

# sunday pioneer

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Published From: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA



**India leading in AI adoption, says Nirmala**



**'Working out scheme to prevent DISTRESS sale of farmers' produce'**



**Trisha: The typhoon of INDIAN cricket**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**I have been trying to put the survey on track breaking my head. However, some people are trying to throw stones at me. The Father (KCR), Son and Nephew who did not care about BCs, have become good. Our leaders are going and sitting next to BRS leaders, if they conduct meetings on caste surveys. They are making me a villain even though I conducted a caste survey working hard.**

**- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister**

**DON'T MISS...**

**CM's gesture of compassion**

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy instructed the officials to provide assistance to Salima, who is bed ridden due to burn injuries. The officials have been asked to provide immediate medical treatment, pension under differently abled category and Indiramma house to the poor family. Since Salima is not in a position to cook food, the Chief Minister also asked the authorities to make necessary arrangements to feed her regularly. CM Revanth Reddy responded ...

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**Tit-for-tat violence in Wgl**

Warangal district has been witnessing a pattern of tit-for-tat violence of late, creating panic among people. Family issues, property disputes, and extramarital relationships are triggering attacks. Criminals are carrying out brutal assaults on their rivals to destroy lives. Recently, the attacks happening across the undivided Warangal district have been creating fear and anxiety among people. In Jangaon, a person was attacked with a boulder, and the body was set on fire after dousing it with petrol. In Hanamkonda, an auto-rickshaw driver ...

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**60 crore devotees have taken holy dip**

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday said an unprecedented 60 crore devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam. The Kumbh Mela which started on January 13 will continue till February 26 on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. Over half of India's 110 crore Sanatan followers have bathed in the holy confluence, and this number is expected to surpass 65 crore by the final 'amrit snan' on February 26, an official statement said. This Maha Kumbh has seen the largest participation in any religious, cultural, or social ...

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**Indians feel savings not enough**

More than half of Indians surveyed feel unprepared for their future despite having a detailed financial plan or having done some degree of planning, says a study. The study of individuals in the age group of 35 to 54 years who financially provide for their ageing parents and growing children found that 60 per cent of respondents feel their savings are not enough for future. The respondents agree that 'no matter how much they save or invest, they feel like it's never enough for future', the study by YouGov said. A majority 94 per cent of respondents said they either have a detailed financial plan or have done some degree of planning, the study, which surveyed more than 4,000 people across 12 cities across India, said ...

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## 8 workers trapped as SLBC tunnel collapses



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A major accident struck the under-construction Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel near Domalapenta in Nagarkurnool district. Eight workers are trapped inside the tunnel after a sudden roof collapse early on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy over the phone, inquiring about the situation and assuring full support from the Centre, including the immediate deployment of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams for rescue operations. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy briefed the Prime Minister on the incident, stating that Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy and Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao were at

the site supervising rescue operations. The collapse, which occurred at around 8:30 am, was triggered by the sudden caving in of a 10-meter stretch of the tunnel roof, trapping the workers who were operating the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM). The site is 13 km away from the mouth and muck mixed with water spread around 200 to 300 meters in the tunnel. The missing individuals are

**Modi speaks to CM, assures full support, NDRF teams deployed**

**CM holds emergency review, orders speedy rescue efforts**

**Ventilation intact but communication not possible with those inside the 44 km-long tunnel**

Manoj Kumar (Project Engineer) and Sri Niwas (Field Engineer) from Uttar Pradesh, Sandeep Sahu, Jagta Xess, Santosh Sahu and Anuj Sahu from Jharkhand, Sunny Singh from Jammu & Kashmir, and Gurpreet Singh from Punjab.

Ventilation is functional inside the tunnel, ensuring oxygen supply for the trapped workers. However, communication has been completely cut off and concerns remain about the instability of the collapsed section. **Continued on Page 2**

**NDSA must probe tunnel collapse: BRS**

BRS leaders lashed out at the Congress government over the collapse of the SLBC (Srisailem Left Bank Canal) tunnel, terming it as a glaring example of administrative failure and incompetence. BRS MLA Harish Rao demanded an immediate investigation by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) to assess reasons behind the tunnel collapse. **Continued on Page 2**

**Uttam condemns BRS's false propaganda**

Telangana Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy termed the SLBC tunnel accident as unfortunate and assured that all rescue operations are underway. He said the incident occurred between 8:30 am and 9 am, follow-

ing which he, along with officials, reached the site by 11 am to supervise relief operations. After a review meeting with the Chief Minister, he revealed further details of the situation. **Continued on Page 2**

## Caste census is 'Bible, Gita & Quran' of weaker sections: CM

**Says some fear BCs will stake claim once their percentage is declared**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The caste census is the 'Bible, Bhagavad Gita and Quran' of all weaker sections, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said. He said that AICC leader Rahul Gandhi had already said that the caste census is like an X-Ray of society. Rahul had also made it clear that the caste census must be conducted if social justice is to be delivered to all BCs, the CM added. "My government constituted a Cabinet Sub Committee on caste census and proved its sincerity. The State Planning Department has been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the caste survey strictly without any legal hurdles. Enumerators have been deployed to all houses to collect personal information. The collected information was computerized in the presence of



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy addressing the meeting on BC Caste Census and 42 per cent BC reservations issue at Praja Bhavan on Saturday

the enumerators to avoid mistakes. Those who are making allegations of mistakes should come out with details citing the place and block where the mistake was made. The opposition conspired to ruin the entire system by distorting the process. The BC fraternity should take note of this. No one has ever conducted a caste census in inde-

pendent India. Some fear that BCs will stake claim once the Backward Classes population percentage is declared," the CM said. Attending the meeting held at the Praja Bhavan on Saturday along with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, TPCC Chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, former MP V.

Hanumantha Rao, MP Anil Kumar Yadav, BC MLAs, MLCs and other Congress leaders, the CM discussed the BC caste census and the 42 per cent BC reservations issue.

The CM said that during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul promised to conduct the caste census soon after the Congress came to power in Telangana. The Nehru family always 'fulfilled' promises and conducted the caste census in the state, he said. "The 'people's government' is implementing the promise made by our leader. No other state in the country has dared to embark on such a big task. As promised by Rahul, we conducted a caste census in Telangana. The BRS government did not disclose details of the Comprehensive Family Survey as it was full of errors. The BRS government used the survey only during elections and not for the people," the CM added.

## Govt to fill Anganwadi teacher, helper posts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Women and Child Welfare Minister, Seetakka, has given the green signal for filling vacant Anganwadi teacher and helper posts all over Telangana. The recruitment process will fill 6,399 Anganwadi teacher posts and 7,837 Helper posts, bringing the total number of vacancies to 14,236.

This marks the first mega recruitment drive for Anganwadi staffers in Telangana. Seetakka has cleared the file, clearing the way for the recruitment process, which will begin after the election code is lifted. Collectors will be responsible for issuing the respective notifications. With this move, the government aims to strengthen the Anganwadi



system, ensuring better implementation of welfare schemes for women and children. The decision is expected to enhance the efficiency of Anganwadi centres and improve services across the state.

**CM Revanth reviews edu reforms**

**'Cong to hold talks on 42% quota in India'**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government will hold talks with the Centre on 42 per cent quota for BCs after taking all political parties to the Centre, TPCC leader B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

Addressing the media on Saturday, Mahesh said the government will introduce the Bill in the Assembly on 42 per cent reservations for BCs to make it law. He said that a new chapter has started with the BC Caste Census in Telangana.

Our caste census has become a role model for the nation, Mahesh said demanding the Narendra Modi government to conduct caste census across the nation. Mahesh said that Bihar and Karnataka states conducted caste census but failed to pass a resolution in the Assembly. He said that only the Congress can deliver social justice to all BCs. Mahesh said that the BRS and the BJP are doing hungama on caste census **Continued on Page 2**

**TG'S FINANCIAL CRISIS**

## KTR challenges Revanth for debate

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing him of driving Telangana into a financial crisis through reckless governance and misleading narratives. Addressing a press conference at the Telangana Bhavan, KTR defended the decade-long rule of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) and challenged Revanth Reddy to a debate in the Assembly on Telangana's financial status. He pointed to the State Statistical Atlas Report, an official document released by the Congress-led govern-



ment, which he claimed contradicted Revanth's allegations of fiscal mismanagement. "This report itself proves how Telangana's financial strength grew under KCR's leadership. Yet, Revanth continues to spread lies," he said. He cited Telangana's Gross State

Domestic Product (GSDP) figures, which rose from Rs 5 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 15 lakh crore in 2023, positioning the state ahead of industrial giants like Gujarat. "Telangana's share in India's GDP increased from 4% in 2014 to 5.1% in 2023 proving our rapid growth," he added. KTR also highlighted the rise in Telangana's per capita income from Rs 1.24 lakh in 2014 to Rs 3.12 lakh in 2023, making it the highest in the country. "KCR's governance ensured prosperity, but Congress is now derailing our progress," he said. Countering Congress' allegations on irrigation projects, KTR defended the impact of Kaleshwaram and Mission Kakatiya.

**'USD 21 million going to my friend Modi'**

**Trump fires another salvo over 'funding' to India**

PNS ■ NEW YORK/NEW DELHI

US President Donald Trump for the fourth time in recent days claimed that the Biden administration allocated USD 21 million in funding to India for 'voter turnout'. In Washington, speaking at a 'Governors Working Session,' Trump said: "Twenty-one million dollars going to my friend Prime Minister Modi in India for voter turnout. We're giving 21 million for voter turnout in India. What about us? I want voter turnout too." A video clipping from the event was posted on social media by the White House on Friday. Trump also said that money went

to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh to a firm that nobody ever heard of. "Got USD 29 million. They got a check. Can you imagine? You have a little firm, you get 10,000 here, 10,000 there, and then we get 29 million from the United States government. "Two people are working in that firm... I think they're very happy, they're very rich. They'll be on the cover of a very good business magazine pretty soon for being great scammers. USD 20 million for fiscal federalism, USD 90 million for biodiversity in Nepal, and USD 47 million for improving learning outcomes in Asia. Asia got a lot of money," Trump said.

**OBTUSE ANGLE**



## If KTR dares me, I will expose him, warns Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, reacted strongly to the statement made by BRS MLA KT Rama Rao that he (Bandi) functioned as a protective shield for Revanth Reddy and labelled them as the 'RS Brothers.' "KTR has nothing to do. No one is paying attention to him. He couldn't even find MLC candidates and ran away from the electoral field. You are



the one secretly supporting Congress. That's why, despite solid evidence in the Kaleshwaram scam, phone tap-

ping, Bammera farmhouse drug case and Formula E race scam no action has been taken against you. This proves that the real KR Brothers are you and Revanth Reddy. Stop your fake dramas. You are living a beggar's life and your arrogance knows no limits. Your entire life is in my hands. I am restraining myself from going personal, but if challenged, I will expose everything. You cowardly issued a legal notice against me and ran away.

## Requirements of police to be met, says Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu assured that the Telangana government would take full responsibility for meeting the requirements of the police so that all citizen groups can live with a sense of security. Charles made these remarks during discussions with police officials as part of pre-budget meetings held at the Secretariat on Saturday. He noted that Telangana was rap-

idly transforming into an urban state, with Hyderabad witnessing major developments, including the creation of a new Future City zone in addition to the existing three city zones. With the Regional Ring Road project progressing swiftly and increasing financial resources, favourable weather, and employment opportunities, migration to Hyderabad and other parts of the state were on the rise. He emphasised the need for the Home Department **Continued on Page 2**

# TG Govt's Diary: Cost-Cutting or Carelessness?

The much-anticipated Telangana government diary for 2025 has left many disappointed, with complaints pouring in about its subpar quality. Compared to the 2024 edition, this year's diary is a major downgrade - cheap paper, fewer pages, fewer photographs, and a binding that barely holds together. Some recipients are already joking that it's best kept as a souvenir rather than used for writing. This is the same diary given to Bureaucrats, officers and journalists. The drop in quality has raised eyebrows. Is this a cost-cutting measure, or is there something else at play? A government diary is not just a planner; it's a reflection of the administration's attention to detail. If the binding is coming apart this easily, one can't help but wonder—what else is falling apart behind the scenes?

The BJP's graduate MLC candidate for Karimnagar - Medak - Adilabad - Nizamabad, in exchange for a ticket - went viral. The catch? The newspaper doesn't even exist. Despite being a blatant fabrication, the clipping gained such widespread traction that it nearly reached a majority of voters. Taken back by its reach, the BJP was forced to step in and counter the narrative, alleging that Congress had orchestrated the misinformation campaign. According to BJP insiders, district Congress presidents down to lower-level cadre were instructed to circulate the fake clipping. If fake news can drive narratives even in a Graduate MLC election, it begs the question - do political strategists believe graduates are that gullible?

In a decisive move, Andhra Pradesh State FiberNet Limited (APSFL) Chairman GV Reddy has dismissed three senior officials for allegedly delaying crucial orders, causing financial setbacks to the organisation. He expressed serious concern over the deliberate inaction, which he claimed had severely hampered APSFL's operations.

## KCR's Selfies Stir Reactions Across Political Circles

BRS chief KCR may be out of power, but his moves still generate buzz - sometimes in unexpected quarters. His recent selfies and casual video appearances with influencers on his birthday have drawn mixed reactions, not just within BRS but also from Congress and BJP circles. For a leader of his stature, merely standing in a video while social media influencers talk away didn't sit well with many. A prominent BJP leader remarked that KCR's obliging for such reels felt out of place, given the larger-than-life image he has built over the years. "He has set his bar so high that even his opponents don't want to see him any less," the Congress leader observed. Even Congress functionaries, despite having defeated him, found themselves debating the optics of such social media engagements. Meanwhile, KCR's arrival at the BRS executive committee meeting saw an unexpectedly thin crowd. For a leader who once commanded massive gatherings, this wasn't just a minor detail - it was a statement. A senior journalist at the venue bluntly put it: "This turnout for KCR is not a good sign." The contrast was even starker given that KTR had drawn a significantly larger crowd when he returned from the ACB office in the Formula E probe.

## No Space for Cars at Telangana Bhavan

Telangana Bhavan, the nerve centre of BRS, may have the car as its election symbol, but when it comes to actual parking, visitors are left to fend for themselves. For reporters covering the party's activities, this has long been an unavoidable challenge, forcing them to find alternate ways to reach the venue. But when KCR is scheduled to attend, the struggle for space only intensifies. On one such chaotic day, a reporter navigating the narrow approach to Telangana Bhavan fell from their bike and sustained bruises, highlighting just how inconvenient the situation has become. The incident sparked a round of discussion among fellow journalists that day, many of whom shared their own experiences dealing with the lack of parking for the party that proudly carries the car symbol. Some have adapted by switching to cabs or autos, while others prefer taking the metro and somehow managing the last stretch. A few have even mastered the skill of squeezing into whatever little space is available. And if parking is a nightmare, the traffic situation around Telangana Bhavan is even worse - best not even to get started on that.

## APSFL Chairman cracks whip over delays, fires 3 officials

Further, Reddy held APSFL Managing Director K Dinesh Kumar accountable for negligence in handling employee terminations, vendor contracts, and key administrative decisions. He criticised the management's failure to inform him about a pending GST bill, which had accumulated a staggering Rs 377 crore fine due to delayed filings. However, timely intervention helped save Rs 9 crore by ensuring the IT returns were filed before the deadline.

# REPORTERS' DIARY

Even the Graduate MLC elections haven't been spared from fake news. A newspaper clipping - supposedly reporting that BJP leaders G Kishan Reddy, Bandi Sanjay, and Dr Laxman received Rs 30 crore from Anjireddy Chinnamail, Fake news hits graduate MLC elections, BJP in damage control

## Aunt and niece steal the show, leaving CM in the middle

In an unexpected moment of political theatrics, BJP MP DK Aruna and her niece, Congress MLA Chittam Parnika Reddy, turned first of its kind women's petrol bunk inauguration into a spectacle that had even Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy caught in the middle - literally. The event, attended by several senior leaders, was set to be a routine ceremony, but when KCR is scheduled to attend, the struggle for space only intensifies. On one such chaotic day, a reporter navigating the narrow approach to Telangana Bhavan fell from their bike and sustained bruises, highlighting just how inconvenient the situation has become. The incident sparked a round of discussion among fellow journalists that day, many of whom shared their own experiences dealing with the lack of parking for the party that proudly carries the car symbol. Some have adapted by switching to cabs or autos, while others prefer taking the metro and somehow managing the last stretch. A few have even mastered the skill of squeezing into whatever little space is available. And if parking is a nightmare, the traffic situation around Telangana Bhavan is even worse - best not even to get started on that.

Determined to address the lapses, Reddy has decided to escalate the matter to the Chief Secretary and Advocate General, demanding that the MD take full responsibility for the losses incurred. With APSFL facing critical financial and operational challenges, Reddy's stern action signals a push for greater accountability and efficiency in the organisation.

Reddy highlighted that the officials failed to act on termination orders for 410 employees who had been appointed without proper documentation. This oversight resulted in a loss of Rs 1 crore in salaries for December, January, and February. Despite his clear instructions, the orders were ignored, leading to significant financial strain.

With APSFL facing critical financial and operational challenges, Reddy's stern action signals a push for greater accountability and efficiency in the organisation.

(Naveena Ghanate, Kolishetty Venkateswarulu and Pradeep Kumar)

# I am portrayed as a villain for conducting caste survey: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy criticised politicians who spoke against the caste survey.

"I have been trying to put the caste survey back on track breaking my head. However, some people are trying to throw stones on me. The person who did not order a caste survey is enjoying in a farmhouse and trying to portray himself as a good person. The father, son and nephew, who did not care about BCs, have become good now. Our leaders are going and sitting beside BRS leaders when they conduct meetings on caste surveys. They are making me a villain even though I conducted the caste survey. Those who are opposing caste surveys are the villains. However, you are criticising me also. Who will suffer in the end," the CM said.

He asked leaders present at the meeting held on caste survey and 42 per cent BC reservations how the caste survey can go forward if you do not stand by me. "The BC leaders of the Congress have the responsibility of taking the caste survey to the people. It is not proper to throw all responsibility on me. Congress activists should answer opposition leaders who are criticising the caste survey details. My responsibility will be over after providing legality to BC details. It is up to you as to how you will take these details to the people," he said.

The CM asked Congress BC leaders to organise caste-wise meetings and seminars in universities with intellectuals.

The report highlighted key issues affecting the education system and proposed solutions for their removal. The commission brought to the Chief Minister's attention the need for a constituency-wise action plan to systematically address the gaps in education infrastructure and quality.

## CM reviews edu reforms, asks commission to draft action plan

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a review meeting with the Education Commission at his Jubilee Hills residence to discuss measures for strengthening the education system in Telangana.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister's Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy, Education Commission

Chairman Akunuri Murali, and members including Professor Vishweshwar Rao, Charagonda Venkatesh, and Jyotsna Shiva Reddy.

The commission presented a report to the Chief Minister outlining recommendations for improving integrated residential schools and government schools across the state.

The report highlighted key issues affecting the education system and proposed solutions for their removal.

The commission brought to the Chief Minister's attention the need for a constituency-wise action plan to systematically address the gaps in education infrastructure and quality.

## MLC elections a battle between deception and justice: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that the forthcoming MLC elections are a battle between betrayal and deception versus struggle for the protection of justice. He called upon graduates and teachers to teach a lesson to the Congress government for its deceit and betrayal through the so-called six guarantees.

He declared that if BJP candidates win, they will launch protests against the Congress government within a week. He emphasised that his Union Minister post is not important for him, but the people are.

He recalled his participation in protests in Hyderabad on behalf of Group 1 candidates even while serving as a minister.

He criticised the Congress for betraying the Backward Classes (BCs) by including Muslims in the BC list and ridiculed them for now chanting the BC quota slogan.

Sanjay was speaking at a meeting of constituency in-charges of Karimnagar Parliamentary Constituency, along with Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, MLAs Patala Shankar, Venkata Ramana Reddy, MLC candidate Anji Reddy, former MLA Bodge Shobha and district presidents Gangadi Krishna Reddy, Gopi, former mayors Sunil Rao, D. Shankar and Vasala Ramesh.

Addressing BJP activists Sanjay said that it is the BJP's responsibility to ensure the victory of all the candidates the party supports.

## GHMC issues notice to NTR Memorial Trust for Rs 5.5 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has issued a notice to the NTR Memorial Trust, associated with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's wife Bhuvaneshwari, for Rs 5.5 crore in pending property tax.

GHMC officials warned that failure to clear the dues could result in seizure of assets.

As part of its intensified crackdown on major tax defaulters, the GHMC has identified tax evasion amounting to Rs 860 crore, with multiple high-profile properties failing to pay taxes for years. In the Khairatabad zone alone, 100 individuals and entities have been issued red notices,

and officials have made it clear that non-compliance will lead to property seizures.

Apart from the NTR Memorial Trust, the Jubilee Hills Landmark Project has the highest outstanding dues of Rs 52 crore, followed by L&T Metro Rail at Rs 32 crore. The Hyderabad Asbestos Company has tax arrears of Rs 30 crore, while the Indo-Arab League owes Rs 7.33 crore. Katriya Hotel in Somajiguda has also been flagged for Rs 8.62 crore in unpaid property tax.

GHMC officials warned all defaulters to clear their dues immediately or face legal consequences. The move is part of the municipal body's aggressive push to recover long-pending tax revenue and ensure compliance across Hyderabad.

## Does Revanth love Naidu more than TG farmers, asks Kavitha

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

BRS MLC K. Kavitha launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing him of prioritising Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu over Telangana's farmers.

She said that Revanth had offered Telangana's rightful share of Krishna and Godavari waters as a political gesture to Chandrababu, neglecting the interests of the state's agricultural community. Speaking to the media on Saturday during her visit to the Nizamabad Turmeric Market Yard, Kavitha criticized the CM for his silence on the Banakcherla project.

She claimed that Chandrababu Naidu announced the project soon after meeting Revanth Reddy at the Praja Bhavan, intending to divert 200 TMCs of Godavari water to the Krishna and Penna basins.

Demanding immediate action, she questioned why the Telangana government had not filed objections with the Centre or approached the courts to stop the project. "If Revanth truly cares about Telangana's interests, he should immediately write to the Centre and take legal action," she insisted.

Kavitha also hit out at the Centre over the ineffective Turmeric Board, arguing that its lack of statutory status had worsened the price crisis for farmers. She alleged that a trader syndicate in the Nizamabad Market Yard was deliberately suppressing turmeric prices and delaying purchases, forcing farmers to wait days to sell their produce. "This blackmailing of farmers will not be tolerated," she warned.

She reminded the public of the Congress party's pre-election promise that turmeric farmers would receive a minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 12,000 per quintal, along with a bonus if market rates fell below that level.

## ATTACK ON MSRTC BUS, DRIVER Maha suspends state transport buses to Karnataka

PNS ■ MUMBAI/BELGAVI

Maharashtra Transport Minister Prapat Sarnaik on Saturday ordered the suspension of the state transport buses to Karnataka after an MSRTC bus was attacked in the neighbouring state.

Sarnaik said the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus, which was plying from Bengaluru to Mumbai, was attacked in Chitradurga around 9.10 pm on Friday by pro-Kannada activists.

They also blackened the face of driver Bhaskar Jadhav and assaulted him, the minister said.

A police case has been registered in Karnataka in connection with the alleged attack.

"Bus services to Karnataka won't be resumed unless the Karnataka government makes its stand clear on the issue," he said.

On the same day, a conductor of the state-owned transport corporation bus of Karnataka was allegedly assaulted on the outskirts of the district headquarters town of Belagavi bordering Maharashtra, for not replying to a girl in Marathi.

It is unclear whether the attack on the MSRTC bus in Chitradurga was in retaliation to the alleged assault on the conductor. Sarnaik said the MSRTC bus (MH-14 KQ 7714) had barely crossed Chitradurga when pro-Kannada activists attacked the vehicle.

Four people have been arrested in another case for allegedly assaulting the conductor in Belagavi, the police said. The conductor has also been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, they said.

## Shivraj slams Air India over 'broken' seat

PNS ■ BHOPAL/MUMBAI

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday slammed Tata Group-owned Air India for allotting him a "broken and sunk" seat, prompting his ministerial colleague K Rammoan Naidu to instruct the airline to take "necessary action". Separately, Air India apologised for the incident and ordered a "thorough probe" while the DGCA sought a report from the airline in the matter.

Later in the day, Chouhan, the Union Minister for Agriculture, said he spoke about his experience so that the airline's management comes to know about it and other passengers do not face such problem again.

## 'Cong to ...

Continued from page 1 and that the Congress is working sincerely to get legality for the 42 per cent reservations for BCs. Alleging that the BRS deceived BCs during its 10-year rule, Mahesh said the government is conducting a second phase survey as per the requests of BC leaders like KCR, KTR and others as they did not participate in the caste survey.

He said the Congress government conducted historical caste surveys scientifically and transparently.

## Govt to revise draft bill to amend Advocates Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid opposition to its various provisions from bar bodies, the government on Saturday said it will revise the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill as it ended the public consultations on it that started earlier this month.

The Department of Legal Affairs in the Union law ministry floated the draft bill on February 13 for public consultations.

The government plans to amend the Advocates Act, 1961.

The draft bill, which faced criticism, proposed sweeping changes in the definitions of a "legal practitioner and a "law graduate".

According to the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025, a law graduate is a person who has obtained a bachelor's degree after completing a course of three or five years or such other duration as prescribed by any centre of legal education or university established by law or a college affiliated to any university and recognised by the Bar Council of India.

In a statement, the law ministry said the bill was put in the public domain, demonstrating the government's commitment to transparency and broader engagement with stakeholders and the public.

## Uttam condemns ...

Continued from page 1

The minister said that eight individuals are trapped inside the tunnel, including personnel from Indian and American companies. The government has deployed teams from the Chief Secretary's office, NDMA, NDRF, and other agencies to coordinate rescue efforts.

The Army, NDRF, Special Task Force, and advanced machinery have been mobilized to safely evacuate the trapped individuals. Dewatering and de-silting operations inside the tunnel are also in progress.

Among those trapped are two engineers from JP Associates, four workers from Jharkhand, and two employees from the American-based Robins Company. The minister said that Robins Company is a globally recognized firm, having built over 3,000 km of tunnels worldwide.

"We are committed to rescuing all the eight individuals and overcoming obstacles to complete the project," said Uttam Kumar Reddy. He emphasized that once completed, the tunnel would provide irrigation to nearly four lakh acres. He noted that 33.5 km of the tunnel work had been completed, with 9.5 km still pending.

## 8 workers ...

Continued from page 1

Rescue teams, including experts from NDRF, SDRF, Singareni, and the Army, have been mobilized to reach the trapped workers. The collapsed section is approximately 13 km from the tunnel entrance, with debris and water spreading up to 300 meters within the structure. Dewatering operations have been initiated, and lighting systems inside the tunnel are being reinforced to aid in the efforts.

The Ministry of Home Affairs confirmed that four NDRF teams from the 10th Battalion are en route, while specialized Army engineers from the 54th Infantry Division are on standby in Secunderabad, ready to be deployed at short notice.

The State Emergency Operations Centre is coordinating the response, ensuring a seamless effort between all stakeholders involved in the mission.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a high-level review meeting with Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, State Irrigation Advisor Adityanath Das, and CM's

Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy. The Chief Minister asked officials to speed up rescue efforts, stressing that all available resources must be deployed immediately. He also directed medical teams to provide top-notch care for injured individuals and assured the victims' families of full government support.

During the meeting, Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy informed the CM that SDRF and NDRF teams were reaching the site shortly. The Chief Minister also emphasized that safety protocols should be strictly followed to prevent accidents during the rescue operations.

The incident posed significant challenges due to the sheer depth of the tunnel - approximately 500 feet below ground level. Authorities have reported an earth fracture on the tunnel wall, allowing water to seep in, further complicating the rescue operation.

Geological experts and engineers with experience in tunnel rescues, including those involved in the Uttarakhand tunnel collapse incident, have been consulted for technical assistance.

## Requirements...

Continued from page 1

to enhance security measures. Bhatti also assured that special focus would be given to addressing security concerns in border areas. He praised the Telangana Police for their strong reputation nationwide, particularly for their expertise in tackling cybercrime. "The Telangana Police are leading in the country when it comes to solving cybercrime cases. Their work is commendable," he said.

He asked officials to submit proposals for constructing police quarters wherever feasible and encouraged police officers to explore Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding for strengthening the department. Bhatti Vikramarka also reviewed the number of posts filled in the last year and current vacancies.

During the meeting, police presented budget proposals for eight divisions, including Greyhounds, Narcotics, Intelligence, Fire, and ex-servicemen. DGP Jitendra submitted an overall budget report for the police department.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Chaturchthi: Feb 15 11:52 PM to Feb 17 02:16 AM

Panchami: Feb 17 02:16 AM to Feb 18 04:53 AM

**Nakshatram:**

Moola: Feb 22 05:40 PM to Feb 23 06:42 PM

Purva Ashadha: Feb 23 06:42 PM to Feb 24 06:58 PM

Rahukalam: 4:50 PM to 6:17 PM

Yamagandam: 12:29 PM to 1:56 PM

Varjyam: 04:25 AM to 06:02 AM

Gulika: 3:23 PM to 4:50 PM

Amritakalam: 12:07 PM to 01:47 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:06 PM to 12:52 PM

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Sunny

Temp: 33°

Humidity: 41%

Sunrise: 6:42 AM

Sunset: 6:18 PM

Updated: February 22, 2025 5:00 PM

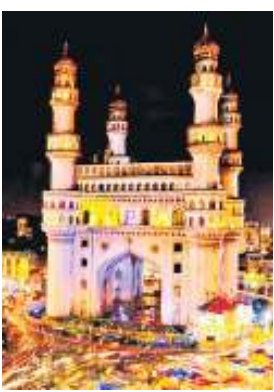
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# City Pioneer

sunday pioneer

HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 23, 2025

03



CITY EVENTS

## TANEIRA

Saree Run

Venue

People's plaza, Necklace Road

February 23, 6:30 am onwards

## Sankalp

Suraksha Run

Venue

Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad

February 23rd, 6:00 am

## National railway dermatologists conference held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The first National Railway Dermatologists Conference in Indian Railway Health Services was held on Saturday at the Indian Railways Auditorium, Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications (IRSET), Secunderabad.

Dr Man Singh, Director General (Railway Health Services), Railway Board, New Delhi, was the Chief Guest and formally inaugurated the conference. Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, SCR, attended as the Guest of Honour. Dr. Nirmala Rajaram, Principal Chief Medical Director (PCMD), SCR, and other senior medical professionals were also present.

Over 100 dermatologists and medical experts from various railway zones participated to discuss advancements in dermatological care.



## CM Revanth Reddy's gesture of compassion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy instructed the officials to provide assistance to Salima, who is bed ridden due to burn injuries. The officials have been asked to provide immediate medical treatment, pension under differently abled category and Indramma house to the poor family. Since Salima is not in a position to cook food, the Chief Minister also asked the authorities to make necessary arrangements to feed her regularly.

CM Revanth Reddy responded to a news article on the plight of Salima, a resident of Gundlasingaram village of Nutankal mandal in Suryapet district. On the CM's instructions, CM OSD Vemula Srinivasulu spoke to the Suryapet District Collector and inquired about the woman's health condition. Salima's nervous system has been damaged due to burn injuries and she is confined to bed.

Her 10 year old daughter Rizwana is taking care of Salima. Astonishingly all, ailing Salima's daughter is also going to school while taking care of her mother.

## BuildNow unveiled to fast-track building permits

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has launched the BuildNow initiative to implement an advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered Unified Single Window System for fast-tracking building permit approvals through the Fast Drawing Scrutiny System.

This AI-driven technology aims to accelerate the scrutiny process for building approvals, ensuring a seamless and transparent system under a unified interface for the entire state. The new AI-based mechanism is designed to enhance efficiency, making the approval process swift and more transparent.

A hands-on training programme on BuildNow DCR was conducted for licensed architects and engineers at the GHMC headquarters conference hall on Saturday. During the session, participants received practical training on the BuildNow DCR system, including template creation, layer structure



Participants at a hands-on training programme on BuildNow DCR at GHMC office in Hyderabad on Saturday

ing, and entity development within the building approval process.

Officials emphasised that the training would help professionals

design projects in compliance with regulations. The BuildNow application team demonstrated the DCR system extensively, explain-

ing the drawing preparation process within the DCR portal and addressing queries raised by attendees.

Speaking at the event, Town and Country Planning Director and State Nodal Officer S Devender Reddy stated that the training program was aimed at enhancing transparency in building design and approval procedures. He stressed that the programme would be beneficial for architects and engineers in developing project plans and drawings in adherence to standard construction norms.

Chief City Planner K. Srinivas highlighted that the AI-powered Fast Drawing Scrutiny System would significantly expedite building permit approvals. He urged participants to fully understand and utilize the training for effective implementation.

The session was attended by GHMC additional chief city planners, city planners, engineers, architects, and members of the BuildNow application team.

## Importance of bridge course in underserved zones stressed

SAMUEL JOSHUA samueljoshuamjmc@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD



Panel members at the CII Telangana and Telangana Development Forum (TDF) conference in Hyderabad on Saturday

Telangana Commissioner for the Board of Intermediate Education, Krishna Aditya, stressed the need for public digital infrastructure for Tribal Students and Teachers Skills Training in line with advancements in the education landscape. He spoke at the CII Telangana and Telangana Development Forum (TDF) conference on Higher Education & Skill Development, themed 'Thriving Telangana by 2050 through Education & Youth Empowerment, on Saturday.

Addressing the conference, Krishna Aditya said that Telangana has 3,300 colleges with 1,330 in the government sector and 1,600 private colleges, with 10.5 lakh Intermediate first- and second-

year students. He mentioned that the industry should always guide improvements, as most students will be employed in the industry after education, so the curriculum should meet field requirements.

He said curriculum updates should be done regularly and be specific to current needs. Since BTEch graduates enter IT, colleges should focus on job-specific training. He noted that teacher skills training should start in schools and intermediate colleges through workshops. He also emphasised industry

and stakeholder involvement in adopting schools and colleges.

During COVID, village students struggled with weak 2G signals, revealing a digital gap. Krishna Aditya urged better public infrastructure, especially for tribal areas. He called for bridge courses in underserved regions and stronger career guidance to prevent dropouts. He also noted that many rural graduates work in Hyderabad but prefer living in their villages, resisting city life.

Meanwhile, Prof P Narasimha Reddy, Pro-Chancellor of Sreenidhi University, called for a three-month immersive training programme for teachers in emerging technologies. He noted that the private sector has overtaken the public sector but lacks a structured plan.

Narasimha Reddy mentioned that core branches of

engineering are declining, and some colleges are being forced to replace them with computer courses. He emphasised that product development, application-oriented learning, and service-oriented skills should be integrated into core engineering programmes.

Dr NV Ramana Rao, Director of NIT-Raipur, stressed flexible education entry and exit levels to improve youth employability. He called for better curriculum updates, faculty development, e-books, virtual labs, and research software.

Ramakrishna Momidi, Leader at DU - The Leadership Center in India, Deloitte US-India Offices, highlighted three key technologies at Deloitte University: Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Extended Reality (XR), which are transforming education.

## 'Take proactive measures to tackle any drinking water problem'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, and Rural Water Supply Minister Seetakka conducted a review meeting at the Secretariat on the status of drinking water supply under Mission Bhagiratha. The meeting was attended by Mission Bhagiratha Engineering in Chief Krupakar Reddy and other senior officials, who provided a detailed update on the ongoing supply situation across the state.

Officials informed the Minister that there were no major drinking water issues reported so far, and any minor problems arising in villages were being resolved immediately. They promised that daily reviews with district officials at 8 am were being conducted to ensure smooth water supply.

Minister Seetakka instructed

officials to take proactive measures to prevent any drinking water shortages during the summer months. She directed that reservoir water levels be monitored regularly and that coordination with the electricity department be strengthened to avoid power supply disruptions affecting water pumping stations. She emphasised that preventive maintenance of pump house motors should be prior-

itized to avoid unexpected breakdowns. She also ordered Mission Bhagiratha staff, from the ENC level down to the village level, to remain vigilant and ensure continuous monitoring of water supply systems. District officials were instructed to submit daily reports on drinking water supply status and to resolve any technical issues immediately. In case of any disruptions, alternative arrangements should be made without delay.

Minister Seetakka instructed

Minister Seetakka instructed

## Crime Scene

### Two arrested for robbery near Bibi Bazar X Road

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Mirchowk Police have arrested two individuals in connection with a robbery incident that took place near Indian Petrol Bunk, Bibi Bazar X Road, Charminar, in the early hours of February 21.

The accused, identified as Syed Wajid Ali (28) and Shaik Arman Ali (19), allegedly threatened a Rapido rider and his friend at knifepoint before fleeing with their vehicle.

According to the complaint filed by Mohd Abdul Rawoof, a 26-year-old Rapido rider, he and his friend C Suriya Kranthi had stopped at the petrol bunk when they were approached by the accused on a Yamaha FZ-S bike. Syed Wajid Ali,

who claimed to be a rowdy sheeter, brandished a knife and demanded their mobile phone, cash, and vehicle. The duo then sped away with their Honda Activa.

Following the complaint, Mirchowk Police launched an investigation and apprehended both accused on Saturday. The police recovered the stolen Honda Activa, a Yamaha FZ-S, and a knife used in the crime.

The investigation was led by Inspector R Ravinder, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner of Police (South Zone) Sneha Mehra, IPS, and Additional DCP M.D. Majeed. Senior officers appreciated the swift action taken by the police in nabbing the suspects and recovering the stolen property.



## Student in city jumps from school building, dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A class 8 student of a private school died by suicide on Saturday by jumping from the school building after being "reprimanded" and "slapped" by a teacher, police said.

The incident occurred at around 9.30 am when the Physical Education Teacher allegedly rebuked the 14-year-old boy in front of other students inside the classroom for reportedly "turning the direction" of a CCTV camera, they said.

Feeling "insulted," the boy later told the teacher he

needed to use the wash-room but instead went to the fourth floor of the building and jumped, police said.

The student was rushed to a hospital, where he was declared dead, police added. Some students told media that the teacher had allegedly slapped the boy.

A note, purportedly written by the boy, apologising to his mother for "ending his life" was found in his book, police said.

A case has been registered on charges of abetment to suicide, and further investigation is underway.

## TGSRTC deploys 3,000 special buses for Maha Shivaratri pilgrims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In anticipation of the Maha Shivaratri festival, TGSRTC has made extensive arrangements to ensure a smooth travel experience for devotees. The corporation has announced the operation of 3,000 special buses from various locations in the state to 43 major Shaiva pilgrimage sites. These services will be available from February 24 to 28, with Maha Shivaratri falling on February 26.

As part of the initiative, 800 buses will be deployed to Srisailem, 714 to Vemulawada, 444 to Yadagirigutta, 270 to Keesaragutta, 171 to Velala, 80 to Kaleshwaram, and 51 to Komuravelli. Additional buses will also be provided to Alampur, Umamaheshwaram, Palakurthi, Ramappa, and

other significant temples. In Hyderabad, special buses to Srisailem will operate from MGBS, JBS, CBS, IS Sadan, KPFB, and BHBL. To enhance convenience, TSRTC will set up shamanias, seating arrangements, drinking water facilities, and public address systems at major boarding points.

As per government orders, ticket fares for these special services will be revised by up to 50 per cent compared to regular fares. However, no changes will be made to fares for regular services. The revised fares will be applicable only from February 24 to 27, while for Yadagirigutta-bound services, they will be in effect from February 26 to 28. Special service buses will display route information prominently to guide passengers.

Transport Minister Ponnamm



Prabhakar has already conducted a review meeting with TGSRTC officials regarding the Maha Shivaratri operations. In line with his directives, TGSRTC has taken measures to prevent any inconvenience to devotees. Managing Director VC Sajjanar, IPS, stated that compared to the previous year, 809 additional buses have been

arranged. He also directed officials to increase the number of buses based on demand to ensure smooth travel for all devotees.

Under the state government's Mahalakshmi scheme, free bus travel for women will be applicable on special services operating as Palle Velugu, Express, City Ordinary, and Metro Express buses. Women passengers must collect zero-fare tickets during their journey.

For the convenience of devotees traveling to Srisailem and Vemulawada, TSRTC has enabled advance reservations, and tickets can be booked through the official website www.tgsrtcbus.in. For further information, passengers can contact the TSRTC call center at 040-69440000 or 040-23450033.

## 6-year-old boy trapped in elevator, dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A day after a six-year-old boy—who was trapped between an elevator shaft and a wall in an apartment complex and later shifted to a hospital—died while undergoing treatment at a state-run hospital, police said on Saturday.

The boy slipped into the gap between the lift door and the wall in the Masab Tank area and remained trapped near the first floor for over two hours on Friday.

Personnel from the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) and the Fire Department rescued him by cutting through the lift frame and floor slab using gas cutters. He was subsequently admitted to a hospital. The boy, who had suffered internal injuries, was declared dead at around 12.30 pm on Saturday, a police official

said. However, the exact cause of death will be determined after a postmortem, he added.

A doctor stated that the child had suffered from suffocation after being trapped in the elevator shaft for more than two hours. The boy had accompanied his grandfather to visit a relative in the apartment complex and entered the lift on the ground floor, the police official said.

However, before the grill door could close, the lift started ascending, and as the boy attempted to step out, he got stuck between the lift and the wall, according to preliminary investigations. A health official said poor maintenance of the lift is suspected of having caused the internal door to fail to close properly, resulting in the accident. A case has been registered, and further investigations are underway.

## Traffic Police warns traders against illegal vehicle modifications

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Traffic Police conducted an awareness programme on Saturday for traders involved in vehicle modifications, including fixing black films, sirens, multi-tone horns, modified silencers, and unauthorised number plates. The session, attended by Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) P Viswa Prasad aimed to ensure compliance with legal regulations and highlight the consequences of violations.

Addressing the traders, Viswa Prasad issued strict instructions to adhere to legal

guidelines while carrying out their business activities. He emphasised that any violation would not only attract penalties but also make the traders liable as abettors of illegal modifications. He urged them to educate customers on the rules and maintain proper records of all job work undertaken. "Compliance with these regulations enhances road safety, reduces accidents, and protects vulnerable road users," he stated.

As per Central Motor Vehicle Rule 100, front and rear windscreens must have a minimum of 70 per cent visual light transmission, and side win-



Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) P Viswa Prasad at a meeting with traders in Hyderabad on Saturday

dows at least 50 per cent. The use of black films is prohibited due to visibility concerns

and their potential misuse in criminal activities. Section 52 of the Motor Vehicles Act,

1988, prohibits unauthorised alterations, including multi-tone horns, which can contribute to noise pollution and road safety hazards.

Rules 50 and 51 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, mandate standard number plate sizes—200x100 mm for two and three-wheelers, 340x200 mm or 500x120 mm for light motor vehicles, and 340x200 mm for medium/heavy vehicles. Rule 120 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules mandates noise control mechanisms in vehicles to ensure compliance with pollution norms.

During the session, traders

and mechanics were educated on these aspects of the Motor Vehicle Act, followed by an interactive Q&A segment. The event saw participation from over 250 shop owners, including car décor retailers, automobile workshops, and number plate manufacturers.

Senior officials, including DCP Traffic-I B.K. Rahul Hegde, DCP Traffic-II N. Ashok Kumar, Additional DCPs, ACPs, and Inspectors of Hyderabad Traffic Police, were present.

The Traffic Police have urged print and electronic media to widely publicize the initiative in the interest of public safety.



Prof Suchanda Bhattacharjee, Dr. Ramnatha Reddy and their team with the patient at NIMS on Saturday

## Spinal cord stimulation system implanted on patient

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A spinal cord stimulation system was implanted on a patient at the Department of Neurosurgery in Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), on Saturday.

The patient, a NIMS staff member, suffered a spinal cord injury in an accident two and a half years ago. After the accident, neurosurgeons performed surgery to fuse the fractured spine using rods and screws. However, the patient remained paralysed and wheelchair-bound despite physiotherapy.

The surgery was successfully performed by Prof Suchanda Bhattacharjee, Dr Ramnatha Reddy, and their team, along with the anaesthesia team led by Prof Sreelatha, Dr. Swapna, and Dr Avinash. They believed that the spinal stimulator would help reduce pain, improve muscle function, and aid in mobility rehabilitation.

Although the device is expensive, this procedure marks a significant milestone for the department. Spinal cord stimulation can provide pain relief for conditions like chronic pain, failed surgeries, and cancer-related pain.

For the first time in a government hospital in Telangana, this rare and complex surgery was successfully completed. NIMS Director Prof. Nagari Bhirappa and senior doctors congratulated the team.



## Tit-for-tat violence grips undivided Warangal district

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Warangal district has been witnessing a pattern of tit-for-tat violence of late, creating panic among people. Family issues, property disputes, and extramarital relationships are triggering attacks. Criminals are carrying out brutal assaults on their rivals to destroy lives. Recently, the attacks happening across the undivided Warangal district have been creating fear and anxiety among people.



In Jangaon, a person was attacked with a boulder, and the body was set on fire after dousing it with petrol. In Hanamkonda, an auto-rickshaw driver attacked his fellow auto driver with a knife over an extramarital affair, leading to death, which caused alarm. In Bhupalapally, social activist Nagavelli Rajalingamurthy was stabbed to death by unknown assailants, which has sparked outrage in the State. On Thursday alone, three incidents in the Hanamkonda district caused a stir. In Madipalli under Hasanpeta mandal, a property dispute escalated into an attack on four people with knives. In Pochamma Maidan, a person attacked his wife and in-laws with a

knife due to a family dispute, leaving his wife in critical condition. In Kazipet, a doctor travelling by car was attacked with rods by unidentified assailants at the Battupalli Ammaripet Cross, and the doctor is undergoing treatment in the hospital. While people are concerned about these incidents, there is growing criticism that the police have failed to take preventive measures.

On Thursday alone, three attempted murders in the Warangal Police Commissionerate left the public in panic. Liquor sales are continuing beyond midnight and marijuana is sold openly. If the police continue to turn a blind eye to violence, people will be gripped by fear, it is said.

## Tummala calls for expanding palm oil cultivation

PNS ■ WARANGAL

To alleviate the country's cooking oil deficit and enhance export capabilities, Telangana's Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has called for the expansion of palm oil farming. On Saturday, he, alongside the Excise and Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, participated in several events across the Pedda Mandali, Pebbair, and Gopalpet Mandals in Wanaparthy district.



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao speaking at a public meeting at Sankireddy in Wanaparthy district on Saturday

The Ministers also laid the foundation stones for multiple development initiatives. In Sankireddy Palli village, within the Devarkadra constituency, they performed the groundbreaking ceremony for a palm oil processing facility being established by a private company. At a public meeting with local palm oil producers,

Minister Nageswara Rao pointed out that India's dependence on imported cooking oils results in substantial foreign currency outflow. To satisfy domestic needs, he suggested allocating 70 lakh acres for palm oil cultivation. He emphasised that palm oil farming would yield high returns with minimal investment and highlighted government subsidies, including Rs 51,000 per acre for cultivation. Additional

financial support will include plant distribution, drip irrigation assistance, and an inter-crop subsidy of Rs 4,200 per acre for four years.

He also noted that palm oil companies would enter into agreements with farmers to buy their produce directly. Currently, the market price for palm oil is Rs 20,487 per tonne, with expectations of it rising to Rs 25,000 per tonne. He announced that the newly established palm oil company is set to commence operations by August 15, with another facility in Beechpally to follow. The state government aims to encourage the cultivation of palm oil over 20 lakh acres and intends to establish one palm oil company in each district. Minister Nageswara Rao advised farmers to adopt crop diversification, setting a target of 11,000 acres for palm oil cultivation in Wanaparthy.



Former Lok Sabha member B Vinod Kumar speaking at a media conference in Karimnagar on Saturday

## Govt must take up Medigadda Barrage repairs: Vinod Kumar

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Former Lok Sabha member and Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader Boinapalli Vinod Kumar on Saturday demanded that immediate repairs be undertaken for the Medigadda Barrage. He pointed out that crops on thousands of acres are drying up. He also wrote an open letter to Chief Minister A Revenath Reddy, urging him to ensure that urgent steps are taken to repair Medigadda Barrage. NAt a media conference, along with former MLA Choppadandi Sunke Ravi Shankar, BRS district President GV Ramakrishna Rao, former corporators, and other BRS leaders, in the letter, Vinod Kumar recalled that the government had announced in December that water could not be provided for paddy crops under the Sriram Sagar project. Recently, Telangana State Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Commission Chairman M Kodandar Reddy advised farmers not to sow crops. "There is no point in crying over spilled milk," he said while criticising the government for its "failure" to take measures earlier to provide water for the crops. He claimed that despite the ruling party celebrating its success in the past year, the government's failure to provide water for summer crops in North Telangana is a clear sign of its incompetence. He pointed out that the state government's lack of awareness about the water supply system of Kaleshwaram is evident. He further criticised the delay in repairs to the Medigadda Barrage, stating that the National Dam Safety Authority's approval is not needed for such repairs. Vinod Kumar also accused the State government's bid to protect the Kaleshwaram project in bad light. He demanded that the government provide water to the farmers.

## Officials told to speed up developmental works in schools

PNS ■ HANMAKONDA

District Collector Satya Sharada has directed the officials to speed up the developmental works in government schools under the PM SHRI scheme in the district and complete them within the stipulated time. The Collector, along with Additional Collector Sandhyarani and District Revenue Officer Vijayalakshmi, reviewed the progress of various developmental works being carried out in 16 government schools selected under the scheme of PM SHRI.



Hanamkonda Collector Satya Sharada holding a review meeting in Hanamkonda on Saturday

While speaking at the meeting, the Collector said in the first instalment under the scheme, a little over Rs 2.74 crore would be released for works in 10 Government schools. The works included installation of LED lights, greenery, vermicompost, kitchen gardens, dustbins with different colours, Swachhata Pakwada

cleanliness programmes, discussions with experts, scientific field visits etc which are planned to take up speedily.

In the second phase under the scheme, a little over Rs 20.25 lakh has been sanctioned for six government schools for installation of LED lights, improvement of

clean and greenery in schools, establishment of herbal gardens, drip irrigation system, vermin compost and inkwells, dustbins with different colors, Swachhata Pakwada cleanliness program, discussion with experts and field level scientific visits for students should be arranged. The District Horticulture Department and the District Comprehensive Development Organisation will support the establishment of vermicomposts, inkwell pits, and kitchen gardens. The collector directed that the installation of LED bulbs in schools under the auspices of Redco should be completed by the first week of March in coordination with the principals of the respective schools.

DRDO Kausalya Devi, District Horticulture Officer Sangeet Lakshmi, District Education Officer Gyaneshwar, Sectoral Officers and others participated in this meeting.

## Man, son held for 'sexually assaulting' minor girl

PNS ■ ADILABAD

A man and his son were arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a mentally unsound minor girl in Adilabad district of Telangana, police said on Saturday.

According to police, the man in his mid 40s and son in mid 20s are neighbours of the victim and they allegedly sexually assaulted the girl multiple times.

The man's daughter-in-law, who was accused of beating up the girl and threatening her not to reveal the incident to anyone, was also arrested, police said.

The girl's family members lodged a complaint with police on Friday and a case was registered under relevant sections of BNS and POCSO Act, a senior police official said.

The medical examination revealed that the minor was sexually assaulted, police said.

The police warned those spreading rumours over the incident. The police also said they took up patrolling and set up pickets in the town. Further probe is on.

## GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY DISTRICT

GAZETTE NO. JSK BHPL/IA/03/2025, Dt: 25-01-2025 (District Collector, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District, No. G/682/2024, Date: 25-01-2025)

### FORM-VI

(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-19 And Section -11(1) of the Act-30/2013)

As per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, (Central Act No.30 of 2013) Amendment by the Telangana Amendment Act, 2016 (Act No.21 of 2017) in its application to the State of Telangana, the District Collector, Jayashankar Bhupalpally (Appropriate Government) declares that the proposed acquisition is in compliance with the provisions of the Act and the provisions of Chapter-II and Chapter-III of the Act shall not apply to this case.

Therefore it is notified that for the Kaleshwaram, Lift Irrigation Scheme Land Acquisition of lands for the purpose of the extension of Gudur (Pedha Cheruvu) tank bund and enhanced bund section to meet the enhanced storage capacity of Gudur (Pedha Cheruvu) tank to an extent of **Ac.05-16 Gts** situated in the village limits of Yadadri, Kataram Mandali of Jayashankar Bhupalpally District is proposed for acquisition. The detailed description is as follows:

### SCHEDULE OF LANDS

Villages: Jadaraopet Mandal: Kataram District: Jayashankar Bhupalpally

Sr. No.	Sy. No.	Name of Land	SRR (Ac./Du.)	Name of the Paddar as per Records/Dharani (Sis, Dio, Wio)	Name of the Enjoyer (Sis, Dio, Wio)	Area (Ac./Du.)	Area (Sis/Dio/Wio)	Area (Sis/Dio/Wio)	
1	57	Pata	0-34	Geondla Isiah (Rajalah)	Geondla Isiah (Rajalah)	0-34	-	-	
2				Kempe Ravi (Sannalah)	Kempe Ravi (Sannalah)	-	-	-	
3				Geondla Chinnu Rajalah (Rajalah)	Geondla Chinnu Rajalah (Rajalah)	-	-	-	
4				MD.Khajanyo (Lal Mohammed)	MD.Khajanyo (Lal Mohammed)	-	-	-	
5				Kempe Kumar (Sannalah)	Kempe Kumar (Sannalah)	-	-	-	
6	89	Pata	0-31	Challa Sujanya (Sannalah)	Challa Sujanya (Sannalah)	0-31	-	-	
7	81	Sis/Janabon dhi	1-17	Atmakuri Cherulu (Kommalah)	Atmakuri Cherulu (Kommalah)	1-17	-	-	
8				Atmakuri Mahender (Kommalah)	Atmakuri Mahender (Kommalah)	-	-	-	
9				Atmakuri Rajalah (Kommalah)	Atmakuri Rajalah (Kommalah)	-	-	-	
10				Anumala Venkataramma (Shankaralah)	Anumala Venkataramma (Shankaralah)	-	-	-	
11				Anmala Shankaralah (Pedha Rajalah)	Anmala Shankaralah (Pedha Rajalah)	-	-	-	
12				Anumala Sushheela (Sathalah)	Anumala Sushheela (Sathalah)	-	-	-	
13				Kotha Chandrashekar (Rajalah)	Kotha Chandrashekar (Rajalah)	-	-	-	
14				Anmala Thirupathi (Chandralah)	Anmala Thirupathi (Chandralah)	-	-	-	
15				Anmala Sampath (Chandralah)	Anmala Sampath (Chandralah)	-	-	-	
16				Anmala Shankaralah (Pedha Rajalah)	Anmala Shankaralah (Pedha Rajalah)	-	-	-	
17				Anmala Sathalah (Rajalah)	Anmala Sathalah (Rajalah)	-	-	-	
18				Anumala Nagarjuna (Sannalah)	Anumala Nagarjuna (Sannalah)	-	-	-	
19	70	Kra/Is	0-24	Baddi Ramiah (Sannalah)	Baddi Ramiah (Sannalah)	0-24	-	-	
20				Baddi Laxminallah (Sannalah)	Baddi Laxminallah (Sannalah)	-	-	-	
21				Baddi Lachiah (Sannalah)	Baddi Lachiah (Sannalah)	-	-	-	
22	136	Gates	0-37	Abdul Majid (Hameed)	Abdul Majid (Hameed)	0-37	-	-	
23	146	Pata	0-33	Bandi Beeraiah (Parvathiah)	Bandi Beeraiah (Parvathiah)	0-33	-	-	
							Total:	164	-

This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No.30/2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No.21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Jayashankar Bhupalpally & Land Acquisition Officer/ Special Deputy Collector, L.A. Bhupalpally on any working day during the working hours. The Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Special Deputy Collector, L.A. and his staff to enter upon and to survey the land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section-12 of the said Act.

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

Objections to the acquisition if any, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of the Act, before District Collector/Authorized officer.

Sd/- Sd/- Sd/-  
Land Acquisition Officer & Collector (Revenue) Collector  
Special Deputy Collector, LA Jayashankar Bhupalpally Jayashankar Bhupalpally Jayashankar Bhupalpally

DIPR No.710/LA/PP-Pub/2024-25

## Four students missing from city found in Yadagirigutta

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANGIRI

Four students missing from Hyderabad were found at Dhatharpally in Yadadri Bhuvangiri district on Saturday. Yadagirigutta Circle Inspector Ramesh confirmed that all four boys, who went missing from Amberpet in Hyderabad, were traced to Dhatharpally in the district. The Circle Inspector said that the police went to the village and brought the four boys to the



Police station and handed over to their parents. They were identified as Ajmad (14), Harshvardhan (14), Tejanath Reddy (14), and Nitesh Kumar. It was revealed that the students came to Yadagirigutta from Amberpet and Patel Nagar in Hyderabad without informing anyone at home, after being scolded by their teachers at school. The Amberpet Police Station registered a missing case for the four students. The students were handed over to the Amberpet Police and their parents at the Yadagirigutta Police Station. The boys were studying in Class 9 in a private school. Peevish over being scolded by their teacher, they ran away from home. They were eventually found at Yadgiri Gutta, bringing relief to everyone.

## LRS process picks up in RR dist after govt offers rebate

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The long-pending process of land regularisation (LRS) has gained momentum in Ranga Reddy district following the government's latest announcement. A 25 per cent fee concession has been offered to applicants till March 31, reviving hopes among thousands of applicants. As a result, many are rushing to the respective municipal offices to apply for LRS. However, the shortage of staff in several municipalities is causing delays, making the process slower than expected. A significant concern remains the high number of applications from prohibited lands. Of the total applications received in the district, 35,837 fall under this category. In Shamshabad Municipality alone, 9,860 applications were rejected due to restrictions under Government Order (GO) 111. Meanwhile, political leaders are reportedly exerting pressure on officials to approve pending applications. The regularisation process was initially notified in 2020 by the previous government, allowing the legalisation of vacant plots and layouts. The fee structure set for the process included Rs 10,000 for layout regularisation and Rs 1,000 for vacant plot regularisation. A total of 3,58,464 applications were received within the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) limits, while 2,38,263 applications came from 13 municipalities and three municipal corporations in



Ranga Reddy district.

With the latest government approval, authorities have intensified efforts to expedite the process. Special teams comprising revenue, town planning, and irrigation officials have been formed for verification, with two or three teams assigned to each municipality. The original target was to complete the process within three months, but it was slowed due to the caste census and other administrative reasons. However, the recent concession announcement has reignited efforts to clear pending applications. Applications have been received from several mandal centers, including 22,051 from Farooqnagar, 10,200 from Keshampet, 2,323 from Talakondapalli, 4,464 from Yacharam, 3,513 from Kadtal, 1,505 from Kondurgu, 929 from Amanagallu, 708 from Madgula, 683 from Jilledu Chaudharygudem, and 54 from Manchala. With the deadline approaching, applicants are hoping for faster approvals, while officials are under pressure to complete the process efficiently.

## Dialysis patients hit hard due to lack of medicines

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

It is a big hospital in name only. People, particularly dialysis patients are deprived of treatment.

In the district hospital of Komuram Bheem Asifabad, people are suffering due to issues in the dialysis department.

Dialysis patients are denied the Erythropoietin (EPO) injection, which is essential to increase red blood cell count, for over a month. Patients are being forced to purchase medicine from private chemists, which is causing financial strain.

They are complaining that the authorities have not taken any initiative to ensure its supply.

When both kidneys fail, dialysis becomes the primary treatment.

Depending on the severity of the disease, some patients require dialysis once a day, while others need it two or three times a week. Government-run blood purification centres are operational in Asifabad and Kaghaznagar. Each of these centres has registered



around 80 patients, with 20 patients undergoing dialysis in 3-4 sessions per day.

Due to insufficient availability, up to 18 patients are forced to visit hospitals in Utanoor, Adilabad RIMS, and Mancherial.

Depending on the haemoglobin percentage, at least four doses of the EPO injection are required every month for a patient. Iron

supplementation is also needed during the second dialysis session. Without the EPO injection, the patient's health worsens.

For over a month, the required supply of the EPO injection has been unavailable, forcing patients to buy it privately from areas like Mancherial and Hyderabad.

The price of the injection ranges from Rs 1,200 to Rs 3,000,

depending on the brand.

In the past, the government provided financial assistance for dialysis patients along with bus passes.

However, many have not received these benefits and are travelling by auto rickshaws, incurring additional expenses of Rs 400-500 for transport and food.

**HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Swarnajayanti Commercial Complex, Amteerpet, Hyderabad-50

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
File No. 912/16/LOHMDA/18/MD/2024

It is to inform that, M/s. Gayathri Paddy Processors, Prop., by its Managing Partner Sri Sanapathi Infra, Prop., by Saripalli Lakshmi Udaya Kumar Reddy & Others under TG-IPASS have applied for approval of revised draft layout with open plots in Sy.No. 269P of Thammaloor Village, Maheshwaram Mandal, R.R. District to an extent of 10679.64 Sq.mts with some internal changes to the earlier issued draft layout permission in File No. 061269/SMO/DTUG/HMDA/24/12/2021, dt. 13.06.2022. Therefore the Plot / Villa owners / Purchasers / Agreement holders of layout permission in Sy.No. 269P of Thammaloor Village, Maheshwaram Mandal, R.R. District may file their objections/ suggestions in writing if any within 15 days to this office from the date of publication of this notice. If no objections/ suggestions are received within the above period the request of the applicant for revised draft layout permission will be considered basing on the material papers available with this office.

Sd/- Director (Planning-I), HMDA

ACROSS THE STATES



Latur girl fights off tears, takes SSC exam after father's death

Latur, Feb 22 (PTI) Even as her father's funeral pyre burned, Disha Nagath Ubale wrote her Marathi paper in the SSC exam, refusing to be overwhelmed by her loss. The Class 10 student's father, who had been battling an illness, passed away on Thursday evening. His funeral was scheduled at their Bhada village for Friday. Disha, a student of Zilla Parishad Girls' School in Bhada, said she was unsure if she would appear for her Secondary School Certificate (SSC) paper on Friday. That's when her teacher Shivaling Nagapure stepped in. Nagapure said he reached out to Sudhakar Telang, chairman of the Latur Divisional Board, who spoke with Disha and encouraged her not to give up.

India leading in AI adoption, shaping how it is governed: Nirmala

PNS ■ KOTTAYAM (KERALA)

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said India was not just leading in the adoption of artificial intelligence, but also shaping how AI is governed.

Speaking at the 6th convocation of the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Kottayam, Sitharaman said that India was not just ready for AI, but the demand for AI-driven solutions was also high in the country.

She said this was evident from the fact that the country recorded 3 billion AI-related app downloads in 2024, while the US and China had only 1.5 billion and 1.3 billion downloads, respectively.

The Finance Minister also said that India being made the co-chair at the recent AI Action Summit in Paris was a recognition of the country's global position in the sector.

She noted that at the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had emphasised that AI was not just a matter of nation-



She said this was evident from the fact that the country recorded 3 billion AI-related app downloads in 2024, while the US and China had only 1.5 billion and 1.3 billion downloads, respectively

significance but a global responsibility.

"What he (Modi) said gives us a very big message—use AI, but use it responsibly. Do not misuse it, do not use it unethically.

"So, it is very important for us to have AI that is ethical, inclusive, and trustworthy," she said. Sitharaman also outlined the steps taken by the central government in the field of AI, starting with the India AI

mission, which was announced with a budget outlay of Rs 10,300 crore for building computing infrastructure, developing indigenous AI capabilities, attracting AI talent from around the world, and financing AI startups.

"India is not just experimenting with AI. We are not just talking about AI or researching it. We are actually implementing it at scale and across various sectors," Sitharaman said, adding that this has been recognised by Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella.

During her speech, Sitharaman also referred to India's achievements in the field of innovation and patenting. She said that India's ranking in the Global Innovation Index had improved to 39 out of 133 countries in 2024, up from 81 in 2015.

Sitharaman also highlighted that India's patents-to-GDP ratio—which measures the economic impact of patent activity—had risen to 381 in 2023 from 144 in 2013, indicating significant progress in innovation and patenting.

People gave clear verdict on genuine Sena, says Shah

PNS ■ PUNE

The people of Maharashtra have given a clear verdict on which is the genuine Shiv Sena and NCP by ensuring a massive victory for the Mahayuti in the assembly polls, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Saturday. The Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party split in June 2022 and July 2023, respectively, with a faction of each of the two parties joining the BJP-led Mahayuti and the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi.

The Mahayuti won 230 of the 288 Maharashtra assembly seats in the polls held in November, while the Sena and NCP factions led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, respectively, fared poorly.

Speaking at an event where sanction letters were allotted to 20 lakh beneficiaries and first instalment was disbursed to 10 lakh beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Shah said he was deeply grateful to the people of Maharashtra for the stellar support in the assembly polls.



Four killed in Nashik highway accidents

Nashik, Feb 22 (PTI) At least four persons were killed and seven others were seriously injured in separate accidents on the Mumbai-Agra national highway in Nashik district, police said on Saturday. A container truck coming from the wrong side overturned and crushed an auto-rickshaw near Dargaon village in Malegaon taluka at 11 AM on Saturday, killing three persons and injuring two others. The deceased included the rickshaw driver and two female passengers. The injured persons were rushed to a hospital, a police official said. Separately, a woman was killed and five others were seriously injured after a truck crashed into vehicles in the Rahud ghat section of the national highway near Chandwad on Friday night, police said.

First session of Delhi Assembly to begin tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first session of the eighth Legislative Assembly of Delhi will begin on Monday with newly elected members taking oath at 11 am, said a bulletin issued by the House secretariat.

The three-day session will see the election of the House speaker and deputy speaker as well as the tabling of the 14 pending CAG reports on the performance of the previous AAP government.

BJP leaders said the party has nominated senior MLAs Vijender Gupta and Mohan Singh Bisht for the election of the speaker and deputy speaker, respectively.



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta will move the motion for Gupta to be chosen as speaker and minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa will second it on February 24, said Assembly's list of business.

Both Gupta and Bisht would get elected to the posts as the

Cong cannot wait for people to get tired of BJP: Sachin Pilot

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Saturday said the party cannot wait for the people to get tired of the BJP but must reach out to the people, and it has been working on it.

Speaking at a media event here, he denied allegations that the Grand Old Party does not accommodate its allies, while also appearing to blame the Aam Aadmi Party for the results in the Haryana elections. "We are in opposition for the last 11 years. I think we need to, and we must work to increase our vote share. For that the party needs to do an outreach and cannot wait for the people to get tired (of the BJP) and come to us. We, leaders and party workers, need to go to



them. We are working on it," Pilot said at the ABP Network's 'Ideas of India Summit 2025' here. The party has a roadmap, and aims to strengthen the organisation in 2025, the Congress general secretary added. Calling the Congress' defeat in the Haryana assembly elections unexpected, Pilot pointed out that the AAP contested all 90 seats on its own, and the difference in the vote shares of the Congress and the BJP was just 0.2 or 0.3 per cent.



Won't implement NEP even if Rs 10,000 cr offered to TN

PNS ■ A CUDDALORE (TAMILNADU)

Continuing his tirade against the Centre over the National Education Policy, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday said he would not agree to implement it even if the Centre offered to provide Rs 10,000 crore in funds to the state.

The opposition to the NEP was not merely due to the attempt to impose Hindi but also because of various other factors that would have serious consequences for the future of students and the social justice system, he claimed.

Apart from encouraging a screening test for admissions to even arts and science colleges, similar to the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical courses, the NEP would allow students to discontinue their studies.



CBI books 3 railway officials on bribery charges

The CBI has registered an FIR against three railway officials for allegedly manipulating a recruitment examination to ensure a job for a person in the railways in return for Rs 15 lakh, officials said on Saturday. The federal agency acted on a reference from the vigilance department of the Central Railway, they said. The FIR has named Goods Train Manager Rajendra Kumar Meena, Assistant TRD Helper Sapna Meena, Tech-II Chetram Meena -- all posted at the Kota division in the West Central Railway and a private person, Lakshmi Meena, who allegedly acted as an imposter and appeared in the examination.

PAPER BALLOT 'PM should pay heed to his friend Trump's remarks'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to heed to his friend, US President Donald Trump, for using paper ballots and not machines for voting to address the concerns of the entire country on the integrity of India's electoral process. Congress general secretary, organisation, K C Venugopal wondered why the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is feigning ignorance to what the entire world is saying and why is its government running away from transparency.

"Will PM Modi pay heed to his best friend Donald Trump's message on ballot papers and same day voting, and address the concerns of the whole nation about the integrity of our electoral process?" Venugopal asked in a post on X. "I'm sure his best friend will also be appalled at the abnormal increase of lakhs of voters in Maharashtra, or the surgical deletions of opposition votes," he said.

India, Bhutan enjoy exemplary ties of friendship: MEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Bhutan enjoy "exemplary ties" of friendship and cooperation, based on trust, goodwill and mutual understanding at all levels, and the visit of Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay was in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries, the MEA said on Saturday.

Tobgay paid an official visit to India from February 20 to February 21 to participate in the inaugural leadership conclave of the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL), which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

During the visit, Tobgay had a meeting with Modi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for External



"The visit of the Prime Minister of Bhutan is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan, a hallmark of the special partnership," it added

Affairs Pabitra Margherita and other senior officials of the government of India called on the prime minister of Bhutan during his visit, it said.

"India and Bhutan enjoy exemplary ties of friendship and cooperation, based on trust, goodwill and mutual

the SOUL conclave here on Friday, the Bhutanese prime minister described Modi as his "elder brother" and "mentor", and sought his guidance to help him contribute in transforming public service in the neighbouring country.

Tobgay made liberal use of Hindi that drew applause from the audience.

"Without a doubt, I see an image of an elder brother in you, who always guides me and helps me ('Nisandeh, aap mein ek bade bhai ki chhavi dekhta hun, jo sadaiv mera margdarshan karte hain aur mujhe sahayata dete hain')," he said.

understanding at all levels," the MEA said.

"The visit of the Prime Minister of Bhutan is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan, a hallmark of the special partnership," it added.

In his keynote address at

60 cr devotees have taken holy dip at Sangam

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday said an unprecedented 60 crore devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam.

The Kumbh Mela which started on January 13 will continue till February 26 on the occasion of Maha Shivratri.

Over half of India's 110 crore Sanatan followers have bathed in the holy confluence, and this number is expected to surpass 65 crore by the final 'amrit snan' on February 26, an official statement said.

This Maha Kumbh has seen the largest participation in any religious, cultural, or social event, it said.



According to the World Population Review, Pew Research, India's population is approximately 143 crore (1.43 billion), with 110 crore (1.10 billion) followers of Sanatan Dharma, the statement said.

This means that over 55 per cent of the Indian population has taken part in the Maha Kumbh, it said.

On a global scale, according

to Pew Research 2024, the number of Sanatan followers stands at 1.2 billion (120 crore), meaning that over 50 per cent of the Sanatanis worldwide have immersed themselves in the Sangam, it said.

Diplomats from 73 countries, including Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, along with many international guests have taken

On a global scale, according to Pew Research 2024, the number of Sanatan followers stands at 1.2 billion (120 crore), meaning that over 50 per cent of the Sanatanis worldwide have immersed themselves in the Sangam, it said

a dip at the Sangam, it said. According to the UP government statement, more than 50 lakh people from Nepal, the maternal home of Maa Janaki (Goddess Sita), have bathed in the Triveni Sangam.

Ahead of the Maha Kumbh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had predicted that this grand event would break records in the number of devotees, fore-

casting an initial count of 45 crore people.

By February 18, the number had exceeded 55 crore and reached 60 crore on Saturday as the grand event nears conclusion, the statement said.

The upcoming Maha Shivratri Snan is expected to further push this number beyond 650 million (65 crore), it said.

Illegal immigrants now meddling in India's electoral process: Dhankhar

PNS ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday claimed that illegal immigrants are interfering in the country's electoral process, and there should be awareness about this.

In apparent reference to the recent deportation of illegal immigrants by the United States government, he said every Indian should ask when this process would begin in our country. Dhankhar was speaking at the 65th convocation ceremony of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University here.

"Crores of people who have no right to live in India are liv-



ing here...They are making their livelihood here.

They are making demands on our resources. On our education, health sector, housing sector. Now things have gone further. They are intervening in our electoral process," said the vice president. "It is the duty

of all of us that we spread a mentality ('manasikta') in the country, create such an atmosphere...that every Indian becomes alert to this," he said.

Without referring to the United States, he said some countries recently deported Indian nationals who had been "taken there through deception." "A question should occur to every Indian -- when would we start doing this?" Dhankhar said. The youth should act as a powerful pressure group and ask the public representatives and government if they are doing their job, the vice president said. "Nationalism is our religion and topmost priority," the vice president said.

Experience Lucknow's legendary flavours with live cooking, rich kebabs, aromatic biryanis and decadent desserts, says SAKSHI PRIYA



# The Royal Taste of Awadh

Lucknow is a city where history and flavour walk hand in hand. Known for its tehzeeb, rich culinary traditions, and slow-cooked delicacies, every bite tells a story of Nawabs and royal kitchens. The aroma of saffron and kebabs fills its streets, the sound of clinking glasses and quiet conversations adding to its charm.

Now, this experience finds a new home in Noida at *Chica Loca* by Sunny Leone. A space where every detail reflects a love for food and culture. The atmosphere feels personal, as though the restaurant itself is telling you a secret. Here, *Zaika-e-Lucknow* is an experience that unfolds before your eyes.

### A Feast for the Senses

There's something mesmerising about watching food being prepared right in front of you. The sizzle, the aroma, the way each ingredient is carefully added. At *Chica Loca* by *Zaika-e-Lucknow* is an experience.

Every dish carries the heart of Lucknow's legendary cuisine, steeped in history and rich in flavour. The chefs perform, turning centuries-old recipes into moments worth savouring.



### The Chaat Experience

At the chaat counter, the experience begins with a flourish. A delicate kataifi basket is placed before you, crisp and golden.

A freshly fried aloo tikki is placed inside, followed by a drizzle of thick tamarind and jaggery sauce, its deep sweetness balanced by the tang of yoghurt. A spoonful of *Arala Galka* chutney, deep green, fragrant, bursting with spice, is added, the final flourish to a masterpiece of textures and tastes.

This chaat is layers of flavour, a balance of crisp, soft, sweet, and spicy. The first bite is a revelation, crunchy, creamy, tangy and warming, all at once. It's street food elevated to an art form.

### Gulati Kebab & Katal Delight

On the live grill, the *Gulati Kebab* sizzles gently, its rich aroma of ghee, saffron, and warming spices filling the air. A delicate blend of khoya, lentils and paneer, infused with cashew paste and *Lazzat-e-Taam* masala, makes it irresistibly soft. Served with saffron-infused Sheermal and bold panch-phoron chutney, it melts on the tongue, releasing layers of spice and smoke.

Never thought of *Katal* as something this indulgent but here it was, stealing the spotlight. Slow-cooked in Lucknowi spices, the raw jackfruit transformed into a rich meaty delight. Paired with warm *Rumali Roti*, it absorbed the deep smokiness of cloves, cardamom and ghee, each bite a revelation.

### The Non-Veg Secrets

For those who crave the richness of Lucknow's meat dishes, the live kitchen offers a spectacle of its own. The legendary *Chowk Ke Galawati Kebab*, soft, smoky, spiced to perfection, is prepared right before your eyes, each portion hand-minced with precision. Beside it, a pot of *Abu Bakar Ki Biryani* is gently stirred, the fragrance of saffron and rose water rising with the steam. The *Rann Mussallam*, slow-cooked to perfection with rich Lucknowi spices, makes a grand entrance, the meat tender, falling off the bone.

### Pan-Asian Flair

While the heart of *Zaika-e-Lucknow* lies in its heritage, there's an unexpected twist, a live Pan-Asian station. The contrast is striking. Here, the preparation is fast, dynamic. Flames leap as a chef tosses fresh vegetables in a hot wok, the aroma of basil and soy hitting the air.

A dish of *Sticky Rice* with Vegetables in *Basil Sauce* comes together in mere minutes. The chef glances up, asking, "More spice?" A nod, and in goes a handful of

fresh chilli, the deep red cutting through the glossy sauce. Spice is adjusted on request. The final dish is bold and full of character, every grain of rice coated in a rich, aromatic sauce. It's a theatrical contrast to the slow, deliberate artistry of Lucknow's kebabs and chaats, yet equally hypnotic to watch.

### A Sweet Mystery

Khushnuma Begum Ki Kulfi, what a name for a dessert. The story goes that a young chef once found an old spoon engraved with "Khushnuma" in the bustling bartaan bazaar, and it changed his fate forever. This dessert carries that same magic. A saffron and almond kulfi, layered with falooda and dry fruits, served with a paan-infused rabri blended with betel leaf and gulkand. Each bite is a journey through Lucknow's rich culinary history, a perfect ending to an unforgettable meal.

Dining at *Chica Loca* is about feeling connected, to the past, to the craft, to the very moment when something beautiful is created. Watching the hands that shape the food, hearing the stories behind the dishes, inhaling the scents that fill the air, it all makes each bite more meaningful. At *Zaika-e-Lucknow*, tradition is alive, food is theatre and every meal is a story waiting to be told.

### FACT SHEET

**Restaurant:** Chica Loca by sunny leone  
**Venue:** 4th Floor, Plot Number-C3, One29, E1, Noida-Greater Noida Expy, above Gulshan, Sector 129, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301  
**Price:** 2500 + for two (without alcohol)

### COCKTAILS & MORE

The drinks here deserve a moment of their own. *Ishq*, what a name. A smooth rum-based drink with almond milk, cream, cinnamon, honey and egg white. Velvety and rich, it felt like a warm embrace. Then came *Suroor-e-Raan*, a vodka cocktail with betel leaf, cloves, honey and lime, served alongside a fragrant meetha paan. An unexpected yet perfect pairing. Finally, *Mehfi*, a mocktail inspired by qawwali, blended rose water, pomegranate, lime and honey. Refreshing, floral, and full of life, just like the city itself.

# Taste of Purani Dilli in Every Bite

*Zaiqa-e-Dilli* returns with a love letter to flavours with iconic street flavours, says GYANESHWAR DAYAL

Ever dreamt of old times when you wanted to have lip smacking street food you headed to the walled city of Delhi and savoured everything that was sinful yet tasted like heaven - chole bhature, parathas of paratha wali gali, and maggi, papri chaat, Daulat ki chaat and what have you. Times have changed Delhi is far more crowded than it used to be but Delhi Street food is same. And the good news is you can have the same taste in same ambience in *Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar* which is celebrating *Zaiqa-e-Dilli* till March 2. And here you get to taste not only the old Delhi street food from Lajpat Nagar but also get a feel of Majnu ka Tila.

*Crowne Plaza New Delhi Mayur Vihar's* signature dining destination, Infinity, has curated street food of Delhi for lovers on a flavourful journey through *Zaiqa-e-Dilli* - a food festival that brings the essence of the capital's legendary street food to life. This year's theme, *Khat - A Culinary Love Letter to Dilwalo Ki Dilli*, is an ode to the city's deep-rooted love affair with its vibrant food culture, where every dish is a cherished memory, and every flavour a story waiting to be relished.

This year's edition of *Zaiqa-e-Dilli* takes an immersive approach to authenticity. Executive Chef Roushan Sharma and his team, in collaboration with *Namaste Culture*, embarked on a culinary treasure hunt across Delhi's bustling streets-from Jama Masjid's lanes to Daryaganj's historic eateries and Connaught Place's timeless food hubs. This meticulous exploration led them to the soul of Delhi's food scene-Lotan Ke Chole Kulche, Sanjay Kumar's Daulat Ki Chaat, Aslam's Butter Chicken, Kuremal's Kulfi, Jain Fruit Sandwich, and many more. To recreate these flavours with precision,



the team observed, tasted, and learned firsthand from the masters behind these legendary dishes.

"Food in Delhi is more than sustenance-it is an emotion, a tradition, and an inseparable part of the city's identity," shares Executive Chef Roushan Sharma. To add an authentic touch, original vendors will prepare signature delights, ensuring that guests experience these dishes exactly as they were meant to be savoured.

*Dahleej-e-Dilli* festival's atmosphere will transport you to the bustling streets of Chandni Chowk, writes ABHI SINGHAL



*Tumse milna purani Dilli mein.....* this always reminds me of Old Delhi and the flavourful food that one can eat while being there. To experience the same, all at a single restaurant, *Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla* hosted the 15th edition of its signature food festival - *Dilli 6 - Dahleej-e-Dilli* till 5th March, bringing the spirit of Purani Dilli to life. This food festival, which takes place every year, offers a genuine taste of Old Delhi's rich flavours and ageless customs while re-creating the ambience of its lively streets with desi decors.

A variety of classic delicacies that embody the essence of Dilli 6 were available for the guests. Every mouthful reveals a tale, from the rich and creamy *Paneer Changezi Paratha* from the Parathe Vaali Gali to the tart joy of *Matar Kulche*, one could feel the flavour. From the making of *Chana Jor Garam* and ambience of love, shayari songs gave the feeling of spending time at Purani Dilli.

While those who prefer sweets could not pass up the *Shafiz Ki Phirni* and the smooth *Kulfi*, meat lovers could savour the slow-cooked excellence of *Mutton Nihari* and the hearty warmth of *Haleem*. Every element of the setup was homage to Dilli 6, from installations with a nod to heritage and the smells of sizzling kebabs.



### ICONIC FOODS

Guests at *Zaiqa-e-Dilli* will indulge in over 100 of Delhi's most iconic dishes, served through a rotating menu featuring the capital's best street food. The culinary lineup includes Chandni Chowk's famous parathas, Connaught Place's comforting Rajma Chawal, Lajpat Nagar's crispy Ram Ladoo, and Jama Masjid's irresistible Chicken Changezi. Majnu Ka Tila's Momos, Rajouri Garden's Chole Bhature, and Karol Bagh's succulent kebabs will also take the center stage, alongside live hawkers crafting refreshing Bunta.



“THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD IS, OF COURSE, THE WORLD ITSELF”  
— WALLACE STEVENS



# VHAH: What a festival!

The Vedaaranya Heritage and Healing Festival (VHAH FEST 2025) breathes new life into the historic town of Ramgarh Shekhawati. Every winter, this once-forgotten town transforms into a vibrant cultural hub, drawing visitors from around the world to revel in its artistic splendor, architectural grandeur and deep-rooted traditions, says **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

**F**or five days, the quiet, dusty town of Ramgarh Shekhawati transformed into a vibrant spectacle of music, dance, colors, and captivating performances that left audiences enthralled. Welcome to VHAH FEST 2025—a celebration that goes beyond mere entertainment. VHAH is a dedicated effort to rekindle tourism in Ramgarh Shekhawati, serving a greater purpose: reviving the town's rich heritage. This eagerly awaited event every year promises an immersive journey into the rich tapestry of heritage, music, dance, wellness, and artistic splendor, all set against the breathtaking backdrop of Rajasthan's architectural grandeur.

But how do these two elements – A cultural festival and Heritage conservation – come together? A silent yet a profound revolution is taking shape in a small town in Rajasthan' Sikar district – Ramgarh Shekhawati. Known for its exquisitely carved havelis and frescos, it is now one of the finest examples of how to protect and conserve the heritage. And more than money you need passion and dedication to do so; money follows. What began as an effort to restore an ancestral haveli by Shruti Poddar, now the convener of INTACH Shekhawati chapter, has grown into a full-blown revival of the town and an effort to put it on the world map of tourism. Indeed, it has been a long and arduous journey but is worth the pain and the



effort. Shruti tells us that when she returned from the UK, searching for her roots, she was amazed to see the heritage her ancestors left and was in tears that her own folk had abandoned such a rich heritage to settle in big towns.

She began brick by brick reviving the haveli that belonged to her. She lived with bats and bare minimum basics. Her dedication inspired people around and they gradually started taking interest in the revival of more havelis. Most of these havelis are over two hundred years and done in limestone, bricks and stones, carved with exquisite designs and painted with frescos on their facades with wet colours on limestone plaster.

But then for everything you need money, people with deep pockets need to be interested in visiting it so that money pours into once the richest place on the planet in terms of per capita income. Ruiyas, Khetans, Khemkas Poddars—the big Marwari business families have their genesis in Ramgarh and it shows. It is writ large in the Havelis they lived; Frescos done in gold, Belgium glasses on the wall and silk smooth flooring done in limestone and seashells—all tell you what the town is all about.

For the VHAH Festival 2025, the guests came from across the world. They came to be part of this immersive experience, a rare treat. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister for Culture and Tourism spent a day to understand the town and what it would take to revive it. He promised government support to provide infrastructure, like airport link and train halt of fast trains at Ramgarh station

The festival has grown bigger in size, both in terms of numbers and scope and has been adding newer elements to it. This year's theme was love – *Shringar rasa*. One major highlight of VHAH FEST 2025 was a heartfelt tribute to the legendary filmmaker Guru Dutt on his 100th birth anniversary. This special commemoration also brought together film enthusiasts and scholars for screenings, discussions, and live performances celebrating his unparalleled contributions to Indian cinema. Among the notable events was an exploration of Guru Dutt's cinematic journey, led by Nasreen Munni Kabir and Shruti Poddar. Additionally, Amrishi Mishra directed grand musical concert dedicated to Guru Dutt's timeless melodies. The Moonlight Mehfil on February 14 featured a live performance of classic Guru Dutt film songs, presented by Anuraag Poddar over an intimate dinner setting.

Adding to the festival's allure was the launch of “The Grand Archway” at MOHAR Haveli, an exclusive Museum Art Gallery. This inaugural exhibition presented rare oleographs by Raja Ravi Varma and M V Dhurandhar, offering a rare glimpse into the artistic heritage of India. The exhibition was inaugurated by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, alongside Prince Rama Varma, a descendant of Raja Ravi Varma, further enriching the festival's cultural offerings.

Evenings at VHAH FEST 2025 were dedicated to the evocative essence of *Shringar Rasa*, celebrating beauty, love, and romance through spellbinding music and dance performances. The classical performances by Geeta Chandran celebrated the theme of Sringara and took it to the next level. A tap dance performance by Irish dancer Jason Donnelly was mesmerising and so was the performance by the Rajasthani Kalbelia dancers. Odissi maestro Vidushi Sujata Mohapatra's interpretation of Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda" on February 15 left the audience spell bound.

The divine love of Radha-Krishna was brought to life through a soulful jugalbandi by Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami and Padmashri Geeta Chandran, while Prince Rama Varma's musical concert, set against the backdrop of Raja Ravi Varma's paintings added another layer of artistic enchantment.

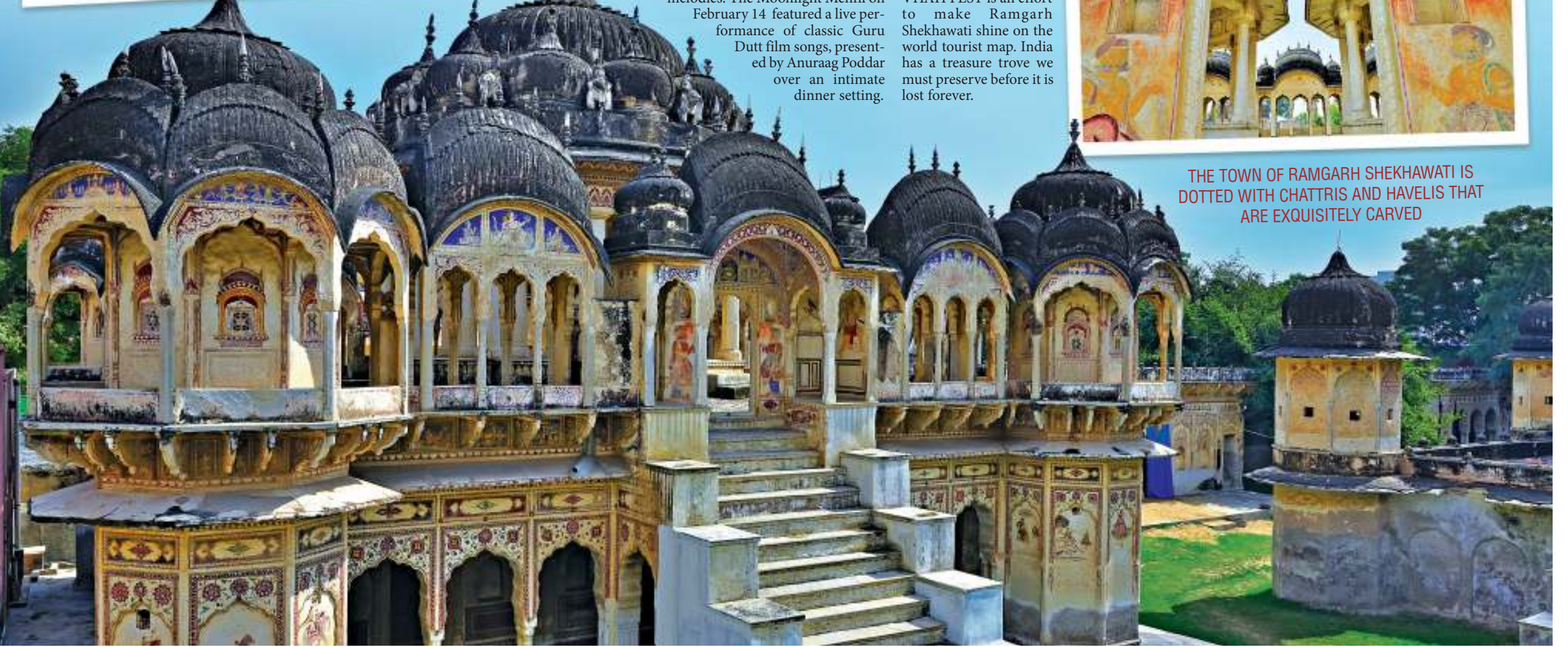
Beyond performances and exhibitions, VHAH FEST 2025 engaged the participants on hands-on learning through an array of workshops and healing experiences. As the sun set over the Shekhawati sand dunes and the echoes of music and laughter fill the air, Ramgarh is indeed showing the country how our cultural heritage can be preserved and restored. VHAH FEST is an effort to make Ramgarh Shekhawati shine on the world tourist map. India has a treasure trove we must preserve before it is lost forever.

## UNVEILING SHEKHAWATI

For those eager to explore the architectural wonders of Shekhawati, the festival offered a Heritage Walk, allowing visitors to discover the intricate frescoes, havelis, temples, and chhatris that define the region's historical landscape. festival provides an opportunity to witness and partake in the preservation of age-old crafts.



THE TOWN OF RAMGARH SHEKHAWATI IS DOTTED WITH CHATTRIS AND HAVELIS THAT ARE EXQUISITELY CARVED



IN BRIEF



Kerala gets EoIs for Rs 1.53 lakh crore investments

Kerala received Expressions of Interest (EoIs) for investments worth Rs 1.53 lakh crore at the two-day investor summit that ended on Saturday. Industries Minister P Rajeev said EoIs have been received from more than 370 companies during the summit. "It is a new beginning of a united Kerala to transform Kerala into an investment friendly state," Rajeev said, adding that the summit saw more than 5,000 delegates. Announcing about EoIs worth Rs 1,52,905.67 crore at the valedictory session, the minister asserted that the state is looking only for realistic investment proposals. For the EoIs, there will be a dashboard-based fast-track mechanism and follow-up of the proposals. A dedicated toll-free investment number and email address will be notified, the minister said. The two-day Invest Kerala Global Summit (IKGS) also saw the participation of Union ministers, Opposition leaders of the state, foreign ministers and industrialists, among others.



Sebi slaps Rs 10 lakh penalty on Axis Securities

Capital markets regulator Sebi has imposed a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on Axis Securities for flouting stock brokers rules as well as other regulatory norms. The penalty has to be paid by the brokerage firm within 45 days, the regulator said in an order on Friday. In an 82-page order, Sebi found that Axis Securities failed to follow regulatory procedures in several areas, including reporting discrepancies and improper handling of client funds. The market regulator found that Axis Securities had inconsistencies in its enhanced supervision reporting to stock exchanges and in stock statements compared to actual holdings in depository accounts. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) also observed that Axis Securities also did not settle clients' funds and securities as per preference obtained from the clients and also failed to provide retention statements with account details. Additionally, the brokerage firm passed on penalties imposed by stock exchanges on it for short collection of upfront/non upfront margin to its clients, Sebi said.



Schneider Electric plans to open 3 more plants

Energy management and automation major Schneider Electric on Saturday announced plans to open three more manufacturing plants in India. Speaking at the inaugural session of Elecrama 2025, Schneider Electric CEO Olivier Blum said that the company plans to make regular investments in India. The company currently has 31 manufacturing plants in the country. The three new plants will come up at Kolkata, Hyderabad and Ahmednagar, he said at the event organised by industry body IEEMA in Greater Noida. "India's focus on digitalization, sustainability, energy transition, and infrastructure modernization presents unparalleled opportunities for growth," Blum said. "We are leveraging AI and digitalization to accelerate growth in the Indian energy sector. We believe that advanced technologies like digital grids, IoT-enabled distributed energy resources, microgrids, smart buildings, and smart cities will reduce emissions by 75% over the next 25 years," he added.

'Working out scheme to prevent distress sale of farmers' produce'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday said the government is working out measures to ensure that farmers do not have to sell their produce, especially fruits and vegetables, at throwaway prices. Speaking after inaugurating the 'Pusa Krishi Vigyan Mela' 2025 -- being held in the national capital from February 22-24 -- he emphasised the need to take new seeds varieties and farm technologies from labs to agriculture filed at the earliest.



Chouhan said the government is holding discussions with farmers directly as well as through their organisations to understand the problems and then making schemes to address the issues. "Jahan-Jahan takleefin dekh rahe hain, hum yojana bana rahe hain (wherever we are seeing problems, we are making schemes to address those)", the minister said, listing out steps taken by the government in the last few years to protect the interest of farmers. Chouhan said the government has removed exports restrictions on rice and onions

while raising import duties on edible oils. He said the Centre has taken steps to help tomato farmers in view of price crash and will take measures for red chilli farmers of Andhra Pradesh as well. "I want to assure our farming community, we will take all important decisions that are required for the welfare of farmers. Do not worry," he said, while asserting that the government is committed to this. "There are some issues which are under consideration. Prices are low at farm gate level and consumers are paying high rates. Who takes the profit in middle? Profit margins

should reduce. The difference between the farm gate price and consumer price for fruits and vegetables should come down," he said. The minister added, "We are working out (a way) to ensure that farmers do not have to sell their produce at throwaway prices." Lauding efforts of scientists at Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for its efforts in making India self-sufficient in foodgrains production, Chouhan said there is a need to take new seed varieties and technology to the field quickly so that farmers can benefit. "Availability of good vari-

eties of seeds is important. Farmers require it. ICAR is developing them... We need to ensure these seeds reach farmers quickly," he said. The minister also asked the ICAR to handle 'Modern Agriculture Chaupal' programme where scientists will tell farmers about recent technological breakthrough, besides solving their problems. The programme will be telecast across India. Chouhan said he does not sit in Krishi Bhawan in Delhi and rather go to fields to understand farmers' problems. He asked officers in his ministry and ICAR scientists to do the same. The minister reiterated that the government is focusing on increasing farm production through yield improvements, reducing cost of production and ensuring that farmers get the right price for their produce. Chouhan said the government is purchasing wheat and paddy at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and assured farmers that it will purchase the entire quantity of masoor, urad and tur dals as part of its efforts to encourage farmers to grow more pulses.

Power minister urges industry to work on innovative solutions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Power Minister Manohar Lal on Saturday urged industry stakeholders to work on manufacturing innovative solutions to strengthen India's journey towards Viksit Bharat.



India's ambitious target of 500 GW of renewable energy target by 2030 provides various opportunities, the minister said, while addressing the Elecrama 2025 event organised by industry body IEEMA in Greater Noida. The power sector is playing an important role in the country's journey towards becoming Viksit Bharat, the minister said, adding that industry stakeholders must work to make the sector a growth engine for India. "The future of power in India is good... in this journey we need to increase production in an innovative way... advance power electronics,

efficient transformer, power converters, smart grid solutions are needed to be developed to take benefit of renewable energy (RE)," he told participants, which included domestic and international delegates and investors. Lal further noted that the sector makes a significant contribution to the country's economy, and said the government is working to enhance its share. The industry can work on developing higher-efficiency transmission, distribution equipment GIS sub station, which will modernise the grid, he said. EV charging infrastructure is need of the hour to reduce emissions, Lal said. e-mobility is a very big opportunity, the minister said, adding that there is a need to develop battery-swapping stations, fast chargers, vehicle-to-grid systems.

'IEEMA aims to more than double electronics exports in 5 yrs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electrical and electronics manufacturers look to more than double the sector's exports to USD 25 billion in the next five years, an industry official said on Saturday. "We are committed to enhancing market access across the globe for our members. Our export today is about 12 billion US dollars and we are committed to make it 25 billion US dollars in the next 5 years," Indian Electrical & Electronics Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA) President Sunil Singhvi said on Saturday.

However to increase exports, it is important that "we actively participate in international standard bodies...advocating policy, that is standard exports, financing, new business model and competitiveness", he said. IEEMA is working with all



Addressing a session at Elecrama 2025 in Greater Noida, Singhvi said IEEMA's vision is to make India a global hub for electronics and electrical manufacturing. With a shift in the global supply chain, the world is looking towards India as a trusted partner in the energy solution, he said.

stakeholders to strengthen quality standards and testing infrastructure in the country because lot of QCOs (quality control orders) are coming and there is a need for enhancement of testing infrastructure. Singhvi also urged the industry members to invest in innovation, skilling, adoption of new-age technologies as it will make made-in-India products match international parameters.

Ex-RBI governor Das appointed 2nd principal secretary to PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former governor of Reserve Bank of India Shaktikanta Das was on Saturday appointed the second Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

P K Mishra, a retired IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre, is currently serving as the Principal Secretary to the prime minister. According to an official order, the tenure of Das, a retired IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, will be "co-terminus" with the term of the prime minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Shaktikanta Das, IAS (Retired), as Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister with effect from the date he assumes the office. His appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the order read.

Siemens looks to increase factory capacity under Make in India: Official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Siemens looks to increase its factory capacity in the country under the Make in India initiative to meet both local and global demand, Matthias Rebellius, Member of the Managing Board of Siemens AG and CEO of Smart Infrastructure said.

The global technology company looks to address both local and global needs for power generation, transmission, distribution, and rail transportation, Rebellius said in his address at the Elecrama 2025 event organised by IEEMA in Greater Noida. Siemens has shown a strong commitment to India by investing over Rs 9,000 crore since 2015, with an additional Rs 1,100 crore announced in November 2023, he said. "We aim to enhance our factory capacities under the Make in India initiative, addressing both local and global needs for power generation, transmission, distribution, and rail transportation," Rebellius said. With over 34,000 employees and 32 factories in India, Siemens recognises the country's ambitious economic goals and role as an innovation powerhouse, the official said. He said there are a lot of opportunities in various sectors in India. The government is focusing on digitalization to enhance energy efficiency and grid management while aiming to establish the country as a global manufacturing hub. To meet rising energy



demands, especially for clean energy, India plans to modernize its power transmission and distribution networks. He said Infrastructure-related ministries are encouraged to come up with a 3-year pipeline of projects for investment through public-private partnerships.

Centre assures swift action on EPS-95 pensioners' demands

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pensioners' body EPS-95 Agitation Committee on Saturday said that Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has assured swift action on its demands.

Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has taken a positive stance on the long-pending demands of 78 lakh EPS-95 pensioners across the country, a statement by the pensioners body said. According to the statement, these demands include an increase in the minimum pension, provision of free medical facilities for pensioners and their spouses, and rectification of errors in applications for high-



er pension benefits. The minister assured the delegation of a swift resolution to these issues, it said.

Commander Ashok Raut, National President of the EPS-95 National Agitation Committee (NAC), which has been advocat-

ing for pensioners' rights for several years, revealed that recent discussions with both the Labour Minister and the Finance Minister provided assurances of an imminent increase in the minimum pension. However, the absence of any such announcement in the Union Budget 2025-26 has led to widespread disappointment among pensioners. In light of this, a crucial meeting between the Labour Minister and a delegation from the NAC was held on Friday. During the discussions, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing pensioners' concerns.

Majority of Indians feel savings not enough for future: Study

PNS ■ MUMBAI

More than half of Indians surveyed feel unprepared for their future despite having a detailed financial plan or having done some degree of planning, says a study. The study of individuals in the age group of 35 to 54 years who financially provide for their ageing parents and growing children found that 60 per cent of respondents feel their savings are not enough for future. The respondents agree that "no matter how much they save or invest, they feel like it's never enough for future", the study by YouGov said. A majority 94 per cent of



respondents said they either have a detailed financial plan or have done some degree of planning, the study, which surveyed

more than 4,000 people across 12 cities across India, said. The study of aspirations, attitudes and financial preparedness

of individuals in the 35-54 years age group stated that more than 50 per cent worry about running out of money, always feeling behind and not doing well enough despite efforts. "They show high reliance on credit and also seem to be exhausting savings as well as income. 64 per cent fund their short-term aspirations via credit, 49 per cent savings, and 47 per cent regular future income," the study by YouGov and Edelweiss Life Insurance said. They have also accessed all forms of credit to meet critical needs like healthcare, education, etc. and also wants like vacation, home renovation, etc,

it added. Their long-term aspirations are on shaky ground as 79 per cent expect to fund their long-term aspirations through returns or gains from financial instruments. According to Sumit Rai, MD & CEO, Edelweiss Life Insurance said, "Through our customer interactions over the years, we

have closely seen how Sandwich Generation is living in a cycle of caring for their parents and children". They want to enable the essentials like healthcare and education while providing an aspirational life where 'needs' don't come at the cost of 'wants', Rai said.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL DEPUTY COLLECTOR,  
LA, HAML, HYDERABAD

FORM-F  
Notification by the Collector (LA), HAML  
(See rule 7 (c))

File No.: C6/11/2025 - LHS Dated: 22-02-2025.

Where as the following notifications were issued and Gazettes were published for the Public purpose for Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Phase-II, from MGBS to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, situated at Shore-E Hyderabad Village, Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District.

In response to the Said Notifications the following affected person (Property owners and others) have come forward to settle their claims through Negotiations. The details of the willing affected persons are as follows.

S.NO	NOTIFICATION NO. & DATE	GAZETTE NO. & DATE	Name and address	Sketch No.	Premises No.	Extent in Sq.Ms.
1	No. C6/W/2024 - LHS (76-001)	HAML No.24 dated 18-11-2024				
1			1. Mohyammed Hussain, S/o. Mohammed Osman, 2. Sri. Mohammed Shabbir Bhojani, S/o. Mohammed Siddiq, R/o. 22-3-482/3, Mir Alam, Mandi, Charminar, Hyderabad	83,84	482/3	48.48 30.86 79.34
3			3. Smt. Amtul Raqueeb, W/o. Mubashir Hasan, 4. Smt. Farhat Hahan, W/o. Mohammed Abdul Raheem, R/o. 22-3-482/3, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.			
			Sri. Syed Abdul Kareem, S/o. Syed Abdul Khader, R/o. 28-2-24/25, AB Bagh, Jahansuma, VTC, Charminar, Falaknima, Hyderabad-500053.			15.79
			Sri. Khalid Bin Ibrahim Masqati, S/o. Late Sri. Ibrahim Bin Abdullah Masqati, R / o. 22-3-479, Mir Alam Mundi, Charminar, Hyderabad-500002.			18.55
			Smt. Haseena Bano, W/o. Late Mohammed Siddiq, R/o. 22-3-353, Mandi Mir Alam, Hyderabad-500002. Rep: By, Mohammed Shabbir Bhojani, S/o. Mohammed Siddiq,			48.58
			1. Sri. Mohammed Saleem Bhojani, S/o. Late Mohammed Siddiq, 2. Sri. Mohammed Haji Sharief Bhojani, S/o. Late Mohammed Siddiq, 3. Sri. Abdul Kareem Bhojani, S/o. Late Mohammed Siddiq, 4. Smt. Haseena Bano, W/o. Late Mohammed Siddiq Rep: Sri. Mohammed Shabbir Bhojani, R/o. 22-3-480 & 22-3-482, Mir Alam, Mandi, Charminar, Hyderabad.			37.16
			Sri. Mohammed Shabbir Bhojani, S/o. Mohammed Siddiq, R/o. 22-3-482/3, Mir Alam, Mandi, Charminar, Hyderabad.			85.74
			Sri. Syed Ashfaq Hussain, S/o. Syed Musfar Hussain, S/o. Sri. Syed Shabbir Hussain, S/o. Syed Ashfaq Hussain R/o. 22-3-482/3, Mir Alam, Mandi, Charminar, Hyderabad.			17.21

It is hereby notified calling for claims and objections if any, to be filed before the District Collector, Hyderabad District/ Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad within the Seven days of publication of this Notification.

Sd/-  
Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabad.

Date: 22-02-2025

DIPR No. 712/LA-PP/Adv/Agency/2024-25

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE

MIT No. 41EE-DH-23982/GHMC/2024-25 Date: 21-02-2025

Name of the Work: Deslting of Storm Water Drains by manual & mechanical means in all wards of Div-25, Sec-3ad, SBZ, GHMC for the year 2025 - 26 works. Estimate Amount / ECV: Rs. 84.70laks. Start date / Last date & Time for receipts of Bids: From: 24-02-2025 @ 4.00 P.M. To: 04-03-2025 @ 4.00 P.M. Name & Address officer Cell. No.: Executive Engineer, Div-25, GHMC, Sec'bad, Cell.No.: 7959280018. Further details can be seen at e-Procurement @ <https://www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, Div-25, Sec'bad, GHMC.

R.O. No: 10963/PRCLAD/110324-25 Dt: 22-02-2025



# the pioneer agenda

"Culture is the arts elevated to a set of beliefs"

— THOMAS WOLFE



## Worlds Within the Fair

At Surajkund International Crafts Mela, every colour, every texture and every melody told a story of heritage and passion, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The first thing that catches your senses is the smell, fresh jalebis sizzling in hot oil, the tangy aroma of bhel puri mixed with the sweetness of roasted nuts. People walk past, their hands full of colourful bags, carefully wrapped souvenirs and steaming cups of chai. A group of school children rushes by, laughing as they hold up the masks they just bought. Nearby, an elderly couple stands at a saree stall, running their fingers over the soft silk as they decide which one to take home.

The 38th Surajkund International Crafts Mela, taking place in Faridabad, Haryana, at Surajkund Mela Grounds, is a grand celebration of art, culture and heritage, featuring over 1,000 stalls, vibrant performances and a special Rajasthan-themed showcase. Every corner of the mela offers a glimpse into the past. It is a place where cultures converge, creativity flourishes and every turn unveils a new treasure waiting to be explored.

### HANDCRAFTED TREASURES

Walking through the fair feels like stepping into a marketplace where every item has a story. The Department of Archaeology and Museum, Haryana, showcases artefacts from different periods of history. Odisha's stall is lined with handloom textiles, intricate Sambalpuri sarees and delicate silver jewellery. Banaras displays its famous silk sarees, their golden threads catching the light. Madhya Pradesh presents handcrafted lamps and umbrellas embroidered with elephant designs. Each stall holds something unique, drawing visitors eager to take home a piece of heritage.

"I have been coming here for years," says an artist from Madhya Pradesh. "People appreciate handmade crafts here and that gives us hope that our work will live on."

People walk around holding boards with messages spread across the mela. Among the many stalls, Bhutan's artisans display handcrafted meditation items. "These are used for meditation," says a vendor as a visitor calls their partner over to take a look. A wooden birdhouse sits at another stall, a symbol of the sustainable crafts that continue to be passed down through generations.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



### DANCE AND MUSIC

The sound of dhols leads the crowd towards the Odisha dance performance. Dancers dressed in traditional attire move with grace, their anklets jingling in sync. A group of visitors stands around them, making videos, clicking photos and cheering. Children try to copy the steps, laughing as they stumble.

College students and professionals move through the fair, capturing performances and interactions for their projects. "We're covering the mela for our college assignment," says a media student. "There's so much to learn from this experience."



### VINTAGE SIPS

The crockery section at Surajkund Mela is a visual delight, showcasing exquisite vintage and aesthetic tea sets from Iran and different parts of the world. Delicate porcelain, hand-painted kettles, and intricately designed cups transport visitors to another era. The Iranian sets, adorned with fine patterns and gold accents, stand out for their elegance. Each stall feels like a time capsule, drawing people in as they admire the charm of old-world tea traditions.



### A CULTURAL MELTING POT

Surajkund is a place where cultures meet, where an artist from Tunisia can sit next to a designer from Bangladesh and exchange ideas. It is where a student can witness centuries-old crafting techniques and imagine a future in design. It is where a photographer captures the joy of a child dancing to a tune she has never heard before.

"This place has everything," says a vlogger recording the event. "If you love art, culture, photography or just good food, there's no place better than this." From authentic crafts and mesmerising folk performances to global flavours, every moment is a celebration of colours, creativity, and culture. Visitors can engage with craftsmen, learn their traditions, and witness the beauty of handcrafted heritage. Performing arts take centre stage with cultural troupes showcasing folk dances and music at the open-air theatre, Natyashala. From ghazals and classical thumri to soul-stirring ragas, the cultural evenings add magic to the event.

This year, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha shine this year with Gond paintings, Maheshwari sarees, Dhokra figurines, Pattachitra art, Sambalpuri weaves, and Gotpua dance. BIMSTEC nations add cultural richness, while Apna Ghar showcases Haryana's heritage. Today is the last chance to experience it all!



PERFORMERS FROM MOZAMBIQUE TAKE THE STAGE. THE EXCITEMENT SPREADS AND VISITORS CANNOT RESIST JOINING IN. FACES LIGHT UP AS PEOPLE DANCE TOGETHER, SHARING IN THE JOY OF THE MOMENT

### GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

Surajkund brings together artisans from around the world. The Grand Bazaar of Istanbul showcases fine textiles and jewellery while Madagascar's stall offers handcrafted vegan bags. Lebanon's stall is filled with intricately designed hookah pots, Iran displays fragrant ittar and woven mats and Syria's section holds paintings, lamps and table décor.

A shopkeeper from Afghanistan carefully unrolls a handmade carpet. "This one costs ₹2,00,000," he says, running his fingers over the fabric. "A deep artist worked on this for an entire year. It may look like a mat but it is a painting in itself."



₹1,300,000

In 2024, 1.3 million visitors attended the Surajkund Mela

### CHALLENGES OF ARTISANS

While the fair is filled with colour and excitement, it also highlights the struggles of artisans. Many crafts that have been passed down through generations now face the threat of being forgotten. "It's not easy to make a living from this," says a block print artist from Rajasthan. "Handmade work takes time but people now prefer cheaper machine-made products. Events like this give us a chance to show the beauty of our craft." Despite the challenges, there is hope.



**UNWIND, CONNECT & KEEP THE GOOD TIMES FLOWING**

MindSPACE SOCIAL is all set to make your gatherings even better! With its latest offering, guests can enjoy three hours of uninterrupted pours for just Rs 1499, making it the perfect way to catch up with friends, celebrate a moment, or simply unwind without a rush. Designed for those who love to settle in and take their time, this experience brings together a mix of classic favorites and signature SOCIAL serves. Whether it's a spontaneous plan or a long-overdue meet-up, this offering ensures the glasses keep clinking and the stories keep flowing. With no fixed hours, guests can start their session at their convenience, making it a truly flexible way to enjoy SOCIAL's signature energy. From refreshing citrus blends like The Famous Social Margarita to bold, smoky pours like Old Smoke, the menu brings a little something for every mood. For those who enjoy playful, unexpected flavors, Trip on the Drip and Vantablackare just a few of the SOCIAL specials waiting to be explored.

**When:** Available every day – 11 AM to 7 PM

**Where:** MindSPACE SOCIAL, Upper level, K. LTD, Raheja IT Park, Survey No.64, Ground plus, near, MindSPACE Junction Flyover, Hyderabad, Telangana 500081

# TOAST TO LOVE!

February is widely celebrated as the month of love, a time when hearts are filled with warmth, romance and the joy of togetherness. From heartfelt gestures to grand celebrations, love takes center stage throughout the month. And what's a celebration without a cocktail in hand? Whether it's a cozy date night, a lively gathering with friends, or a toast to self-love, the perfect cocktail adds a touch of magic to every moment. A well-crafted drink not only elevates the mood but also becomes a symbol of shared laughter, deep conversations, and cherished memories. So, as love fills the air this February, let's raise a glass to passion, companionship, and the little indulgences that make life truly special!

Curated by Diageo's Brand Ambassador, Hemali Bendre, these recipes feature a delightful mix of flavours, from rich and indulgent to light and refreshing—ensuring there's something for every palate. Cheers to love, laughter and unforgettable moments!

## TIRA-MISS-YOU!

**INGREDIENTS**

- 50 ml Johnnie Walker Blonde
- 20 ml tiramisu syrup
- 30 ml espresso

**METHOD**

- Shake all the ingredients well
- Glassware
- Coup
- Garnish
- mascarpone cream cheese foam, cocoa dust



## LOVESTRUCK SOUR

**INGREDIENTS**

- 50 ml Black Dog
- 25 ml fresh lime juice
- 20 ml rose syrup
- 2 dashes angostura bitters
- 30 ml cranberry juice?
- 3 dashes vegan foamer

**METHOD**

- Shake all the ingredients
- Glassware
- Old Fashioned
- Garnish
- rose dust in heart shape using stencil, ice cubes



## GREEN FOREST

**INGREDIENTS**

- 30 ml Smirnoff no 21
- 15 ml mint liqueur
- 15 ml cucumber syrup
- 15 ml fresh lime juice
- 80 ml sparkling wine

**METHOD**

- Build Up
- Glassware
- Wine Glass
- Garnish
- English cucumber slice
- Ice Cubes



## CRIMSON SUNSET

**INGREDIENTS**

- 50 ml Johnnie Walker Black Label
- 15 ml Fresh Lime Juice
- 20 ml Raspberry Puree
- 10 ml Grenadine
- 60 ml Ginger Ale

**METHOD**

- Shake all ingredients and top up with Ginger Ale
- Glassware:** Highball
- Garnish:** Fresh Raspberries
- Ice:** Cubes

## STOLE MY HEART

**INGREDIENTS**

- 50 ml Black & White
- 25 ml Sweet Vermouth
- 7.5 ml Cherry Syrup
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters

**METHOD**

- Stir all the ingredients
- Glassware:** Nick & Nora
- Garnish:** Maraschino Cherry
- Ice:** None

**WHAT'S NEW**



### LEATHER METALLIC BUCKLE BELT

This belt by Uspoloass.in features an adjustable buckle, making it a versatile gift that pairs effortlessly with both casual and formal looks.

Price: INR 2199

### ARIANA GRANDE X SWAROVSKI STUD EARRINGS

Two hearts become one in this joyful pair of Swarovski pierced studs. Each rhodium plated piece features a heart-shaped crystal, which is surrounded by a glittering halo of clear pavé. Pair them with the matching pendant for a radiant gift of love.

Price: INR 10,900/-



### GLOW PLAY CUSHIONY BLUSH

A bouncy, buildable blush by MAC Cosmetics that provides glowy colour in a lightweight formula with skin-conditioning ingredients.

Price: INR 3800



### KARL LAGERFELD AT THE COLLECTIVE

Black in colour, this K/Signature bag exudes edgy vibes with its striking python print and KARL Signature hardware on the flap. Its spacious interior provides plenty of room for your essentials, while the top handle and detachable shoulder strap offer versatile styling options. Style it with any casual outfit

Price: INR 53,250

### LIVON PROFESSIONAL RANGE

The Livon Professional range strengthens hair 10x stronger\* while offering versatile care. Use it as a pre-shampoo treatment, overnight spa, heat protectant, or hairstyling primer—perfect for all hair types, including chemically treated hair and it helps effortlessly detangles, tames frizz and enhances your hair without weighing it down.

Price: INR 495



### POWER KISS MATTE: INTENSE COLOR, ALL-DAY COMFORT!

Power Kiss Matte Lip Color Combines high-impact pigment with a lightweight, hydrating formula. Available in 12 stunning shades, from classic reds and pinks to versatile nudes and browns, this lipstick ensures your lips stay kiss-ready all day. Enriched with Vitamin E and Avocado Oil, it keeps lips soft, moisturised, and irresistibly smooth while offering a sheer matte finish that feels as good as it looks.

PRICE: INR 799

## HOROSCOPE



### ARIES

Tread carefully in new ventures. Your efforts will yield results, but don't get complacent. Resolve sibling issues quickly. A productive week awaits—stay adaptable to surprises.



### TAURUS

Career growth thrives on wit and reasoning. Tackle financial stress and self-doubt with optimism. A nurturing attitude will bring positive outcomes.



### GEMINI

Embrace attraction despite hurdles. Enjoy laughter and aesthetics. Friends will help achieve goals. Avoid living through others. Rekindle romance.



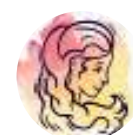
### CANCER

Consider a career shift for better prospects. Address financial worries and self-worth. Self-reflection brings joy. Show kindness but avoid exhaustion.



### LEO

Patience and dedication will help solve personal and shared challenges. Balance growth, relationships and responsibilities. Cherish family support.



### VIRGO

Siblings uplift aspirations. Handle financial stress wisely. Stand out with confidence. Independent efforts lead to success. Loyalty strengthens bonds.



### LIBRA

Restlessness may disrupt harmony. Sibling support is valuable. Overcome quirks through persistence. Keep going even without immediate backing.



### SCORPIO

Pursue beauty and generosity. Seek self-growth with help from others. Guard against negativity. Overfocus on money stifles creativity. Be cautious with commitments.



### SAGITTARIUS

Fast career progress comes from charm and logic. Control temper and impatience. A feminine energy attracts relationships. Meditation clears illusions. Self-care is key.



### CAPRICORN

Persevere through obstacles. Family stands by your efforts. Hold off on new ventures. Seek guidance for clarity. Prevent miscommunications. Stay practical.



### AQUARIUS

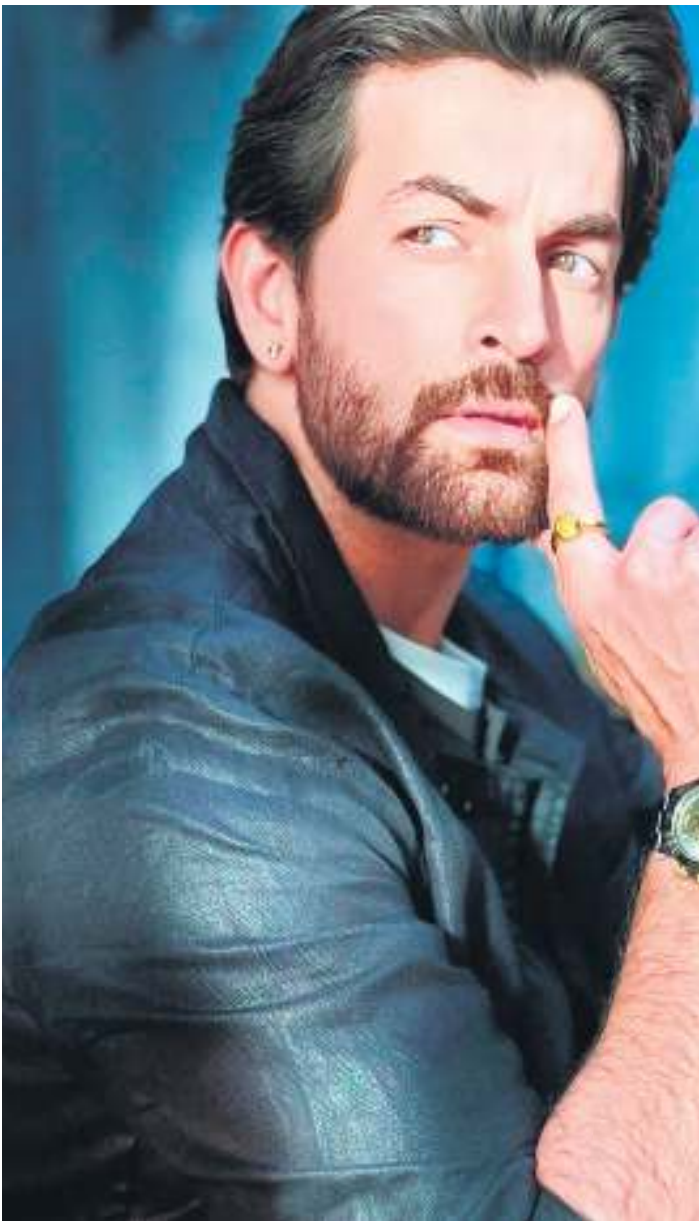
Move forward with long-awaited plans as the stars align. Address quirks with counselling. Expect an active and restless week. Build trust in love.



### PISCES

Attend key meetings for career growth. Your energy draws others in. Make time for family. Seek support for success. Stay active-avoid laziness.

# 'Antagonists have layers beyond monotony, that's what makes them fascinating'



TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

In the glamorous world of Bollywood, where perceptions often shape reality, Neil Nitin Mukesh has steadily carved a distinct niche for himself as an actor of remarkable versatility. While many may have initially pegged him as a serious and intense figure based on his past roles, a candid conversation with the actor reveals a different side. He speaks with enthusiasm, warmth and a passion for cinema that goes far beyond what meets the eye. Neil's latest project, *Hisaab Barabar* streaming on Zee5, introduces him as Mickey Mehta, a cunning business tycoon whose empire thrives on manipulation and deceit. While Mickey is undoubtedly an antagonist, Neil emphasises that such roles provide actors with a unique opportunity to delve into emotional depth and complexity. "With antagonist characters, like you mentioned earlier, you get a lot more layers than just the one

monotone of a certain rank," he explains, reflecting on the enriching experience of playing a character with such intricate motivations. In *Hisaab Barabar*, the narrative provides an exciting blend of entertainment and a strong social message. "The topic of the film was really exciting. The film carries a very big message that aims to spread awareness to a larger audience, reminding them to slow down a bit in this fast-paced world we live in. It's a message that asks people to pause and reflect. While the film is highly entertaining, it's also about not losing the soul of the story." Neil's character is a banker with billions under his belt, a man who justifies his actions in a way that makes the audience stop and think. "Mickey is a scheming monster, but his ideology is what makes him interesting. It's rare to get a role like this." The *Lafangey Parindey* star was deeply passionate when he spoke about the emotional depth of his characters, especially when playing antagonists or antiheroes. "I am so happy and proud of you for asking this question," he stated, smiling. "Because up until now, there's always been this perception that an

antagonist is heartless. They just show up, create chaos, and either get killed or defeated in the end. But for me, my first question to the director is always, 'What is the emotional arc of this character?'" He recalled his experience working on *Johnny Gaddaar* with director Sriram Raghavan, where he discovered the complexity of playing an antagonist. "My character didn't want to be an antagonist. He became one because of a lie, because of his need to cover up something. That's what shaped him. Similarly, in *7 Khoon Maaf*, my character ended up being an antagonist in someone's life, not because he was evil, but because of his own psychological complexities—he was paranoid, believing his wife was having an affair." Neil emphasised the importance of emotional grounding, not just for the character but for the audience's connection to them. "It's crucial because, as an audience, you want to understand why the character is doing what they're doing. You don't need to condone it, but understanding their pain or their confusion makes the character more relatable," he explained. The *Shortcut Romeo* fame reflected

on his character Mickey Mehta in *Hisaab Barabar* and how one specific scene made him realise the importance of emotional depth. "When I first read the scene where Mickey is exposed and brought to justice, I had concerns. My director said, 'We're going to dunk your face in cow dung,' and I was like, 'You want me to do what?' But my director had such conviction in his vision and I knew I had to trust him. I agreed right away. But I had one request: I wanted Mickey to be desperate, not just angry. I wanted to show that he was frantic and looking for his lost money, that he wasn't just a villain who didn't care." Neil stressed that even the most seemingly heartless antagonist has psychological motivations. "Every character, even the villain, has their own backstory, their own pain. That's what makes them interesting. It's about understanding the 'why' behind their actions," said the *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo* star. When asked about his preparation for Mickey Mehta, he shared a surprising insight: "For Mickey, I had to unprepare myself. As actors, we often subconsciously prepare for an antagonist in a specific way, but when I arrived on set, I realised I needed to forget everything I thought I knew and start fresh. It was challenging, especially when my first scene was a confrontation with Radhe Mohan outside the courtroom." He continued, explaining that it wasn't about relying on physical gestures or

dramatic actions, but rather on the raw emotional delivery. "It was one of the toughest scenes in my career. I couldn't rely on body language or typical antagonist moves. It was all about trusting the director and delivering the scene with emotional restraint." For the *Kavacham* actor, the scene was more than just an acting challenge. "I was lucky to work with such a talented director, who pushed me to be present in the moment. Often, as actors, we want to insert our own emotions or try to get the audience to sympathise with our character. But with Mickey, we didn't do that. We had to show the character's journey without manipulating the emotions of the audience. It was a big lesson in being open and flexible as an actor, learning to unlearn and trusting the process," he explained. Neil acknowledges the pivotal role of director Ashwini Dhir in helping him shape the character. "I had to unprepare myself for Mickey Mehta. As an actor, you often have a certain preconceived idea of how to play an antagonist, but Ashwini made me realize that I needed to throw that away. The first day of shoot was my toughest. The scene where Mickey and Radhe Mohan meet for the first time was physically demanding, but it was also about relying solely on the power of delivery. It's not about physical gestures or histrionics; it's about staying true to the essence of the character." He adds, "Ashwini's clarity and conviction helped me understand the importance of not overdoing anything. As actors, we sometimes have the urge to put in our own 'flair,' but his approach was all about staying true to the character's tone. It's something I've started carrying with me into every role now."

Neil is excited for what lies ahead. "My next project is a web show, a musical, with Jacqueline Fernandez, Shazahn Padamsee, Sumeet, Sidharth Nigam and others. It's something I've never done before on screen. The show is still untitled, but it's set to release in April," Neil shares. "We're working with an amazing director, Abhishek Sharma, and the show will be available on Jio's new platform after the merger with Hotstar." In addition to that, Neil has another theatrical project slated for release in June, where he collaborates with a national filmmaker he greatly admires. "It's a very exciting year ahead and I can't wait for everyone to see what's coming." For an actor whose career has been marked by such versatility and depth, Neil Nitin Mukesh's journey is still unfolding. With each project, he continues to challenge himself and break boundaries, proving that his passion for cinema and his craft only grows with time.



**AS ACTORS, WE OFTEN SUBCONSCIOUSLY PREPARE FOR AN ANTAGONIST IN A SPECIFIC WAY, BUT WHEN I ARRIVED ON SET, I REALISED I NEEDED TO FORGET EVERYTHING I THOUGHT I KNEW AND START FRESH. IT WAS CHALLENGING, ESPECIALLY WHEN MY FIRST SCENE IN HISAAB BARABAR**

## TRENDING

### PERSON

### REKHA GUPTA



Rekha Gupta was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Delhi on Thursday, making history as the only woman CM in all saffron and NDA-ruled states. Marking the BJP's return to power in the national capital, the grand oath-taking ceremony took place at the iconic Ramliila Maidan, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior party leaders.

### VIDEO

### KIIT NEPALI EXODUS

A viral video has surfaced showing the management of KIIT University allegedly forcing over 500 Nepali students to leave the campus in Bhubaneswar following the alleged suicide of a Nepali girl student on February 17, 2025. The video, widely shared on social media, has intensified discussions around the university's handling of the situation and the treatment of international students.



### MOVIE

### L2 EMPURAN



Actor Mohanlal has unveiled a stellar lineup of renowned actors for his upcoming film *L2: Empuraan*. The highly anticipated sequel boasts a powerhouse cast, raising expectations for an intense cinematic experience.

### GALATFEHMIYAN

### SONG



The song *Galatfehmiyan* from Ibrahim Ali Khan and Khushi Kapoor's film *Nadania* is going viral for its sizzling chemistry and captivating visuals. Set against a sprawling stadium and vibrant backdrops, the track beautifully portrays the duo navigating misunderstandings.

### HUGE CROWD AT PATNA RAILWAY STATION

Patna railway station witnessed massive rush and chaos as thousands of devotees thronged the platforms following the conclusion of Mahakumbh. With overcrowded trains and long queues, passengers struggled to find space, highlighting the sheer scale of the pilgrimage's return journey.



## RARE NERVE DISORDER ON THE RISE

# IS YOUR DIET PUTTING YOU AT RISK?

**The Pioneer brings to you an in-depth look at the alarming rise of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) across Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. As medical experts investigate the link between infections, dietary habits, and environmental factors, this report uncovers the potential triggers behind the surge in cases. From early symptoms to treatment options and preventive measures, we provide crucial insights to help you stay informed and protect your health**

PNSJ EXCLUSIVE

**G**uillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare but serious autoimmune disorder affecting the nervous system, is seeing a worrying surge in cases across Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The rise in cases has become a growing concern for the medical community, as researchers work to uncover both known and lesser-known triggers of the disease.

GBS occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the peripheral nerves, leading to muscle weakness, numbness and, in severe cases, paralysis. The condition is often linked to infections, particularly respiratory illnesses and gastrointestinal diseases, with symptoms typically appearing within two to six weeks after an infection.

### Why are GBS cases on the rise?

The sudden increase in GBS cases has raised urgent questions about its underlying causes. While bacterial infections like *Campylobacter jejuni*—commonly found in contaminated water and undercooked poultry—are already recognised as major triggers, researchers are now investigating other possible factors.

"In rare cases, Guillain-Barré Syndrome follows an infection; however, the emerging trends suggest that environmental and dietary factors might be amplifying the risk," says Dr. Animesh Gupta, Senior Consultant, Neurology, Apollo Spectra Hospital,

Kanpur. "The sudden rise in the number of cases is concerning, and we need to identify the common factors responsible for it."

One of the leading causes of GBS is bacterial contamination in food and water. *Campylobacter jejuni*, a pathogen linked to over 30% of GBS cases worldwide, is commonly found in undercooked poultry, unpasteurized dairy and polluted water sources. In addition, viral infections that spread post-rainfall, leading to flu-like symptoms and stomach infections, may also trigger an immune overreaction. "Bacterial infections have long been recognised as a trigger for GBS, but we are also exploring whether post-viral immune responses or even toxin exposure could be playing a role in these recent cases," explains Dr. Nikhil B. Consultant Neurology, SPARSH Hospital, Bangalore. "There is a need for detailed studies on various other factors that could possibly trigger severe immune responses."

Another suspected factor is environmental pollution, particularly the presence of heavy metals in food and water. Exposure to these toxins can alter immune responses, making individuals more susceptible to autoimmune disorders like GBS.

### Who is at risk?

**GBS can affect anyone, but certain groups are more vulnerable:**

- Children and infants, especially those exposed to contaminated food and water. Parents should watch for symptoms such as muscle weakness,



difficulty walking, or loss of reflexes.

- Elderly individuals, whose immune systems may react differently to infections and who often experience more severe complications. Recovery in older adults can be prolonged due to existing health conditions.

- People with weakened immune systems, including those with diabetes or individuals undergoing treatments like chemotherapy, are at a higher risk of developing complications from infections that may lead to GBS.

### Diagnosis and treatment

**Early detection is critical for managing GBS. Once diagnosed, patients are typically treated with:**

- Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG) therapy, which helps neu-

tralise the immune system's attack on the nerves.

- Plasmapheresis, a procedure that removes harmful antibodies from the blood.

Following initial treatment, physiotherapy plays a crucial role in helping patients regain mobility and strength. The recovery period varies depending on the severity of nerve damage, ranging from weeks to months.

"Just like any other disease, early diagnosis, timely treatment and rehabilitation play a vital role in recovery," says Dr. Vivek Tomar, Consultant Neurosurgeon, Chatrapati Shivaji Subharti Hospital, Meerut. "Depending on the severity, some patients regain full mobility in a few months, while others struggle with

long-term nerve damage."

The recent spike in GBS cases highlights the need for better sanitation, stricter food safety regulations and extensive research into its lesser-known triggers.

### Preventive measures: How to reduce your risk

Since infections are a major trigger of GBS, maintaining proper hygiene and a strong immune system is essential.

- **For children:** Ensure they consume purified water, wash their hands frequently and avoid unpasteurized dairy and undercooked meat. Parents should also monitor vaccinations like flu shots, as rare cases of GBS have been linked to certain vaccines.
- **For the elderly:** A well-balanced diet rich in magnesium, vitamins B6 and B12 and omega-3 fatty acids is beneficial. Regular health check-ups and prompt treatment of infections can prevent immune overreactions.
- **For everyone:** Eat home-cooked meals and avoid consuming food from unhygienic sources.
- Ensure poultry and meat are thoroughly cooked.
- Stay vigilant for symptoms like weakness, tingling sensations, or difficulty walking, and seek immediate medical attention if they appear.

"Prevention is the key to such rare diseases," emphasises Dr. Vivek Tomar. "Simple lifestyle changes—such as choosing home-cooked meals over street food, drinking clean water and ensuring proper hygiene—can

have a big impact. People often overlook how minor infections can trigger serious immune reactions that lead to conditions like GBS."

### The role of food habits in GBS prevention

**A strong link exists between dietary habits and the risk of developing GBS. Contaminated and undercooked food can introduce harmful bacteria into the body, sometimes leading to autoimmune responses that trigger the condition. Risk factors include:**

- Consuming undercooked poultry or raw meat, which may contain *Campylobacter jejuni*.
- Drinking unpasteurised milk, which can harbor harmful microbes.
- Eating street food from unhygienic places or drinking unfiltered water, increasing exposure to infections.
- Ignoring early signs of food poisoning, such as vomiting or diarrhea, which may indicate bacterial contamination.

Even processed and pre-packaged foods should be stored and cooked properly to prevent bacterial growth.

### Need for more research and awareness

Ongoing studies are analyzing patient histories, food habits, and environmental influences to pinpoint the causes behind the rising number of GBS cases. Awareness campaigns by health authorities are being launched to educate the public on food safety and hygiene practices.

# TRISHA: THE TYPHOON OF INDIAN CRICKET



Gongadi Trisha etched her name in history by becoming the first player to score a century in the U-19 T20 Women's World Cup, leading India to a remarkable victory. She was named both Player of the Match and Player of the Series after scoring 110 runs off just 59 balls and taking three crucial wickets against Scotland. With 309 runs in the tournament, she emerged as the highest run scorer of the series. Amid the reels going viral and becoming a sensation in one night, cricket lovers watching this girl playing, hitting over the covers, Gongadi Trisha, has made India and Telangana proud. It is all my parents' dream. I was told by my friends that my father was emotional. I have never seen my father ever in tears, says Gongadi Trisha, in an interview with *The Pioneer's* Deepika Pasham



## DREAM NURTURED BY PARENTS

My father, Rami Reddy, a farmer and fitness trainer, and my mother, Madhavi, a homemaker, have given their all for their only child — me. Cricket has always been their dream. I don't remember when it all started as a kid, but I do remember holding a bat when I was just two-and-a-half years old, and I never put it down since. My father has always been my biggest inspiration when it comes to playing cricket. Initially, he was also my bowler. He was always there for my practice, and every ball I faced was delivered by him. If I've learned to bat, it's because of his bowling.

## ROOTS IN BHADRACHALAM

My parents owned agricultural land and maintained it in Purushothapatnam (now in Andhra Pradesh), near Bhadrachalam. Later, the first half of my family, including my grandparents, moved to Hyderabad for better coaching, as my parents were focused on farming. In Bhadrachalam, I trained on the junior college grounds at 5 a.m. Eventually, my father and mother also moved to Hyderabad. My father left his job as a private fitness trainer to support me in my cricket journey.

## MENSTRUATION DIDN'T HOLD BACK CENTURY

Menstruation is undoubtedly painful for women, and as cricketers, we can't escape it. The experience varies from woman to woman. I remember having severe cramps at times, but my focus remained on performing at my best. There's a myth that women cricketers don't play during their periods, but we are all comfortable playing cricket even when on our periods. The key is to maintain hygiene. As athletes, some may take prescribed medications, but I personally do not consume anything. I find that natural food helps on some days.

**COACHING IS EXPENSIVE**  
our primary reason for moving to Hyderabad was to enroll in the best coaching camp. My father visited numerous camps to gather information and eventually found St. John's Cricket Academy. At the age of eight, I joined the academy under the guidance of my first coach, Srinivas. Cricket requires significant financial investment, and players often rely on sponsors to support their journey in the sport. Currently, I am training with Coach Beyond, and my coach is R. Sridhar.

## NO PLAN B

There are sportswomen who may have a second option in mind, but for me, it has always been cricket—just cricket. I've never thought about anything else. If I weren't a cricketer, I honestly wouldn't know what I'd be doing. The journey has been tough, but I know I have much more to achieve. With the Under-19 T20 Women's World Cup behind me, I have my eyes set on the Senior Cricket World Cup. My goal is to play more matches, win the Women's Cricket World Cup, and keep pushing forward.



## ARK FOUNDATION; FUELING MY AMBITION

It has been six years since I joined the Ark Foundation, and it feels like family to me because they have always been there for us. I am deeply grateful to the Ark Group for believing in me, supporting me, and empowering my journey. I am especially thankful to Gummi Ram Reddy Sir, who has motivated me tremendously over the years through numerous meetings. This recognition fuels my drive to work even harder and make my country proud.

## BOWLING TO MY IDOL, MITHALI

As a kid, I had no clear idea about cricket. I just picked up a bat and started hitting my father's bowling. But as I grew older and continued practicing, I started reading about Mithali Raj, and she became my inspiration. She would visit coaching centers and practice with us. I clearly remember bowling to my idol, Mithali Raj. She always encouraged us to stay focused, have fun, and enjoy the game while playing.



## RAISING SPORTSPERSON BEYOND GENDERS

My parents never considered gender. Whether a girl or a boy, they always wished to make me a sportsperson. I was fortunate to receive the best training they could afford. Although they may have heard opinions from outsiders about encouraging me, they remained supportive throughout.

## FATHER MISSED FIRST WORLD CUP

As part of the women's cricket team, it's not always necessary for us to travel with our parents. However, if they wish, they can come and watch our matches. My father does attend my games, though he missed my first World Cup. This time, during the World Cup, he was there to witness me score a century.

## ALWAYS CRAVING FOR AMMA'S FOOD

The longing for home-cooked food never fades. As I mentioned, I eat home food very rarely, but if given the chance, I would choose my amma's handmade food any day. I enjoy both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes.

**PEEK INTO MY DAILY LIFE**  
I wake up at 5 a.m. and freshen up. My first class starts at 5:30 a.m., and it usually continues until around 11 a.m. The schedule is divided into parts, with a total of six to seven hours of practice. I also follow a diet plan as guided by our experts to maintain strength and health. Cheat days are rare and usually occur on Sundays or occasionally after tournaments, when we get back home for one or two days.

## RARE SCHOOL DAYS

I had very little school life and, honestly, I don't remember any friends because I attended school rarely. I was in Bhadrachalam until Class 4, and later, I attended Class 6 and 7 in Hyderabad. My education mostly consisted of tuitions and last-minute studying for Classes 8, 9, and 10, where I directly appeared for the exams. I completed my Intermediate with the CEC group and will take admission for my Degree to finish it as well.

## JERSEY NUMBER TWISTS

Initially, my jersey number was 5, but later someone else chose it. I was asked to pick another number. I called my father, telling him that all the numbers were taken. He suggested I take 99, and that's how I ended up with it. Now, I feel it's my lucky number.

## KEEPING IT REAL, NOT MIMICING

We usually don't spend much time analyzing the techniques of other cricketers because we believe in sticking to what comes naturally to us. Instead, we have random discussions and stay active on social media. My favorite shot is over the covers, and I've been interacting with my best friends, Niki Prasad and Mithila, for the past six to seven years.

## TALE OF TWO GENERATIONS

For the first few months, I stayed with my grandparents. My grandmother would prepare my breakfast, and my grandfather would handle the drop-off and pick-up schedule, even though we had rented a house near my coaching location. Later, when my father moved, it became his responsibility.

## RAPID FIRE

**Favourite destination:** Hyderabad  
**Favourite hobby:** I watch cinema, do painting  
**Favourite food:** Biryani, pizza **Favourite cricketer:** Mithali Raj  
**Favourite colour:** Blue and black  
**Favourite hero:** It depends on movies

