the meeting. Uttam, the district in-charge minister, had earlier attended the

nomination filing of Congress candidate Narendra Reddy. He later discussed the matter with party leaders, stressing the need for grassroots mobilisation. "These elections will serve as a rehearsal for local body polls. If we capitalise on the momentum from this election, the Congress can secure a landslide victory in MPTC and ZPTC elections," he said.

Probe soon against Eatala, says Surekha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Forest, Environment and Endowment Minister Konda Surekha said that there will be an investigation against the BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender. She said that Endowment lands were subjected to encroachments in the last 10 years during BRS rule. She said that BRS leaders were behind these encroachments. During a chat with journalists on Tuesday, Surekha said that she had directed officials to prepare a list of places to conduct Kumbhabhi

shekams in the state. She said a Kumbhabhishekam was held in Kaleshwaram 42 years ago. Reacting to BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's criticism against the caste census and his demand for a re-survey, Surekha asked KTR and his family to apply for a survey first. KTR should learn a lesson from his sister Kavitha, who participated in the caste survey. She asked KTR to explain where mistakes took place in the survey. Answering another question, she said that she doesn't know about the unhappiness of

MLAs and that she is not encouraging anyone who demands favours. Surekha said that there is a shortage of employees in the Endowment Department and the administration is facing problems due to insufficient staff. She said that taking employees from the Revenue Department is not a new thing and that she directed surveyors to survey endowment lands where there are no litigations. She said that there are no complaints about the protection provided to surveyors in the forest department.

Netanyahu threatens to resume fighting if hostages aren't released Saturday

PNS ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday threatened to withdraw from the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and resume its fight against Hamas if the militant group does not go ahead with the next scheduled release of hostages on Saturday. Hamas said Monday — and reiterated Tuesday — that it planned to delay the release of three more hostages after accusing Israel of failing to meet the terms of the ceasefire, including by not allowing enough tents and other aid into Gaza. US President Donald Trump has emboldened Israel to call for the release of even more remaining hostages on Saturday, but it wasn't immediately clear whether Netanyahu's threat referred to the release of all remaining hostages in Gaza, or just the three scheduled for release on Saturday. Earlier Tuesday, an Israeli official said Netanyahu ordered the army to add more troops in and around the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu also ordered officials "to prepare for every scenario if Hamas doesn't release our hostages this Saturday," according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a private meeting. Israel had signalled Monday it planned to reinforce defences along the Gaza border. The all-scenario plan was announced during a four-hour meeting between Netanyahu and his Security Cabinet that focused on Hamas' threat, which risks jeopardizing the three-week-old ceasefire.

Energy Department must function as one team. He advised that any field-level issue should be immediately reported to the superior and, if unresolved, escalated further, even to his office if necessary. He assured officials that the government is ready to provide all required resources to address ground level challenges.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Feb 11 06:55 PM to Feb 12 07:23 PM
Krishna Paksha Pratipada: Feb 12 07:23 PM to Feb 13 08:22 PM
Nakshatram: Ashlesha: Feb 11 06:34 PM to Feb 12 07:35 PM
Magha: Feb 12 07:35 PM to Feb 13 09:07 PM
Rahukalam: 12:30 PM to 1:56 PM
Yamagandam: 8:13 AM to 9:39 AM
Varjyam: 08:21 AM to 10:03 AM
Gulika: 11:04 AM to 12:30 PM
Amritakalam: 05:55 PM to 07:35 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: NIL
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 34°
Humidity: 48%
Sunrise: 6:44 AM
Sunset: 6:17 PM
Updated: February 11, 2025 5:00 PM

Secrecy over ...

Continued from page 1

He said that the commission's process was flawed and lacked transparency, with no evidence of public consultations, expert reviews or research-based methodology. Government Under Pressure to Act Dr Krishna Mohan Rao also criticized the government's failure to clarify its legal and legislative stance on BC reservations, calling it an anti-BC approach. He questioned the point of conducting a massive caste survey if the government was not going to act on it and warned that ignoring BCs' rights would amount to misleading the entire nation on social justice. He demanded that the state government should take three immediate steps to restore faith among BC communities. 1. Conduct a re-survey to collect scientific and comprehensive population data and publish caste-wise statistics. 2. Ensure that the dedicated commission re-examines the data with full transparency. 3. Take strong action to implement 42% BC reservations in local body elections, as promised. Dr Krishna Mohan Rao warned that BCs will launch state-wide protests if the government fails to act on its commitments. The press statement was issued during an honorary journalists' meeting at Hotel Abhinandan Grand, Kacheguda, Hyderabad.

Krishnaiah ...

Continued from page 1

report from the BC Commission. "The BC Commission submitted its report on Monday, which has details of the BC population in the state. Based on these figures, the government must increase reservations in panchayat raj institutions — sarpanch, MPTC and ZPTC elections — to 42%," Krishnaiah demanded. He accused the government of using legal constraints as an excuse to delay the process.

Defected ...

Continued from page 1 BRS in KCR's presence. The move is seen as one strengthening the BRS in the region, ahead of electoral battles. Consolidating the party's

"The Supreme Court's verdict on reservation ceilings was delivered 20 years ago. However, when the Centre introduced a 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS) among upper castes, the ceiling was removed. There are no legal hurdles anymore," he asserted. Krishnaiah challenged the state government to pass legislation in the Assembly to increase reservations for BCs and face any legal challenges that may arise. "Make the law first, and then let's see how to deal with the consequences," he said, daring the Congress to act on its promises.

base, a large-scale induction programme will be held on February 15 at the Telangana Bhavan in the presence of BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR). Around 1,000 activists from Station Ghanpur are expected to join BRS during the event.

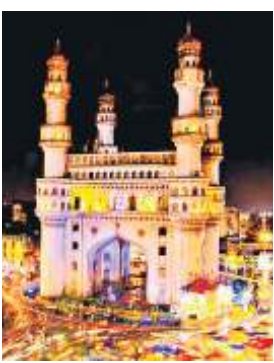
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City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 12, 2025

03



Annual Day Celebrations
By Kangaroo Kids Pre School (Rehearsals)

Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
February 12, (9 am to 1 pm)

Dr BV Pattabhiram 75th Birthday Celebrations

Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
February 12, (1:30 pm to 10 pm)

K.V Ramana Birthday Celebrations

Venue
Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha
February 12, (6 pm)

Live Musical Orchestra

Venue
Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha
February 12, (10 am)

IIT Hyd holds meet on conditional cash transfer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad, hosted a distinguished gathering of scholars to discuss Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) schemes and the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative at a conference titled "Turning girls into daughters: Conditional cash transfer schemes, marginalities, and changing gender dynamics in India." The conference is part of the ICSSR-funded Vision Viksit Bharat @2047 project, "Viksit Bharat ki Atmanirbhar Betiyan: Exploring the Role of CCTs and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in Empowering Girls in India."

The conference will bring together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to critically analyse how CCTs shape gender dynamics in India. By fostering interdisciplinary discussions, this event aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts for women's empowerment and gender equity in India.

Prof BS Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad, reaffirmed the institute's dedication to social impact research, stating, "At IIT Hyderabad, we are committed to fostering research that not only advances academic knowledge but also drives meaningful change in society. This conference is a crucial platform for examining how policy interventions can promote gender equity and social transformation. To further support this mission, we have introduced special provisions and supernumerary seats to encourage greater participation of girl students in higher education."

Docs who know AI will replace those who don't: Dr Nageshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AI will not replace doctors, but doctors who use AI will replace those who don't, said Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals. He urged doctors to be responsive to change, at the 32nd HYSEA National Summit and Awards 2025 at HICC Novotel on Tuesday. Addressing the Powernote on AI Innovations in Healthcare, Dr Nageshwar Reddy noted that India's first in-hospital AI centre has been set up at AIG, with 50 professional engineers working there.

Dr Reddy said medicine has always been about empathy and natural intelligence. He added, "I used to be anti-AI until recent medical developments." He mentioned that since 1950, no one has fully understood what AI means. He noted that machines now exhibit human-like intelligence.

Dr Reddy stated they follow three foundation models: Computer Vision, the medical component of ChatGPT for LLMs, and NLP for speech-to-text conversion. AI plays a major role in diagnostics, image analysis, drug discovery and predictive,



Dr. D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals, being felicitated at the 32nd HYSEA National Summit and Awards 2025 at HICC Novotel on Tuesday

precision, and personalised medicine. Most research is in radiology imaging and telehealth. He said rapid, accurate diagnosis is needed to improve healthcare

efficiency and resource allocation. For patients, predictive precision medicine is key.

Dr Reddy mentioned that at AIG, AI is used in service man-

agement, predictive medicine, patient data analysis, diagnostics and clinical decision-making.

He said that preoperative methods involve multiple doctor con-

sultations, but 30% of patients do not return for surgery. AI identified that each patient interacted with 17 points before surgery clearance.

AI streamlined these into one small space, improving cost efficiency by 20%. Now, 99.5% of patients return for surgery.

Dr Reddy highlighted AIG's medical information robot, 'Meera,' which assists doctors, nurses and patients. He said that Meera answers 60% of patient queries, saving doctor's time.

He also mentioned another device called I-Save, which predicts Code Blue emergencies. When five out of seven parameters become abnormal, an alert is triggered, preventing Code Blue. In seven months, I-Save has prevented Code Blue events, saving 100 patients each month.

Dr Reddy also highlighted PRISM (Perception Recording Intelligence and Summary Maker), an AI tool that records and summarises doctor-patient interactions, increasing efficiency. He noted that AIG will offer PRISM for free at all hospitals after validating it with 30,000 patient records.

TG to support Bahrain in skill development: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is ready to support the establishment of world-class institutions like Skills University, T-Hub and T-Works in Bahrain, announced IT Minister D Sridhar Babu. In a high-level meeting at the State Secretariat on Tuesday, he assured Bahrain's Ambassador to India, Abdul Rahman Al Gaoud, of Telangana's commitment to sharing its expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship.

A Bahraini delegation, including senior members of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce, expressed interest in Telangana's initiatives and invited Minister Sridhar Babu to Bahrain to explore collaboration further. He welcomed the invitation and reaffirmed



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu with the Bahraini delegation at the Secretariat on Tuesday

Telangana's support in setting up advanced skill development institutions. Minister Sridhar Babu highlighted Skills University's industry-driven model, where corporations shape curricula and provide hands-on training.

Each year, 3, 30 00,000 graduates in Telangana receive specialised training, ensuring they are job-ready. Telangana has also partnered with Singapore's Institute of Technical Education to introduce global standards.

NO NEED TO PANIC

Eating chicken and eggs is safe, say experts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amid concerns over Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) cases in some states, doctors and poultry experts have reassured the public that there is no need to panic and that chicken and eggs are safe to consume.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Special Chief Secretary Sabayasachi Ghosh clarified that the recent Animal Husbandry department memo was only a precautionary measure to protect poultry in Telangana. "People can eat chicken and eggs. This memo is a precautionary step as HPAI has been reported in other states," he said.

The Animal Husbandry department has urged District Collectors across Telangana to strengthen biosecurity mea-



asures and prevent the spread of avian influenza from other states. The key directives include, raising awareness among poultry farmers and the public about prevention,

restricting transportation of sick birds, ensuring proper disposal of dead birds, encouraging early reporting of unusual poultry deaths to the Veterinary and Animal

Husbandry department and holding district-level meetings with relevant departments to discuss containment measures.

Dr Madap Karuna, a pediatrician from Kompally, emphasised that eating properly cooked poultry and pasteurised dairy products poses no health risks.

"Eating undercooked poultry, beef, or unpasteurised milk can cause illness. However, cooking poultry, eggs and meat at the recommended internal temperature kills bacteria and viruses, including avian influenza," Dr Karuna said.

Poultry experts have also dismissed rumors of restrictions on chicken consumption. They stressed that the precautions are solely for poultry health and that there is no reason for consumers to avoid chicken or eggs.

GMR School of Aviation, RMIT sign MoU to enhance aviation edu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GMR School of Aviation and GMR Aero Academy has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) to strengthen specialised training and professional education in the aviation sector.

This collaboration aims to develop joint training programmes, including diplomas, degrees, credit transfers, and specialised courses in key areas such as aviation and airport safety, security, operations, cargo management and customer experience. The agreement will also facilitate the design and delivery of Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering, along with internships and placement opportunities for students.

The partnership will focus on innovation,

safety advancements, sustainability and emerging technologies to address the growing demands of the aviation industry.

Ashok Gopinath, President and Accountable Manager, GMR Aero Academy and GMR School of Aviation, said, "This MoU is a significant step in our mission to shape the future of aviation. By developing training programmes aligned with industry needs, we aim to build a highly skilled workforce ready to tackle industry challenges."

Lea Vesic, Director, RMIT Aviation Academy, added, "We are excited to partner with GMR Aero Academy and GMR School of Aviation to develop dynamic programmes that bridge the skills gap in emerging aviation sectors. This partnership enables us to create real-world educational opportunities tailored to industry demands."



GMR School of Aviation and GMR Aero Academy signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

2,480 applications received at Prajavani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 2,480 grievance applications were submitted during Prajavani on Tuesday at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan. Officials reported that the majority of applications, 2,130 were for the Indiramma Housing Scheme. Other submissions included 139 for the Panchayati Raj and Rural Development department, 110 for the Electricity department, 36 for Revenue department, one for Pravas and 64 for various other departments. State Planning Commission Vice-President Dr G Chinna Reddy and Public Administration Special Officer D Divya participated received applications.

Hyd's office space set to surpass 200 M Sqft by 2030

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's commercial real estate sector is witnessing unprecedented growth, with the city's office stock projected to exceed 200 million sqft by 2030, according to a joint report by CBRE South Asia and the Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA).

The report, titled HYSEA Scale @ Hyderabad: Global Technology Destination, highlights Hyderabad's emergence as a top business hub, contributing 15 per cent of India's total office space and over 18 per cent of the country's green-certified office stock. Since 2014, the city's office stock has tripled, reaching 137 million sqft. by the end of 2024, driven by strong demand from global firms.

Hyderabad's office space absorption



hit 12.3 million sqft in 2024, with the technology sector leading at 31% of total leasing. The city has also seen a diversification in its occupier base, with life sciences firms (21%) and flexible space operators (14%) increasing their office footprint.

Hyderabad has now cemented its position as a major innovation hub, attracting global corporations in IT, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and finance. Anshuman Magazine, Chairman and CEO, India, Southeast Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE, said, "Hyderabad's transformation into a global business and technology hub highlights its ability to adapt to market demands. Its strong infrastructure, diverse occupier base and skilled workforce make it a key growth centre in India's real estate landscape."

AI-powered platform launched for automated HR interviews

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

ZinterviewAI, an AI-powered platform with innovative avatars for automated HR interviews was launched by Riktam Group, a leading provider of engineering solutions. This innovation aims to streamline hiring by conducting unbiased and efficient interviews, saving companies time and resources.

For over 15 years, Riktam Technology Consulting has provided solutions to global brands like Toyota, Nike, Google and Procter &

Gamble. Recognising hiring challenges, the company developed ZinterviewAI to make recruitment faster and more accurate.

Co-Founder and CEO, Siddharam Shingshetty said that ZinterviewAI handles the repetitive screening process, allowing organizations to focus on selecting the right talent. Since its pilot launch in June 2024, ZinterviewAI has conducted thousands of interviews monthly. The company has secured \$200,000 in seed funding and is seeking investors for further growth.



A devotee complaining about alleged irregularities at Pochamma temple in Vemulawada on Tuesday

Chilli prices crash, leave farmers distraught

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

On Monday, when the Enumamula Agriculture Market reopened after a two-day break, farmers brought in one lakh bags of red chillies. The produce came from nearby districts like Warangal, Mahabubabad, Suryapeta, Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem, as well as from areas in neighboring Andhra Pradesh.

The market was flooded with chilli bags, but the farmers faced disappointment over the price. The market authorities only purchased one or two lots at the official price of Rs 14,000 a quintal. The model price offered was Rs 13,300. In contrast, the actual price paid was much lower than the official rate, causing frustration among the farmers. Many lamented that the price they received barely covered their input costs.

Three years ago, the price of red chilli was as high as Rs 25,000 per quintal, but it since dropped by half. Despite the



Marketing Department promoting the official price, only a few farmers were able to sell at that rate. Traders have been lowering

the price citing issues like poor colour and quality of the chillies. As a result, some farmers are forced to sell their produce for as

low as Rs 8,000 or even Rs 6,000 per quintal. A lack of demand from export markets has worsened the situation. Farmers in

undivided Khammam, Warangal, and Nalgonda districts primarily cultivate the Teja variety of red chilli, known for its spiciness and high demand. This variety was previously exported to countries like Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, China, and Singapore. However, the export prospects for this crop have significantly diminished.

The farmers faced additional challenges last year. Many chilli plants did not survive due to high temperature during transplanting, forcing farmers to replant, further raising their costs. Heavy rains in September caused waterlogging in the fields, damaging the plants.

Additionally, pest attacks led to a considerable drop in yield. With costs mounting, the farmers are worried about recovering their input and labor expenses and are calling on the market committee to take appropriate steps to ensure better prices for their produce.

Devotees complain of indiscriminate fleecing in Vemulawada

PNS ■ VEMULAWADA

It is a tradition for devotees, who visit Vemulawada Rajanna temple, known as the god of the poor, to also visit Sri Pochamma temple. There have been allegations that devotees are being fleeced during their visit to the temple. Specifically, it appears that devotees who pay to perform special prayers at the temple are facing large-scale extortion. Compared to other devotees, those who perform rituals (called Patnam) seem to encounter more adverse experiences, with many asserting that this is a recurring issue.

In reality, devotees are required to pay Rs 150 for an official ticket to perform the rituals. However, it appears that the organisers are collecting additional money. While if the sum is in the hundreds it may not

be a huge issue, reports indicate that it can sometimes run into thousands of rupees.

Devotees have criticised the officials for turning a blind to the extortion racket. The devotees are expressing their grievances, saying it is unfair to demand such large sums.

Despite these complaints, those responsible for the rituals are allegedly refusing to reduce the charges and continue extorting the devotees. On Tuesday, devotees who came from the Jangaon district reported that they were forced to pay Rs 2,000 for the ritual, further highlighting the ongoing exploitation. Devotees are now urging temple authorities to intervene and stop this extortion system. There is a strong belief that the lack of supervision by authorities is the main reason why devotees are being extorted at the temple.

Caste census: Ponnam asks Oppn not to mislead people

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

At a media conference in Karimnagar, Minister for Backward Classes and Transport Ponnam Prabhakar stated that the caste census conducted by the Congress government will become a role model for the nation. Congress leader and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi mentioned during the Bharat Jodo Yatra that the Congress government would conduct the caste census. He said that the BRS and BJP had been spreading fake news on the caste census.

The Minister emphasised that the BRS and BJP have no moral right to speak about the caste census. The BJP opposed the caste census. He pointed out that the Congress government conducted a caste census and urged those who did not



Backward Classes Minister Ponnam Prabhakar speaking at a media conference in Karimnagar on Tuesday

participate earlier to provide their details now if they wished to speak on the matter. He said those who did not participate in the survey have no right to talk about it.

He demanded that the BJP leaders from the State put pressure on the Central government to conduct a nationwide survey. The Congress government has been striving

to ensure that the Backward Classes (BCs) get justice. He said that the Congress would work for the welfare of all BCs. He also mentioned that meetings would be held with intellectuals and representatives of all castes. He appealed to opposition parties not to mislead people. Prabhakar stated that the BCs among Muslims is not a new concept.

Minister, Congress leaders condemn attack on Rangarajan

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Minister for Information Technology and district in-charge Minister D Sridhar Babu, government Chief Whip Patnam Mahender Reddy, Chevella MLA Kale Yadaiah, and senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao visited Chilkur Balaji chief priest Rangarajan following the recent attack on him.

Speaking on the incident, Mahender Reddy condemned the attack, stating that violence in the name of God and Ram was unfortunate. He said that the government would take strict action and punish the accused severely. Sridhar Babu strongly condemned the attack, calling it an inhuman act. He emphasised that such incidents in the name of Ram would not be tolerated. He



Information Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu, government Chief Whip Patnam Mahender Reddy, Chevella MLA Kale Yadaiah, and senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao with Chilkur Balaji chief priest Rangarajan on Tuesday

confirmed that the police had already arrested some of the accused and warned against

any attempts to spread anarchy under the guise of Ram Rajya. To prevent further incidents,

he announced that security at the Chilkur Balaji Temple would be increased

Importance of eye health stressed

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

District Collector Adarsh Surabhi here on Tuesday stressed the importance of a healthy vision for students.

On Tuesday, free eye tests were conducted for students at the Zilla Parishad Government Boys School here under the supervision of the District Health Department and free eyeglasses were distributed to those found with vision problems.

During the event, the Collector mentioned that good eyesight would contribute to enhanced academic performance. He said that without proper eyesight, students cannot concentrate on their studies and may not perform well in exams.

He explained that eye tests were conducted for over 30,000 students in more than 300 government schools in the district.

Fake scribe held on charges of blackmail, extortion

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Anand Kumar, who allegedly donned the garb of a journalist and blackmailed officials, was arrested by Nalgonda police on Tuesday. He was involved in publishing false and defamatory news against government officials 'Crime Mirror Digital Paper' and then blackmailed them to extort money.

Anand Kumar, along with his accomplices Tuppari Raghunath and Peraboyina Anjaneyulu alias Anji, targeted government employees and business people in Nalgonda, Vikarabad, Rangareddy, and Karimnagar districts. They published false and fabricated information in the 'Crime Mirror Digital Paper' and extorted money.

The police launched an investigation against the fake journalists based on a complaint by some officials. The gang blackmailed even Miryalaguda Circle Inspector Vryababu and extorted Rs 2



Deputy Superintendent of Police K Rajashekar Raju announcing the arrest of a fake journalist who allegedly blackmailed officials, in Nalgonda on Tuesday

lakh from him, according to a press statement by the police.

It is reported that this gang had also extorted money from several other government employees in the Nalgonda district, and several cases are under investigation. It is further revealed that Anand Kumar and his associates had

engaged in illegal extortion in various districts, including Vikarabad, Rangareddy, and Karimnagar. Following the arrest of the first two accused, other victims have also started to approach the police to file complaints, and additional facts are expected to surface during further investigations.

Doctor turned-MLA performs surgery at Govt Hospital

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The second mega surgical camp organised at the government hospital in Achampet town of Nagar Kurnool district has been successful for the past three days. On the occasion, MLA Vamsikrishna, who is a medical doctor, performed a scientific treatment on a woman, earning praise for his efforts.

Goreti Lakshamma from Charakonda Mandal had been suffering from severe stomach pain for the past few months. She had visited a private hospital but could not afford the surgery.

Upon hearing about the mega surgical camp being held in Achampet, she decided to meet with the doctors. The MLA, Dr Vamsikrishna himself performed the surgery and removed the abdominal cysts.

Many patients, having learned about the second mega surgical camp at



MLA Dr Vamsikrishna and the doctors' team at the mega surgical camp in Nagar Kurnool on Tuesday

Achampet Area Hospital, visited the hospital for treatment.

Vamsikrishna stated that people from poor and middle-class backgrounds who cannot afford treatment at private hospitals should immediately visit Achampet Area Hospital for care.

He further explained that surgeries for rare cysts, which would cost lakhs of rupees at

any corporate hospital, are being performed free of charge at Achampet Area Hospital under the guidance of senior doctors and Vamsikrishna as part of this mega camp. He urged people from Achampet, Nallamalla, and surrounding areas to make use of this opportunity.

Deputy District Medical and Health Officer Tara Singh and medical staff were present.

Narayana's dominance in JEE Main 2025 exam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Narayana Educational Institutions continue to redefine academic excellence with a stellar performance in JEE Main 2025 session 1.

Bani Brata Majee achieved a perfect 300/300, securing a hundred percentile, a remarkable testament to his dedication and Narayana's rigorous academic approach. Alongside him, Ayush Singhal, Kushagra Gupta, Vishad Jain and Shiven Vikas Toshniwal also achieved the prestigious 100 percentile, further reinforcing Narayana's legacy of nurturing top achievers.

Adding to this extraordinary success, Narayanites dominated the State topper list across multiple states.

Ayush Singhal emerged as Rajasthan state topper, Kushagra Gupta topper in Karnataka and Vishad Jain secured top position in Maharashtra, and Bani Brata Majee leading in Telangana.

Dr P Sindhura Narayana, director of Narayana Educational Institutions, expressed immense pride in students' achievements, stating, "At Narayana, we do not just teach - we empower.

Our unique approach blends conceptual clarity with problem-solving techniques, ensuring every student is prepared to face challenges head-on."

'90 Maoist leaders from TG still hiding in Chhattisgarh'

ACCORDING TO SOURCES, MOST OF THEM ARE AGED AND FACING HEALTH ISSUES

PNS ■ WARANGAL

In Chhattisgarh's Dandakaranya, the number of Maoists from Telangana has decreased significantly. According to state intelligence, only 90 people from Telangana are currently in Chhattisgarh. These 90 members serve in key positions in the Communist Party of India-Maoist, known as Maoist Party, central committee and several other important committees. At present, they are

believed to be in safe regions.

Of the 13 members of the Maoist central committee, 11 are from Telangana. Among them, central committee secretaries Namballa Keshavarau and Sudhakar are from Andhra Pradesh. Notably, the remaining nine are also from Telangana. Senior members from Telangana are now holding a majority of the positions in the central committee. Intelligence sources have identified that they represent several

state committees.

At Bijapur in Chhattisgarh Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav explained that a combing operation was carried out based on information that a key meeting of the Maoist party was being held in the forest of the National Park. Maoist leaders Bandi Prakash, Adellu alias Bhaskar, Buchanna, Krishna, and Ajith, along with 40 to 45 armed Maoists, were reportedly meet-

ing. After receiving this information, forces launched a search operation, during which an exchange of fire occurred. Multiple rounds of gunfire took place within a span of 3 to 4 hours. Police in Bastar suspected that the key leaders may have fled the scene as soon as the encounter began.

As far as Maoist leaders from Telangana are concerned, sources said that many of these leaders are ageing and

facing health issues. The movement of these individuals is currently limited, according to intelligence reports. Security forces are expected to carry out more aggressive operations in the coming days. The ongoing Maoist security forces conflict in Chhattisgarh is also impacting Telangana. As a precaution, Telangana police are continuously conducting combing operations along the borders to prevent any infiltration into the state.



AK-47, SLR, INSAS rifles, .303, BGL launcher weapons, and explosive materials recovered from the encounter site in Chhattisgarh

ACROSS THE STATES



NEET aspirant found hanging in Kota

An 18-year-old NEET aspirant from Swai Madhopur district hanged himself in his PG room early Tuesday, police said. The youth, Ankush Meena, did not leave behind any message. Police, however, surmised he killed himself over a love affair. According to police, Ankush had been preparing for (NEET-UG) in Kota for over one and a half years and living in a PG room in Pratap Nagar. He was found hanging from a ceiling fan Tuesday morning by a cousin of his who lives in the same neighbourhood. Circle Inspector at Dadabari police Station Menge Lal Yadav said. His body was sent for a postmortem, and the matter is under investigation, with a case lodged under section 194 of BNSS Act, he said. Head Constable Jitendra said a police team was rushed to the PG in Pratap Nagar after a call about suicide. Ankush scored around 480 marks in routine tests at his institute and showed no signs of stress over study, an uncle of his told reporters here outside the mortuary. He also called his father Tuesday around 8 am but did reveal if anything was troubling him, he added. This is the seventh student suicide this year that took place in the city.



Man shot dead by brother over property dispute

A 35-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by his brother over a property dispute in southwest Delhi's Uttam Nagar Area, police said on Tuesday. According to police, they got information on Monday around 10 pm regarding the murder of Dharminder Dalal, a resident of Matiala Village in Uttam Nagar, behind his house. A case under relevant sections was registered at Bindapur police station and an investigation was initiated. During the initial investigation, the police found that there had been a property dispute between two brothers -- Dharminder and Ravinder. The issue was related to the division of rental income, the officer said. Another officer said that the deceased was the youngest of three brothers and was favoured by their father. Police are searching for the accused, he added.



Army captain killed in IED blast in Jammu

Two Army personnel, including a captain, were killed and another was injured when suspected terrorists set off an improvised explosive device (IED) near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Akhnoor sector near here on Tuesday, officials said. This was the third incident of cross-border action by terrorists in the Jammu region in four days. It came a day after the general officer commanding of the Jammu-based White Knight Corps unit of the Army, Lieutenant General Navin Sachdeva, reviewed 'hostile activities' along the LoC in Rajouri district. The Army confirmed the fatalities in the blast and said "own troops are dominating the area and search operations are underway". The officials said the troops were on patrolling duty when they were hit by the powerful explosion near a forward post in the Bhattal area of Akhnoor in Jammu district at around 3:50 pm. The injured personnel were rushed to a hospital where two of them, including the captain, succumbed to their injuries, they said, adding that the condition of the other injured soldier is "out of danger". The White Knight Corps, also known as the XVI Corps, saluted the supreme sacrifice of the two soldiers.

'Work does not disappear due to tech, its nature changes'

PNS ■ PARIS

Allaying concerns about job loss due to artificial intelligence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that work does not disappear due to technology but its nature changes and new types of jobs are created.

Co-chairing the AI Action Summit along with French President Emmanuel Macron here, Modi called for investment in skilling and re-skilling people for an AI-driven future. "Loss of jobs is AI's most feared disruption. But, history has shown that work does not disappear due to technology. Its nature changes and new types of jobs are created. We need to invest in skilling and re-skilling our people for an AI-driven future," he said.

He said AI is writing the code for humanity in this century but it is very different from other technology milestones in human history.

"AI is already re-shaping our polity, our economy, our security and even our society. AI can help transform millions of lives by improving health, education, agriculture and so much more.



"It can help create a world in which the journey to Sustainable Development Goals becomes easier and faster. To do this, we must pool together resources and talent. We must develop open-source systems that enhance trust and transparency," Modi said. He said that India has successfully built a Digital Public

Infrastructure for over 1.4 billion people at a very low cost which is built around an open and accessible network.

"We are developing AI applications for public good. We have one of the world's largest AI talent pools. India is building its own Large Language Model considering our diversity," Modi said.

MODI OFFERS TO HOST NEXT AI ACTION SUMMIT

PARIS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday offered to host the next AI Action summit in India. In his concluding remarks at the summit which he co-chaired with French President Emmanuel Macron, Modi said that the discussions have clearly brought out that there is "unity in vision and unity in purpose across stakeholders." Observing that the partnership for AI is truly global in nature, Modi said, "To build on the momentum of this Action Summit, India would be happy to host the next Summit." France is hosting the first global AI Action Summit. The Prime Minister also welcomed the decision to set up the 'AI Foundation' and the 'Council for Sustainable AI' at the summit. Modi congratulated France and President Macron for these initiatives and assured him of full support. "We must also make the 'Global Partnership for AI' truly global in nature. It should be more inclusive of the Global South and its priorities, concerns and needs," Modi said.

Maldives an important pillar of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy: Om Birla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday reaffirmed India's deep-rooted ties with the Maldives, describing the island nation as not just a friendly neighbour but also a key pillar of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.

Birla made these remarks during bilateral talks with the visiting Maldivian delegation led by Abdul Raheem Abdulla, Speaker of the People's Majlis of Maldives, at Parliament House here.

Birla highlighted the advances made by Parliament of India in its digital transformation with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance legislative efficiency.

He informed the delegation that the Parliament of India now provides simultaneous interpretation services in 15 regional languages, which will soon be expanded to 22 languages," an official statement said.

Discussing capacity-building initiatives, the Speaker underscored the role of Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for



Democracies (PRIDE) in providing training on parliamentary procedures.

Birla hoped that this visit would open new avenues for collaboration between the legislative institutions of India and the Maldives.

"Speaker of Maldives appreciated the usage of technology, digitalisation work and use of AI by Parliament of India and requested the Speaker to extend technological support to help Maldives to digitise its parliamentary resources.

The Speaker assured him that every possible help would be extended from Parliament of India to Maldives in this regard," the statement added.

Cricket analogy abound in LS, barbs against BJP, Congress traded

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde on Tuesday described the Congress as a "batsman" who is trying to get the other partners of the INDIA bloc "run out."

Independent MP from Maharashtra's Sangli, Vishal Patil, too resorted to cricketing lexicon to take a swipe at the Mahayuti government, and said that after winning the assembly polls, the alliance got the "12th man" to run the gov-

ernment there.

Participating in the discussion on the Union budget in the Lok Sabha, Shinde said "INDI alliance is like a cricket team that has batsmen named Congress who is bent on getting others run out."

He added, "The Congress is the 'Bhasmasur' of Indian politics, whomever it supports is destroyed. In our Maharashtra, it put off the 'mashaal' of the UBT...those who moved away from the Hindutva ideology, look at their situation in



Maharashtra now."

Alleging that Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi spoke like a "spokesperson of

engineers and doctors, as they are all part of it."

Shinde also lauded the Union Budget to say, "When we call (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji, the captain of Team India, then we can call Nirmala Sitharaman, the winning all-rounder of Team India."

He said the BJP-led Centre proved everyone wrong in the opposition by building the Ram Temple, and abrogating Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Be meticulous, don't fell trees unnecessarily: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it was everyone's constitutional duty to protect trees and public authorities should be meticulous and not seek more trees to be felled than necessary.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan made the observation while hearing a plea filed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) seeking permission to cut over 800 trees in the Taj Trapezium Zone for the development of a six-lane, access-controlled highway between Agra and Gwalior.

It was yet another instance where the court noticed the public authorities seeking to fell a large number of trees though it wasn't required.

"Practically in case of every application made in TTZ and in Delhi, we have noticed this tendency. It is the constitutional duty of all public authorities to save and protect as many trees as possible. Therefore, when applications are made seeking felling of trees, the authorities have to be meticulous and they should not apply for felling more trees than necessary," it added.

The top court said the NHAI had sought permission for felling 850 trees, however, only 650 were required to be cut for the construction of the highway.

It noted the report filed by the centrally-empowered committee (CEC) and said it had recommended certain conditions including compensatory plantation of 9,000 trees at the cost of NHAI.

In a large number of cases before compensatory afforestation was done, the court said, the permission to fell trees was granted and the order for compensatory afforestation was not implemented in true letter and spirit.

The NHAI was directed by the bench to first comply with the condition of compensatory afforestation and asked the CEC to examine the compliance. The committee would submit a compliance report and only then the permission would be granted, it said.



'India rolls out red carpet, not red tape to investors'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said India rolls out red carpet, and not red tape to investors and that there is broad consensus for sustainable economic development in the country.

Inaugurating Invest Karnataka-2025 meet here on Tuesday, he said India has addressed the crucial point of policy uncertainty by creating a stable and predictable policy environment.

"When I speak about the policy uncertainty, I want to emphasise a crucial point. Today across all governance level in India, including the central government, state government and local bodies, there is a broad consensus that sustainable economic development must be driven by a market led economy with the private sector playing a leadership role," Singh said.

According to him, this shared commitment of sustainable economic development provides a stable and predictable policy environment ensuring that investors can invest with confidence on policy continuity.

Singh said in the past investors faced numerous challenges and one of the biggest hurdles was red tape, but now the time has changed.

"Today India no longer presents red tape to investors. Instead, we roll out the red carpet for them. This kind of cross party consensus on promoting investment plays a crucial role in reducing uncertainty for our investors," the minister pointed out.

Singh told the investors who had gathered from various parts of the world that Karnataka offers everything one seeks in an investment destination.

Prayagraj to turn into 'no vehicle zone' for Maghi Purnima bath

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR (UP)

The Prayagraj administration has chalked out a special traffic plan for Maghi Purnima on Wednesday when the month-long 'kalpvash', an integral tradition of the Maha Kumbh, comes to an end. Kalpvash refers to the practice of living near a sacred river for a set period, adhering to fasting, self-discipline, introspection and spiritual purification. Performing kalpvash during the Maha Kumbh is considered auspicious.

More than 10 lakh devotees have undertaken kalpvash at

the Triveni Sangam this year, a government statement said.

While the fair area has been declared a 'no vehicle zone' from 4 am on Tuesday, the rule will apply to the entire city from 5 pm onwards, with an

exemption for emergency and essential services, an official statement said.

The measures are meant to ensure the safety of the devotees who are expected to take a dip in the Sangam in large



'Everything is in BJP high command's hand'

Manipur MLAs on selection of new CM

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Manipur BJP MLAs Sapam Keba and K Ibomcha on Tuesday said that the party high command will decide on the new chief minister of the state.

The two BJP MLAs, who held a meeting with BJP Northeast in-charge Sambit Patra at a hotel in Imphal on Tuesday afternoon, said they requested the Centre to make efforts to restore peace in the strife-torn state.

Upon being asked by waiting journalists about the selection of a new chief minister, Sapam Keba said, "Everything will be

decided by the high command. We urged the Centre through Patra to find ways to restore normalcy in the state. Within a couple of days, the Centre will decide on what things need to be done."

When asked if there is any time frame for the selection of a new chief minister, Keba said, "We didn't have any discussion on that."

Ibomcha said, "Everything is in the hand of the Centre. We cannot make any comment. We were here to make a courteous call. The only thing we requested him is to bring peace to the state."

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday quashed a more than 33-year old case saying it would be futile to proceed with trial when parties had resolved the issue.

A bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and S V N Bhatti passed the verdict on an appeal against a January 2023 order of the Allahabad High Court which held that the attempt to murder case couldn't be compounded.

The incident is of August 11, 1991, that is, about 33.5 years ago. No doubt, there is a

reference to the firing in the FIR but admittedly there was no injury," it noted.

The high court dismissed the application seeking to quash the proceedings in the case lodged in August 1991.

The top court considered the injury and the nature of weapon used in the case and held no offence under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC was made out.

"It could not be said, on facts, considering all the circumstances that this is a crime which has such a harmful effect on the public and that it has the effect of seriously

"We are also firmly of the opinion that proceeding with the trial, when parties have amicably resolved the dispute in the present case, would be futile and the ends of justice require that the settlement be given effect to by quashing the proceedings."

threatening the well-being of the society," it said.

Referring to the facts, the bench said it would be grave abuse of process to let the trial remain pending, particularly when the dispute was settled.

"We are also firmly of the opinion that proceeding with the trial, when parties have amicably resolved the dispute in the present case, would be futile and the ends of justice require that the settlement be

given effect to by quashing the proceedings," it said.

The bench said it was a case which resulted in a closure report from the police that was rejected by a magistrate in Moradabad, UP.

It dealt with the question whether it was a fit case where the proceeding could be quashed, particularly when Section 307 of IPC was invoked in the summons.

The bench observed the high court did not appreciate the difference between compounding of an offence and quashing of proceedings.

"Will the mere mention of

Section 307 IPC in the criminal proceedings force the court to adopt a hands-off approach, when parties come forward with a settlement?" it asked.

Referring to an apex court judgement, the bench said it was held that a mere mention of Section 307 of IPC in the FIR or chargesheet should not be the basis for adopting a "hands-off" approach.

The bench said it was further held that it would be open for the court to examine whether the incorporation of Section 307 of IPC was for the sake of it or there was evidence to back it.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A push for AI and defence

The Prime Minister Modi's France visit underscores a shared vision on technological innovation and global stability

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France marked a significant chapter in Indo-French relations, focusing on advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), defence collaboration and honouring shared historical ties. AI Action Summit co-hosted by President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Modi convened global leaders, tech industry executives and researchers to deliberate on the ethical deployment of AI and its potential benefits for the society. The summit aimed to position France and India at the forefront of the AI revolution, emphasising the need for responsible and democratic AI governance. Notable outcome of the summit was the announcement of the 'Current AI' partnership, a public-interest initiative with an initial investment of \$400 million. This partnership seeks to provide open-source access to databases, software, and tools for trusted AI actors, promoting the use of AI in addressing global challenges such as healthcare and environmental sustainability.



In a groundbreaking development, France is in advanced discussions to procure India's domestically developed Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher system. This potential deal signifies a shift in defence dynamics, as it would be the first instance of one of India's major arms suppliers purchasing Indian-made weaponry. The Pinaka system, with a range of up to 90 km, has been demonstrated to a French delegation and met with positive feedback. During his visit, Prime Minister Modi paid tribute to Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the World Wars by visiting the Mazargues War Cemetery in Marseille. This gesture underscored the deep historical ties between India

and France and highlighted the shared values and sacrifices that bind the two nations. The visit also marked a milestone in diplomatic outreach with the inauguration of India's first consulate in Marseille. This move is expected to bolster bilateral relations, facilitate consular services for the Indian diaspora, and enhance cultural and economic exchanges between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi and President Macron reviewed progress on the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, an initiative launched in 2023 to chart the course of Indo-French relations up to 2047. The roadmap focuses on collaboration in key sectors such as nuclear energy, defence and technology, aiming to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two nations. Engaging in global AI dialogues and partnerships positions India to harness AI for public good, addressing challenges in healthcare, agriculture and education. The prospective sale of the Pinaka system to France not only boosts India's defence exports but also signifies international recognition of India's indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities. The inauguration of the consulate in Marseille and the review of the Horizon 2047 Roadmap reflect India's commitment to deepening bilateral ties with France, fostering cooperation across various sectors.

PICTALK



Farmers pluck Gladiolus flowers at an orchard, in Nadia

The US humanitarian legacy under siege

USAID faces an existential crisis as the Trump administration's aggressive restructuring and Elon Musk's vocal opposition threaten its very survival



AMAL CHANDRA

USAID, long regarded as a pillar of American humanitarian aid and soft power, now finds itself embroiled in an existential crisis that threatens its very survival. Founded in 1961 by President John F Kennedy, the agency has historically been at the forefront of global development efforts, providing critical support in areas such as food security, healthcare, and economic development. Over the decades, USAID has built a complex legacy—on one hand, saving millions of lives through vaccination programmes, disaster relief, and poverty alleviation initiatives, while on the other, facing criticism for allegedly serving as a tool for American political influence and intervention abroad.

Now, under the Trump administration's aggressive restructuring plans and the unexpected involvement of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, USAID's future hangs precariously in the balance. At the centre of this upheaval is the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a newly created federal body with a mandate to streamline government operations by cutting budgets, eliminating inefficiencies, and reducing the federal workforce. With its expansive global footprint and substantial funding, USAID has become a prime target. The Trump administration, which has already frozen the majority of foreign aid programs, is pushing to either drastically curtail USAID's power or absorb it into the State Department—an action that would effectively end its independent operation. The situation reached a boiling point when DOGE agents attempted to force their way into USAID's Washington, DC headquarters, leading to a tense standoff with security personnel. Eventually, the agents gained access to USAID's control systems, locked out employees, and combed through internal communications. Allegations have since surfaced that DOGE operatives were attempting to seize classified documents, though the department has denied any wrongdoing. The ease with



which USAID's offices were infiltrated has raised troubling concerns about the security of other government institutions. Elon Musk, known for his ventures in electric vehicles, space exploration, artificial intelligence, and social media, has emerged as one of USAID's most vocal critics. He has publicly labelled the agency a "criminal organisation" and a "viper's nest" of corruption, accusing it of funding radical leftist causes and supporting groups that oppose American interests. Musk has called for the complete dismantling of USAID, arguing that American taxpayers should not be footing the bill for foreign aid that, in his view, does not serve the nation's interests. While President Trump has not explicitly endorsed Musk's rhetoric, sources within the administration suggest that his views have influenced internal discussions about USAID's future. Signs of this shift are already visible—nearly 100 USAID employees have been placed on administrative leave, including two security officers who attempted to prevent DOGE's entry. Additionally, the agency's website and official X (formerly Twitter) account have been taken offline, signalling that a fundamental transformation is



THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAS ALREADY FROZEN THE MAJORITY OF FOREIGN AID PROGRAMS, IS PUSHING TO EITHER DRASTICALLY CURTAIL USAID'S POWER OR ABSORB IT INTO THE STATE DEPARTMENT

underway. If these trends continue, USAID's six-decade existence may soon come to an unceremonious end. The ramifications of this crisis extend far beyond the political infighting in Washington, DC USAID operates in over 50 countries, funding programs that provide clean water, healthcare, sanitation, and ed munities. At the same time, India has increasingly scrutinised foreign-funded NGOs, with the Modi administration tightening restrictions on organisations perceived as meddling in domestic affairs. In this light, a reduced USAID presence may align with India's push for self-reliance. Moreover, as the US pulls back from global aid commitments, India may see an opportunity to expand its influence in South Asia, filling the void left by Washington's retreat. The broader question at stake is what role the United States intends to play in the world moving forward. Should it continue investing in foreign aid as a means of exercising global leadership, or should it prioritise a more insular, America-first approach? Supporters of USAID argue that America's strength is not merely derived from military power but also from its ability to assist those in need.

A retreat from humanitarian efforts would create a vacuum that rival powers—especially China—are eager to exploit. Beijing has already made significant inroads through its Belt and Road Initiative, offering infrastructure financing and economic partnerships to nations that might otherwise have sought aid from Washington. If the US abandons its foreign aid commitments, it risks ceding valuable influence to geopolitical competitors. The coming months will determine whether USAID's fate is sealed or if political resistance will salvage some version of the agency. What is certain, however, is that this is not just a bureaucratic dispute—it is a battle over the values that America chooses to uphold. If humanitarian aid is sacrificed in favour of a purely transactional foreign policy, the consequences will reverberate not only in the nations that once relied on US assistance but within America itself. The world is watching, and history will judge whether this moment signifies the decline of American global responsibility or the dawn of a more ruthless, self-serving era in US foreign policy. (Amal Chandra is an author, political analyst, and columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PM MODI ENCOURAGES STUDENTS

Madam — Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the eighth edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha, imparted the invaluable mantra of confidence and positive thinking to students. He emphasised that exams are merely a milestone, not the final destination of life. They serve as a powerful medium to assess one's knowledge and preparation. Encouraging students, Modi advised them to master the art of handling mental pressure, just as a skilled batsman focuses on the next ball despite the loud cheers of the audience. This initiative reflects that the nation's leadership is not confined to policies alone but is also deeply concerned about the bright future of the younger generation. He urged parents not to compare their children with others and to stop treating them merely as a means of performance evaluation. Every child is unique and should be encouraged according to their individual capabilities. Highlighting the importance of mental balance, a healthy diet and adequate rest, Modi introduced students to the art of effective time management and emphasised that every student deserves the opportunity to fulfil their dreams. The Prime Minister encouraged students to focus on their studies without stress and to challenge themselves continuously. This interactive session not only helps students overcome the fear of exams but also instils confidence in them, fostering a positive outlook on life.

R K Jain | Barwani

ROHIT SHARMA BACK IN FORM

Madam— Form is temporary, class is permanent was at last proved by the Indian skipper Rohit Sharma by his scintillating century at Cuttack against England in the second ODI, which has come at the appropriate time by winning the match with a series lead. However big a player is, self-confidence matters most when it comes to a comeback when in a bad patch. The board and the selection panel have given more than the required time for Rohit to perform. He must be thankful for

Security forces kill 31 Naxalites



In another successful encounter, security officers killed 31 Naxalites in Bijapur district of Bastar division in Chhattisgarh, which is regarded as a den of red terrorism. The magnitude of the success in the recent elimination spree of the security forces against the Naxalites proves that Left Wing Extremism is heading to its end in the country. Their dream of establishing a red corridor from Nepal to Andhra Pradesh has been devastated

by the security forces. The success also reflects Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resolve to completely eliminate naxalism by March 2026.

The better coordination in the now BJP-ruled states of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra has led to an effective implementation of the anti-naxalite operation. There were reports that some elements connected with left-wing student unions in JNU celebrated the massacre of 76 CRPF jawans by naxalites in Chhattisgarh. On the contrary, the Modi government has zero tolerance against Naxal violence. Besides counterinsurgency, welfare and development schemes launched in naxalism-affected areas have also made the tribal youths disillusioned with naxalism.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

the selectors to repose faith in him. It will be prudent for Rohit to keep the past memories aside and ascertain his position as an invincible hitman to bring the ICC Champions Trophy for Team India as his next milestone. The upright decision to have included the mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy for the second ODI has been a success when he made the breakthrough to begin with by adding salt to the wound of Englishmen by dismissing Phil Salt, the opener. The kind of form maintained by Ravindra Jadeja, both with the bat and ball, would do a world of good with the company of Varun Chakravarthy for Team India in the ICC Champions Trophy, giving them a certain edge to win the title.

A.P. Thiruvadi | Chennai

SAFEGUARD INDUSTRY INTERESTS

Madam — The US President Trump knows pretty well the global impacts of imposing tariffs and duties unilaterally. The industries in India apparently were least prepared to face this tariff war and the consequences. It should be noticed and recognised by our Union Government how

strongly the US and China safeguard their industry's interests while we let our industry face the global pressures and turbulence and trade deficits on their own. The US and China advance their policies of trade and strategic interests of futuristic two decades. We have to safeguard our industry's interests, exports and trade balance. The steel industry obviously may not be impacted on a substantial basis as hardly a fraction of its production is exported to the US but as detailed in the news, the Indian steel industry may be stressed if the major producers divert their exports to India, high on steel consumption. If the US continues with tariff escalation, it takes risks of consequent higher cost of domestic production. India will continuously face competition and rivalry in the global trade from the US and China, so there is a need to divert and set up our manufacturing bases in African countries, Southeast Asia and Europe and even in the US.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The comfort of relationships that need no validation

Let's free our relationships from the weight of constant maintenance, trusting that true bonds don't fade in silence but grow stronger in the depths of our affection

This is a sequel to my column of last week, wherein I underlined the need for us to stay in touch with people to build a robust circle of love, care, and compassion around us. The article, which was lauded by many, also raised a slew of questions. What do people who don't genuinely find the time to make calls and retain personal connections in a tangible way do? They accepted the merits of what I had highlighted in the column but doubted if, in this age when generations are passing in a jiffy and the race to the finish line seems to go on forever, we could squeeze in little niceties like making a call or strengthening our links with people by going beyond pleasantries. I was even asked if I have been able to maintain relationships in the manner I had suggested.



The answer is, "No, I haven't been able to keep pace with my growing connections," but there is something that I do in order to spare myself the guilt of not calling people as often as I would like: keep them close to my heart even when there is prolonged silence, and when the opportunity to meet them or speak to them knocks, pick it up from where we had left off the last time, without complaints or frowns. Now, that's a different equation altogether, and not all are primed to keep up incognito relationships where love and care thrive even without regular check-ins. We look for reinforcements and reassurances, and when they aren't forthcoming, tend to blame it on the other for their lack of affinity. I have many connections where the foundations of the association are so firm and deep-rooted that no time or space can dislodge us from each other's lives. Months and years may pass, but when we meet, it is as if the bond has only grown stronger and our love for each other more pristine, untouched by the patina of time.

Why can't we allow our social bonds the freedom to exist without yoking them to formalities? Why don't we come to terms with the fact that there is no lack of love, but each one of us is just bogged down by the demands of life in the fast lane? There is an unspoken comfort in relationships that do not demand constant validation. Some bonds flourish in silence, in the spaces between meetings, in the warmth that lingers even when words are absent. It is a reassuring truth that not all relationships require the crutch of routine communication to remain strong. Yet, the modern mind struggles to accept this form of connection, often mistaking silence for indifference and distance for detachment. In an age where instant responses are expected, where friendships are measured in the currency of texts and calls, we have begun to equate attention with affection and availability with authenticity. And when someone does not reach out as often as we desire, we assume they have relegated us to the margins of their lives. The expectation that rela-

tionships must be constantly tended to, like fragile saplings that require perpetual watering, stems from a fear of being forgotten. But relationships built on mutual respect and a deep-seated connection are not fragile; they are resilient. Perhaps, instead of lamenting the lack of frequent contact, we should cherish the moments when reconnections happen naturally, without resentment or reproach. True companionship does not wilt under the weight of time; it endures, sustained by the simple yet profound act of keeping someone close in thought and heart. So let us release our relationships from the burden of constant upkeep. Let us trust that genuine bonds, once formed, do not wither in silence but gather strength in the depths of our affection. And when the moment to reconnect arrives, let it be a celebration of love that time could never diminish. This, perhaps, is the only way we can realign our relationships with the changing world. (The author is a Dubai-based columnist and children's writing coach. She has published six books. Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR





FIRST COLUMN PROTECT YOUR SPINE

The spine plays a crucial role in maintaining overall health, yet we often neglect it



RAVI VALLURI

How many of us get up in the morning and virtually struggle to get out of bed as the body feels sore, the neck remains stiff, knees wobble, shoulders and feet pain? In fact, the entire day is torturous. Such individuals run to doctors, seeking a magical cure for the pestilence. Unless the problem is genetic or hereditary, humans get afflicted with such disorders because of a deficient lifestyle, stress accumulated over a period of time and poor dietary habits. The vertebra and our skeletal frame are an extremely important part of the human body, which we ignore at our own peril.

Therefore, a healthy spine leads to a healthy life. Do we recall when a child begins to walk, the preliminary baby steps are raising his/her thumbs; this is called the 'Merudanda Mudra'. The vertebra consists of a series of small bones which form the backbone or the spine, having several projections for articulation and muscle attachment, and a hole through which the spinal cord passes. The spine is the first identifiable structure that provides us with a shape and form rather than being a ball of cells without any differentiation. It keeps us upright, allows us to bend



and twist and connects the different parts of our skeleton. Office goers are programmed – for making a living – to undertake a typical quotidian 9 to 5 routine, and several among them use computers for prolonged hours, or those professionals who are compelled to drive long distances to their places of work from their dwelling paces ought to necessarily know how to protect their backs, necks and hand muscles. Not only are these muscles to be protected and fortified but the tissues should be sufficiently strengthened.

Such working men and women should be educated regarding deploying the correct posture. Many homemakers at times develop severe middle or lower back medical problems for a variety of reasons. Continuously undertaking repeated chores and even activities involving the handling of small or no weights, performed with an incorrect posture, can damage tissues and muscles, which causes irreparable damage to the back and neck. The afflicted suffer from the debility for years together in pain. Awareness about the structure of the spine and adopting the right postures along with simple strengthening stretches significantly helps to avoid these misadventures in one's life. In the cases where these problems assume the shape of chronic disorders the patient suffering can be guided through simple stretching exercises under the supervision of a physiotherapist or an orthopaedic. To ameliorate the condition of those suffering from these debilitating health issues, the patients should take treatment for it. Those in particular suffering from spondylitis, frozen shoulder, middle and lower back problems, and knee problems benefit immensely upon undergoing the rehabilitation process and will certainly see visible dramatic changes in their lifestyle patterns and daily routines. Such programmes generally encompass the techniques mentioned below with the required sensitivity to an individual's health condition:

- Power Walk: alignment of vertebrae and to open energy channels
- Posture Awareness and its correction
- Ergonomics
- Simple but powerful stretches and yoga – for inner surgical alignment of the spine to release the nerves that were being continually pressed
- Gait Training
- Guided Meditation techniques to release stress

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He has authored both fiction and nonfiction and is a faculty member of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

Trump's 'America first' policy causes chaos

As Donald Trump embarks on his second term as the US President, the nation faces a turbulent landscape of climate disasters and economic uncertainty



B K SINGH

One of the first executive orders signed by Donald Trump after his inauguration as US President was the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, overlooking a whole lot of climate disruptions that the country has faced since his election campaign. At least 335 human deaths were attributed to Hurricane Beryl and Hurricane Milton, making 2024 the deadliest hurricane season in the continental US since 2005. What followed each time was damaged buildings, roads and bridges and power outages for several days, forcing people to live without electricity for days and weeks. The year 2025 welcomed the US with unprecedented snowfall in the central and eastern part forcing the shifting of Trump's second term inauguration indoors, and a week earlier, catastrophic wildfires ravaged the Los Angeles region in the western part of the country.

The fire lasted for ten days and climate experts have attributed it to strong Santa Ana winds and extremely dry weather making forest vegetation readymade fuel. Los Angeles fire killed at least 25 persons, damaged more than 15,000 structures and ravaged more than 200 square km area. 60,000 persons including Hollywood stars left home for safety. The largest fire in the region the Palisades and Eaton have continued to burn for ten days. After El Nino and neutral weather conditions, La Nina arrived and pushed the storm back to the northern part of the US making the northern part wetter than usual and the southern part drier than usual. Santa Ana winds common in January and February in the region have been aggressive with wind speeds up to 120 km per hour.

This made damage control difficult. The temperature contrast between cooler inland areas (southern California deserts) and warmer coastal areas is the recipe for these winds. The extent of dryness of the area can be understood by the fact that the last half-inch of rain received in the region was only a year ago. In his America First policy, Trump has been continuously announcing to increase tariffs on goods imported from Canada, Mexico, China and several more. He has also named Brazil and India among the countries that harm the US, through their tariffs. Trump's action has the potential to initiate a trade war among countries and impact many developing economies. He has offered two million federal workers the option to resign but get paid till September 2025, in his effort to cut the federal workforce and push out those who do not support his political agenda.

Though federal law has long protected civil servants from pressure and political interference, yet President is testing his power. The process of deportation of illegal immigrants has started in a big way. Search for other undocumented immigrants is aggressively going on. Religious places like Gurudwaras have been searched in New York and New Jersey, at the cost of antagonising Sikh and other religious groups. He has also said that he will hold some in Guantanamo Bay away from legal and social services and support. Some of these migrants are so bad that countries cannot be trusted to



THOUGH FEDERAL LAW HAS LONG PROTECTED CIVIL SERVANTS FROM PRESSURE AND POLITICAL INTERFERENCE, YET PRESIDENT IS TESTING HIS POWER. THE PROCESS OF DEPORTATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS HAS STARTED IN A BIG WAY. SEARCH FOR OTHER UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IS AGGRESSIVELY GOING ON

hold them back. Time will tell whether Trump's agenda to bring manufacturing back to the US would succeed in the absence of a labour force that is largely being deported/ housed in Guantanamo Bay where 30,000 beds are being added to expand the government's detention capacity.

Renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America would hardly carry any meaning, but it can irritate a neighbouring country and may be a spoilsport in their relationship. Donald Trump wants Canada to become the 51st state of the USA and his justification is that the US is the only country Canada shares its boundary along the land and makes it secure. The countries have a free trade agreement and Canada takes full advantage of it. Further Trump has expressed to take over the Panama Canal from Panama and purchase Greenland from Denmark for strategic reasons and security of the USA.

These steps are needed to have a check over growing Chinese control on trade with Latin American countries. Greenland is approachable by China from the Arctic side, while the Panama Canal is crucial for Chinese ships to cross from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, which provides a shorter route for trade to all countries in South America. The taking over of the Panama Canal and Greenland can have serious environmental fallout. World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) secretary-general Celeste Saulo, while addressing the 150th Foundation Day celebration of the Indian Meteorological Department referred average global temperature rise of 1.55 degrees Celsius in 2024 over the preindustrial period and she termed it as a "very grave danger"

and called for decisive climate action in 2025 and speed up the transition to renewable energy. Trump has again withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accord and prioritised energy self-sufficiency through domestic drilling and exploration of oil and natural gas with the sole justification of cutting the cost of energy and thereby bringing down inflation.

It is feared that the gains achieved by Biden through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 2022, where \$369 billion was invested in clean energy initiatives and that also created jobs in the US, will be dismantled. He has declared a National Energy emergency, a first in US history, which may lead to the suspension of environmental rules and grant permission for mining projects. He has halted the lease of federal water for offshore wind farms and called for shutting wind turbines that cause wildfire.

The prohibition on drilling of oil and gas in Polar Bear Wildlife Sanctuary in Alaska has been lifted. It will not only threaten the life of wildlife species but would accelerate the melting of ice in the region, causing undue concern such as sea level rise etc. Why US is keeping an eye on Greenland? It has a history. Immediately after World War II, they planned there to build 600 nuclear missile bases to be mounted on a train riding 3000 km of track.

It never took off. In the late 1950s and early 1960s US Army made a camp there for the 'Project Iceworm'. A small nuclear reactor was brought to power the camp. Once they realized after a few years that the project was not feasible, they gave up but left a lot of nuclear waste water at the camp. They also left thousands of litres of diesel fuel in the middle of Greenland's ice sheet, expect-

ing that it would remain buried in the ice forever. But climate change happened, the planet has warmed and ice has melted.

It has the potential to contaminate water in Greenland. While China has deployed its vast foreign exchange reserve to secure long-term control over strategic minerals critical for advanced technologies in the defence sector, climate change etc. in resource-rich nations like copper and cobalt from Congo and Peru, nickel from Indonesia and lithium from Argentina, the Trump administration is looking to counter it by accessing rare earth and critical mineral deposits in Greenland.

The southern pointed mountains of Greenland are gold belts, which is another temptation for the new US administration. Panama Canal, an engineering marvel constructed in 1913 enables ships to cross from the lower water level of the Atlantic to the higher water level of the Pacific Ocean, saving the costs and journey time in trades. A dam was built on river Cagres and water was impounded in Gatun Lake, where ships pass.

The level of water in Gatun is managed through gates. With the rising water level ships from the Atlantic side gain height and sail towards the Pacific. The flow of water in River Cagres and many other rivers from Amazon forests has been depleted due to massive degradation and deforestation. Panama Canal efficiency is lowered and hardly half the ships can cross. Trump should strive to conserve river catchments, rather than owning the Panama Canal.

(The writer is Retd Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force, Karnataka. Views are personal)

Union budget 2025: Transforming agriculture for a sustainable and inclusive future

Union Budget 2025 introduces a bold vision for agricultural transformation, addressing key challenges such as soil degradation, climate change and rural distress

Agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy, sustaining growth and the livelihoods of millions, thus correctly referred to as the primary engine for India's accelerated and inclusive growth in the annual budget presented on February 1, 2025. However, the sector is facing numerous challenges, including deteriorating soil quality, stagnating crop yields, inadequate technologies, shrinking farmlands, poor infrastructure and heightened vulnerability to climate change, which poses a threat to food security and the wellbeing of our Anndatta. Further, these difficulties have led to a troubling trend: many marginal farmers and agricultural labourers from rural areas are being forced to



PUSHPLATA SINGH

migrate to cities in search of better opportunities. Agricultural sustainability is also closely tied to climate change, which affects nearly all of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With a population still heavily reliant on farming, the need for sectoral

reforms is undeniable. New policies and regulations are crucial for inclusive and accelerated growth. India's 2025 budget addresses issues in the agriculture sector with a forward-thinking framework, by enabling improved credit access, and infrastructure development, and preparing farmers for future growth. One standout initiative is the Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY). India's agricultural sector is marked by significant regional disparities, with certain districts lagging in infrastructure, productivity, and economic opportunities. This ambitious program stands as a transformative initiative for rural India, focusing on the 100 most underdeveloped districts, and directly benefiting around 1.7

crore farmers. PMDDKY focuses on these underdeveloped areas, directing resources to regions that have been overlooked in the broader development process. This initiative seeks to ensure that farmers in these areas have access to the same opportunities as their counterparts in more prosperous regions. The program aims to address long-standing agricultural challenges and empower farmers, particularly those affected by climate change and those from marginalised communities. With proper execution, PMDDKY can spark a ripple effect of development, improving infrastructure, technology access, and financial services in these districts thus enabling equitable growth across the country. By focusing on sus-



tainability, inclusivity, and empowerment, PMDDKY strives to uplift farmers, women, and marginalised communities while ensuring resilience against future challenges. The program also offers access to high-yielding varieties of seed and irrigation techniques and training to address the root causes of agricultural stagnation. By supporting farmers in overcoming unpredictable weather

patterns, outdated techniques, and limited market access, PMDDKY provides a pathway to more stable and productive farming. A distinctive feature of PMDDKY is its focus on empowering marginalised groups, particularly the poorest farmers. These communities often face barriers such as limited access to credit, technology, and education. PMDDKY seeks to address these gaps by providing women farmers with greater control over land, improved training, and better market access. For marginalised communities, the program aims to ensure they are included in the benefits of agricultural development, promoting equality and empowerment. PMDDKY is not only about boosting agricultural

output but also ensuring sustainable practices. One of the unfortunate consequences of rural stagnation is the mass migration of farmers to urban areas in search of better opportunities. By strengthening agriculture in rural areas, PMDDKY aims to create conditions where farmers can thrive while cultivating their farmlands. If executed well, PMDDKY could be the catalyst for a brighter, more inclusive future in agriculture, where every farmer has the tools to thrive. The hope is that migration for farmers will become a choice, not a necessity—allowing agricultural communities to thrive where they are. The budget also emphasises investment in innovation and technology, particularly in

developing high-yield, climate-resilient crop varieties. The creation of germplasm banks to restore and introduce local crop varieties will strengthen domestic production. Additionally, the government is working to enhance the agricultural value chain, focusing on better storage, transportation, and export infrastructure, benefiting both farmers and consumers. Targeted schemes for crops like cotton, pulses, oilseeds, and vegetables will help mitigate the effects of climate change on farmers. These programs aim to boost food security and export potential, all while securing farmers' livelihoods. (The writer is Associate Director, The Energy and Resources Institute; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Nuclear power to be part of energy discussions: Union min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nuclear power will be part of all energy discussions as its commercialisation has not happened yet, largely in the Indian context, even though the country signed a treaty with the US, Union Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday.

This assumes significance in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US later this week where he will meet US President Donald Trump and have discussion on a series of subjects, including energy. Earlier on Monday during a presser on India Energy Week 2025, which began here on Tuesday, Puri had said, "I will be surprised if sourcing of energy from the US does not figure in the discussions (of PM and Trump)."

Puri had also stated that with President (Trump) saying he wants to see global energy prices coming down, he wants more and more energy to come to the market. For countries like India it is a positive development, he said.

During ministerial panel discussion at IEW25, Puri stated, "Nuclear (power) provides an efficient cost-effective thing but you have to go to a particular route and I'm sure that this is going to be a discussion point in major wherever such discus-



During ministerial panel discussion at IEW25, Puri stated, "Nuclear (power) provides an efficient cost-effective thing but you have to go to a particular route and I'm sure that this is going to be a discussion point in major wherever such discus-

sions take place. I see that happening."

About the commercial expansion of nuclear power, the minister stated, "We had signed an India-US civilian nuclear energy deal. We had an India-specific IAEA safeguards agreement but somehow the commercial contracting never took place... But now we're talking about small modular reactors. Earlier this month in her

Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a Rs 20,000-crore nuclear mission with an aim of developing at least 100GW of nuclear energy by 2047.

She had said that for an active partnership with the private sector to meet this goal, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act will be taken up, she

informed the House.

A Nuclear Energy Mission for research & development of Small Modular Reactors (SMR) with an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore will be set up.

At least five indigenously developed SMRs will be operationalised by 2033.

Talking about the Trump administration, Puri recalled that during his last term as India's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York he had the "great privilege of knowing Trump when he was not the President".

"I have the privilege of living in the Trump Tower. He used to visit us every year to have the annual get together of the residents of World Trump Tower. I was the minister in waiting when he came here for first official visit. So I have watched the unfolding events with more than a sense of interest," he said.

He also pointed out that we live in an interdependent world and 50 per cent of our (India's) GDP is in the external sector. The new aspect of (US) administration is music to my ears when it says that more energy should come in the market, he stated.

More energy means that prices should come down for a country like India, which is both consumer and producer, he said.



Review of Chinese investment ban unlikely soon: CEA

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A review of the nearly five-year old restrictions on Chinese investments into India is unlikely in the near future, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said both countries have to understand the importance of mutual dependence and mutual benefits. "I don't think it is something you would expect to see immediate results because both sides are crossing the river by feeling the stones, so to speak," Nageswaran said, replying to a specific question on whether any changes are afoot.

It can be noted that following violent clashes between Indian and Chinese soldiers in Galwan valley in 2020, the Indian gov-

ernment introduced measures restricting investments from countries sharing a land border with India that was taken to be an attempt to restrict Chinese play.

Speaking at the IVCA event here, Nageswaran did acknowledge that both countries have been engaged in a conversation on the trade imbalances, probably drawing from the parleys on various issues lately.

"We triggered a conversation because we basically wanted to highlight the fact that our bilateral trade deficit with China in 2024 might be close to USD 93-95 billion. And India is one of the top-3 countries with a huge trade imbalance with China. Naturally, if you are excessively import-dependent, it raises certain vulnerabilities in terms of supply chain," he said.



Bharat Tex Fair to showcase organic fabrics

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) on Tuesday said Bharat Tex fair will showcase organic fabrics, recycled materials and energy-efficient production technologies. The second edition of Bharat Tex 2025 will be inaugurated in Greater Noida. AEP Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said sustainability has become a central theme in the global textiles industry and Bharat Tex is committed to promoting eco-friendly practices. "The event will showcase sustainable innovations, including organic fabrics, recycled materials and energy-efficient production technologies," he said. He added that the support announced through the Union Budget 2025-26 has also brought the labour-intensive export sector to the focus by credit support to the MSMEs and custom duty rationalisation.



Gold snaps 7-day rally, declines Rs 200

Snapping the seven-day winning run, gold prices declined by Rs 200 to Rs 88,300 per 10 grams in the national capital following selling by stockists amid a bearish trend in global markets. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also dropped Rs 200 to Rs 87,900 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 88,100 per 10 grams. Additionally, silver prices decreased Rs 900 to Rs 96,600 per kg from the previous trading close of Rs 97,500 per kg on Monday. Traders said the yellow metal prices depreciated ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's testimony to Congress, which will be closely watched for insights about the US Federal Reserve's future interest rate-cut path. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had surged by Rs 2,430 to hit an all-time high level of Rs 88,500 per 10 grams on Monday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. In the last seven sessions, gold soared Rs 5,660 or 6.8 per cent. This year, the yellow metal has risen Rs 8,910 or 11.22 per cent. On the MCX, gold futures for April delivery declined Rs 333 to Rs 85,483 per 10 grams. During the day, the yellow metal futures touched a lifetime high of Rs 86,360 per 10 grams.



'Market share of top 15 developers doubled'

Realty firm Godrej Properties Ltd CEO Gaurav Pandey on Tuesday highlighted that the market share of the top 15 developers has doubled in the last five years to nearly 20 per cent and expects further demand consolidation towards big branded builders in the coming years. Addressing a FICCI real estate conference here, he said the housing sector is not an easy sector to operate in. "At a very pan-India level, we are also noticing one more trend that corporate developers and top 15 developers are increasing market share. So, in the last five years, the market share has doubled for them and currently stands at about 19 per cent. "I think this will increase, especially three years from today, when maybe the market might slow down because demand aggregation happens whenever there's some sort of market slowdown," Pandey said. He highlighted that the last calendar year was very exciting for the residential segment of the Indian real estate sector. "In 2024, the residential real estate in India did about 1 billion square feet of demand, which is the highest ever till now. So, I think 1 billion square feet is something which I had never imagined when I started my career in the residential sector. And to see that happening in the primary market alone is quite astounding," Pandey said. In value terms, he said this is like close to about Rs 8.5 lakh crore of sales. About 75 per cent of this is largely in the top five cities of India, which is essentially Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune.

GDP growth witnessing speedy rebound: Sitharaman

Says India to remain fastest growing economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that the Indian economy is seeing a "speedy rebound" from 5.4 per cent growth clocked in the second quarter of the current fiscal, and the government shall take measures to ensure that India remains the world's fastest-growing economy.

Replying to discussions on the Union Budget for 2025-26 in the Lok

Sabha, the finance minister said the Budget has taken various steps to increase liquidity in the hands of people while maintaining fiscal prudence by using 99 per cent of the borrowing in FY'26 to fund capital expenditure.

She also said that inflation management receives the highest priority of this government with retail inflation within the tolerance band of 2-6 per cent. Inflation trend, particularly in food, appears to be mod-



erating, she added. Speaking about GDP growth, Sitharaman said in the three years

prior to 2024-25, the country's GDP growth rate averaged about 8 per cent.

The Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.4 per cent in the current fiscal -- the lowest pace in four years. The Finance Ministry's Economic Survey has projected growth in next fiscal FY'26 to be between 6.3-6.8 per cent.

Sitharaman said only in two out of 12 quarters, India's growth rate touched 5.4 or remained below it. The GDP growth in the second quarter (July-September) slowed to 7-quarter low of 5.4 per cent. "... on account of strong econom-

ic foundation, a speedy rebound is happening, and we shall take measures which will go forward, help in keeping our economy growing fastest as in the last few years. We will continue to remain the fastest-growing economy," the minister said.

Sitharaman said the private final consumption expenditure is expected to grow by 7.3 per cent in the current fiscal driven by a good rural demand.

The private final consumption expenditure is estimated to be 61.8 per cent of the nominal GDP, which is the highest since 2002-03, she added.

'65 pc of Indians used AI, more than double the global average'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reflecting the swift adoption of artificial intelligence in India, a Microsoft study has found that 65 per cent of Indians surveyed have used AI -- more than double the global average.

Microsoft on Tuesday unveiled the Global Online Safety Survey, which studies the growing influence of AI. The survey is based on a survey of 15,000 teens (13-17) and adults that was conducted in 15 countries between July 19 and August 9, 2024.

"65 per cent of respondents have used AI (+26 per cent from 2023). This is more than double the global average of 31 per cent in the same time period."

"India is most excited about using AI for translations, answering questions, increas-

ing efficiency at work and helping students with schoolwork," the report said.

The report showed that millennials (people aged 25-44) lead adoption, with 84 per cent reporting usage.

Indian parents are more aware of their children's digital challenges, showing increased awareness compared to the previous year, it said. However, India also has some reservations about AI, including concerns about online abuse, deepfakes, scams, and AI hallucinations, mirroring global trends.

Online abuse was among the top worries regarding AI. "More than 80 per cent of respondents worry about AI usage for children under 18 years," the report noted.

Over 80 per cent of Indian teens said they have experienced an online risk.



Oil retailers pick 26 PACS to set up retail petrol, diesel outlets: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies have selected 26 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) out of 286 applications for setting up retail petrol and diesel outlets, Cooperation Minister Amit Shah told Parliament on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Shah said the government has allowed PACS to operate retail petrol and diesel outlets and LPG distributorship.

As informed by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), 286 PACS from 25 states and Union Territories have submitted online applications to establish retail petrol/diesel outlets, of which 26 PACS have been selected by OMCs, he said.

Under conversion of PACS, Wholesale Consumer Pumps into retail outlets, OMC reports indicate that 116 PACS from five states have agreed to this conversion, and 56 PACS have



been commissioned. For LPG distributorship, two PACS have applied for the two advertised locations in Jharkhand. As per the revised guidelines, PACS have been included under Combined Category 2 (CC-2) for retail petrol/diesel dealership and Combined Category (CC) for LPG distributorship, for which they can apply online as per the advertisements issued by OMCs.

Further, PACS are also given one-time option to convert their wholesale consumer pumps into retail outlets for which the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has released detailed guidelines.

Ad revenue growth to slow down to 7 pc in 2025: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Ad revenue growth is estimated to slow down to 7 per cent in 2025 from the 8.8 per cent attained in 2024, a leading media agency said on Tuesday.

WPP Entity GroupM pegged the Indian advertising revenues across all media formats to grow at 7 per cent to Rs 1,64,137 crore in 2025, from Rs 1,53,407 crore in 2024. India will be the ninth biggest advertising market glob-

ally in a list that has the US, China, and the UK as the top-three countries. Globally, the ad revenue growth is set to slow down to 7.7 per cent in 2025 from 9.5 per cent in 2024.

Digital ad spends will be driving the growth for India with an 11.5 per cent growth in ad revenue to nearly Rs 1 lakh crore, as per the agency's 'This Year Next Year' report. The report said digital spends will be 60 per cent of the

overall spends in India, as against 82 per cent globally in 2025. Television will be the second biggest by revenues at Rs 42,431 crore, but is likely to witness a 1 per cent decline in revenues in 2025 from the Rs 42,859

crore in the year-ago period. Print ad revenues will grow 4 per cent to Rs 15,947 crore, giving the medium a 10 per cent share in overall revenues in 2025, the report said.

Operating Officer, Ashwin Padmanabhan, said streaming TV is now accounting for 12.6 per cent of total TV ad revenue, which signals a critical shift for brands to optimise across high-growth platforms.

He added that key sectors such as small businesses, realty, education, banking financial services and insurance, and technology/telecom will be contributing 60 per cent of total advertising, and are set to grow at around 10 per cent.

FIVE DAYS OF MARKET CRASH

Investors become poorer by Rs 16.97 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity investors became poorer by Rs 16.97 lakh crore in five days of market crash as persistent foreign fund outflows and fresh US tariffs that reignited trade war fears dented sentiments. In the past five days, the BSE bellwether gauge slumped 2,290.21 points or 2.91 per cent.

Tumbling for the fifth day running on Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 1,018.20 points or 1.32 per cent to settle at a two-week low of 76,293.60.

Tracking the weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 16,97,903.48 crore to Rs 4,08,52,922.63 crore (USD 4.70 trillion) in five days.

On Tuesday alone, investors' wealth got wiped out by Rs 9,29,651.16 crore.

"Indian markets underperformed global indices as benchmark indices plunged over 1 per cent each on widespread selling, mainly ignited by worries over escalating tariff war," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Among 30 Sensex shares,

Zomato tanked over 5 per cent. Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever and ITC were the other big laggards.

Bharti Airtel was the only gainer from the pack. The BSE smallcap gauge plunged 3.40 per cent and midcap index tumbled 2.88 per cent.

"The ongoing uncertainty surrounding US trade policies and tariffs, coupled with domestic economic growth concerns and persistent selling by FIIs, is dampening market sentiment. The mid and smallcap stocks experienced significant declines due to demand concerns and higher valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

All BSE sectoral indices ended lower. Realty tanked 3.14 per cent, industrials (2.87 per cent), consumer discretionary (2.73 per cent), capital goods (2.59 per cent), auto (2.49 per cent) and metal (2.23 per cent).

As many as 3,478 stocks declined while 525 advanced and 94 remained unchanged on the BSE.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G LIMITED
E-Procurement/Open Tender Paper Notification RRRZ - 16/2024-25
Tenders are invited from eligible contractors for tenders with Specification No. 48 /2024-25 for Electrification of 28HK Houses at Kharilapur Village of Cybercity Circle of CE/OP/RR Zone. For further details regarding detailed notification, specification and digital certificate please visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in.
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NIT No.: 18/EE-26/SBZ/GHMC/2024-25 Date: 11-02-2025
Name of the Work: Details of discharge quantities of storm water flow into the railway land, City: Job: Bid Submission Start date & Time / Bid Submission of Closing Date & Time: 11-02-2025 & 11:30 AM / 14-02-2025 & 11:30 AM. Name & Address of officer Cell No.: Executive Engineer: 9154796465, 7331189186. For further details can be sent at e-procurement @ http://www.tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Division No. 28, GHMC.

'Pyaar Testing is not just a love story - it's about families too'

TEJAL SINHA
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Plabita Borthakur is no stranger to unconventional roles. The Assam-born actress first caught Bollywood's attention with her performance in PK but truly made waves with her fearless portrayal of Rehana Abidi in Lipstick Under My Burkha. Since then, she has built an impressive repertoire across films and web series, from Breathe: Into the Shadows to Bombay Begums. Now, she's back with Pyaar Testing on Zee5, a unique romantic drama that goes beyond the usual love story, weaving in the complexities of family dynamics.

In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer, she shares what drew her to Amrita, how she navigates generational conflicts in real life, and why she believes every relationship - romantic or familial - needs open-mindedness. She also gives a glimpse into her upcoming projects and reveals a rather unexpected dream role.

What attracted the PK fame to Pyaar Testing was her character, Amrita's boldness and self-awareness.

"What I really liked about Amrita is that she speaks her mind," she says. "She's unapologetically honest about how she feels. She knows what she wants - what she likes, what she doesn't like, what's okay with her, what's not. I like that about her."

While Amrita's worldview is distinctly modern, she relates to her character's determination to challenge outdated ideas. "Coming from a small town and a traditional family, I understand her struggle. Amrita is not ready to blindly accept what the previous generation says is the 'right' way to live. And I resonate with that because I also believe that every generation needs to adapt. At the same time, the younger generation must also listen and learn from the older one. There needs to be a balance."

A central theme of Pyaar Testing is the concept of a "trial relationship" - a couple living together before marriage to test their compatibility. Plabita believes this is a practical approach.

"I think anybody who's looking at marriage, especially in an arranged setup, should consider living together first. It helps you see if the relationship is actually worth committing to."

She acknowledges that traditional families might struggle with such an idea, but she believes that love and understanding can bridge the gap.

"We can't expect traditional families to suddenly change everything they believe in. But if they love their children, they should at least try to understand why they think differently. It's about communication - taking one step towards each other."

As an actor and as an individual, she has experienced the push and pull between personal choice and societal expectations.

In an exclusive chat with **The Pioneer**, **Plabita Borthakur** opens up about her latest project, **Pyaar Testing**, where she plays the fiercely independent Amrita. She also shares behind-the-scenes moments with co-star Satyajit Sharma, hints at an upcoming comedy show and film, and reveals her dream role

"I think everyone faces this dilemma. Every generation is different. Our parents had to convince their parents about things, and now we have to do the same with ours. You grow up with certain values, but as you experience life, you learn and unlearn. Some things that applied to previous generations may not apply to us. The challenge is explaining that without causing conflict."

Her perspective on modern relationships is refreshingly open-minded.

"I don't believe in trends when it comes to relationships. To each their own. If two consenting adults want to live together, great. If they don't, that's great too. Whatever works for them. No one else should have a say in it."

Plabita shares a warm camaraderie with her Pyaar Testing co-star, Satyajit Sharma, with whom she has previously worked.

"Satyajit and I have already done another show together, where we played a couple. Even before that, we were friends - we used to meet at auditions. So, it was really nice working together again. We have great on-screen and off-screen chemistry."

Laughing, she recalls how Satyajit's high-energy personality made for entertaining moments on set.

"He cracks a lot of jokes and is always energetic, even in the mornings. I used to tell him not to bother me with so much energy so early in the day!"

Streaming platforms have been producing bold and unconventional content, and Pyaar Testing fits right into this trend. However, Plabita believes its uniqueness lies in how it balances romance and family dynamics.

"It's not just about a couple in love - it's also about their families. The show explores the relationship between two generations. Every character has an arc - there's something happening with the parents, the grandparents. It's about the amalgamation of two different mindsets coming together, and that's what makes it special."

Plabita has played an impressive variety of roles, but she's eager to explore new territories. "What excites me is playing something I haven't played before. I've been fortunate to get diverse roles, but I want to keep challenging myself. One role I'd really love to play is a serial killer. I think I would be very good at it."

She teases that she has an upcoming comedy show and a film in the pipeline, though she can't reveal details just yet.

As our conversation wraps up, it's clear that Plabita Borthakur is an artist who values growth, authenticity, and pushing boundaries-both on-screen and off. Whether it's playing a fiercely independent woman, breaking societal norms, or even (hopefully) becoming a serial killer on screen, she is here to leave a lasting impact.



I DON'T BELIEVE IN TRENDS WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS. TO EACH THEIR OWN. IF TWO CONSENTING ADULTS WANT TO LIVE TOGETHER, GREAT. IF THEY DON'T, THAT'S GREAT TOO. WHATEVER WORKS FOR THEM. NO ONE ELSE SHOULD HAVE A SAY IN IT



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Gift the joy of effortless beauty with Nourish Mantra's luxurious matte liquid lipsticks. This lipstick combo features four chic shades-Masoom Pink, Tedha Medha Hazelnut, Spice & Shanti, and Natkhat Berry. Infused with SPF Vitamin E, and Shea Butter, these hydrating, smudge-proof lipsticks are perfect stocking stuffers for beauty lovers.

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Price: INR 1,499



MOHA - TINTED SUNSCREEN GEL WITH SPF 50

Tinted Sunscreen Gel has a universal tint that blends with every skin tone by covering up minor imperfections such as redness, blemishes, and discoloration with a natural look. Its Gel formulation is lightweight, non-greasy, absorbed quickly and does not leave a heavy or sticky residue, which makes it comfortable to wear, especially for those with oily or combination skin.

Price: INR 525



LOVE SPELL NAILS: THE VALENTINE'S LOOK

Fall in love with the new Love Spell Hello SOE21 press-on nails-a perfect match for your Valentine's Day or Galentine's celebration. Designed for short-term wear, these nails come in a universal size with 24 nail tips to ensure a comfortable fit for any nail shape. The red and white color combination is the ideal blend of romance and fun, perfectly complementing your Valentine's dress and setting the tone for a memorable night out.



AI powered cameras revolutionise surveillance industry

PNS|HYDERABAD

Imagine a world in which creativity and intellect collide, pushing the frontier of what is conceivable. Greetings from the Edge AI era, in which the combination of edge computing and artificial intelligence is transforming how companies run. A game-changing technology at the vanguard of this revolution is poised to change the face of numerous sectors.

The next generation of advanced AI cameras is here, with the goal of making AI more widely available, deployable and customisable than in the past. This ground-breaking invention is based on the innovative idea of appzation, which enables companies to easily access AI's enormous potential. Whether it's improving security, transforming retail, improving healthcare, or simplifying industrial automation, this technology has the potential to open up new avenues and spur previously unheard-of expansion.

Businesses may now fully utilise AI to spur innovation, boost productivity and obtain a competitive advantage thanks to Edge AI's capability. AI has never had a more promising future and the potential is virtually limitless. With an exclusive conversation with Eric Fonseca, co-founder and VP of marketing at IndoAI Technologies Pvt Ltd, be ready to feel the excitement of invention and explore a world where intelligence and imagination collide!

He explains to us that, "IndoAI is driving innovation through Edge AI, ensuring privacy, security and adaptability as AI evolves. It makes AI solutions faster, safer and more effective by enabling on-device processing and lowering reliance on the cloud, which is in line with international data protection regulations like the GDPR and India's DPDP Act. Edge AI will be used more and more in the healthcare, governance, automotive and security sectors over the course of the next ten years to make decisions in real time, guaranteeing quicker reactions, better data security and less reliance on cloud computing." Consider a solution that is as flexible as your business. You can remain ahead of the curve with real-time processing, flexible

models and smooth scalability. This technology delivers unmatched flexibility and innovation, regardless of your industry-retail, healthcare, or more. Additionally, your data is kept private and safe using localised data processing! Can you imagine? "A major hurdle in AI adoption has always been flexibility-most AI cameras come with fixed functionalities, making customisation a challenge," the interviewee adds to our understanding of this. "In order to address this, there is a modular AI architecture that enables companies to install, modify and update AI models in the same way that apps do. Do you need guest management tomorrow and fire detection today? Simply install the necessary AI model; no hardware modifications are required, which speeds up and simplifies adaptation. Because of this, AI is now more widely available and scalable without requiring significant infrastructure investments."

AI-powered cameras are transforming the surveillance industry by providing unmatched accuracy and real-time analytics! The AI technology is revolutionising the industry by outperforming conventional CCTV systems. Not only that, but even in places with poor internet connectivity, the sophisticated facial recognition system has produced previously unheard-of accuracy. The spokesman goes on to clarify, saying, "There are three main advantages of moving AI computation to the device itself: Faster reaction times: Access control, fire detection and facial recognition in real time without lag or dependence on

internet bandwidth. Improved security: Complete control over the data keeps it on the device, lowering the possibility of hackers and leaks. Energy efficiency: By keeping data on the device, breach risks are decreased. The next stage of AI is being driven by this change, where decisions are made securely and rapidly at the edge rather than depending on centralised cloud servers."

By revealing the full potential of AI-powered cameras, they have made it possible for developers to produce a variety of cutting-edge applications, ranging from visitor control and vehicle number plate recognition to fire and smoke detection. This accomplishment demonstrates the dedication to encouraging domestic innovation and advancing the nation's goal of independence! We also hear that, "IndoAI adheres to a privacy-first approach by guaranteeing: Adherence to national data protection regulations, stringent access restrictions that guarantee businesses have complete control over how AI is used and their data. The systems are made to monitor authorised users, not to track down employees or assets without permission!"

They keep refining the models to guarantee accuracy and fairness with data that is trained while on the road." In an audacious attempt to transform operational effectiveness, they have partnered with prestigious institutions and regional

administrations to use the potential of scalable, safe and intuitive technology. Additionally, "AI regulations aren't universally applicable. One needs to maintain compliance with local laws and regulations by storing data on Indian cloud servers in order to stay ahead of the competition! Modify AI models in accordance with local legal specifications. Pay attention to explainability; users should always comprehend the decision-making and data processing operations of AI. Localised AI is the way of the future, requiring businesses to adapt AI to many legal systems. Because the world is ready for this change."

What makes it unique? AI-driven automation is quicker and more secure when there is no reliance on the cloud. In contrast to conventional cameras, it enables companies to select and implement the AI models that are required. Unlike international brands, they are completely compliant with Indian rules. Made in India for India (and beyond!). They don't take a one-size-fits-all approach. The AI ensures improved outcomes for industries including government, healthcare and education. While global players concentrate on mass monitoring, they prioritize privacy-first, industry-specific AI solutions. "Real-time industrial safety monitoring is one of the most effective uses. It strengthens AI's function beyond surveillance by preventing workplace accidents by identifying dangers in manufacturing facilities. They decided to branch out into industrial AI applications because of this unforeseen use case! It strengthened the conviction that AI can actively save lives and enhance operations, not merely be used for monitoring." It is influencing the future of India's AI landscape with strong government support and an expanding AI ecosystem. Building AI-powered cameras in India is not just about business; it's about empowering the country. Less reliance on foreign AI hardware - reduce dependency on imports. More job opportunities - create careers in AI, machine learning and edge computing. Boosting India's AI leadership - strengthening the country's position as an AI innovation hub. Ensuring data sovereignty - keep AI solutions compliant with national security needs. And why not!



EDGE AI ADVANTAGES

Faster reaction times: Access control, fire detection and facial recognition in real time without lag or dependence on internet bandwidth.

Improved security: Complete control over the data keeps it on the device, lowering the possibility of hackers and leaks.

Energy efficiency: By keeping data on the device, breach risks are decreased. The next stage of AI is being driven by this change, where decisions are made securely and rapidly at the edge rather than depending on centralised cloud servers.



what's brewing?



Mrs India Telangana winners to represent State on the national platform. After successfully organising the Mrs India Telangana 2025 grand finale, Mamta Trivedi, Regional Director, informed that State-level winners will now represent Telangana on the national platform of Mrs India 2025, to be held later during the year

Mitalee Agrawal



Dr. Rashmi Kandlikar



Mamta Trivedi



Maitreyee Amruta



Sudipta Dash



Archana Konakanchi



Shruti



Dr. P. Sita

PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary



Hyderabad Fashion Forecast 2025 outlines key trends that will define wardrobes in the upcoming year, focusing on sustainability, innovation and nostalgia. This year's fashion forecast emphasises the growing influence of the circular economy, the return of iconic '90s and early 2000s fashion, and the increasing role of AI in fashion design



ARK Group a trusted name in the residential, industrial, and infrastructure projects known for its exceptional craftsmanship, innovative design, and commitment to sustainability, proudly celebrated the phenomenal achievements of G Trisha, the star performer for India in Under-19 T20 World Cup Cricket Tournament 2024. She was felicitated at a special event by Gummi Ram Reddy, Chairman and MD, Ark Group, in the presence of Pullela Gopichand, Indian Badminton Legend and Mentor, MSK Prasad, Former Indian Cricketer and Chief Selector, M Mahendar Reddy, retired IPS officer and former DGP, Rajeshwar Tiwari, retired IAS officer and former Special Chief Secretary, Janaradhan Reddy, retired IAS officer and Former GHMC Commissioner, Kalidindi Venkata Vishnu Raju, Chairman- Anjani Vishnu Holdings and Vishnu Educational Society, along with other dignitaries.



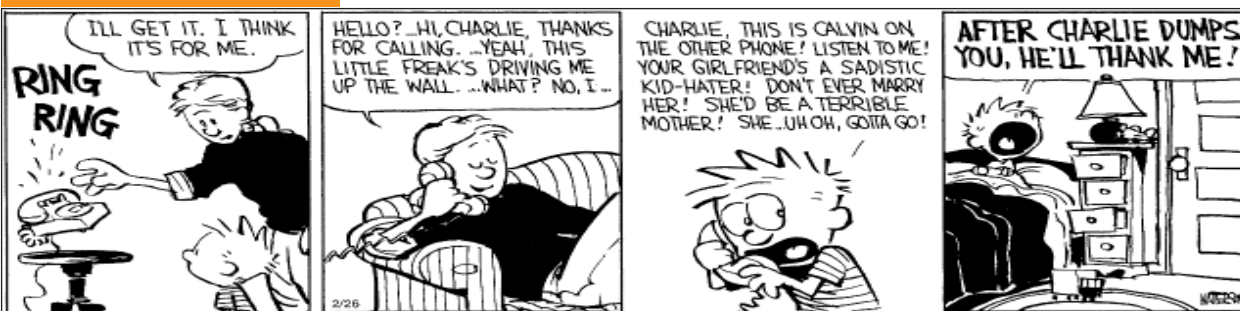
The 30th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week closing ceremony, hosted by Jayajothi Cements Pvt Ltd (S.J.C.P.L), a part of the My Home Industries Pvt Ltd group, was successfully conducted. The event was organized in collaboration with the Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Council. The ceremony took place at the Mallika Convention Hall in Shamshabad, with P.N. Sharma Controller General - In Charge, Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur, as the chief guest.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



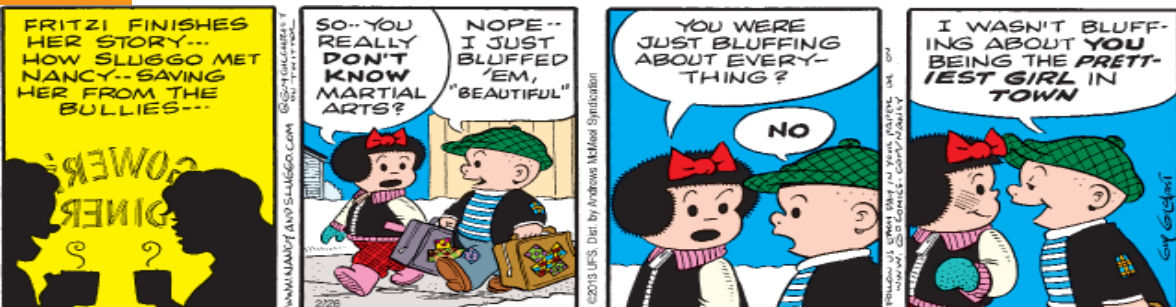
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A person who lives next door
- Two times two, times two
- Speed competitions
- Have a lie down
- Sick
- A bed for a small baby
- Rub out
- The start of the day
- A large bird of prey
- An exciting experience
- So dull it makes you feel sleepy
- The opposite of aunt
- Pain in your ear
- No sound at all
- The arm of a coat
- A special prize
- A feeling of rage
- A compass direction

DOWN

- The parts along the sides of something
- Obtains



GINGER MEGGS



What Prudhvi said is completely wrong: Laila director



Director Ram Narayan entered into the industry as music director, ended up as director and made his debut with *Battala Ramaswamy Biopikku*. Now, he is directing Vishwak Sen in *Laila*. He talks about his struggles, what he likes and also his reaction to Prudhvi's political comments...

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Ram Narayan is the director of 'Laila' and this is his second film. He made his debut with 'Battala Ramaswamy Biopikku' which is a comedy drama with some witty dialogues. "I prefer naughty jokes, but the visuals are good," said Ram Narayan. He entered into the industry as a music director, but ended up as director. "I composed music for a few films, including 'Lavakusa,' Varun Sandesh film," said Ram Narayan.

Now, he is coming up with 'Laila'. "Initially, I narrated the story to a couple of young actors, though liked the story, they did not prefer to play the lady role, because they have to remove the moustache and also a few things to do," said Ram Narayan about the story. He added that in recent times, when he was searching to do a story, he got this female get-up idea.

One of his friends took him to producer Sahu and then he suggested actor Vishwak Sen for this story. "As I told, a couple of actors rejected this story because of the female get-up, so I didn't mention it and narrated the story to Vishwak Sen, till interval and then said about the female get-up. Luckily, he wanted to play a female role. So he liked the story and immediately accepted it," said Ram Narayan about how this story landed Vishwak Sen.

The director said that he likes the Old City culture. Hence, he roped in Gullu Dada for this film. "They are famous in the Old City and they played important roles in my film. They speak a Hindi-Telugu mix and it came out very nice," said the director. Abhimanyu Singh and

Prudhvi also played important roles.

Talking about actor Prudhvi and his goat comments which became viral, when asked how many goats are there in the film? "There are goats in the film, but whatever number he said is wrong. He should not talk like that and there is only one scene between Prudhvi and Vishwak. Abhimanyu Singh is doing mutton business, so he owned these goats," he clarified about goats. He added that the team is not responsible for Prudhvi's comments. "The numbers are wrong and he doesn't have scenes with Vishwak; it is his personal opinion," said the director. After Vishwak Sen accepted the story, they did a look test for him in the female get-up.

"Initially, we did a look test and he sent it to a few people, which they liked. When the actual shooting started in his lady get-up, he made a video call to his father; he couldn't make out who this lady was? Then Vishwak revealed it and the next day the entire family came to shoot and they enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun while shooting," said Ram Narayan.

Vishwak turned lyric writer with this film. "Music director gave me the tune and I sent it to Vishwak. He called and showed the lyrics and asked about it. I said the lyrics are nice, then he said he wrote it. Initially, I couldn't believe it, but he changed a few lines on the spot. Actually he penned two songs for the film."

Akanksha Sharma is the female lead, while Kamakshi is also there in the film. "Kamakshi played a special role which she only could only do. I didn't reveal her role in the trailer, but it's a special one and she justified it. Initially, I had my doubts whether she would accept it or not, but when I approached her, she agreed immediately," said the director about Kamakshi.

The director said that he likes comedy and he wanted to continue with the same. "I like situational comedy, rather than writing punch dialogues. I never do punch comedy, as I feel that situational comedy gives more laughs. In this film he preferred it."

Talking about his future projects, he said he wants to focus on this film and once after release, he will think about his next film.



Is Allu Aravind planning to release Girlfriend now?

Top producer Allu Aravind is a master planner when it comes to his films and the release dates. He knows when he wants to release a film, how it does and his timing is always perfect and proved earlier many times. Now, the producer is also planning to come up with his film 'Girlfriend' that stars Rashmika

Mandanna and directed by Rahul Ravindran. According to a source, the film was completed long back, but Allu Aravind kept it in the dark. The film is a romantic drama and Rahul Ravindran provided the story and he also directed it. The film completed its shoot in March last year, says the source. Geetha Arts is producing this film. "Now that 'Pushpa 2' has become a huge hit, especially in the Hindi belt, Rashmika has become a big star. Also she became nicknamed as National crush after her 'Animal' Hindi film which was a huge success. Allu Aravind waited for this time to release his 'Girlfriend'," says the source.

The film 'Girlfriend' has Rashmika as the main lead and all other actors don't are not big names. So, the film's success depends only on Rashmika Mandanna. Allu Aravind waited for a long time after Rashmika made her mark in down South and Hindi also. "It's a female-centric film. The story speaks about the importance of women in every-one's life," added the source. Actor Deekshith Shetty of 'Dasara' fame is playing opposite Rashmika in it.

Kiara Advani starts shooting Toxic

After 'KGF' film two parts' success, Yash is now shooting his next film titled 'Toxic'. Interestingly, the actor is shooting nearly three years of 'KGF Chapter 2'. He waited for the right story and the director and started this 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups' directed by Geethu Mohandas. KVN Production is producing this high budget film.

According to a source, Bollywood actress Kiara Advani has joined the shooting of this film in Bengaluru. This marks the debut of Kiara in Kannada and the film is also shot in English. This is another multi-lingual project for Kiara Advani as she earlier acted in 'Game Changer' opposite Ram Charan, but the film didn't do well either in Telugu or in Hindi.

Now, the actress is acting in another multi-lingual but this time a Kannada film is being released in all other languages including English. The makers aimed to release the film abroad with the English version, added the source. Now, it is getting curious how Kiara and Yash look on the screen as a pair and how the audience will take them. We have to wait and see. The film is all set to release this year. Nayanthara is also there in this film.



ANUPAMA'S FIRST RELEASE IN THIS YEAR

Pradeep Ranganathan became an overnight star after the success of 'Love Today'. The film was made with a Rs 5 crore budget and grossed Rs 100 crore in Tamil. Pradeep is the lead actor, writer and also the director of this film. Now, the actor is coming up with a film titled 'Dragon' and is the lead actor. But the director is Ashwath Marimuthu of 'Ori Devuda' fame. The Telugu version is titled as 'Return of the Dragon' and it is produced by AGS Entertainment.

she can be seen in both shades as a performer and also as glamorous actress.

Pradeep Ranganathan portrays a young man named Raghavan struggling to achieve something in life. His relationships with Anupama and Kayadu Lohar fall apart due to his irresponsible behavior. The trailer tells that it is an entertainer, designed to appeal to all audiences, with elements showcasing the twists and turns in his life. Popular directors KS Ravikumar, Gautham Vasudev Menon and Mysskin are also seen in key roles in this film. This is the first film for Anupama releasing in Telugu this year. She is busy with multiple projects, but a lot depends on this film which is releasing both in Tamil and Telugu. Leon James composed the music. 'Return of the Dragon' is all set to hit the screens on February 21.



First song from Kannappa is out

Vishnu Manchu's dream project 'Kannappa' is all set to hit the screens on April 25. Produced by his father Mohan Babu, the makers have been releasing something from the film on every Monday for the last few weeks. Now, they released the first song 'Shiva Shiva Shankara' and it was launched by none other than Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Foundation. This marks the first time Guruji has lent his presence to the music release of a film, making this a truly landmark event, according to the makers.

The song launch event was held at Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ashram in Bengaluru, with the team of 'Kannappa', including Mohan Babu, Vishnu Manchu, director Mukesh Kumar Singh and others. Deeply rooted in devotion, the song captures the essence of Lord Shiva's divine energy, making its release an occasion of immense spiritual significance. In an official statement, the production team expressed their gratitude, saying, "This film is a labour of devotion, and having Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Guruji unveil our first song on our behalf is truly a blessing."

"It is an honour to have Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Guruji launch this divine song. Kannappa is a film deeply connected to Lord Shiva, and this moment adds immense spiritual value to our journey," said Mohan Babu on this occasion. The Telugu lyrics are penned by Ramajogayya Sastry, while Vijay Prakash lends his voice for this song. The song portrays a unique form of love and devotion towards Lord Shiva. Vishnu Manchu plays the role of Kannappa and in this song he shows his affection towards Lord Shiva. Preity Mukhundhan is also there in this song as his love interest.

Anil Ravipudi's Sankranthi sentiment continues



Director Anil Ravipudi is the most successful director after Rajamouli in Telugu Cinema. His recent film 'Sankranthiki Vasthunnam' that stars Venkatesh, has created history by being the highest grosser in regional cinema. The film was released at the time of Sankranthi and with this Anil wants to continue the Sankranthi sentiment in the near future. His earlier films 'F2' and 'Sarileru Neekevvaru' were also released during Sankranthi festival and became successful.

Now, Anil is joining hands with Megastar Chiranjeevi for a film which is already announced officially. Anil is going to start the shooting this summer and planning to release it by 2026 Sankranthi. He doesn't want to leave the Sankranthi sentiment; so the title for Chiranjeevi's film is considered to be 'Sankranthi Alludu', according to a source. After Chiranjeevi's film he once again joined hands with Venkatesh for the sequel of 'Sankranthiki Vasthunnam' and he is planning to release it by 2027 Sankranthi. It seems, Anil became the Sankranthi director.

Team India eye ODI clean-sweep over England

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A big knock from Virat Kohli's currently silent bat along with a series clean-sweep over England will be on Team India's wish-list when the two teams square off in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday, marking the end of their Champions Trophy (CT) build-up.

While India hold an unassailable 2-0 lead with identical four-wicket wins in each of the first two ODIs, Rohit Sharma's men will be extra motivated to get a win here at the Narendra Modi Stadium where they had suffered a crushing ODI World Cup final loss in 2023.

Needless to say, having their batting mainstay Kohli among runs and a win would be perfect culmination to the home side's Champions Trophy preparations. The eight-team competition gets underway from February 19 in Karachi with India starting against Bangladesh the next day in Dubai as per a hybrid model of hosting.

The team has already got a shot in the arm by Rohit's return to form. His 90-ball 119 in the second ODI was a source of relief to both the side and to him after a prolonged

run of poor scores. Kohli hasn't looked completely out of touch but hasn't stayed at the crease for long enough to give himself a chance for a big knock either.

If he manages to click, Kohli is in with a chance create another record. He is 89 runs short of becoming only the third batter in history to score 14,000 runs in the format which arguably has been the run-machine's favourite.

India don't seem to have put a foot wrong in this series as they continue to make the most of their rich reservoir of talent.

The addition of Varun Chakravarty has given additional ammunition to their lethal spin attack which will be vital for the Champions Trophy and Mohammed Shami's return after lengthy injury layoff has been seamless too.

Shami's successful comeback has certainly been assuring given that the Indian team management will spend an anxious day on Tuesday awaiting news on their premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, whose availability for the Champions Trophy is still under doubt.

As per the original time-line, Bumrah was slated for a comeback in the Ahmedabad ODI, but the



pace pacer is currently toiling at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru under the watchful eyes of specialists aiming to make the final squad that is set to be unveiled on Wednesday.

Bumrah's guile on varied pitches

and conditions is something that no team across the world possesses and India would be desperate to have their trump card back in the mix as they chase another ICC trophy.

Both India and England will enjoy

an off day on Tuesday as they have skipped training and other pre-match routines to rest and recuperate.

Having ended his troubled run with the bat with a characteristic hundred in Cuttack, Rohit's

confidence will certainly rub off on the rest of the side.

While Yashasvi Jaiswal could continue to warm the bench, India will expect better application and results from wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, who is going through a lean patch himself.

But it would not be a surprise if India give the flamboyant Rishabh Pant a crack to get some game time and have another left-handed batter in the mix to try out additional combinations.

India will need Shreyas Iyer's presence in the middle-order which has been bolstered by robust batting performances from Axar Patel. The 31-year-old all-rounder has shown immense maturity at No.5 in pressure situations of both the ODIs so far with knocks of 52 and 41 not out.

Patel's exploits with the bat have taken some pressure off Ravindra Jadeja, who has chipped away at England with six wickets so far, exploiting the spin-friendly conditions perfectly to warm-up for similar set-ups in the Champions Trophy.

But for Jos Buttler's England, this tour has raised more questions than they would have expected.

England have suffered repeated implosions in their core batting

line-up across the T20Is and ODIs which has undone the impressive work that the opening pair of Phil Salt and Ben Duckett has been putting up. Buttler maintains his team remains a work in progress but exit of the talented Jacob Bethell due to injury hampers them further.

Harry Brook has blown hot and cold in ideal conditions for batting and Joe Root's impressive returns haven't got the adequate support from others.

Among bowlers, Adil Rashid has exploited the conditions perfectly but the onus will be on England batters to produce a unified show.

Teams (from):

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh and Varun Chakravarty.

England: Jos Buttler (c&wk), Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Philip Salt, Jamie Smith (wk), Tom Banton, Brydon Carse, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid and Mark Wood.



Virat Kohli is world's best player regardless of form: Chris Gayle

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli may have been going through a poor run of form but the senior Indian batter remains the "best player in the world," feels former West Indian swashbuckler Chris Gayle.

The 36-year-old Kohli endured yet another poor outing as he was dismissed for just five runs in the second ODI against England in Cuttack on Sunday.

But Gayle, who has played alongside Kohli at the Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL, remains unperturbed by the Indian's lean stretch.

"He is still the best player in the world regardless of the form, Virat Kohli is still the best player, the stats prove that, how many centuries across formats he has scored as well," Gayle said on the sidelines of an event here on Tuesday.

"It's just one of those things that we cricketers go through in patches. I know it is coming at the back end of his career as well, but these things do happen, so he just needs to pick himself up and come back again."

Kohli has been struggling for runs in international

cricket of late, but he was expected to find form in the ODIs, which he has dominated like no other for the longest time. Kohli's return to the format, however, was not a great one as he was caught behind off Adil Rashid in the second match after missing the opening game due to a sore knee.

Asked if Kohli can break Gayle's record for most number of runs scored in the Champions Trophy, he said, "It is easy for him just to get 200 runs (more to surpass Gayle)".

"I don't know how many games they will be playing but I am sure he can get over 200 runs, and I am sure he will get a century for sure, so it's just a matter of time before he goes on to break that record."

Known for his flamboyance besides his big-hitting capabilities, Gayle called Indian captain Rohit Sharma the "new king in town" after the Mumbaier broke the Jamaican's record for most number of sixes in the ODI format.

"Congratulations to Rohit, sports always need a new entertainer and Rohit has been entertaining all these

years as well I have done it alongside him. So he is the new king in town now. So congrats to him, and hopefully, he goes on to hit more sixes."

Asked about youngster Abhishek Sharma blistering hundred against England in the fifth T20I, Gayle said, "I heard about his innings, it was a cracking innings and for a youngster to do such a thing on an international platform, is huge and fantastic."

Gayle also expressed his disappointment at West Indies' absence in the Champions Trophy.

"I am disappointed, no West Indies in the Champions Trophy but it is good to have the Champions Trophy back, so I am looking forward to it."

"Hopefully, it will be an entertaining one. I know it is actually taking place in Pakistan and Dubai, so hopefully, we will have some entertaining cricket."

Asked to pick his semifinalists for the event starting February 19, Gayle said, "I'm going to be going off just my mind — India, England, Australia, and probably New Zealand."

South Africa could end ICC trophy drought this year: Graeme Smith

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Former captain Graeme Smith is optimistic that South Africa will end its prolonged wait for an ICC trophy this year, long before they host the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2027.

With the eight-team Champions Trophy beginning on February 19 and World Test Championship (WTC) final scheduled for June this year, Smith believes South Africa is on the brink of breaking their ICC trophy drought.

"Hopefully, we will end that wait much before the 2027 World Cup, with the Champions Trophy and WTC final coming up but if South Africa could win a WC trophy in front of a home crowd, it would be amazing," Smith, who serves as SA20 commissioner, told PTI Bhasha.

"Over the next three years, we want to just keep pushing to improve our stadiums, pitches and our cricket

ecosystem, so that by the time we host the 2027 WC, we are the favourites."

South Africa finished as runners-up at both the men's and women's T20 World Cups in 2024. Earlier this year, they were also defeated by India in the ICC Women's Under-19 World Cup final.

However, the Proteas have a chance to lift spirits in the country as they prepare to face Australia in the WTC final this June. This will be their first appearance in the summit clash, having secured their spot after a crucial win over Pakistan in the Boxing Day Test in Centurion.

Many believe South Africa had an easier run to the finals, having beaten teams such as India, West Indies, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

However, Smith, who boasts 9,265 runs in 117 Tests and 6,986 runs in 197 ODIs, dismissed the claims.

"There is no smooth journey in cricket today. You have got



to do what you got to do. Right in the beginning, everyone knew who they were playing and who they were not playing.

"South Africa has won 7 test matches in a row to qualify. Everyone should look into the Test ecosystem, how it works as you play what you have been told to play in that cycle."

On the ongoing "country vs club" debate, Smith acknowledged the rise of T20 cricket but stressed the importance of creating a

sustainable model where all member boards collaborate.

"I want to see Test cricket stay stronger and if we can keep it strong with at least 6 or 7 nations, that way Test cricket will stay strong," Smith, who led South Africa to a record 54 Test victories, said.

"I often say that T20 cricket has to grow. We have seen it moving into America and also in lots of new regions. We will see it in the Olympics now. What amazes me is that how many cricket

fans it has pulled.

"I think franchise cricket will probably end up having 3 or 4 outstanding leagues in the world, with maybe a tier-two system. But in the future, it's more about all the member boards working together to keep each other strong."

Smith also highlighted the role of scheduling in ensuring financial stability.

"Scheduling also helps the revenue model. India is amazing as they tour frequently, providing revenue that keeps nations afloat. But if England and Australia continue playing only each other and not engaging with African or other nations, it gets harder because Test cricket is commercially under pressure," he said.

"If you look at how the money flows and the expenses, it puts Test cricket under strain. It's about working together and creating a model that can keep the game sustainable," he added.

Sheldon Jackson retires from first-class cricket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prolific Saurashtra batter Sheldon Jackson on Tuesday retired from professional cricket after a career spanning 15 years, his last outing ending in a defeat to Gujarat in the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal here.

Jackson, 38, retires with more than 7200 runs in 105 first-class matches with a highest score of 186, 21 hundreds and 39 half-centuries.

That he ended his career with an average of over 45 speaks volumes about his consistency in first-class cricket.

Jackson has been a multidimensional cricketer and besides being a reliable batsman and an excellent fielder. He also kept wickets for Saurashtra in the limited-over competitions. In the longer format,



however, he was not required to do the duty thanks to Sagar Jogiyani's presence.

He scored 14 and 27 in his final two outings as Gujarat won by an innings and 98 runs.

Jackson, who was once part of the Kolkata Knight Riders

set-up after being spotted by former Bengal player Joydeep Mukherjee, made his debut for Saurashtra in December 2011.

After being on the fringes of selection for his state team Saurashtra for three years, he made his debut in December 2011.

He made four fifties and three hundreds in the 2012-13 Ranji season, including back-to-back centuries in the quarter-final and semi-final against Karnataka and Punjab respectively, to help Saurashtra qualify for the final for the first time.

Owing to his excellent run with the bat that year, he broke into the India A team for the series against West Indies A at home. He was also a prominent member in Saurashtra's second charge towards a Ranji Trophy title in the 2015-16 season.

Last month, Jackson had called time on his limited-overs career after scoring 2792 runs in 84 innings, with his highest being an unbeaten 133 during the Vijay Hazare Trophy in 2022.

In the limited-overs game, he struck nine centuries and 14 half-centuries in all.

Gujarat crush Saurashtra by innings and 98 runs

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Pacers Priyajit Jadeja and Arzan Nagwaswalla shared seven wickets among them as Gujarat pummeled Saurashtra by an innings and 98 runs to enter the Ranji Trophy semifinals here on Tuesday.

The Saurashtra batting malfunctioned again in the match as they were bundled out for 197 in their second innings, far away from the mark of 295 required to make Gujarat bat again.

Left-arm pacer Nagwaswalla (3/54) and his right-arm colleague Priyajit (4/32) were unstoppable once Saurashtra resumed the day from 33 for no loss.

Rahane's century, Dias's effort put Mumbai in Ranji Trophy semifinal

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane conjured a typically gritty hundred and pacer Royston Dias supported his effort with a five-wicket haul as defending champions Mumbai completed a fine escape act, scripting a commanding 152-run over Haryana to enter the Ranji Trophy semifinals here on Tuesday.

Rahane, resuming on 88, wasted no time in the morning to notch 108 (180 balls; 13x4) — his 41st first-class century, that guided Mumbai to 339 in the second innings for an overall lead of 353 runs.

Chasing 354, Haryana crumbled against left-arm pacer Dias (5/39) and Shardul Thakur (3/26), as the veteran quick completed a creditable nine-wicket haul for the match.

They were bowled out for 201 as the joyous Mumbai dressing room might have forgotten that worrisome period when they were 65/5 in the first innings.

Rahane made a bright beginning

in the first session, as two exquisite boundaries off Sumit Kumar and Anshul Kamboj took him to 99, before a nudged single towards midwicket carried him past the milestone off 160 balls.

The Mumbai stalwart took his helmet off, looked skyward and seemed emotionally relieved as it was his first hundred of the season.

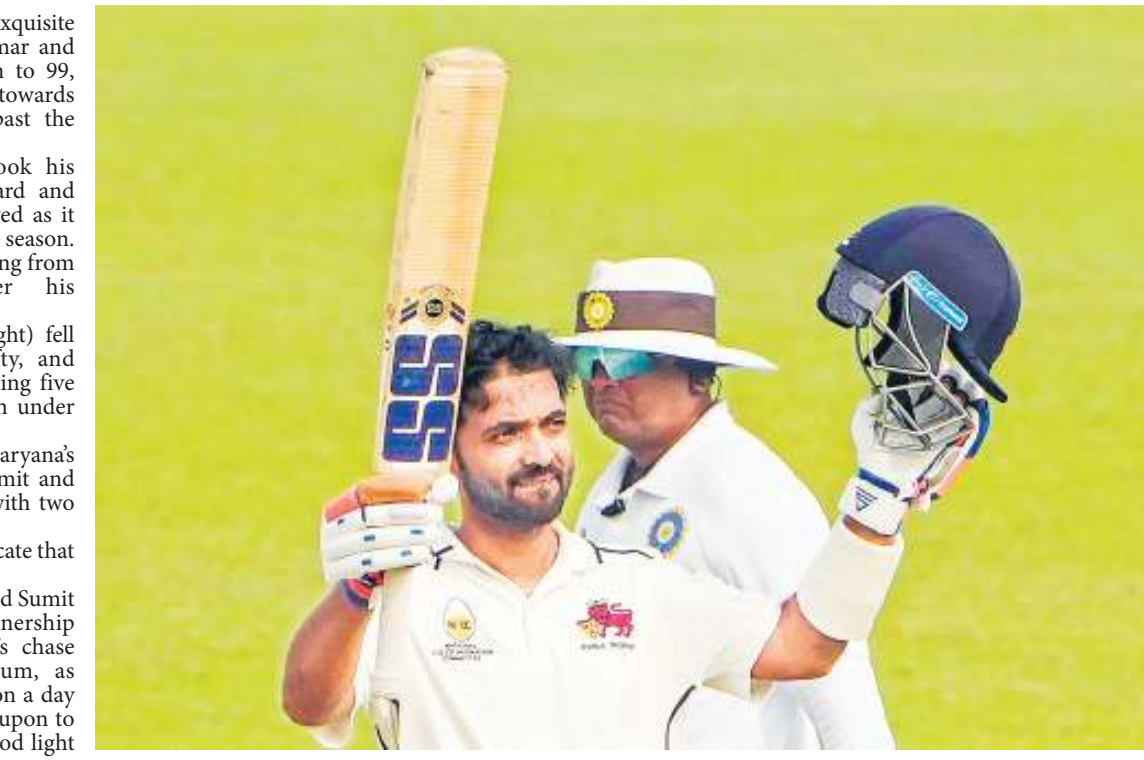
However, Mumbai, resuming from 278/4, crumbled after his dismissal.

Shivam Dube (44 overnight) fell two runs short of a fifty, and Mumbai lost their remaining five wickets for just 25 runs in under 10 overs.

Anuj Thakral (4/70) led Haryana's charge, while Kamboj, Sumit and Jayant Yadav chipped in with two wickets each.

But Haryana failed to replicate that spirit in their chase.

Barring a Lakshay Dalal and Sumit Kumar sixth-wicket partnership worth 90 runs, Haryana's chase never gathered momentum, as they folded in 57.3 overs on a day when the play was agreed upon to be extended because of good light



and also because of Haryana losing nine wickets.

Haryana's last five wickets tumbled in the final hour, with Dias producing a career-best 5/39 in 10.3 overs — his maiden five-wicket haul.

Shardul, who had taken six wickets in the first innings, was the first to strike. Steaming in from the High Court end, he extracted lateral movement on a docile pitch, bowling a relentless 10-over spell across two sessions that read 10-3-26-3.

From the Pavilion end, Dias provided perfect support, returning 6-2-12-2 in his first spell.

Lakshay, Sumit frustrate Mumbai just as it seemed Mumbai would wrap things up early, Haryana's Lakshay (64 off 130; 9x4) and Sumit (62 off 96; 10x4) dug in, stitching a doughty stand against the run of play.

On an eased-out fourth-day pitch, Sumit counterattacked, stepping out to Shams Mulani to negate the turn.

Rahane turned to Dube's military

medium pace, but Mumbai remained frustrated as misfields crept in, offering easy singles, though the steep target remained their advantage.

Sumit soon reached his seventh first-class fifty in 72 balls, Rahane's sharp captaincy changed the game.

The breakthrough came via off-spinner Tanush Kotian, who struck in his very first over.

Lakshay, attempting to drag a ball from outside, gloved it faintly to the keeper.

The umpire wasn't convinced, but Rahane immediately called for DRS and the UltraEdge showed a clear deflection.

Dias then delivered another blow, as Rahane's astute bowling change ended Sumit's counterattacking knock.

Brief Scores

Mumbai 315 and 339 in 85.3 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 108, Suryakumar Yadav 70, Shivam Dube 48). Haryana 201; 57.3 overs (Lakshay Dalal 64, Sumit Kumar 62; Royston Dias 5/39, Shardul Thakur 3/26). Mumbai won by 152 runs.