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Pragya Jaiswal: Akhanda is my life-changing



the pioneer The Bhu Bharati Act provides a permanent solution to land disputes in the state. Due to the Revenue Act-2020 commoners were facing many problems in Telangana. Even three years after the Act was introduced rules were not framed. There is no village in Telangana without land disputes. The **BRS** admin had destroyed the revenue system for its selfish

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister, Telangana

Mud removal begins in Musi

Acting on the orders of Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath's orders, Rajapushpa Constructions has begun removing the illegally dumped mud in the Musi River near Narsingi, close to Gandipet. Two weeks ago, Commissioner Ranganath inspected the site after receiving complaints of illegal dumping and encroachment in ...

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'India's contribution to civilisation great'

President of Trinidad and Tobago Christine Carla Kangaloo on Thursday said India has made some of the "greatest contributions" to the world civilization in various fields such as mathematics, medicine and navigation. Addressing the 18th Pravasi Bharativa Divas. 2025 convention virtually as the chief quest. Kangaloo said. "India's contributions to the world's development are ...

Adani-ISKCON to start 'Mahaprasad Seva'

The Adani Group and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) have joined hands to serve meals to devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj this year. The Mahaprasad Seva will be offered for the entire duration of the Maha Kumbh Mela, from January 13 to February 26. To thank ISKCON for this initiative, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani on Thursday met Guru Prasad Swami, the Chairman ...

'I think he will be the next captain'

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar is in awe of Jasprit Bumrah's leadership qualities and reckons the peerless fast bowler will succeed Rohit Sharma as the next captain of the Indian team following his extraordinary display in the Border-Gayaskar Trophy Bumrah recently produced one of the best-ever bowling performances by an overseas pacer in Australia and picked 32 wickets over five Tests. He was also captain during India's only victory in the series, helping the visitors to a.

FORMALA E CASE

No arrest of KTR, only questioning for 7 hrs

ACB puts 82 questions Most of them were repeated: KTR

PNS HYDERABAD

ACB sleuths asked BRS Working President KTR around 82 questions which he claimed to be questions framed by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. "Most of them were repeat questions, I asked them (ACB) where the corruption was," he said.

Amid chants of 'CM CM,' KTR returned to Telangana Bhavan at around 5.30 pm and got a rousing reception from BRS activists. He got a welcome at his home in Nandi Nagar too.

KTR said that the ACB was on a wild goose chase and that they had questioned him for seven hours.

The ACB officials had nothing new to ask. Just like there is 'no Mysore in Mysore Bonda, the ACB's corruption case had no corruption in it," KTR said.

KTR said on Thursday that he was ready to face a thousand cases like the one registered against him in connection with the Formula-E

Former Municipal Administration

and Urban Development Department Special Chief

Secretary Arvind Kumar appeared

before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday in

connection with the Formula-E Race-linked financial irregularities

case involving him and BRS leader

The senior IAS Officer reached

ment on transferring funds to Bureau (ACB).

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

KT Rama Rao.

IAS officer Arvind Kumar appears before ED

am on Thursday and left after Laundering Act (PMLA) based on

around seven hours of question- the First Information Report (FIR)

ing. The ED recorded his state- filed by the Anti-Corruption



had nothing new to ask. Just like there is 'no Mysore in Mysore Bonda,' the **ACB's corruption** case had no corruption in it," KTR said.

"The ACB officials

Talking to reporters while leaving his residence to appear before the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), he denied all corruption charges and said that he was not afraid of any case. He said he has full faith in the law, courts and the Constitution.

He said that the Congress government registered the case against him as he was questioning its "failure" to implement the promises made to the

The ED is conducting the probe

people during elections. The BRS leader said that he could answer all questions as he had done

Continued on Page 2

Supreme Court refuses urgent hearing

TO TAKE UP CASE ON JAN 15

PNS HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) faced a setback in the Supreme Court as his plea to speed up hearing in the Formula E Race case was refused.

The case was filed by the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). KTR had sought an urgent quashing of the charges against him. The SC, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, clarified that the hearing was already scheduled for January 15 and cannot be advanced. CJI Khanna said that there was no compelling reason to justify an early hearing and dismissed the urgency raised by KTR's counsel.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2

ACB court grants permission to Revanth to travel abroad

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's Australia visit has been cancelled. The CM will go to New Delhi on January 14 and will remain there on January 15 and 16 to attend the AICC office's inauguration.

From New Delhi, the Chief Minister will go to Singapore on January 17 and spend two days in the city-state.

On January 19, he will leave Singapore for Davos in Switzerland, where he will represent Telangana at the World Economic Forum. The conference will continue till January 23. The ACB court granted the Chief Minister permission to travel abroad from January 13 to 23. This follows his request to retrieve his passport, which had been submitted earlier in connection with the vote-for-cash

The court asked the CM to return his passport by July 6, allowing him to attend key events in Singapore, Davos and other international locations as part of his official duties.

The CM will attend the World Economic Forum to highlight Telangana's achievements and attract

GUV APPROVES BHU BHARATI ACT Will come into force soon, assures Ponguleti



Revenue Department's Chief Secretary Naveen Mittal presenting a copy of the Bhu Bharati Bill approved by Governor Jishtudev Verma to the Minister at the Secretariat on Thursday

PNS HYDERABAD

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma has approved the Bhu Bharati Act (ROR Act-2024) and the government will bring the Act into force as soon as possible, Revenue, Housing and Information and PR Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said. The government will provide effective revenue services from now on, he

Ponguleti asked officials to implement the historic Bhu Bharati Act cleared by Governor Jishnu Dev Varma as soon as possible. He said the Bhu Bharati Act is being introduced to provide comprehensive revenue services to Telangana's people.

"On behalf of the government, I extend special thanks to the Governor for approving the Bhu Bharati Act to provide a permanent solution to land problems. On behalf of landown-

ers, I would like to express my special thanks to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who has provided all possible assistance to introduce this law, to all my fellow Cabinet members, public representatives, officers and staff who worked day and night, as well as to the intellectuals who gave many suggestions to enact this law. Thanks to everyone behind this law," he said.

He said the Bhu Bharati Act was introduced by consolidating public opinion and its main objective is to serve commoners. Officials were told to pay special attention to formulating the procedures connected to this law, he said.

A copy of the Bhu Bharati Bill, approved by the Governor, was handed over to the Minister by Naveen Mittal, the Principal Secretary of Revenue at the Secretariat on

Continued on Page 2

TIRUPATI STAMPEDE

AP orders probe, suspends 2 officials

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday ordered a judicial inquiry into the tragic stampede incident in Tirupati that nearly 40 devotees injured. He also announced the suspension of several senior officials for their role in the incident, including Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Raman Kumar, and SV Gosala Director Dr. Harinath Reddy, who were directly responsible for the site's management. Additionally, three other officials — JEO Goutami, SP Subbarayudu, and CVSO Sridhar — have been transferred as part of the administrative

Addressing a media conference in Tirupati on Thursday, Naidu expressed his deep sorrow over the incident and assured that steps would be taken to prevent such occurrences in the future. He pledged to ensure a smoother and safer Vaikuntha Dwara Darshanam for devotees, especially during the

Vaikuntha Ekadasi celebrations. The Chief Minister also announced ex gratia compensation for the victims: Rs 25 lakh to the families of the deceased, Rs 5 lakh to those severely injured, and Rs 2 lakh for the 33 others who are receiving medical treatment. Naidu assured that arrangements would be made for the injured devotees to receive a special darshan of Lord



deceased, Rs 5 lakh for the severely injured, and Rs 2 lakh for others

Naidu assured special arrangements for injured devotees to have darshan on January 10

The new token system in Tirupati. administration, will be reviewed with Agama experts

 Naidu emphasises the importance of maintaining sanctity of Tirumala and improving the pilgrimage experience

Venkateswara on January 10, following their wishes.

Naidu explained that the stampede occurred as devotees were queuing up for Vaikuntha Dwara Darshanam tokens. He noted that the new system of issuing tokens in Tirupati, introduced by the previous government, might have contributed to the confusion. He emphasised that the system would be reviewed in consultation with Agama experts to make it more pilgrim-friendly and aligned with temple traditions.

Earlier, Naidu visited the hospi-

tal where the injured were being treated and reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding the sanctity of Tirumala. He stressed that the Board Administration would need to work in close coordination to ensure the safety and well-being of all pilgrims. Ministers Anam Ram Naravana

Reddy, Anitha, Satya Prasad, Śatya Kumar Yadav, Parthasaradhi, Rama Naidu, along with TTD Board Chairman BR Naidu, TTD EO Syamala Rao, and other officials, were present at the press briefing.

Yogita Rana is new Education Secretary

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has issued transfer and posting orders for IAS officers. Dr Yogita Rana, who was awaiting

posting, has been appointed as the Secretary of the Education Department. This relieves N. Sridhar (IAS, 1997) who was holding the post on a Full Additional Charge (FAC) basis. K. Surendra Moĥan, the Secretary of the Mines & Geology and Industries & Commerce (I&C) Department has been transferred and posted as the Commissioner of Transport. Continued on Page 2

Sanjay to CM: Pay Aarogyasri & fee dues

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to release Arogyasri and fee reimbursement dues immediately. He said the approach of the Congress Government regarding education and healthcare is causing severe distress to the public.

Sanjay addressed an open letter to the CM regarding on Thursday. "The Congress Government's approach to implementing Aarogyasri and fee reimbursement schemes is like praising with words but mocking in action. On the one hand, they announced an increase



in Aarogyasri's limit to Rs 10 lakh and an expansion of healthcare services. But they have failed to pay pending bills, making healthcare services under Aarogyasri inaccessible to the public," Sanjay said.

Continued on Page 2

World is listening to India, says Modi

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Asserting that the world today listens to India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said due to the country's heritage, it is able to tell the international community that the future does not lie in 'Yudh' (war) but in 'Budh' (Buddha).

Addressing the diaspora at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention here, Modi said India is not only the mother of democracy, but democracy is a part of people's lives

Emphasising that he has always considered the Indian diaspora as ambassadors of India, the PM expressed his joy in meeting and conversing with fellow citizens around the world and said the love and blessings he receives from them are unforgettable.



closely interact with them during my

visits overseas," he said. Underlining India's growing global role due to its achievements and prospects, the PM said, "Today's "I have always believed that our India not only firmly asserts its diaspora is our 'Rashtradoot', and I point, but also strongly amplifies the First."

voice of the Global South". He highlighted the unanimous

support for India's proposal to make the African Union a permanent member of the G-20, emphasising India's commitment to "Humanity

'70% of beer price in Telangana comprises taxes'

PNS HYDERABAD

United Breweries Limited (UBL) clarified that nearly 70% of the consumer price of beer in Telangana comprises state taxes, duties, VAT and other levies. The statement was issued after the suspension of supplies to the Telangana Beverages Corporation Limited (TGBCL) due to losses. The UBL emphasized that its current basic prices, which account for only 16% of the consumer price, have remained unchanged since 2019. The company cited the rising

cost\ of raw materials like barley, sugar and fuel, which have seen inflation of 110% over three years, making operations unsustainable. Continued on Page 2

Lady IAS officers to inspect girls' welfare hostels: CS

In a move to improve the quality of education and facilities in government girls' welfare hostels in Telangana, Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari said that women All India Services (AIS) officers will personally inspect these hostels and stay overnight there to assess conditions.

Highlighting the government's commitment, the CS said that Telangana has 540 government girls' welfare hostels catering to students from SC, ST, BC, and minority communities. The inspections are aimed at improving education standards and ensuring the supply of quality

Addressing a teleconference held with senior officials on Thursday,



the CS outlined the inspection plans. She said that in the first phase, 29 women IAS officers will visit these hostels to review the conditions there and propose measures to make the hostels more efficient. Detailed guidelines have already

been prepared for the inspections. The officers will evaluate key aspects like diet management, educational standards, infrastructure and overall hostel management.

The first phase of inspections will be completed by January 25. The feedback from these visits would be thoroughly reviewed for action.

The CS emphasised that the feedback will play a vital role in deciding future steps, including broader inspections involving AIS officers at all levels

The teleconference was attended by N. Sridhar, the Principal Secretary of the SC Development Department and other senior offi-

State function to observe Jaipal Reddy's 83rd birth anniversary



PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari has asked officials to make arrangements to observe the 83rd birth anniversary of former Union Minister, the late S Jaipal Reddy, which will be conducted as a state function on January 16.

Addressing a review meeting, the CS directed the HMDA Commissioner to ensure that all necessary preparations are made at the Jaipal Reddy Memorial at Spurtivalu on Necklace Road. She emphasised the importance of coordination among various departments to ensure the event's success.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of providing proper sanitation, adequate parking spaces, traffic management and security arrangements at the event venue.

CM going to Delhi on Jan 14, Aus tour postponed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's Australia tour has been postponed and next date will be announced later. However, the CM is going to New Delhi on January 14. The Chief Minister will attend the opening ceremony of the AICC's new office on January 15.

The Chief Minister would meet Central Ministers seeking funds supposed to come to the state on January 15 evening and on January 16. The Chief Minister will go to Singapore on January 17 for a twoday tour. From there, the Chief Minister would go to Davos on January 19. The Chief Minister would seek investments in the state while attending the World

'70% of beer ...

Continued from Page 1

The brewery said that price revisions were delayed despite repeated representations to the TGBCL and the government over the past year. The company also highlighted overdue payments from TGBCL, compounding the financial burden. Reiterating its commitment to keeping beer affordable and maintaining operations in Telangana, the UBL appealed to TGBCL to revise prices to ensure the viability of the brewing industry in the state.

Yogita Rana is ...

Continued from Page 1

N. Sridhar, the Principal Secretary of the SCD Department, has been placed on FAC basis as the Secretary of the Mines & Geology and the I&C Department in place of K. Surendra Mohan.

The transfers are aimed at streamlining the administration. The orders were issued by Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari.

Panchayat employees to receive monthly salaries without delay: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has directed officials to ensure that the salaries of employees working in village panchayats are paid monthly like government employees. The Chief Minister emphasized that the salaries must be disbursed through a green channel to avoid delays.

Currently, 92,351 employees are serving in village panchayats, requiring a monthly salary payment of Rs 116 crore. The CM asked the Panchayat Raj and Finance Departments to implement a clear system for timely payments.

On Thursday, the Chief Minister reviewed the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department at the Integrated Command Control Centre.

Former minister Jana Reddy, ministers Seethakka, Konda Surekha, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, government advisors K. Keshava Rao and Vem Narender Reddy, Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari and senior officials attended the meeting.

Revanth also ordered the speedy clearance of pending bills under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural



CM schedules Collectors' conference on Jan 10

HYDERABAD The Chief Minister has scheduled a Collectors' conference on January 10 at 3 pm at the secretariat. The meeting will focus on the progress in implementing social welfare schemes. . The conference's agenda lists Raithu Bharosa, ration cards, Indiramma Atmeya Barosa and the Indiramma Indlu scheme. Special Chief Secretaries Principal Secretaries Secretaries and

Special Secretaries have been directed to attend the conference All Collectors, District Magistrates and Additional Collectors are expected to attend along with District Agriculture Officers, DRDOs and DCSOs with all relevant data and updates. Officials have been granted permission to leave their headquarters to attend the meeting without

instructed officials to connect and Nalgonda districts,

IPS officer Subbarayudu transferred

Employment Guarantee that approximately 1.26 lakh pleted after since April 2023, Scheme (MGNREGS). He said employment works were com-

cleared without delay.

The Chief Minister stressed the need to use Central funds for village development efficiently. He directed officials to ensure the timely allocation of these funds for panchayat pro-

Revanth urged officials to speed up the release of pending Central funds under MGNREGS and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) before the end of the current financial year.

BJP concentrating on local body elections

The BJP announced the list of its mandal presidents and is concentrating on strengthening the party as local body elections are approaching.

The party is now concentrating on organisational elec-tions. The party announced the list of its mandal presidents after getting the approval of its state leadership and consulting its cadres. The party also announced its district council

The BJP's Telangana incharge Sunil Bansal will conduct a review meeting on

Friday on district presidents' elections. He will also have a meeting with district returning officers and observers. The BJP has asked for a list

of five hopefuls from all districts for selecting district presidents. The party has prepared the lists of hopefuls in the run for the posts of district presidents. Party leaders are now lobbying to get the post as competition is intense. Hopefuls are hanging around leaders who decide district party presidents. The party will announce the name of district presidents any time after Sankranti, it is learnt.

Congress leaders counter KTR's criticism against govt

- People won't believe if KTR says he is not obsessed with money: Kiran
- Respect Chief Minister's post, says Jeevan Reddy

PNS HYDERABAD

Congress leaders countered BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's criticism against the government in connection with the Formula E-Car Race case.

Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah said that KTR is showing the same arrogance he had earlier even after engaging in unethical deals

He said that KTR has been speaking unethically after attending interrogation in connection with his alleged unethical acts. Moreover, KTR has been saying that he committed unethical acts to enhance the image of Telangana, Ilaiah pointed out. He said that KTR's sister

BRS MLC Kavitha destroyed

Telangana's image.
"KTR destroyed the image of

Telangana globally by engaging in corrupt deals in connection with the Formula E-Car Race. Why did KTR transfer Rs 55 crore without Cabinet permission and how can he say that he had not committed even halfpaisa corruption after that? Did KTR think that the assets of the people of Telangana belong to his father? How can KTR say that he is the original son of Telangana after 'handing over' Telangana's assets to foreign countries?" he said.

Ilaiah warned that they will not remain silent if KTR speaks as he likes against the CM. The Congress's Bhongir MP,

Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said that KTR is not a soldier but a 'prince.' He made it clear that people won't believe it if KTR says that he is not obsessed

Formula E Race case on Income Tax Dept radar

PNS HYDERABAD

PNS HYDERABAD

In a new twist to the ongoing investigations into the Formula E Race case, sources revealed that the

Chief Minister A Revanth

Reddy has emphasised the

need to design the Warangal

(Mamnoor) airport to propel Warangal into a mega city, mirroring Hyderabad's develop-

ment. Reviewing land acquisi-

tion and planning for the

Warangal airport at the

Integrated Command Control

Centre on Thursday night, the Chief Minister directed

officials to prioritise the air-

port's role in attracting inter-

Continued from Page 1

He said that after the

one-year rule of the

Congress, Aarogyasri dues

have accumulated to over

Rs 1,000 crore. Due to the

government's refusal to pay

the poor are suffering with-

out access to Aarogyasri

weakening the fee reim-

bursement scheme. Pending

dues of the BRS govern-

ment, combined with your

government's inaction, have

now crossed Rs 7,000 crore.

Private college administra-

tions have openly declared

that students will not be

given certificates unless the

dues are paid. What are you

"You are deliberately

services, Sanjay said.

Sanjay to CM: Pay

Income Tax Department compliance concerns. might step in to probe the

Sources suggest that TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) was not deducted for the Rs 55 crore transaction under scrutiny, raising serious tax

Income alleged financial irregulari- Department has reportedly

Highlighting interest from

South Korea and other nations,

Revanth Reddy stated that the

airport must cater to global

investors and follow models

like Kochi airport, which offers world-class facilities. He also

doing about this? Your

refusal to pay has destroyed

Sanjay said that issuing

the future of lakhs of stu-

Rs 380 crore as token pay-

ments months ago but fail-

ing to release them is dis-

graceful. The state's propos-

al to clear fee reimburse-

ment dues through a 'One-

Time Settlement (OTS) is

shameful. Are these arrears

bank loans? How can you

demand cuts under OTS

after allowing arrears to

accumulate with interest, he

to provide funds for educa-

tion and healthcare and

then cutting dues through

OTS, is unacceptable.

Sanjay said that refusing

dents," he said.



Warangal airport to drive

growth as a mega city: CM

PNS HYDERABAD

Tirupati stampede.

Andhra

Mangalagiri.

the airport to an Outer Ring

Road and radial roads, ensur-

ing seamless accessibility.
The Chief Minister further

directed officials to plan road

networks that link the airport

to Khammam, Karimnagar

after Tirupati stampede

Telangana cadre IPS officer L.

Subbarayudu, who has been on

deputation in Andhra Pradesh

after Chandrababu Naidu took

over as Chief Minister, has

been transferred after the

Subbarayudu, who served

as Superintendent of Police

(Urban), Tirupati, has been

asked to report to the Director

General of Police (HoPF),

The transfer comes after

administrative decisions fol-

Pradesh,

written to the state government seeking detailed records of the transactions connected to the event. This comes as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) are investigating the

enabling convenient travel for

residents. He stressed that

development plans should

position Warangal as a reflec-

tion of Hyderabad by fostering

growth in textiles, IT, pharma

Pradesh for three years last July

to strengthen inter-state collab-

S. Sreedhar, the Chief Vigilance

and Security Officer at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), has also

been transferred and ordered to

report to the DGP's office in

Department's order states that

alternative arrangements for

these posts will be made by the

attempt to restore accountabil-

This move is seen as an

Andhra Pradesh DGP.

The General Administration

Mangalagiri.

In addition to Subbarayudu,

With the Income Tax Department's potential involvement, another Central agency has now entered the radar. This development could open up additional layers of inquiry into the financial dealings of

Assam mining tragedy: Rescue ops on for 4th day

PNS ■ UMRANGSO (ASSAM)

Rescue operations by multiple state and central agencies continued for the fourth day on Thursday to locate trapped miners inside an illegal rat-hole coal mine in Dima Hasao district of Assam, officials said.

The search operations resumed early in the morning after the dewatering exercise all and the Operated Vehicle (ROV) has gone inside the flooded shaft, a senior official of Assam Police told PTI.

"So far, nothing has been detected by the ROV. It is trying very hard to locate the trapped miner despite the extremely hostile and difficult situation. The water inside is totally blackened and it is creating problems in finding anything," he added.

Additionally, four deep divers from the Navy also went inside the flooded shaft to find the trapped miners, the official said.

A united effort is being made by the Navy, Army, NDRF, SDRF, ONGC, Coal India and district administration to trace the workers trapped inside.

The labourers were on Monday trapped inside the 3-Kilo Coal Quarry in Umrangso area, around 250 km from Guwahati, after a sudden gush of water flooded the site.

According to employees of the quarry, there were around 15 workers inside the illegal mine when water breached one of the walls and flooded the entire shaft and tunnels. "We were told by the miners

that nine were missing and the rest escaped the tragedy. Out of them, one body was retrieved yesterday," the official said. He said that Coal India has

flown in a heavy pressure pump with a capacity of 500 gallons per minute from Maharashtra and it has reached Silchar airport in neighbouring Cachar district.

One Mi-17 chopper will transport the pump parts in 2-3 sorties and then it will be assembled here at the site. Already 5-6 pumps are working, but heavy siltation in water is creating problems for the pumps. We now need heavy submersible pumps and it is being arranged," the official said.

'complete rat-hole mine", which is totally illegal after a ban by the authorities concerned. The National Green Tribunal

He confirmed that it was a

(NGT) had banned rat-hole mining in 2014. However, coal is still extracted by this dangerous method in the Northeast.

"The shaft itself is 310 feet deep. Multiple channels were carved out through rat-hole technique from the shaft. We assume that a wall of one of the channels was breached and the entire shaft was flooded.

TUDAY **ALMANAC** Sukla Paksha Ekadashi Jan 09 12:22 PM to Jan 10 10:19 AM Dwadashi to Jan 11 08:21 AM Nakshatram Jan 09 03:07 PM to Jan 10 01:45 PM Jan 10 01:45 PM Rohini: to Jan 11 12:29 PM 11:00 AM to 12:23 PM Rahukalam Yamagandam: 3:09 PM to 4:32 PM Varjyam: 04:54 AM to 06:25 AM 8:15 AM to 9:38 AM Gulika:

11:29 AM to 01:00 PM Amritakalam: Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:01 PM to 12:45 PM HYDERABAD WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy Temp: 27°° Humidity: 59% Sunrise: 6:49 AM Sunset: 5:59 PM

Updated: January 9, 2025 5:00 PM

Will come into ...

Continued from Page 1

Ponguleti said that due to the Revenue Act-2020 commoners were facing many problems in Telangana. "Even three years after the passing of the Act, rules were not framed and as a result there is no village in Telangana without land disputes. The BRS government had completely destroyed the revenue system for its own selfish interests,"

He said the Congress government had initiated extensive steps to provide revenue services, which were confined to a few people during BRS rule. A Revenue Officer is going to be appointed for every revenue village to look after revenue administration, he said.

Ponguleti said the Indiramma government is working as the people want. The Revenue Department should work in accordance with the government's ideas and the government's intention is to bring the revenue system closer to the people. The people are at the centre of the government's decisions. Keeping that in mind, the Revenue Department should try to keep common people happy, he said.

SC refuses ...

Continued from Page 1

KTR had filed his petition seeking immediate intervention to quash the ACB case, with a request that the matter should be addressed on January 10. However, the court firmly maintained its earlier schedule. Meanwhile,

appeared before the ACB on Thursday in connection with the case. Reports indicate that

senior officials are questioning him regarding the alleged irregularities in the Formula E Race event.

The investigation by the ACB, coupled with mounting scrutiny from Central agencies, has put the case under intense focus. The Supreme Court's decision adds another laver of complexity to KTR's legal battles.

IAS officer Arvind Kumar ... Continued from Page 1

at

on deputation to Andhra after the stampede.

lowing the tragic incident in ity and curb administrative

Tirupati. Subbarayudu was sent oversight in the Tirupati area

The Central agency is looking into possible violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Former Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) Chief Engineer BLN Reddy appeared before

the ED on Wednesday and he was questioned for nine hours. Reddy was reportedly asked about the different aspects of the Rs 55 crore transferred to the UK-based Formula-E Operations (FEO) in forex, allegedly violating the FEMA and PMLA. He was

also asked why no clearance was taken

from the RBI for transferring the Arvind Kumar is being reportedly questioned on the basis of the statements given by BLN Reddy. He reportedly told officials that he acted as per the orders of Arvind Kumar.

The ED had earlier issued notices to BLN Reddy and Arvind Kumar to appear on January 2 and 3 respectively but they sought more time.

The ACB last month registered an FIR against BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, Arvind Kumar and BLN Reddy for alleged irregularities in the payment made by the HMDA to FEO and associated entities without adhering to established financial procedures.

The FIR was registered under Sections 13 (1) (A) and 13 (2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, along with Sections 409 and 120 (B) of the Indian Penal

Arvind Kumar had appeared before the ACB on Wednesday and was quizzed for about six hours.

KT Rama Rao, who is the accused number one in the case, appeared before the ACB on Thursday. He is scheduled to appear before the ÉD again on January 16.

The ED on Tuesday issued a fresh notice to KT Rama Rao, directing him to appear before it on January 16 after he failed to present himself before the agency on Tuesday. The BRS leader had sought more time to appear before the agency.

No arrest of KTR, only ... Continued from Page 1

He declared that he would continue to question the Congress government over its failures. "As KCR's son, I will die for Telangana if needed but won't bow in front of such people," he said.

He claimed that as BRS minister he had tried to enhance Hyderabad's brand image by bringing the Formula-E Race to the city. "When the BRS was in power, I did not give a Rs 1,137 crore contract to my brother-inlaw. As a Minister, Í did not give a contract to my son's company or purchase land cruisers with that money. Such things can be done by only Revanth Reddy and his Cabinet colleagues," he said. Earlier, KTR posted on 'X' that

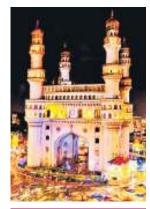
the BRS government had brought the Formula-E Race to make Hyderabad a hub of emobility. He claimed that it had yielded results with the state attracting investments of Rs 12,000 crore during the E-mobility Week 2023.

"I worked tirelessly to bring the prestigious event to India, making Hyderabad a pivotal hub for sustainable mobility as the world transitions towards it. The Formula-E Race was part of the effort to realise this. My objective was to make TMV (Telangana Mobility Valley) clusters the epicentre of innovation, research and the manufacture of electric vehicles creating employment and revenue. We had started well bringing in marquee investments of over Rs 12,000 crore during the E-mobility week 2023," he wrote.

"Small minds who are driven by petty politics may never understand any of this, but I am confident that the people of Telangana will understand the truth. Truth always triumphs and justice will prevail," he added.

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Governance & Leadership

By VRK Sharma

Ravindra Bharathi January 10,

(9 am to 1 pm)

Annual Day Celebrations

Care Model High School

Venue Ravindra Bharathi January10, (1:30 pm to 5 pm)

Lite Music

By Rallabandi Kamalamma Charitable Trust

Ravindra Bharathi January 10, (6 pm to 10 pm)

Detective Navalalu

Book launch

Venue Ravindra Bharathi

January 10, (6 pm)

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

Venue

Culinary Guru Institute, Hyderabad. Till January 11, 2025

Prajavani rescheduled to January 17

PNS HYDERABAD

Government of Telangana has announced that the State-level Prajavani programme, usually held every Tuesday and Friday at Mahatma Jyothiba Phule Praja Bhavan to receive citizens petitions, has been rescheduled.

The programme originally planned for Tuesday, January 14, has been postponed to Friday, January 17, due to the Makara Sankranthi

The government requests all petitioners to note the change and attend the Prajavani Programme on Friday, January 17.

City Pioneer



Minister Sridhar Babu launches 'Mee Ticket' app

PNS HYDERABAD

Highlighting the primary objective of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government to deliver effective governance to the people, IT Minister D Sridhar Babu launched the Telangana Department of Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) 'Mee Ticket' app at the State Secretariat on Thursday.

The 'Mee Ticket' app simplifies ticketing for Telangana citizens by providing a single platform for booking RTC and Metro tickets, entry to temples, passes for parks and tourist destinations, and more, eliminating the need for long queues.

On this occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu highlighted the app's development with expert input to ensure user-friendly and efficient service. He noted its potential to inte-grate various services, with plans for future innovations to enhance public convenience.

The app covers ticketing for 15 temples, 129 parks, 54 boating destinations, zoos, museums, RTC and Metro services, entertainment zones, community halls, gyms and sports complexes within GHMC limits. It also provides automated recommendations for nearby attractions based on user location, improving the overall experience. Users can make payments through secure UPI options without



Mud removal begins in Musi River following HYDRAA orders

PNS HYDERABAD

Acting on the orders of Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath's orders, Rajapushpa Constructions has begun removing the illegally dumped mud in the Musi River near Narsingi, close to Gandipet.

Two weeks ago, Commissioner Ranganath inspected the site after receiving complaints of illegal dumping and encroachment in the Musi River. Following his

visit, he directed Rajapushpa Constructions to clear the mud immediately. The company has since removed 40 feet deep and 30 feet high layers of dumped mud.

The Commissioner also instructed the Musi River Development Authority to demarcate the boundaries and issued clear orders to officials from the Irrigation, Revenue and Municipal departments to monitor the removal process.

On Thursday, Ranganath visited the site to review the progress and praised the officials for their

swift action.

In another development, Aditya Constructions has committed to clearing the illegally dumped mud in the same area within the next 10 days. Similarly, Pooja Homes has begun dismantling sheds and clearing debris near Neknampur Lake, as instructed by the Commissioner.

Meanwhile, Ranganath inspect-Gollavari Kunta in Shamshabad Municipality, where an 18-acre lake has reportedly been converted into layouts. Taking the matter seriously, he

directed Revenue and Irrigation officials to submit a detailed report immediately.

In another programme, residents of Saibaba Nagar Colony in old Alwal were relieved as their skating park's approximate area is 1600 sq yds has been recovered from encroachment with the support of HYDRAA team.

In addition to this, the colony has requested for a compound wall and the GHMC authorities have sanctioned a budget of Rs 10.5 lakh and tender has been



(HLF) releasing the poster of the 15th edition of HLF at

15th Hyd Literary Fest from January 24 to 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 15th Hyderabad Literary Festival (HLF) will take place from January 24 to 26, at Sattva Knowledge City and T-Hub. This prestigious event will feature over 200 speakers, 15 themed streams and a participation of 75,000 attendees.

During a press conference on Thursday, HLF committee member Vijay Kumar highlighted that HLF has been an annual international event since 2010, held in the last weekend of January. He mentioned that Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary to the IT Department, will be the Chairman for HLF 2025. This year marks the festival's 15th anniversary with streams including Climate Conversations, Cultural Events, Poetry (Kaavya Dhaara), Literature, Storytelling, Workshops, Youth Events (Youngistaan Nukkad) and more. He emphasised the festival's independence, noting it is volunteerdriven, free of charge and not tied to any corporate sponsorship.
Vijay announced that the inauguration

will feature chief guest Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and guest of honour Diana Mickevi?ien?, Lithuanian Ambassador to India. Other special participants include young Telangana writers Nishanth Injum based in the UK, and Ruthwika Rao, based in the US, actor Siddharth, and screenings of his film Chithha on January 26.

Kinnera Murthy shared this year's focus on poetry, book pitches by new authors and cultural activities like Adishakti (theatre) and Advaita (band). Discussions on Sindhi traditions, science and Hyderabad's natural rock conservation will also take place.

Meanwhile, Amita Desai noted HLF's eco-conscious approach, avoiding plastic at the festival and encouraging Metro use. Amita also shared that young artists are invited to encourage student curators. She also noted that this year's all-inclusive festival will feature a unique session on dog

training.
Urvi Desai said that climate conversations with WHO officials and sessions for students and teachers are among the key attractions. She added that activists and conservation groups will focus on promoting sustainable practices and raising environmen-

ISB Hyd, Samhita-CGF empower 500 rural women entrepreneurs

PNS HYDERABAD

(ISB) Hyderabad Executive Education, in partnership with Samhita-CGF, has completed pilot Women's Development Programme for 2023-2024. This three-month initiative trained 500 rural women entrepreneurs across Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Following its success, a new cohort of 550 women is now being trained across seven blocks in Uttarakhand.

The Indian School of Business

The programme combines online business modules from ISB Hyderabad and mentorship from Samhita-CGF. It covers business basics, financial literacy, marketing and digital skills while addressing socio-economic challenges. Women also benefit from



mentorship and networking opportunities. Many participants from the first cohort started businesses or secured livelihoods.

On Thursday, Executive Director at ISB Sujatha Kumaraswamy emphasised the programme's role in empowering rural women with entreknowledge. preneurial Meanwhile, CEO of Samhita Social Ventures Priya Naik

communities.

highlighted its potential to double the income of two million women entrepreneurs in

Graduates received joint certification from ISB Executive Education and Samhita-CGF. The initiative also identifies and develops 'Champions' from the course, who act as role models and change agents within their

TG PRISONS DEPARTMENT

30 years below convicts increase as total admissions remain at 41,138

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Prisons Department increase in total admissions, from 31,428 in 2023 to 41,138 in 2024. Admissions of male and female prisoners saw an uptick from 29,059 to 38,239 and 2,332

It was detailed by Director General of Telangana Prisons and Correctional Services Dr Soumya Mishra in the annual round-up on Wednesday. A significant surge of 71.12 per

cent was recorded in new inmates under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, jumping from 3,688 in 2023 to 6,311 in 2024.

Soumya Mishra said, "The performance makes us happy as we achieved premature release of



Director General of Telangana Prisons and Correctional Services Dr Soumya Mishra Soumva Mishra addressing a press conference on Wednesday

Focus on LRS applications, new SHGs: MA&UD Secy

213 prisoners. The individuals have not come up in other crimes again. We also provided study centres and saw 750 graduates and 225 post-graduates."

The department also recorded a reduction in the number of extremists from 46 in 2023 to 31

under PD Act) from 109 in 2023 to 25 in 2024.

2024 as against 12514 in 2023.

The report alarms on the data where 30 years below convicts have seen an increase 18,855 in

Over 20,000 e-mulaqats were

four de-addiction centres in Hyderabad, Cherlapally, Sangareddy and Nizamab ad The department announced

recorded by the department through the virtual platform by

The department has installed

smart kiosks for prisoners to

access court dates, parole infor-

mation and canteen coupons.

Security has also been upgraded

through installation of X-ray

baggage scanners, 124 CCTV

cameras, 105 walking talkies and

The department will set up

20 body-worn cameras.

Telangana Prisons

recruitment of academicians for teaching sociology, psychology, criminology and legal studies to trainees in the State Institute of Correctional Administration.

Curbs imposed for Sankranti festival in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad City Police have issued a notification outlining specific restrictions and guidelines to ensure public safety and maintain law and order during the Sankranti celebrations scheduled from January 13 to January 14. Commissioner of Police CV Anand has invoked provisions

under the Hyderabad City Police Act, 1348 Fasli, prohibiting kite flying on thoroughfares across the city. This measure is aimed at preventing accidents and breaches of public peace.

The notification also places restrictions on the use of loudspeakers, DJs and public address systems without prior police permission. Noise levels are mandated to remain within permissible limits as per the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, and ambient air quality standards. Night-time noise restrictions between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am will also be strictly enforced, adhering to directives from the Supreme Court of India.

Parents have been urged to supervise their children, advising them against flying kites from terraces without parapet walls and avoiding roads or vulnerable areas while pursuing stray kites. Awareness about the risks of electrocution while retrieving kites from electric poles has also been emphasized. In a bid to discourage unlawful practices, the notification prohibits the forcible collection of wood for

PNS HYDERABAD

Municipal Administration and Development (MA&UD) Principal Secretary Dana Kishore has directed municipal commissioners to prioritise resolving Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS) applications and establishing new Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Speaking at a meeting held at the Marri Chenna Reddy Development Institute with commissioners from 142 urban local bodies (ULBs) on Thursday, Dana Kishore emphasised the importance of efficient revenue generation and achieving tax collection targets. He instructed officials to expedite the LRS

Resource process, giving priority to regularising layouts on clear title lands. He set March as the deadline for completing LRS processes and encouraged applicants to secure building permits. He stressed that the LRS process must be completed transparently, leaving no room for errors.

Highlighting the government's agenda, Dana Kishore reiterated that every eligible woman should be part of an SHG. Under MEPMA, SHGs have already been linked to Rs 2,500 crore in bank loans this fiscal year, with the target raised to Rs 5,000 crore. He instructed municipal officials to plan the disbursement of the remaining Rs 2,500 crore

Skills varsity to start three new courses

PNS HYDERABAD

The Young India Skills University has announced notifications for three new courses to create employment opportunities for Telangana youth. Established by the State government, the university aims to develop skilled professionals for 17 priority sectors, including pharma, construction, banking, e-commerce, logistics, retail and animation, by adhering to high standards and collaborating with indus-

Designed by the Minister D Sridhar Babu's IT and Industries department, the courses are industry-focused and developed in partnership with leading companies. Graduates will have direct job placement opportunities with partner organisations.

The first course, the AIG Hospitals Endoscopy Technician Training Programme, is a six-month programme for BiPC intermediate graduates (minimum 50% marks, under 25 years). It combines classroom and practical training in endoscopy operations, with placements at AIG and other hospitals. The fee is Rs10,000.

The second course, the T-Works Prototyping Specialist Programme, is a two-month course for 10th-grade graduates (aged 18-25). It offers hands-on training in design thinking, 3D printing, CNC machining and more. Graduates can earn Rs 15,000-Rs 25,000 per month as pro-

totyping technicians. The fee is just Rs 3,000.

The third course, the Medical Coding and Soft Skills Programme, is a 55-day programme for B.Sc Life Sciences graduates (aged 18-25). It prepares participants for medical coding

roles with a fee of Rs 18,000. It is advised to visit www.yisu.in for more updates.

PNS HYDERABAD

In a move to enhance transparency and citizen engagement, Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) Dr Jitender has launched a new technical initiative on Thursday, a QR code-enabled Citizen Feedback Centre. This innovative system allows citizens to provide feedback on police services, aiming to improve service quality and the police-public interface. The Feedback Centre,

operating under DG-CID Shikha Goel now integrates QR codes for easier feedback

Citizens can scan the codes at police stations and offices using their smartphones, opening a form available in Telugu and English. The form also includes a voice recording feature for those unable

Feedback will be collected on services such as petitions, FIRs, e-challans, passport verifications and other interactions.

If no response is received through the QR code system, the Automatic Calling App will continue to gather feedback manually.

The insights collected will be used to rate and rank

officers, promoting accountability and improving public service delivery.

QR code for citizens to give feedback on TG Police

Speaking at the launch, DGP Dr Jitender emphasised the importance of the feedback system in gauging public satisfaction and enabling continuous improvement. "This initiative reinforces our commitment to building a citizen-friendy and responsive police force," he said.

The QR code feature will also be accessible through official police websites and social media platforms, ensuring wider reach and convenience for citizens.



Director General of Police (DGP) Dr Jitender, along with DG-CID Shikha Goel launches the QR code





HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | JANUARY 10, 2025

CT-scan machines at RIMS in need of urgent repairs

PNS ADILABAD

The CT-scan machines at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Adilabad are urgently in need of repair. Due to this, doctors at RÎMS have been referring patients, including those injured in road accidents, to private diagnostic laboratories for CT-scans. Both the CT-scan machine at RIMS and another at its affiliated superspecialty hospital have malfunctioned, prompting the referrals. However, this is a financial burden for many, as the cost of a CT-scan at private labs ranges from Rs 1,500 to Rs 5,000, which is unaffordable for the economically disadvantaged.

The CT-scan machine at RIMS has been out of service for four months, forcing patients to rely on the superspecialty hospital for their scans. Unfortunately, the machine at the hospital also broke down, leading to further inconvenience. While the state government had supplied an MRI machine worth Rs 11.50 crore to RIMS, there are no similar machines in private facilities within the district.

Although MRI scans have been conducted in emergency cases, the machine has faced issues, including cable damage caused by rats. For the past month, it has been non-operational.

RIMS Director Dr Rathod Jai Singh said that repair work is underway for both the CT-scan and MRI machines. Technicians have been deployed to address the issues, and the CT-scan machine is expected to be operational within the next two or three days.



Tummala assures Godavari water for Khammam

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao stated that Khammam district would soon become fertile with Godavari waters and that the works related to the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Scheme are progressing at a brisk pace.
On Thursday, the Minister,

along with Sathupally MLA M Ragamayee, inaugurated the office building and warehouse of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, built with NABARD funds, at Nuthankal village under Thallada mandal. Speaking on the occasion,

Minister Nageswara Rao mentioned that he has a long association with Thallada mandal. He emphasised that the government is working with a focus on farmers. He highlighted that a lift irrigation system was set up on the Nagarjunasagar, bringing water to the farthest fields, and check dams were constructed. He also stated that his long-held wish for Godavari waters to reach the farmers' fields would soon be fulfilled.

The Minister further



Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, along with Sathupally MLA M Ragamayee inaugurating the office building and warehouse of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society at Nuthankal in Khammam district on Thrusday

expressed that he had long desired Godavari waters to reach Khammam district, the district would receive water for irrigation from the Godavari even if there is a delay in releasing Krishna water to the region next year. The irrigation project was being brought to Khammam through a lift system, and the Chief Minister recently promised that pending works would be completed

He added that works related to the Sitarama Project are progressing in the 10 constituencies of the undivided Khammam district to provide complete irrigation coverage. Godavari waters will reach Sathupally and Vaira constituencies in the coming year, he confirmed.

Despite financial difficulties, the government has prioritised farmers' welfare. The Congress government fulfilled

its promise to waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh. The Minister up to Rs 2 lakh. The Minister said that all eligible farmers who took loans from Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and who qualify for loan waiver should provide details, and they too would benefit from the scheme.

The minister also stated that

The minister also stated that the farmer insurance scheme would continue.

It provides financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the families of farmers who have registered for the scheme. The government is taking measures to implement crop insurance schemes for every crop starting from the next Vanakalam (kharif) season. The insurance scheme is designed to cover crop losses, including lower yields, he said.

Farmers are encouraged to focus on alternative crops like oil palm, jowar, and other crops, in addition to rice.

The government is ready to

provide necessary infrastructure, warehouses, equipment and other support through the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, the

Teacher 'brutally' beats students, parents protest

About 30 students were rushed to hospital on Thursday after a teacher allegedly stuck them with a wooden stick at Duddeda Social Welfare Gurukula School in Siddipet district.

A physical Education Teacher (PET) who was supposed to teach discipline and culture to the students allegedly resorted to perpetrating violence on

Study hours for students of Intermediate and Class X are held every day at 6 am. As part of that, watchman Bharat woke up the students at 5.20 am. As it was late, all the students went to the bathroom. Some stayed back in the room. Vasu, who is PET got angry because of the late arrival of the students. He started beating them with a wooden stick, it is alleged.

It is reported that Azaru was treated at Siddipet Hospital. Harshavardhan, a student from Ramanthapur in Hyderabad, was seriously injured and



narrating the horrifying experience he had gone through at the hands of the PET at Social Welfare Gurukul School in Siddipet district

his parents Sambayya and Rajitha were informed of the incident. So they reached the school and expressed their anger at the teachers. They demanded immediate suspension of the PT teacher who treated the children like cattle.

Parents of several students, who arrived at the school, vented anger at the principal and other teachers for preventing the PT teacher from brutally assaulting their children.

Christian minorities advised to apply for free sewing

Christian minority women are advised to apply for free sewing machines under the "Indiramma Mahila Shakti Scheme" through the Telangana Christian Minority Finance Corporation by visiting the online website tgobmms.cgg.gov.in before January 20, said District Minority Welfare Officer K Sathyanarayana in a statement on Wednesday.

divorced, orphaned, or single, aged between 21 and 55 years and who have at least a 5th-grade education will be given priority. After applying online, applicants must submit the following documents along with the application: BC/SC caste certificate, baptism certificate, white ration card/food security card, if not available, an income certificate (not exceeding Rs 1.5 lakh for rural areas and Rs 2 lakh for urban areas), Aadhaar card for address verification, voter ID card/Aadhaar card for age verification, tailoring certificate from the Telangana Christian Minority Finance Corporation or any government-recognized institution, and educational qualification certificate copies.

PNS KHAMMAM

Women, who are poor, homeless, widowed,

Govt hospital staff accused of demanding bribes

PNS JAGTIAL

The laboratory staff at the district headquarters government hospital in Jagtial have been accused of extorting money from patients, collecting bribes, and referring their samples to private diagnostic laboratories instead of using the T-hub diagnostic facility available at the hospital. This practice has led to accusations of patient exploitation.

The hospital, affiliated with a medical college, has seen a significant increase in patient visits, especially with an estimated 500-600 patients coming to the outpatient ward during peak seasons, and at least 300 during regular days. On average, 20 hospital conducts about 200 diagnostic tests daily in its T-hub diagnostic facility, which offers 64 types of tests. However, the laboratory staff, allegedly motivated by greed, are said to be working in collusion with private diagnostic laboratory employees.

They are reportedly sending samples for tests like complete urine examination, blood tests, thyroid stimulating hormone test, malaria, HIV, and serum iron levels to private labs. They claim that essential chemicals are out of stock at the government lab, forcing them to send the samples to private facilities. Patients are being charged double the required fee, with the laboratory staff pocketing the excess as bribes.

This illegal activity has been ongoing, with reports of laboratory personnel making substantial profits, particularly from Gulf-bound laborers. Despite an incident coming to light where these practices were exposed, no action has been taken ing them to continue their illicit operations. Dr Suman Rao, the in-charge hospital superintendent, confirmed that he had received information about the lab staff referring samples to private labs under the pretense of a chemical shortage.

Man arrested for impersonating doctor at private hospital

PNS KAMAREDDY

Kamareddy town police arrested a person, named Mulkal Ravinder, who impersonated a doctor and worked at Star Hospital, according to Additional Superintendent of Police Chaitanya Reddy here on Thursday "A fake doctor working at

Star Hospital in Kamareddy has caused quite a stir. After learning about it, the police raided Star Hospital. It was discovered that Ravinder, who was working at the hospital, had been posing as a doctor for the past three years in various Kamareddy districts with the sole intention of making money. He created fake certificates claiming to have completed his MBBS from Gandhi Medical College, despite not having a degree," Chaitanya



Kamareddy Additional Superintendent of Police Chaitanya Reddy revealing the arrest of an imposter in Kamareddy

The police identified of Ramakrishnapur village under Mandamarri mandal. Ravinder, using the name "Dr Ravinder Reddy," had entered into a contract with Khanapur Shanmukha Hospital to work as a pediatrician for Rs 2 lakh salary a month. The police

apprehended the fake doctor, and upon investigation, they seized fake Aadhaar cards, certificates, a cell phone, and Ravinder had used certifi-

cates related to another person named Ravinder from Telangana University, matching them to his name and created fake certificates. The management of Star Hospital, which had fully trusted him when the hospital started, was shocked when they realised that he was a fake doctor. The police are now investigating whereelse Ravinder might have been providing treatment, as pitals in Kamareddy district. The police also conducted raids on these hospitals. Afterward, the fake doctor was taken into custody, and cases were registered under various sections, and he was remanded in judicial custody.

File No.: C6/03/2025 and Gazettes were Published for the Public purpose fo Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Phase-II, from MGSS to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, situated at Share-E Hyderabad Village, Bahadurapura Mandal of Hyderabad In response to the Said Notifications the following effected person (Property owners and others) have com-lorward to settle their claims through Negotiations. The detail of the willing affected persons are as follows. dated 16-11-2024 Premises Extent (26 to 50) address RHS 34 22-7-472 Bogum, W/o. Ahmed Hussain Abdul Fazal, R/o B-1-523/279/1/1. Brundhava Colony Tolichowki, Golkonda Hyderabad-500008. 2. Syeda Nayeem Unnisa W/o. Late. Mir Qutub Mohiuddin Ali Khan, R/o 22-7-472, Purani Haveli, 1. Sri Cheguri, Umanand, Sro. Late C. Krishna 2. Sri Cheguri Mahender, Sro. Late C. Krishna 3. Sri. Cheguri Santhosh, RHS 68 22-7-560 S/o. Late. C.Krishna 4. Sri. Cheguri Sujatha, W/o I. Sri Shaik Ishaq, S/o. 22-6-673 Shalk Osman, R/o.23-2-640, Shalibanda, Bahadurpura, tyderabad.500002. 2. Sri Mohammed Abdul Racof, 8/o. Mahamood Yaqub, R/o. 17-7-205/2, Naga bowli, Yakutpura, Charminar, Hyderabad-3. Sri Shaik Muzahi Zaho Bajaber, S/o. Shalk Zahoon Bajaber, R/o. 22-6-673/3. Alijah Kotia, Etabar Chowk 4. Sri Mohammed Yousuf S/o. Mohammed Haroon, R/o. 22-7-506, Purani Haveli, harminar, Hyderabad-Sri Mohd Wassem, S/o. No. 16-5-225, Farhat Naga

abad.500024.

S/o.Mohammed Ibrahim

No. 23-1-629, Bibi Baza

Moghalpura, Charminar,

No. C6/104/2024

(126 to 150)

No. C6/105/2024 - RHS (151 to 175)

dated 07-12-2024

dated 07-12-2024

in Sq. yds

All set for Vaikunta Ekadasi celebrations

Ramesh Vishnu, the hereditary chairman of the Siddipet Mohinipur Venkateswara Swamy Temple, and Vishwanath Sharma, the temple Executive Officer, announced that all arrangements for the Vaikunta Ekadasi uttara dwara darshan have been completed. Members of the Siddipet Mohinipur Temple Committee unveiled the Vaikuntha Ekadashi darshan brochure on the Sri Venkateswara Temple premises in the district. At a media conference, conference in Siddipet on Thursday



they were joined by the temple priests Venkataramacharyulu and Krishnama charyulu. They mentioned that five queues have been arranged for the darshan. A VIP line and a separate line for local people have been arranged at the backside of the temple. To ensure convenience for devotees, drinking water and medical camps have been set up. Arrangements for parking are also made at the R&B Guest House, Church Compound, High School Ground, and

Ex-MLA expresses shock over Tirupati tragedy

PNS RANGAREDDY

Former Telangana TDP Politburo member and former Shadnagar MLA Bakkani Narasimulu expressed profound shock and sorrow over

the tragic stampede in Tirupati, which resulted in the loss of six lives. Extending his heartfelt condolences, he conveyed his deepest sympathies to the bereaved fami-

In his statement, Bakkani Narasimulu urged the Andhra Pradesh government to prioritise

Narasimulu

the treatment of the injured by providing them with the best possible medical assistance without delay. Stressing the importance of immediate action, he called for swift measures to support those affect-

ed by this unfortunate incident. हंतियन केंद्र 🕰 Indian Bank # 3-5-335, Gandhi Road Phone: 0878-2260086, 9948125184

KARIMNAGAR - 505001 APPENDIX- IV-A" [See proviso to rule 8 (6) / 9(1)] Sale notice for sale of immovable properties Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 rea

ith proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guaranto s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Prysical/Constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Karlmnagar branch, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", an Whatever there is on 14.02.2025 for recovery of Rs. 1,05,39,887. |Rupees One Crore Five Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Seven only) as on 02.05.2022 due to the India Bank, Karimnagar Isranch, Secured Creditor, from Mile Valishnavi Hil Technology Seeds Accou No.6468558721 (OCC) & and Account No.6462192136 (Term Loan) represented by Partners N iheem Reddy Swender Reddy, Sri Dabbels Rejender Reddy, Srif Bheem Reddy Anithe, Sm Dabbeta Ramadovi, Sri Byroddy Ramreddy, Sri Pathi Devender Reddy, Srif Byroddy Srilatha, Smt Pathi Karya . The specific details of the property intended to be brought to sale through e tion mode are enumerated below:

Detailed Description of the Property: House bearing No. 5-78 of an extent 655.55 Sq Yad: ituated at Bigaid Village and Mandal of Karim Nager District under the jurisdiction of Sub legistration Sulfhanabad, District Registration Karimnagar, Belongs to Baireddy Snlaths indaries/East:PWD Road West: Open land of Banda Raisiah North: Land of Chennamanen

Srinivasa Prasad Rao, South Land o	of Chermamaneni Srinivasa Prasad Rao.				
Encumbrances on property	Mortgaged to INDIAN BANK				
Reserve Price	Rs.41.16 Lakhs (Rupees Forty One Lakhs and Sixteen thousand rupees only)				
EMD Amount	Rs.4.12 Lakhs (Rupees Four Lakh and Twelve thousand Rupees only)				
Bid incremental amount	Rs.0.10 Lakhs (Rupees Ten thousand only)				
Date and time of e-auction	14.02.2025 , 10AM to 5.00PM				
Property ID No	IDIB06468558721B				

lidders are advised to visit the website (https://bsanknet.com) of our e auction service provider PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance, please cal 8291220220. For Registration status and EMD status, please email to support.baanknet@psballiance.com. Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number nertioned above while searching for the property in the website with https://baanknet.com. rms and conditions of e-auction is available in the website (https://baanknet.com)

Date: 95.01,2024

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Late Moi	hein Bin Sayeed,	156	23-1-909	
	1-909, Moghalpura,			
Kalyani I	Nawab Devdi,			
Charmin	ar, Hyderabad-			
500002.				
Sri Moh	d Younus, S/o. Late	RHS	23-1-929	38.49
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Syed Sa	hab Lane, Dabirpura,			
Charmin	ar, Hyderabad-			
5000002.				
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It is hereby notified calling for claims and objections any, to be filed before the District Collector, Hyderabad District Special Deputy Collector, LA, HAML, Rasoolpura, Hyderabar within the seven days of publication of this Notification i.e., by

RHS

23-2-492.

Smt. Noor Begum, @ Alas

Noorani W/o. Ali Bin Abdullah

Nahdi, R/o. 3-C/4/2, Barkas

Sayeed Colony, Kothapet,

Special Deputy Collector, LA Date: 09-01-2025

Gang involved in stealing cement nabbed

PNS NALGONDA

Nalgonda District Police, under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent of Police K Shivaram Reddy, arrested a gang involved in the illegal transportation of cement using truck bulk-

ers. The accused were smuggling cement without any permissions, filling bags with fake company labels and selling them at higher prices, thereby defrauding both the public and the government. A total of 1,500 cement bags worth approximately Rs 4 lakh rupees

(each weighing 50 kg) and a lorry used for transportation were seized. Action on a tip-off, Nalgonda

SP Sharat Chandra Power issued orders for a joint operation by the Task Force and Chityal Police on January 9. Upon investigation, it

them at inflated prices. The arrested individuals are Gundala Naveen (Father: Srinu) from Chityala village, Gundala Durgaiah (Father: Somayya) from Chityala village, Gundala Srinu (Father: Somayya) from Chityala village, Avineni Ramanayya (Father: Ramayya) from Chityala (absconding). Perika Jayarasimha (Father: Nageswara Rao) from Agrharam, Jaggayyapet, NTR Krishna District, AP (Truck driver). Several others are currently

> The investigation revealed that these individuals, along with approximately 30 truck drivers, were involved in the illegal operation, using fake trade licenses and without approval from concerned authorities. The Nalgonda police are now identifying more individuals involved and will take further legal actions.

including

was revealed that the gang had

been loading cement beyond the

permissible weight limit from

companies like Sagar, Rashi, and

Nagarjuna Cement. They then

sold the excess cement by creat-

ing fake bags labeled with the

companies' names and selling



Nalgonda Police showing the seized stolen cement bags after arresting a gang in Nalgonda on Thurday



ACROSS THE STATES



Six surrendered naxals produced before NIA court

Six naxals who surrendered in the presence of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on December 8 were produced before a special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) here on Thursday. They underwent medical examinations at the Victoria hospital in the city, before the court proceedings. The Chikkamagaluru police escorted the surrendered maoists to the NIA special court. While the three women were kept at the Mahila Santwana Kendra near Dairy Circle, the three men were lodged at the FSL special cell in Madiwala. The surrendered group includes Mundagaru Latha and Vanajakshi from Chikkamagaluru, Sundari from Kotlur in Dakshina Kannada, Jisha from Kerala, Vasanth K from Tamil Nadu, and Marappa Aroli from Raichur. According to officials, the ultras handed over their uniforms and a formal surrender letter to the CM, signalling a shift away from insurgency towards integration into mainstream society



What is the solution for air pollution: HC

he Bombay High Court on Thursday wondered if there would be a solution for air pollution in the city or if citizens have to continue seeing haze each year after Diwali. It also suggested that bakeries should be prohibited from using wood and coal and batted for CNG and electric cars. A division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Girish Kulkarni said while all authorities are broadly aware of the problems and the reasons behind Mumbai's depleting Air Quality Index (AQI), the solution and measures to be taken need to be arrived at immediately. The bench had in 2023 taken suo moto (on its own) cognisance of the poor air quality in the city and state. On Thursday, the court noted that each year the situation is the same after Diwali. "What is the solution in such situations? All this starts every year after Diwali. Broadly we know the problems and the causes



Centre ignoring Dallewal's indefinite fast: SKM

he Samyukta Kisan Morcha on Thursday slammed the Centre, accusing it of ignoring the ongoing fast-untodeath of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal and asked it to hold talks with the protesting farmers. In a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' at Moga in Punjab, the SKM said the draft of the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM) announced by the Union government is "a dangerous form of re-enforcing the now-repealed three farm laws." It announced to burn the copies of the draft policy on January 13 and take out a tractor march on January 26. The SKM held the second 'Kisan Mahapanchayt' within a week to express their anger against the NPFAM, alleging it will "destroy" the mandi system if it is implemented. The first 'mahapanchayat' was held at Tohana in Haryana on January 4. The SKM leaders also lashed out at the AAP government in Punjab for not calling a session of the state Assembly for rejecting the draft policy on agricultural marketing.

India captured my heart, savs US envoy Garcetti

PNS MUMBAI

US ambassador to India Eric Garcetti on Thursday described his tenure in the country as the "most extraordinary", and said India captured his heart.

During his interaction with select media representatives on the sidelines of a programme here, he said the relationship between India and the US holds "endless possibilities".

Garcetti, whose term as the US ambassador to India is ending soon, said his stint in the country was the most

extraordinary job of his life.



place at the right time with the right relationship," he said.

"President Joe Biden had said India was the most important country in the world to him and if you want to work on the future, you need to come to India. No US president has ever said this," he

'Genome India data will help develop precision medicines'

Genome sequencing data of 10,000 Indians will now be available to researchers to develop precision medicines tailored for the local popula-tion, a step hailed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "milestone" in biotechnology research.

In a video-recorded statement to the Genomics Data Conclave here, Modi said the national database encapsulated the extraordinary genetic landscape of the country and promised to serve as an invaluable scientific resource.

The Genome India Data, that represents the genetic diversity in the country, will be available to researchers at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) through "managed access". "The GenomeIndia Project is an important milestone in the biotechnology revolution in India. I am told that through this project we have succeeded in creating a diverse genetic resource in the country," Modi said.

At the conclave organised by Department Biotechnology, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh unveiled the 'Framework for Exchange of Data (FeED) Protocols' for sharing of genetic data with researchers

Singh also launched the

The GenomeIndia Project is an important milestone in the biotechnology revolution in India. I am told that through this project we have succeeded in creating a diverse genetic resource in the country,"

'Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) DATA Access Portal' and unveiled the 'Call for proposals on Genome India Data'. "This will help in understanding the unique genomic

patterns of the Indian population. And only then can we prepare special solutions or effective medicines for the specific problems of a particular group," the prime minis-

Modi said in India, researchers were still unaware of several illnesses that are transferred from one generation to the next and the GenomeIndia Project will help in the development of effective treatment for all such diseases.

The prime minister noted that the GenomeIndia Project was launched in 2020 and scientists from 20 research institutes worked through the Covid pandemic on the whole genome sequencing of 10,000

world was looking towards India for solutions to global problems. "This is both a responsibility and an opportunity for our coming generations. Therefore, today a very large research ecosystem is being created in India. In the last 10 years, a lot of emphasis has been

major pharma hub of the world and has taken many revolutionary steps regarding public healthcare in the past decade. Principal Scientific Adviser Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General and Secretary, Department of Health Research Rajiv Bahl,

> occasion. Sood said the GenomeIndia Project data will create a precious national resource for India's public health.

GST is collected from the bil-

lionaires. The Corporate Tax

rate has been reduced from 30

per cent to 22 per cent," he said. Kharge said GST has been

imposed on 36 agricultural

products of farmers for the first

time. Even 18 percent GST has to be paid on the premiums of

Life Insurance and Health

The Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha also said Income

Tax collection increased by

240 per cent and GST collec-

tion increased by 177 per cent

Insurance, he said.

and Secretary in Department

of Biotechnology Rajesh S Gokhale were present on the

"It will facilitate advancements in the treatment of

genetic and infectious dis-

eases, foster the development

of new medications and preci-

sion medical techniques, and enable research into the lifestyles and habits of diverse communities," Modi said.

The prime minister said the

given to research and innova-

tion at every level of education,

he said. Modi said India has

established its identity as a



Kejriwal accuses BJP of manipulating electoral roll

FILES COMPLAINT WITH EC

PNS NEW DELHI

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission, alleging that the BJP has manipulated the electoral roll in the New Delhi assembly constituency from where he is contesting the upcoming elections.

Kejriwal alleged that people associated with the BJP applied to add 13,000 new voters in the electoral roll and they sought to cancel 5,500 voter entries to "influence" the voting in its favour. The former Delhi chief minister visited the Election Commi ssion (EC) on Thursday to lodge a complaint against these alleged malpractices.

Addressing the media after meeting EC officials, Kejriwal

said, "In the past 22 days, 5,500 applications have been received for deletion of voter names in the New Delhi constituency. There are about one lakh voters in this constituency, meaning applications to remove 5.5 per cent of the electorate have been filed in just 22 days." "This raises serious concerns, as when the Election Commission contacted some of these people, they denied submitting such applications. All 89 individuals contacted stated they had not filed any requests. It clear-

ly indicates a scam," he said. Kejriwal further highlighted the sudden surge in voter registration applications. "In the last 15 days, applications for adding 13,000 new voters have been received.

Bangladesh rejects allegations of mistreatment of Indian fishermen

PNS DHAKA

Bangladesh on Thursday rejected as "baseless and fabricated" the allegations about mistreatment of Indian fishermen, an apparent reference to recent remarks by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Expressing its "utter dismay and deep disappointment," Bangladesh Foreign Ministry also urged "all parties" to avoid such unfounded accusations that undermine the "spirit of bilateral cooperation and mutual respect.'

Banerjee had on Monday alleged that some of the 95 fishermen, who were released by Bangladesh recently, were beaten up in iail.

"I found some of them were limping. When asked, the fishassaulted in jail with their eral cooperation and mutual hands tied. As a result, they

Too many power centres in

have injuries below the waist and the legs ... They were crying while talking to me," Banerjee had said at the felicitation of the released fishermen. They were arrested for illegally entering Bangladesh waters more than two months ago. Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry on Thursday termed as "baseless and fabricated" the allegations of mistreatment of its fishermen detained in Bangladesh, and urged "all parties" to avoid making such ermen told me that they were undermine the spirit of bilat-

Modi govt has made GST a means of 'looting' poor: Kharge

PNS NEW DELHI

president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday alleged that the Narendra Modi government has made the Goods and Services Tax (GST) a means of "looting" the hard-earned money of the poor and middle class and demanded that it end this "tax terrorism" and "loot" in the upcoming Union

Budget.

Kharge further alleged that nine types of rates make GST 'complex and absurd" and not "good and simple tax".

'Call it 'Gabbar Singh Tax' or 'Household Destruction Tax' or Whatever name we call BJP's

PNS NEW DELHI

aspirants.

The Supreme Court on

Thursday agreed to examine a

plea against bringing down

from three to two, the attempts

given to Joint Entrance

Examination (JEE)-Advanced

When the plea came up

before a bench of Justices B R

Gavai and Augustine George

Masih, the petitioner's counsel

said, "This matter pertains to

the IIT (Indian Institute of

Technology) admission entrance examination in which

the number of attempts have

been reduced from three to



poor and the middle class," he d in a nost in Hindi on X

JEE-ADVANCED

SC agrees to hear plea

against cut in exam attempts

two." The lawyer said a simi-

lar plea was listed before the

bench on January 10 following which the court directed both

to be tagged. The fresh plea,

filed through advocate Sanieet

Kumar Trivedi, said it related

to the process for admissions into the prestigious IITs but the

The GST is a tax on public

GST a means of looting the Modi government rubs salt hard-earned money of the into their wounds by celebrating record GST collections.

-- i.e. 64 per cent -- comes from GST, one thing is certain -- the consumption, said the the pockets of the poor and the Modi government has made Congress chief, adding that the middle class but only 3 per cent

joint admission board (JAB),

entrusted to conduct the JEE-

Advanced exam, changed the

eligibility criteria for students

in an "arbitrary" manner.

"The JAB, vide its press release

dated November 5, 2024, first fixed

the permissible number of attempts

for JEE-Advanced at three, only to

change it abruptly vide another press

release dated November 18, 2024.

and thereby reducing the number

of attempts to two," the plea said.

"The abrupt changes in the eligibil-

ity criteria," it said, "has affected the

petitioner as well as thousands of

similarly situated persons denying

them a valuable opportunity to

in the last five years. "The Congress party demands that in the upcoming general budget, the Modi gov-'tax terrorism' and looting of the public," Kharge said in his

Raj govt causing confusion: Pilot

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Thursday said people of Rajasthan are suffering due to the confusion caused by too many power centres in the

state's BJP government.

He claimed that the BJP ministers and the state government often give conflicting statements and there is no clear policy. "People are suffering due to too many power centres in the BJP government of the state. Ministers in the government say something and the government says something else," Pilot told reporters here.



Highlighting the issue of the sub-inspector recruitment exam-2021, Pilot said the government is completely confused as its ministers say that they will get the exam cancelled whereas the government denies it. The people are ment.

within the government. There should be a clear policy. It has been so many months since this has been going on, he said.

"Whether it is the SI recruitment or other examinations, the state of uncertainty and indecision in it creates confusion among the public," he

Pilot said there is resentment among the people of the state due to the decisions taken by the BJP government in the last year. He said that Congress will raise the issue related to the people in the Assembly and seek a reply from the govern-

India's contribution to civilization remarkable'

PNS BHUBANESWAR

President of Trinidad and Tobago Christine Carla Kangaloo on Thursday said India has made some of the "greatest contributions" to the world civilization in various fields such as mathematics,

medicine and navigation. Addressing the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, 2025 convention virtually as the chief guest, Kangaloo said, "India's contributions to the world's development are remarkable. The world's first university was established in Takshashila in

700 BC. Stating that Ayurveda is widely acknowledged as an earlier school of medicine, she said that the art of navigation was born in the Sindhu river



'Algebra, trigonometry and calculus were also first developed in India," she said.

This apart, Kangaloo also noted that India was the first

country of civilization which used the symbol zero (0) in arithmetic operations. The game of chess is also believed to have originated in eastern

India while the decimal system is widely acknowledged to have been developed in India.

'And India's very own Shushruta is widely acknowl-

edged to be the father of surgery," she said. India is one of the countries that established diplomatic relations with Trinidad and Tobago following the country's independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, Kangaloo said. "Our country's ties with India, however, long precedes that. Our relationship goes back to 1845 when the first ship carrying 225 Indians reached the shores of Trinidad and Tobago, then a British colony," she said.

Nearly 72 unbroken years thereafter, more than 1,43,000 Indians came from cities and states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and many others, reshaping the social, demographic, economic and cultural landscape of Trinidad and Tobago forever, the Trinidad and Tobago President said. "They were a fascinating mix of people - languages, tradition and belief system, all united in a new life," Kangaloo said. Lauding India's efforts in holding the PBD, she said that over the last two decades, this convention has been collaborating between India and its diaspora.

Kangaloo thanked India for conferring the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) on her. The award will be handed over by President Murmu on Friday.

"In conferring the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman (award), the government and the people of India give powerful expression to the commitment to strengthen the ties between India and all of its children throughout the world," she



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Breaking ice

The India-Afghanistan talks reflect India's shift from nonrecognition of the Taliban to a pragmatic approach to engagement

n a significant step towards recalibrating ties, India and the Taliban-led Afghan government held a high-level meeting in Dubai. The dialogue, attended by India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, revolved around enhancing bilateral relations and addressing regional challenges. The talks, focusing on economic, humanitarian, and strategic cooperation, underscore India's pragmatic approach toward engaging with Afghanistan despite the complex political dynamics following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. India's relations with Afghanistan have been historically robust, characterised by cultural and economic collaboration. However, the Taliban's return disrupted bilateral ties, with India maintaining a cautious stance while continuing to provide humanitarian aid. The evolving geopolitical landscape, Pakistan's actions in the region, and Afghanistan's dire humanitarian crisis have necessitated a renewed engagement. The discussions also



gain relevance amidst regional tensions, notably Pakistan's airstrikes in Afghanistan, which New Delhi strongly condemned. This shared concern over Islamabad's destabilising actions further aligns Indian and Afghan interests, fostering mutual coop-

The Dubai meeting covered a wide range of topics. India reaffirmed its commitment to aiding Afghanistan's recovery. It pledged continued support in healthcare, food security, and disaster relief, building on its earlier contributions, such as 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat, medical supplies, and vaccines. Besides, both sides emphasised the strategic impor-

tance of Chabahar Port in Iran as a key trade and humanitarian supply route. The port offers Afghanistan access to global markets, bypassing Pakistan, and could serve as a stabilising economic lifeline for the war-torn country. India has expressed readiness to resume developmental activities, including infrastructure and capacity-building projects. This signals India's willingness to strengthen Afghanistan's socio-economic framework despite challenges posed by the Taliban's governance. The Afghan delegation addressed India's concerns about terrorism and regional stability, assuring cooperation to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for anti-India activities. The talks indicate a shift in India's approach. This may encourage other nations to adopt a similar stance, recognising the necessity of dealing with the Afghan government. But the biggest takeaway from this meeting indeed was Strengthening India-Afghanistan ties to counter Pakistan's influence in the region. Islamabad's strained relations with Kabul, exacerbated by recent airstrikes, present an opportunity for New Delhi to assert its role as a reliable partner. Reviving trade and development projects through Chabahar Port could bolster Afghanistan's economy and offer India strategic leverage in Central



A commuter rides his bicycle through a mustard field on a winter morning, in Nadia

Navigating Trump redux: India's tightrope



While Trump's focus on countering China could strengthen Indo-US strategic ties, his erratic temperament and divisive policies present challenges

n India, there is a mix of excitement, tentativeness, and even concern, with the second coming of Donald Trump as the President of the United States. While Trump's excitable temperament is well known, he ought to be served better with hindsight of experience. But he may not. While India will remain resolutely relevant and critical in his foreign policy calculus, the handling of certain issues could test Indian reaction and patience. His inevitable fixation with managing China will necessitate nurturing the strategic 'pivot' of India as a counterbalance, Delhi's deep-rooted equations with countries like Russia or Iran, could earn his ire and vitriol

A lot will depend on 'Team Trump' who will aid and assist Trump as he attempts the shape his poll promises of MAGA i.e., Make America Great Again! However, unlike the first term when he did inherit and heed reputation and professionalism as the criteria for key jobs in the Trump administration (though subsequently, he developed a penchant for 'revolving door' ousters of many), this time the criteria only seem to be 'loyalty' to Trump, personally.

There is a disconcerting and contradictory logic to many recent appointments that begs the question if it indeed will be 'business as usual' – something Delhi had got used to, irrespective of the dispensation in Washington DC. Sadly, that vital presence of 'adults in the room' from the first Trump administration who were able to navigate and manage Trump out of his outlandish and fickle ideas, will not be present anymore. If anything, in a room filled with 'loyalists' (read, obsequious staff), chances that someone will play the 'adult in the room' anymore, will be starkly lesser than before, as there could be competitive grovelling to valourise Trump's ideas, whatever be the portent. How will Trump's purported 'non-interventionist' preferences sit with Sino-wary countries like India, Japan or Australia (the other three from QUAD framework) that are in the direct line of Chinese belligerence and expansionism? Will Trump's 'non-intervention-

ist' instinct embolden Beijing to finally bite the bullet on Taiwan and storm the same, knowing that beyond mouthing platitudes, Washington DC will not intervene militarily? The picture emerging out of a beleaguered (and potentially isolated) Ukraine does not seem reassuring from a security angle, as the possibility of America pushing its 'allies' under the bus, seems very plausible. Even disconcerting memories of the Summer of 2020 when the Chinese aggression pushed through Indian frontiers, with a seemingly disinterested Trump offering to 'negotiate a deal' instead of adopting a

more assertive stance, are still

Indeed, the Americans had expedited the exports of weaponry to Delhi, but all that made imminent commercial sense to the die-hard businessman in Trump. Just how ramrod and unfailing will the Trump support be in meeting any such exigency in the future, is worth considering. Even in bilateral relations, there is a fresh bunch of unrestrained radicals who make up the Trump redux cabinet They may or may not play by the traditional rulebook of THE DISPENSATION diplomacy and could make comments that are unpalatable IN WASHINGTON DC to Indian sensibilities. Delhi will be under immense pres-



THERE IS A

DISCONCERTING AND CONTRADICTORY LOGIC TO MANY **RECENT APPOINTMENTS** THAT BEGS THE QUESTION IF IT INDEED WILL BE 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' -SOMETHING DELHI HAD GOT USED TO, IRRESPECTIVE OF

engagement and conversations, as the Indian democracy has its dynamics and imagined perceptions that will disallow unruly comments, even if they were to come from the

Adding to the complexity is the contradiction that many amongst this new Trump cabinet are trigger-happy interventionists (e.g., Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Elise Stefanik the Ambassador to UN etc.,) a la neoconservatives whom Trump rubbish repeatedly – how this contradiction will manifest will be interesting. Even on non-security issues like immigration, trade terms, or commitment towards the environmental issues, could be a very rocky ride for Delhi

India has made ambitious commitments towards the global environmental cause, whereas Trump's rhetoric has cockily been, "We're going to drill, baby, drill," and con-firmed that, "I will terminate the green new scam". While India isn't on top of its target list on immigrant issues, it will only be a matter of time before the bogey "stealing your jobs" impacts India. Trump will be a mega populist who will dance to the redneck wish list and this will impact relations with the world's largest democracy, a lot more gravely than other countries.

Trump has demonstrated a ter-

rifying ability to shed responsibilities towards his allies (sovereign, coalition, and even personal) and also his moral responsibility by readily abandoning its vital geostrategic stakes (remember Afghanistan, and now Syria) with a thoughtless shrug of the shoulder and "not my problem" approach. This tests the will to invest in a transactional relationship like the one offered by Trump, as no support can be construed for

Owing to his polarising politics of identity and blind support for the likes of Benjamin Netanyahu, the narrative emanating from the White House could jeopardise and harm the societal fabric of a diverse country like India that needs to maintain an inclusive outlook. America itself is in for a tumultuous time with the President-designate having promised to close the border with Mexico and launch the largest deportation exercise in US history within hours (not days) of taking over. While Donald Trump's rhetoric is usually more bark than bite, India may find it difficult to accommodate his provocative talk and tempera-

ment, beyond a point. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Åndaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views are personal)

How India's healthcare sector is accelerating towards Viksit Bharat 2047



As India embarks on its journey toward becoming a \$35 trillion economy by 2047, the healthcare sector emerges as a critical pillar in this transformation.

s India aims to achieve A its ambitious goal of becoming a \$35 trillion economy by 2047, the healthcare sector stands as the cornerstone of this transformation. With aspirations to increase the average life expectancy from 71 to over 85, India's vision of Viksit Bharat aligns closely with the sentiment of "Swasth Bharat, Viksit Bharat, and Niramaya Bharat." It considers a robust healthcare system not just as a necessity but as the foundation for a healthier, more productive nation.

A Visionary Healthcare System

As part of its vision, the government strives to establish a healthcare system capable of addressing the diverse needs of a population exceeding 1.4 billion.

Not only are efforts underway to improve physician and hospital bed ratios, expand access to affordable healthcare, and ensure universal health insurance coverage but the inclusion of senior citizens over 70 years through the Ayushman Bharat Vay Vandana Card highlights the commitment to an inclusive healthcare approach. India's Viksit Bharat 2047 journey

builds upon substantial achievements in the healthcare sector. Since independence, the nation has witnessed notable reductions in neonatal, infant, under-five, and maternal mortality rates, reflecting improved healthcare outcomes.

Flagship initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres, the establishment of new AIIMS, and a growing network of medical colleges have bolstered healthcare delivery. Moreover, digital advancements through initiatives like CoWIN, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, and e-Sanjeevani have revolutionized healthcare accessibility, particularly in rural areas.

Role of the Pharmaceutical

India's pharmaceutical leader- emphasis on preventive care, ship has further solidified the country's position as a global healthcare contributor. mass-produced to biotech-As a leading producer of vaccines and generic medicines, supported by advancements the nation plays a pivotal role in ensuring global healthcare equity. Coupled with its steadily increasing medical tourism industry, India continues to attract patients worldwide, offering advanced care at affordable costs.

The private sector continues to play a crucial role in complementing public healthcare efforts. Innovation, R&D, and cost-effective healthcare models spearheaded by private players have extended quality healthcare to remote and underserved regions. Technological advancements, from AI and robotics to telemedicine and wearables, are shaping the future of healthcare delivery, making it more accessible.

Roadmap of Viksit Bharat 2047 includes priorities such as workforce development through the expansion of medical and nursing colleges, further integration of cutting-edge technologies, and an are personal)

mental health, and holistic wellness. The transition from based personalized medicine, in CRISPR and nano-technology, is set to redefine pharmaceutical practices.

India's healthcare system is also poised to transform its business models, shifting from predominantly out-ofpocket expenses to public and insurance-funded frameworks. This evolution will not only strengthen the healthcare sector but also ensure equity and affordability for all.As India strives toward its 2047 goals, public-private partnerships and an unwavering commitment to equitable healthcare are vital. India's healthcare providers remain dedicated to contributing to this transformative journey. By fostering innovation, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring quality care for all, 2047: Looking ahead, the roadmap to Viksit Bharat gral role in building a healthier, stronger, and more prosperous India.

The writer is CMD, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad; views

INDIA'S GDP GAP WITH CHINA WIDENS Madam — An analysis of the economies done by a start-up highlights the pressing necessity to boost India's lacklustre growth. In 1980, India's Gross Domestic Product was \$186 billion, close to China's \$303 billion. But, by 2024, India's GDP had grown 21 times to \$3.93 trillion, while China's GDP had surged to \$18.5 trillion-61 times its 1980 level. To put it differently, China's GDP in 2004 was 2.82 times greater than India's. In 2014, it was 5.13 times greater and in 2024, 4.71 times greater. India's GDP surged 2.94 times from \$694 billion to \$2,043 billion between 2004 and 2014, while it grew merely 1.92 times, reaching \$3,930 billion between 2014 and 2024. Had the GDP growth in the decade starting in 2004 persisted in the decade beginning in 2014, the GDP disparity would have further

sure to moderate the bilateral

The decade before 2004 was a period of consolidation after structural reforms were initiated. India has to rejig its economic strategy to achieve a consistent 9-10 per cent rate of growth. India chose a mixed economic system, which combines the features of both socialist and freemarket economic systems. The recent push towards private investment in government-owned assets has served only as an easy route for crony capitalists to enrich themselves into billionaires. Democratic India can consider a new economic system aimed at fostering faster

However, growth in Southern India, which accounts for about 31 per cent of GDP, has thrived under the current system and can accelerate further with adequate support from the Centre. Northern India needs to explore strategies to bridge the gap with the South. And the ostrich-like attitude and constant denials hinder progress in addressing realities. The nation must embark on a rapid growth path that creates jobs, elevates the living standard of common man and reduces inequality.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

India's Al gets a leg-up



golden chapter has begun in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India. The announcement by Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella to invest \$3 billion (approximately Rs 25,000 crores) marks a historic step toward elevating India's technological capabilities to new heights. This initiative will serve as a foundation for strengthening visionary programs like Prime Minister Narendra

STAMPEDE AT TIRUPATI TEMPLE Madam — Six devotees, including four women, and many injured in a stampede near Vishnu Niwasam in Tirupati for getting tokens to visit Tirumala Srivari Vaikuntha Dwara is disturbing, tragic and appalling. A huge rush for getting tokens by devotees had caused the tragedy. But this accident at Tirupathy is unfortunate and could have been avoided. It is the utter failure of the state machinery. Mismanagement in the crowd governance system is a primary cause of the

accident. An immediate investigation should be conducted into this incident. Officials should be made accountable for negligence of duty. People were accommodated in temporarily constructed compartments and neatly provided darshan. This token system is ill-advised and should be dispensed with. All safety measures should be put in place so that people have a hassle-free Vaikunta Ekadasi Darshan, which is to run for the next ten

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

Modi's 'Digital India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India). The Government of India is already committed to promoting digital infrastructure, skill development, and startups. Microsoft's investment will further bolster

The initiative to train 10 million Indians in AI over the next five years is a significant step to prepare the youth for global competition. This effort will create new opportunities in areas such as cloud infrastructure, data centres, and SaaS (Software as a Service). With the support of the government. Indian industries and startuns will become global leaders in competition. The collaborative efforts of Microsoft and the government will not only place India in a leading position on the global AI map but also pave the way for entering a golden era of self-reliance and innovation

RK Jain | Barwani

EARTHQUAKE IN TIBETMadam — Powerful Tibet earthquake near Nepal kills 53, injures 62; tremors also felt in Bhutan and northern India, including Delhi-NCR and parts of Bihar. The impact of the temblour was felt across the region of 800,000 people, which is administered by Shigatse, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, one of the most important figures in Tibetan

Buddhism. Can we ever forget the havoc the Nepal earthquakes wreaked back in 2015, killing about 9,000 people, or the huge quake in China's Sichuan province in 2008 that killed almost 70,000 people? Today (on January 7, 2025), a 7.1 magnitude earthquake, near the Nepal-Tibet border, was felt in North India. India's geographical position at tectonic plate boundaries makes it prone to earthquakes, particularly in the Himalayan and Northeast regions.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

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FIRST COLUMN

TRUMP 2.0: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASEAN

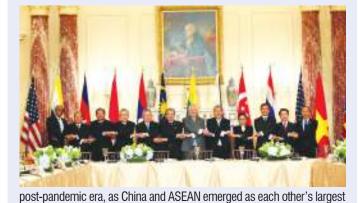
With Trump's return, Southeast Asia finds itself bracing for another era of US ambiguity



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

Ith the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency, Southeast Asia braces for another era of unpredictability in American foreign policy. Southeast Asian nations, while expressing formal congratulations following Trump's victory, are now focusing on how his administration will impact their economies and strategic interests. As the region's governments gear up for a distinctly different governance style than the one under President Joe Biden, the potential for dramatic shifts in trade relations, diplomatic ties and regional stability is palpable. The ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—spanning from Indonesia to Myanmar—are acutely aware that Southeast Asia may not be at the top of the new administration's

Trump is a known figure for his transactional and often unpredictable style of diplomacy. ASEAN countries, while understanding the volatility that a Trump administration can bring, remain cautiously optimistic that his return might lead to a return to serious trade talks. Many regional leaders believe that Trump's preference for direct, bilateral negotiations could lead to more favourable deals for specific countries, particularly those that are not bound by multilateral negotiations, like those seen under Biden's tenure. Yet, for many in Southeast Asia, the most pressing concern remains the US-China relationship. Since Trump's first term, ASEAN nations have had to balance their relationships with both China and the US, seeking to maintain economic growth and regional security without angering either side. The dynamic has changed considerably in the



trade partners. The direction of US-China relations will have profound consequences for Southeast Asia's economic stability and security. Under Trump, this relationship was tense, marked by the trade war and military posturing, and the nomination of hardline China critics, such as Marco Rubio for Secretary of State and Mike Waltz as National Security Advisor, signals that the US will continue to confront China head-on in ways that could disrupt regional dynamics. While many ASEAN leaders are concerned about the economic impact of a hard-line US-China policy, there is also hope that Trump's presidency could bring muchneeded attention back to Southeast Asia's trade and strategic importance. This could be particularly appealing to resource-rich nations like Indonesia and the Philippines, which are in high demand for critical minerals used in electronics and green technologies. On the other hand, a significant worry for ASEAN countries is that they may become collateral damage in the US's efforts to reduce its trade deficit.

Despite these uncertainties, ASEAN's primary goal will remain stability and balance. ASEAN countries will push for steady relationships with both global powers, aiming to shield themselves from the worst effects of US-China tensions while seeking to expand their own economic and diplomatic space. To avoid being left behind, India is watching the space closely, as it is well aware that Trump will target Delhi soon.

Delhi is trying to rebuild bilateral relationships with several ASEAN groups of countries, even as it participates with full vigour on the multilateral platform. The chief guest for 2025 Republic Day would be the President of Indonesia, a key country in ASEAN. India's exports to the US could be hit due to Trump's overtures and it needs to find new markets for its products, while gently easing out domestic compliances and trade barriers. The region's future relationship with the US will depend not only on Trump's domestic agenda but also on how ASEAN and India navigate the delicate balance between American and Chinese influence in the years to come.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

The courage to tell untold stories on the celluloid



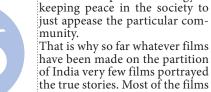
Despite the challenges, a new wave of filmmakers continues to illuminate untold stories, challenging entrenched narratives and bringing forgotten truths to light



ecently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has praised the film The Sabarmati Report produced by Ekta Kapoor and her Balaji Motion Pictures. Before this also PM has been praised films - The Kashmir Files and The Kerala Story. It took almost seventy years after the independence of India, for a few courageous filmmakers like Vivek Agnihori to make Buddha in a Traffic Jam, The Tashkent Files, The Kashmir Files, and Vaccine War; Sanjay Puran Singh make 72 Hoorain and Sudipto Sen to make The Kerala Story and Bastar: The Naxal Story both produced by Vipul Shah. Fortunately, most of these films have been celebrated among the audiences overwhelmingly. The group of pseudo-secular, those who still control the fake narratives to spread one-sided, false propaganda throughout the world, have also been super active in dismissing these films.

But not all filmmakers are lucky enough forget about PM's praise to release their films, get proper distribution channels or theatres, or the cooperation from the local authorities, governments and positive reviews by film critics. It is almost swimming against the tide. After the success of those films, some independent filmmakers got the courage to tell the true stories, incidents which were unfortunately never been part of our history syllabus. The incidents were not discussed, or debated much by the elite of the society or the so-called liberal, secular, intellectual groups. Very few filmmakers dare to make films on those subjects, because, in most cases, the victims are the majority Hindu community while the oppressors are from other communities. Since the last many years there has been a tendency among the liberals, that whenever the Hindus are the victim, the stories have been buried with all extra efforts so that the so-called peace should be maintained in society.

Even if there has been immense loss of human lives, property, rape of women, and permanent displacement from the homeland, nothing is much more impor-



tant than the pseudo ideology of keeping peace in the society to just appease the particular community. That is why so far whatever films have been made on the partition

the true stories. Most of the films are sugar-coated to portray that the victims belong to both com-munities and it was a loss for everyone. No doubt the partition SINCE THE LAST of India was a great loss for all the communities but why do we feel

MANY YEARS ashamed to point out the faults and the responsible people?

THERE HAS BEEN Neither our history books nor the literature or cinema have been ever so brave as to tell the actual stories of our society.

AMONG THE Filmmaker M K Shivaaksh made LIBERALS, THAT WHENEVER THE Godhra which is based on the infamous case of Godhra in Guiarat, where fifty-six Ram

Guiarat, where fifty-six Ram HINDUS ARE THE devotees were burnt alive in a VICTIM, THE train coach of the Sabarmati Express by one particular com-STORIES HAVE munity. Again the film became BEEN BURIED the victim of the ecosystem and got a very limited release so the WITH ALL EXTRA film can't be seen by many people in the country. While The EFFORTS SO THAT Sabarmati Report not only got THE SO-CALLED praise from the PM but also Yogi Adityanath, Pushkar Singh PEACE SHOULD Dhami and Naib Singh Saini took time to watch the film along BE MAINTAINED with the crew and casts and made IN SOCIETY the film tax-free in their respective states UP, Uttarakhand and

Haryana because of Ekta Kapoor Smriti Irani connection. But Shivaaksh was not that lucky at

He had planned to release his film Accident or Conspiracy: Godhra in February but the censor board delayed the process for seven months. They have asked for literally all the evidence and the makers have provided all the related evidence based on the government helped him a lot

Nanavati - Mehta Commission Report, Court Verdicts, eyewitness records as well as all the supporting documents. To study the material the censor

board took seven months and even after that they gave the certificate where they chopped about fifty per cent of the content, informed Shivaaksh. Unfortunately, some renowned actors also took advantage of the situation from these novice young independent filmmakers to bully them, those who have good connections with the government agencies as well as some strong political backing. Initially, they talk big to bag the role and comparatively good remuneration, but after the film is completed, instead of beloing the film for instead of helping the film for smooth sailing, they even discourage the other co-actors from not promoting their film just pretending to be secular. Forget to help with the censor process, they don't even come forward to pro-

social media. Pushpendra Singh director of Ajmer 92, Kamal Chandra director of Humare Baraah and Shivaaksh, all of them have the same terrible experiences with some of their actors. Akashaditya Lama's Bengal 1947 described the hardships faced by the displaced Hindu refugees from the then East Pakistan now Bangladesh to the completely unknown, unfamiliar terrine of present days Chhatisgarh.

mote the film, nor even post on

A few political leaders high ambitions divided the country into three different territories and created devastating for the crores of innocent people in the country. The film was released in very limited theatres. Akashaditya said that when he made the film in Chhatisgarh, the then Congress without imposing many terms and conditions, then Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, told him only not to show Pundit Nehru in a bad light.

Even a cabinet minister came to receive the shooting team at the airport, and arranged the fullproof security for the entire team, with overwhelming hospitality. By the time the film got ready to release BJP government came to power in Chhatisgarh, but unfortunately, the film never got any special attention or tax rebate from the local government. However, the films have been screened at various film festivals. In the same manner, another film The Diary of West Bengal directed by Sanoj Mishra has suffered massively at the hands of the government and political elements of West Bengal.

Finally, the film was released which too a very limited release by the order of the court. All of these films are not only talking of the great human rights violations by one particular religious community towards the majority Hindu community but also these films are unbiased, true documentation of time a political era as well as the impact on society. Unfortunately, none of these films got any recognition, big awards or even tax rebates from the government. In this situation, a special section "The untold stories" could have been curated in the just concluded International Film Festival of India (IFFI) which would have been very much appropriate to showcase the film to the larger audiences, as well as the screening at IFFI would have certainly boosted the morale of the filmmakers.

(The writer is a Delhi based Film Festival curator. The views

What gaming regulation can learn from SEBI'S F&O regulations

India's gaming sector stands at a critical juncture. Thoughtful regulation can help it realise its immense potential while safeguarding consumers

wo seemingly disparate sectors—India's gaming industry and capital markets—are drawing significant attention in public policy discourse. Both sectors hold immense promise: gaming contributes to job creation, while capital markets foster capital formation. However, both also pose substantial challenges. Gaming can lead to habit formation and addiction, while the Futures and Options (F&O) segment of capital markets carries risks of speculative losses. Policymakers have tackled these challenges differently, with contrasting approaches in gaming and F&O regu-

The Opportunities and Challenges: India is a global tial to generate significant gaming hub, housing 40 per



MANDAR KAGADE

around 568 million playersand employing 15,000 developers. The sector's revenue is rojected to grow from \$3 billion in 2023 to \$6 billion by 2028, potentially creating 250,000 new jobs over the next decade. With development costs in India nearly 50 per cent lower than the global average, gaming has the poten-

export revenues.

on balanced regulation, particularly concerning gaming's habit-forming nature. Unfortunately, current proposals by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), and other stakeholders lean toward rigid, prescriptive measures, drawing inspiration from China's heavy-handed regulatory framework

Flaws in Current Gaming Regulation

1. Time and Age Restrictions Proposals to impose strict time limits and age restrictions on gaming apps are touted as innovative but raise significant concerns. Forcing intermediaries to monitor minors' activities infringes on privacy and cent of the world's gamers— However, this growth depends contravenes the data minimi-

sation principle of India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA). Such policies may inadvertently lead to surveillance overreach, compromising minors' online privacy.

Parents, who have a far greater vested interest in their children's wellbeing, are better positioned to manage their gaming habits. Handing this responsibility to unelected bureaucrats not only undermines parental discretion but also risks creating intrusive and overly broad policies.

2. Blanket Warnings and **Advertising Restrictions** The Ministry of Education's 2021 advisory linking online gaming to "gaming disorder" is an overgeneralisation. Such broad statements, without clinical substantiation, stigmatise



gaming and equate it with gambling. Similarly, ASCI's restrictions on advertisements portraying gaming as a viable career path stifle creativity. These measures lump educational and cerebral games with gambling-like activities, disincentivising developers from creating "good habit-forming" games. This could slow innovation and limit the gaming sector's growth potential.

Learning from SEBI's anced approach—relying on Approach to F&O Regulation The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) faced a similar challenge with F&O trading, where explosive volumes exposed retail investors to speculative risks. Instead of resorting to outright bans. Key Steps by SEBI:

Increased Contract Sizes: Raising the minimum investment size by 50 per cent reduced speculative trading by retail investors.

Disclosure Requirements: Brokers were mandated to display potential downsides prominently, promoting informed decision-making. Structural Adjustments: Limiting weekly expiries to one per exchange curbed excessive speculative activity. These steps exemplify a balnudges and incentives rather than bans. SEBI recognised that heavy-handed policies could undermine broader goals, such as increasing equity market participation.

India's gaming sector can benefit from SEBI's measured approach to F&O regulation. Policymakers must embrace strategies that balance innovation, consumer protection, and industry growth. Here are three actionable recom-

mendations: 1. Nudges and Incentives Over Mandates: Rather than micromanaging user behavior, regulators can incentivise responsible gaming through voluntary measures. For instance, gaming platforms could offer rewards for adhering to healthy gaming limits.

2. Transparent Education Over Stigma

Policymakers should prioritise honest disclosures about gaming's potential downsides instead of messaging that fosters shame. Clear and factual communication can empower gamers to make informed choices without demonising the industry.

Consideration of **Unintended Consequences:** A tunnel-vision approach risks stifling innovation and creating barriers to growth. Policymakers must evaluate how restrictive measures might deter investment, hinder creativity, or drive users to unregulated platforms.

(The writer is Founder & Principal, Black Dot Public Policy Advisors; views are HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | JANUARY 10, 2025

IN BRIEF



Gold rises to Rs 80,300 on global cues

old price climbed Rs 300 for a third consecutive session to Rs 80,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid strong global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Traders said the precious metal surged, following news that People's Bank of China (PBoC) increased its reserves for the second consecutive month. In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity ended at Rs 80,000 per 10 grams. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 300 to Rs 79,900 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver rose by Rs 500 to Rs 93,000 per kg from the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg on Wednesday. Additionally, gold contracts for February delivery climbed Rs 247 or 0.32 per cent to Rs 77,994 per 10 grams in futures trade



Lupin gets USFDA nod for generic medicine

harma major Lupin Ltd on Thursday said it has received Dtentative approval from the US health regulator to market its generic version of Ivacaftor oral granules used in treatment of cystic fibrosis. The approval granted by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for the abbreviated new drug application for Ivacaftor oral granules of strengths 25 mg, 50 mg, and 75 mg per unit dose packet, Lupin said in a statement. These are the generic equivalent of 'Kalydeco' oral granules, 25 mg, 50 mg, and 75 mg, of Vertex Pharmaceuticals Incorporated. "Lupin is the exclusive first-tofile for this product and may be eligible for 180 days of generic drug exclusivity," the company said, adding that the product would be manufactured at its Nagpur facility. lvacaftor oral granules, 25 mg, 50 mg and 75 mg per unit dose packet are indicated for the treatment of cystic fibrosis (CF) in patients aged four months and older who have at least

one mutation in the 'CFTR' gene that is responsive to Ivacaftor



SAIL supplies 45,000 tonnes of steel for Kumbh Mela

AlL, country's largest steel maker, on Thursday said it has supplied approximately 45,000 tonnes of steel for the upcoming Mahakumbh Mela which is one of the biggest religious congregations in the world. Prayagrai in Uttar Pradesh will host the Maha Kumbh Mela from January 13 to February 25. The total quantity of steel supplied includes chequered plates, hot strip mill plates, mild steel plates, angles and joists, the state-owned firm said in a statement. Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) had also supplied steel during the Mahakumbh Mela of 2013. The steel supplied by SAIL will play an important role in supporting the construction of various temporary structures essential for the smooth conduct of the Mahakumbh Mela. These include pontoon bridges, passages, temporary steel bridges, substations and flyovers, the statement said. Major customers for this steel supply, include the Public Works Department, Uttar Pradesh State Bridges Corporation, Electricity Board and their suppliers.

'WILL HIT RS 20,000 CR IN 3 YEARS'

India aims to boost organic products exports: Goyal

PNS NEW DELHI

India has the potential to increase exports of organic products up to Rs 20,000 crore in the next three years, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

He said this while releasing the eighth edition of National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) with new regulations aimed at enhancing clarity and transparency in organic product standards as well as aligning with global standards.

"Currently, our organic product exports are at Rs 5,000-6,000 crore. In the next three years, we can easily achieve Rs 20,000 crore exports, about 3-3.5 times increase from the current level," Goyal said at an event organised in partnership with industry body Ficci.

He said the global demand for these products is about Rs 1 lakh crore, which can grow up to Rs 10 lakh crore in the coming years, a unique opportunity India should not miss.

India already has one of the largest numbers of farmers in the world undertaking organ-

He also asked startups to come out with solutions that help in growth of the sector.

The NPOP has undergone several revisions since its inception in May 2001. The eighth edition marks a significant update to the regulatory framework governing organic products in India, with the last revision occurring in 2014.

Key features of the eighth edition of NPOP include farmer-friendly regulations, streamlined certification, enhanced transparency and revamped traceability system.

The eighth edition aims to bolster India's organic export

sector, with an ambitious target of reaching USD 2 billion in organic food exports by

Ministers of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal Gurjar and Murlidhar Mohol, Minister of State for Commerce Jitin Prasada and Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani were also present at the event.

NPOP plays a crucial role in enhancing the credibility of organic products in both national and international markets. It ensures that agricultural products labelled as "organic" meet stringent stan-dards, thereby protecting con-

sumer interests and promoting sustainable agricultural prac-

exports, about 3-3.5 times increase from

the current level,"

Goval said

"Currently, our

organic product

exports are at Rs

5,000-6,000 crore.

In the next three

years, we can

easily achieve

Rs 20,000 crore

It is overseen by the Commerce Ministry, with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) managing its implementation.

TraceNet 2.0, an upgraded traceability platform of NPOP for seamless operations and enhanced tools for regulatory oversight, was also launched.

On the occasion, a dedicated NPOP portal was launched for more visibility and ease of Operations for Organic stake-

Govt to give Rs 35,000 cr LPG subsidy to IOC, BPCL, HPCL

PNS NEW DELHI

The government is likely to provide a subsidy of Rs 35,000 crore to state-owned Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) to make up for losses they incurred on selling the fuel this fiscal, sources said.

The three fuel retailers have

kept the price of domestic LPG unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder since March 2024 despite a rise in input raw material cost. This led to under-recoveries on LPG sales, and the resultant drastic

fall in their earnings in the April-September (first half of current 2024-25 fiscal year).

The total under-recovery on LPG sales for the industry in the current fiscal is estimated at about Rs 40,500 crore. Against this, the government is likely to provide Rs 35,000 crore in total spread over two financial years, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

IOC, BPCL and HPCL are likely to get Rs 10,000 crore during the current 2024-25 fiscal

and the remaining Rs 25,000 crore in the next, they said, adding that provision of the subsidy is likely to be made in the Union Budget for 2025-26 that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present on February 1.

Sources said there is an under-recovery (or loss) of about Rs 240 per 14.2-kg cylinder that the state-owned fuel retailers sell to domestic house-

holds at the current price of Rs 803.

Prices of domestic LPG are regulated by government to insulate domestic households from high market rates. Regulated prices are lower than the Saudi CP - the interna-

tional benchmark

used to price domestic LPG. This is because domestic LPG production is not sufficient to meet the local demand and the fuel has to be imported.

This leads to under-recoveries and consequent losses to the fuel retailers.

Government from time to time compensates IOC, BPCL and HPCL for these losses. The three were previously paid Rs 22,000 crore compensation for 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal

'Freebies or better amenities, choice rests with citizens'

PNS ■ PANAJI

People have to decide if they want freebies or better roads, good drainage system and improved water supply, said economist and 16th Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya Thursday.

He was interacting with the media here after meeting between a delegation of the commission and top ministers and officials from Goa.

To a question about states allegedly utilis-

ing funds allocated for infra- freebies transferred to your structure for distributing freemoney is given for projects, then it has to be used for those works. However, in a democracy, the elected government makes the final decision, he

'The decisions are not made by the Finance Commission. The Finance Commission can

raise the issue in the overall interest of macroeconomic stability. The commission can say something at the general level but cannot control how states choose to spend the amount," he said.

The onus finally lies with the citizens as they elect governments, said Panagariya.

'If citizens vote for a government based on freebies, then they are asking for freebies. Ultimately, the citizens should decide whether they want better amenities, better roads, better sewerage, better

water or these bank accounts," he added.

the commission members, Goa officials sought a fourfold increase in the coastal state's share of funds from the divisible pool. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and many of his ministerial attended the meeting held at a hotel in the Dona Paula area.

Aim is to make India no.1 in auto segment: Gadkari

PNS ■ DHAR

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday highlighted the growth of the country's auto sector in the past few years, during which it became the third biggest player in the seg-ment, and said the aim is to become number one.

'...our number was seventh in the world but we are third in the automobile sector... we surpassed Japan and now our number is third," Union Road Transport and Highways Minister said while addressing a function at National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRAX) here.

mobile sector at the top (of the table) was Rs 78 lakh crore industry size, while that of China was Rs 47 lakh crore," Gadkari said. "When I took charge of the minister. The size of the industry was Rs 7.5 lakh crore and today its size is Rs 22 lakh crore.

Markets tumble amid broad-based selloff **SENSEX SINKS BELOW 78K**

PNS MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Thursday due to heavy selling in market heavyweights HDFC Bank, TCS and Reliance as investors turned nervous over earnings growth concerns amid unabated foreign capital outflows.

Besides, abysmally low Chinese inflation data, an indication of poor demand, and a sell-off in US bonds added to the pressure, traders said.

Sliding for the second straight day, the 30-share benchmark dropped 528.28 points or 0.68 per cent to sink below the 78,000 level at 77,620.21. During the day, it tanked 605.57 points or 0.77 per cent to 77,542.92.

The NSE Nifty slumped 162.45 points or 0.69 per cent to 23,526.50.

The Indian stock market mirrored the decline across its Asian peers, with cautious



investor sentiment driven by a sell-off in US bonds. The ÚS 10-year Treasury yield surged to its highest level since April 2024, signalling the expectation of fewer rate cuts by the

"Further, disappointing added pressure, indicating that recent stimulus measures have failed to rejuvenate one of the world's largest consumer markets," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30-share Sensex blue-chip pack, Tata Steel,

Zomato, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank and NTPC were the major laggards.

Ńestle, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints and Bharti Airtel were among the gainers.

Meanwhile, India's largest IT services company TCS reported an 11.95 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 12,380 crore for the December quarter. The financial results were announced after market hours.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.17 per cent while the midcap index declined 0.96 per

Among BSE sectoral indices, realty slumped 2.90 per cent, oil & gas (2.19 per cent), energy (1.83 per cent), power (1.68 per cent), capital goods (1.54 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (1.14 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the only

Adani-ISKCON to start 'Mahaprasad Seva'

PNS NEW DELHI

The Adani Group and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) have joined hands to serve meals to devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj this year.

The Mahaprasad Seva will be offered for the entire duration of the Maha Kumbh Mela, from January 13 to February 26.

To thank ISKCON for this initiative, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani on Thursday met Guru Prasad Swami, the Chairman of ISKCON Governing Body Commission (GBC).

Speaking about ISKCON's support in offering the



Mahaprasad Seva, Adani said, "Kumbh is a sacred place of seva, where every devotee gets involved in the name of seva to God. It is my good fortune that we are starting the 'Mahaprasad Seva' for the devotees at the Maha Kumbh in collaboration

"With the blessings of Maa Annapurna, free food will be provided to lakhs of devotees. Today, I got the opportunity to meet Guru Prasad Swami ji of ISKCON and I deeply experienced the power of dedication towards seva. In the true sense, seva is the highest form of patriotism. Seva is meditation,

seva is prayer and seva is God.' Guru Prasad Swami, one of the outstanding preachers of the International Krishna Consciousness Society, said, "The Adani Group has always been a shining example of corporate responsibility and social service. What makes Gautam Adani ji outstanding is his humility -- he never waits to be called but moves forward to serve selflessly. We are extremely grateful for his contribution. His work inspires us to give back to the society and unite in the service of humanity."

The Mahaprasad Seva will be offered to 50 lakh devotees and the meals will be prepared in two kitchens in and outside the mela area.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BID TENDER NOTIFICATION

Rec. no.E1/ parksmaintenance/Jyothiraophulepark/2024-25 Dt: 7-1-202
Sub:- Extension of tender date for Invitation of Bids from Competent Private/Publi Agencies/ Parties/ Companies for the maintenance, management and operations of Jyofirao Phule Park, Karimnagar, The Park is located near to Karimnagar Bus stand and is resplendent in its greenery

has synthetic (EPDM) walking track and it perfect for fitness enthusiasts and nature lovers alike, open gym for adults, dedicated children play area with exciting swings slides and climbing frames, a separate canteen for refreshment, the resplendent rose and cactus gardens, illuminated fountain, sandstone statues, a walls of the park an beautifully painted to attract children, separate indoor parking for two wheelers, three wheelers and four wheelers, clean and well maintained toilets, a spacious open air stage with adjacent ground and ideal for hosting various events and gatherings, lust pardens with vibrant flowers and trees and comfortable seating areas.

It is proposed to lease for the maintenance, management & operation of Jyotirao Phule Park initially for a period of two years. Bid document will be available on payment of Rs.5000/- (non refundable) by means of DD drawn in favor of Municipal Commissioner Karimnagar from 30-12-2024 to 07-01-2025 @ 3.00 PM at the Municipal Corporation Karimnagar, in view of low response from bidders the tender is extended upto Dt 10-01-2025, 3.00 PM.

Completed Bid documents must be submitted by 5.00 PM on 10-01-2025 in th Municipal Corporation, Karimnagar and bid document will be opened on 18-01-2025 at 5.00 pm in the Municipal Corporation, Karimnagar.

The minimum offset amount for the bid is Rs. 10.00 Lakhs/Annum. Prospective bidders are welcome to visit the Jyothirao Phule Park, Karimnagar. Sd/- Commission R.O.No: 8881-PR/CLIADVT/1/2024-25, Dt. 69-01-2925

E-Procurement/Open Tender Paper Notification- RRZ-11/2024-25 Tenders are invited from eligible contractors for tenders with Specification Nos 46 (Reserved for SC) & 24A (Reserved for ST)/2024-25 for Bifurcation of 33KV

Wkarabad Circle respectively of CE/OP/RR Zone. For further details regarding detailed notification, specification and digital certificate please visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in. Sdi-Chief Engineer, Operation 8.0. No. 3000-PRCLADVTR0204-21, bt 0540-2025 Ranga Reddy Zone, KPHB Colony, Hyderaba

MD Pally feeder of Rajendranagar Circle & Alternate source to Bhuranpally SS of

Sdl- Medical Superintende

AS VENDORS FOR SUPPLY OF MEDICINES, SURGICALS AND CONSUMABLES FOR EMERGENC LOCAL PURCHASE AND SUPPLY OF GENERAL ITEMS/ELECTRICAL_ELECTRONICS AND REPAIRS. Emparationart will be for a period of one year which may be estanded further for one more year on mutual consent and based on the performance. Schedule of scrutiny is as under: Opening date of submission of EO1: 19.11.2025, Actives to submi favs. Contact No.: 7883000995, 8801444525.

'PVT LABELLING', FOOD DELIVERY VIA SEPARATE APPS

NRAI to file complaint against Zomato, Swiggy

PNS NEW DELHI

Opposing "private labelling" by Zomato and Swiggy and their recent foray into quick commerce food delivery via separate apps, restaurant body NRAI on Thursday said it will file complaints with "relevant regulatory authorities" and initiate legal action to prevent them from monopolising the market.

According to NRAI, the entry of the two food delivery giants into delivering private labelled food via their own quick commerce platforms such as Blinkit Bistro and Swiggy Snacc fundamentally violates marketplace neutrality, creating an uneven playing field.

Comments from Zomato and Swiggy could not be obtained as emailed queries

remained unanswered. NRAI President Sagar Daryani said, "What we are absolutely not okay with is Zomato and Swiggy doing private labelling and selling



food by themselves. In Bistro app and Swiggy launch-Zomato via Blinkit's separate ing Snacc for quick food deliv-

originally established as marketplace platforms, are now leveraging their dominant positions and access to restaurant data to venture into private-label food delivery either directly or via their subsidiary. This strategy not only cannibalises the business of restaurants that rely on these platforms but also raises serious concerns under the Copyright Act and related laws," NRAI

ery". "Zomato and Swiggy,

It further said the move

undermines the principles of fair competition and "poses a significant threat" to the viability of thousands of restaurants across India. "We are committed to pursuing all available legal reme-

dies to safeguard the interests of the restaurant industry. This includes filing com-

plaints with relevant regulatory authorities and initiating legal action to prevent Zomato and Swiggy from monopolising the market," it stated.

the pioneer derabad

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> Friday January 10, 2025

'Barefoot pilgrimages and deer sightings— Tirupati was pure magic!'

From exploring the vibrant

culture of the United States

to finding spiritual solace in

Tirupati, actress Nandini Rai

takes *The Pioneer* through

her recent trips that have

been transformative. She

vaishnavi.tikka@gmail.com

ravelling is a profound experience that allows individuals to learn new languages, explore diverse cultures, discover unique traexplore diverse cultures, discover unique traditions and savour new cuisines. It offers an escape from the hectic routines of daily life, providing adventure, peace and personal growth. For actress Nandini Rai, travelling is more than a hobby; it is an inspiring journey that pushes people out of their comfort zones, encouraging them to see, taste and try new things. While travelling presents challenges such as adapting to new surroundings and meeting unfamiliar people, it also creates cherished memories to share with level ones.

loved ones.

Reflecting on her recent trips, Nandini shared her experiences of visiting the United States and Tirupati:

"I recently visited the United States and as soon as I returned, I planned a trip to Tirupati within a day's time. Both destinations were amazing and I had a wonderful time!"

The Varisu actress described her visit to Tirupati, a city in Andhra Pradesh renowned for its spiritual significance and cultural heritage. The city is home to the famous Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, a sacred Hindu pilgrimage site. "My most memorable moment from the Tirupati trip was walking barefoot all the way up to Tirumala. The mantras playing on the speakers, the scenic beauty and spotting deer along the way created the most amazing feeling," she expressed.

spotting deer along the way created the most amazing feeling," she expressed.

During this trip, she discovered Japali, a serene spot nestled within the dense forest of Tirumala, famous for its Hanuman Temple. "I had to walk 4 kilometers through the jungle to have darshan, but it was a unique and enriching experience," she shared.

One place that stood out to Nandini was Assam, a northeastern state in India celebrated for its rich culture, natural beauty and warm hospitality.

"Assam felt unique to me. The cleanliness in the villages, the pristine lakes and the humble, down-to-earth people amazed me. It felt like stepping into a different world," she said.

world," she said.

For the *Metro Kathalu* fame, Rishikesh, in Uttarakhand, holds a special place in her heart. Known for its tranquil environment and spiritual significance, Rishikesh offers her solace and rejuvenation.

her solace and rejuvenation.

"Rishikesh is my go-to place for peace and rejuvenation. I've been there almost 20 times and every visit brings me immense peace. The sight of the Ganga flowing alongside the mountains makes me feel closer to God. It's where I go when I'm sad, happy, or simply need a break." While travelling offers joy and new experiences, it also has its challenges. For the *Astakarmma* actress, travelling alone at night has been a frightening experience. "Walking alone on streets at night during trips can be daunting, especially for women. It's a challenge we face in today's times," she noted. To create meaningful travel memories, sheencourages immersing oneself in travel memories, sheencourages immersing oneself in the local culture, connecting with people, and being open

to unexpected adventures.

"Capture moments through photos but also experience them fully without the lens. Be present in the moment," she advises. When asked about her next destination, she revealed her desire to visit Finland, a country known for its stunning landscapes and vibrant Northern Lights. She enjoys travelling in groups, as it offers opportunities to bond with friends and gain fresh perspectives.



Bringing intersectionality and inclusivity to climate justice

PNS| HYDERABAD

ature is queer and our approach to the world can benefit from queerness." For climate justice advocate Nivedita Bansal (she/they), these words are more than a philosophy they are a way of life. A climate practitioner and community organiser, Nivedita's journey into environmental advocacy is deeply rooted in intersectionality, inclusivity and a personal connection to the natural world.

"With its sprawling man-groves and thoughtful urban planning, Navi Mumbai felt like the epitome of a sustain-able city," she recalls. But as they grew older, watching the mangroves disappear and public infrastructure deteriorate was unsettling. "One of the lakes has even been cut off from its water source, making it uninhabitable for the pink flamingos that used to flock there every year," they lament.

Their commitment to climate justice began in high school with a research project mea-suring the environmental impact of Ganpati idol immersion on local water bodies.

"This project made me realise the profound effects human activities have on natural heritage. I became deeply invested in Mumbai's water ecosystems and knew that one day I would work in environmental advocacy, Nivedita



says. Nivedita pursued their passion for the environment through rigorous education. They attended summer school courses at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington and Mahindra United World College in Pune, where they explored

the interconnectedness of

urban planning, ocean acidification, and climate change. Later, they earned a BSc in Global Sustainability Science (Hons) from Utrecht University, specialising in environmental governance. Their most cherished pro-

ject, Minecraft Mumbai (Coast Custodians), was born during the controversial Mumbai Coastal Road Project.

"As I saw the project rapidly destroying the shallow seas, it broke my heart to think of all the sea stars, eels, octopi, and corals being killed. So I gathered a few friends, and we started Minecraft Mumbai," Nivedita explains. Using open-source geo-data, the team created a navi-

gable digital replica of Mumbai, attempting to simulate the coastal road and highlight its flaws. While the project was ultimately halted, Nivedita learned the power of community.
Beyond raising awareness,

she is leading an ongoing research project to compile Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG) data for Indian states, in line with international standards. "No other organisation

reports SDG progress at the state level in India. This onestop resource will empower civil society to ask better questions of policymakers and industries," they explain. As a queer individual, she lived experiences shape their approach to climate leader-ship.

"Queerness is about self-

acceptance and it's been instrumental in forming my leadership style. Nature is inherently queer—it exists in countless shapes, sizes, colours and patterns. Similarly, climate activism must embrace diversity in people, perspectives, and solutions," they say.

"The queer community strives to leave no one behind, and that's a value I carry into my work. So far, I've engaged over 50 young people in deep and meaningful ways, creating space for everyone's ideas and initiatives," she shares.

Currently part of the 2024 cohort of the Women Climate Collective (WCC), shecredits the platform for helping them recover from burnout and tackle impostor syndrome. "Through WCC, I met

inspiring women leaders, attended COP 29, received capacity-building training and most importantly, learned to reflect. Thanks to them, I feel empowered to continue my work with confidence," they say.

Mindful of the emotional

toll of climate advocacy, Nivedita ensures they make partner and pets. They also pursue art, photography, cooking and fitness to stay grounded.

For Nivedita, climate advo-cacy is about more than protecting the planet; it's about building a world that values inclusivity, diversity, and collaboration. Their work serves as a reminder that with determination and community, it's possible to create a sustainable and equitable future.

Why cancer is a 'young person's disease'

ancer has long been perceived as a disease that primarily affects older individuals. However, recent trends are challenging this notion, with cancer rates in young adults—those in their 20s and 30s—rising significantly. While this shift is alarming, understanding the reasons behind it and the importance of early detection can empower young people to take proactive steps toward better health.

Changing face of cancer

Statistics reveal a concerning rise in cancer cases among younger populations. Cancers such as colorectal, breast, thyroid and melanoma are being diagnosed more frequently in millennials and Gen Z individuals compared to previous generations at the same age. This shift has left many young adults grappling with a diagnosis they never anticipated.

Medical oncologists attribute this increase to a combination of factors, including:

- Lifestyle changes: Sedentary behavior, poor dietary choices, obesity and increased alcohol consumption have been linked to cancer development.
- Environmental exposures: Growing up in an era of higher pollution levels, excessive screen time and potential carcinogen exposure may contribute to these
- Genetic predisposition: While genetics play a role in some cases, external factors often act as triggers, accelerating the onset of the disease.
- Delayed screenings: Many young adults skip routine health checks, dismissing symptoms as minor issues due to a general perception of being too young for serious illnesses.

Impact on young lives

A cancer diagnosis in early adulthood often brings unique challenges. Individuals in this age group are typically building their careers, relationships and families. The emotional, financial and social toll of treatment can disrupt these critical life milestones.

Moreover, young bodies tend to metabolise medications differently, making treatment more aggressive in some



cases. The psychological impact of navigating cancer during what should be the prime of life often requires additional mental health support, which can be overlooked in traditional treatment plans.

Early detection is crucial

The key to combating this alarming trend lies in early detection and prevention. Cancer caught at an earlier stage is often more treatable, with significantly higher survival rates. Unfortunately, young adults are less likely to undergo regular screenings or report persistent symptoms to a healthcare provider.

Here are some steps to improve awareness and early detection:

- 1. Know the warning signs: Be vigilant about unexplained weight loss, persistent fatigue, unusual lumps, changes in bowel or urinary habits, or prolonged pain.
- 2. Adopt healthy habits: Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and avoid smoking or excessive alcohol consumption.
- 3. Stay informed about family history: If certain cancers run in your family, discuss genetic testing and earlier screening options with your doctor.
- 4. Advocate for yourself: If you notice concerning symptoms, don't hesitate to seek medical advice, even if you feel too young to be at risk.

A crucial aspect of addressing this trend is raising awareness among younger generations. Campaigns that highlight the importance of regular health check-ups and early cancer detection can help dispel the myth that cancer is exclusively an older person's disease. Healthcare providers, too, play a pivotal role in this shift. By offering tailored screening recommendations and emphasising the importance of prevention, medical professionals can bridge the gap between awareness and action.

Message of hope

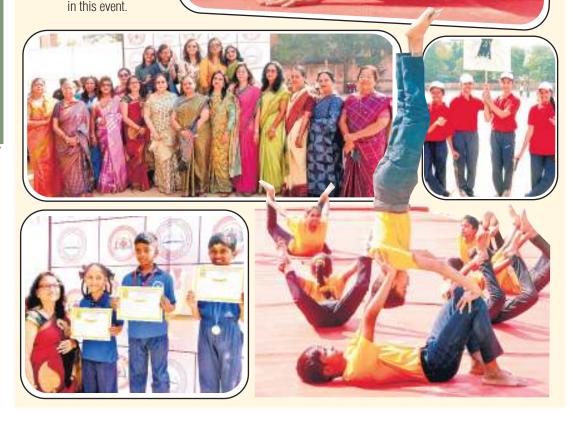
Despite the rise in cancer rates among young adults, advancements in oncology offer hope. Improved diagnostic tools, targeted therapies, and personalised treatment plans are making it possible for many young patients to achieve full recovery and lead healthy lives. For millennials and Gen Z, the key takeaway is clear: cancer is no longer an age-restricted disease. By embracing proacage-restrict disease. By Chinaching protective healthcare, recognizing potential risks and prioritising early intervention, young people can take charge of their health and reduce their cancer risk. Together, healthcare providers, young adults and communities can work toward a future where no one is caught off guard by a diagnosis they thought belonged to another age group.

(The author, Dr Rajeev Vijayakumar, Sr consultant-Medical oncologist and BMT physician, at Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Kengeri, Bengaluru.)

what's brewing?







ARCHIE







CALVIN AND HOBBES

honorary members, along with the KGHS Trust Board and students had participated



YOU HAVIEN'T DONE ANTHING YET! DON'T YOU CARE!? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

IT'S NO USE! WE'RE GOING TO PLUNK! I'LL HAVE TO GO TO A SECOND-RATE COLLEGE BECIUSE MY LIDIOT PARTNER SPENT THE STUDY PERIOD DRAWING MARTIANS!



GARFIELD

NANCY







REALITY CHECK

YOU GROPER ON SOCIAL MEDIAL AND NOW MISS PLAGY IS ACCUSING YOU OF MAKING UNWELCOME ADVANCES-IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO I ONCE TRIED TO TICKLE ELMO

IT'S BAD GROVER - THEY'RE CALLING



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CROSSWORD

9 Reply

14 Overtakes

18 Living

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10 A large furry animal

17 A dentist repairs these

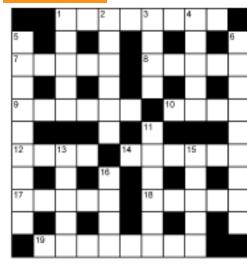
19 A game of jumping a rope

2 The number of players in

a cricket team 3 Smell with this

4 A rope loop

12 A snake's noise



ACROSS 5 A skydiver wears this

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 - 16 Cut with an axe



I GUESS IT'S JUST A REMINDER THAT

THAT'S PRETTY COOL!



GINGER MEGGS

I ALWAYS READ THE TEST ALL THE WAY THROUGH BEFORE I START SO THAT MY BRAIN CAN WORK ON THE ANSWERS I DON'T INITIALLY KNOW.



DIFFICULTY RATING: ** * ** ***



¬he highly anticipated pre-release event of Balakrishna's upcoming film Daaku Maharaaj, which was scheduled to take place today in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, has been cancelled. Directed by Bobby Kolli and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya, the event was set to feature Balakrishna's sonin-law and Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh as the chief

Arrangements for the grand event had been underway for several days, and the unit was fully prepared to head to Anantapur. However, a tragic incident in Tirupati led to a change in plans.
On the previous night, a stam-

pede occurred in Tirupati, resulting in the loss of several lives. The unfortunate incident, which took place at a devotional site, deeply saddened the team. Considering the circumstances, the filmmakers decided it was inappropriate to proceed with the event.

In a heartfelt statement, the film team announced the cancellation:

"Given the circumstances, we feel it is not appropriate to proceed with the Daaku Maharaaj pre-release event as planned. With a heavy heart and utmost respect for the devotion and sentiments of the people, we have decided to call off today's event. We hope for your understanding and support during this difficult time."

Some members of the unit had already left for Anantapur early in the morning but were asked to return after the cancellation decision was communicated.

Sources indicate that the team is now planning a smaller event in Hyderabad. However, this event will not involve fans and is likely to take place behind closed doors. "In Hyderabad, they may plan an event in closed doors, and it is not for fans. They will communicate through

media channels," a source shared. The film Daaku Maharaaj is slated for release on January 12, coinciding with Pragya Jaiswal's birthday and the Sankranti festival. Fans eagerly await further updates on the film's promotional plans.

SURESH KAVIRAYANI sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

fter a couple of years away from Telugu cinema, Pragya Jaiswal returns with Daaku Maharaaj, where she stars opposite Nandamuri Balakrishna. Interestingly. her last major Telugu hit, Akhanda, also featured Balakrishna. "Balakrishna is a lucky charm," said Pragya, who is overioved about her new film releasing on January 12—coinciding with her birthday and the Sankranti festival.

"Usually, when actors celebrate their birthdays, a teaser or poster is launched. But this time, my film is releasing on my birthday and I'm thrilled! When the producer announced the release date, I was the first to react because of this coincidence," she shared excitedly.

Pragya, who began her career nearly a decade ago, feels her journey is still fresh. "Every film is a new adventure with new characters to explore. There have been ups and downs, but I feel blessed. I've had the privilege to learn from some of the best filmmakers and actors. This journey has been incredible and I look forward to many more years in the industry," she reflected.

Speaking about her career-defining film Akhanda, Pragya recalled the unexpected way she landed the role. "During the pandemic, when most people had no work, I got a call from Boyapati Srinu sir. I flew to Hyderabad from Bombay with just a handbag and went straight from the airport to meet him. He narrated the story and finalised everything, including my remuneration, within a day. It was a life-changing opportunity for me and I'm forever grateful to Boyapati sir for trusting me with such a significant role," she said.

Pragya described Akhanda as a "proper commercial masala film" with substantial screen time for her character, which contributed to her career's biggest success.

"Akhanda was my life-changing film. It was the biggest hit of my career and I feel blessed to have worked with Boyapati sir and Balakrishna. I'm thrilled to collaborate with Bala Sir again in Daaku Maharaai and the upcoming

Akhanda 2," she added.

In Daaku Maharaaj,

tollywood

PRAGYA JAISWAL:

Akhanda is my

Pragya plays a unique character named Kaveri. "It's a completely different role for me and I'm very excited about it," she said. She revealed that she was shooting a Hindi film, Khel Khel Mein, when she got the offer for this project.

She also shared her long-standing connection with director Bobby. "I met Bobby even before I debuted with Kanche. We've stayed in touch over the years but never had a chance to work together until now. Watching the teaser of Daaku Maharaaj convinced me to take up this project. Working with Bobby has been an absolute bless-

ing," she said.

Talking about her co-star Balakrishna, she expressed her admiration for his work ethic and personality. "This is my second film with Bala Sir and surprisingly, he hasn't changed a bit. He's as positive, energetic and full of life as ever. On set, he's always cracking jokes or sharing stories about his father's movies. But when the camera rolls, he transforms into a superhuman—especially during intense scenes like the Aghora character in Akhanda. His dedication and energy are unmatched," she said.

She also highlighted how much she has learned from him. "His discipline is incredible. He wakes up at 3:30 a.m, does his pooja, works out and is always on set before time. It's inspiring to see such commitment," she added.

Shooting for Daaku Maharaaj came with its own set of challenges. "Filming in Rajasthan was tough. The extreme heat, dust and propeller fans made it physically demanding. I fell sick on the second or third day, but the team's passion kept me going," she revealed.

As her film release coincides

with her birthday, Pragya plans to stay in Hyderabad to celebrate both occasions. "I want to watch the film with the audience and experience the euphoria. Having my film release on my birthday, during Sankranti, feels like a sign from the universe. It's the best celebration I could ask for," she concluded.



Ram Charan's make-or-break moment



¬he upcoming film *Game Changer* is poised to be a significant milestone in Ram Charan's career. Following his multi-starrer RRR, the actor is now set to appear in this film as a solo lead. Although he made a cameo appearance in Acharya after RRR, Ram Charan has high expectations for Game Changer. This film will be released not only in Telugu but also in other languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada.

This film is a crucial test for Ram Charan, as well as for director Shankar. Shankar's previous films did not perform well at the box office, particularly *Indian* 2, which tarnished his reputation. As a result, he is heavily invested in the success of Game Changer, which marks his debut as a director in Telugu cinema. On the other hand, producer Dil Raju is the most anxious person, having invested a substantial amount of money in this film.

At a promotional event, he stated, "This is a comeback film for me." Dil Raju added that he had seen the film and was confident that it would not only thrill fans but also appeal to a broader audience. "There are a few scenes where people will definitely applaud," he said. Dil Raju also managed to secure ticket price hikes in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. However, the Telangana government did not grant permission for benefit shows.

Dialogue King Sai Kumar completes 50 yrs in film career

popularly known for his iconic dialogues, Sai Kumar has completed 50 years of his illustrious journey in films. He debuted as a child artiste with the film *Devudu Chesina Pelli*, which was released on January 9, 1975. Since then, he has never looked back, continuing to act as a lead actor, character artiste, and

hosting numerous TV shows. Sai Kumar is extremely popular for his police films like *Police Story*, *Agni IPS*, *Police Story 2* and *Central Jail*. His dialogues from these cop films are still wide-



the South Indian film industry.

Sai Kumar earned recognition as a great actor with the movie Sneham, directed by Bapu. He has acted in numerous evergreen films in both Kannada and Telugu. In 2006, he won the Nandi Award for Best Villain for his role in *Samanyudu* and again in 2010, he won the Nandi Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in *Prasthanam*. He also won Filmfare Awards for his acting in Samanyudu,

Prasthanam and Rang Tarang.
Despite completing 50 years as an actor, Sai Kumar continues to be part of numerous high-profile projects, keep-ing him as one of the busiest actors in the industry. His son, Aadi Sai Kumar, is also an actor and

Kumar is also a renowned dubbing artist, having lent his voice to actors busy with films. Rajasekhar and Suman in many films. artists, Sai Kumar's father, PJ Sharma, was a dubbing artist and actor, while his m o t h e r, Krishna Jyothi, was a renowned actress in the Kannada film industry. Although Kannada is his mother tongue, Sai Kumar has made a distinct mark in

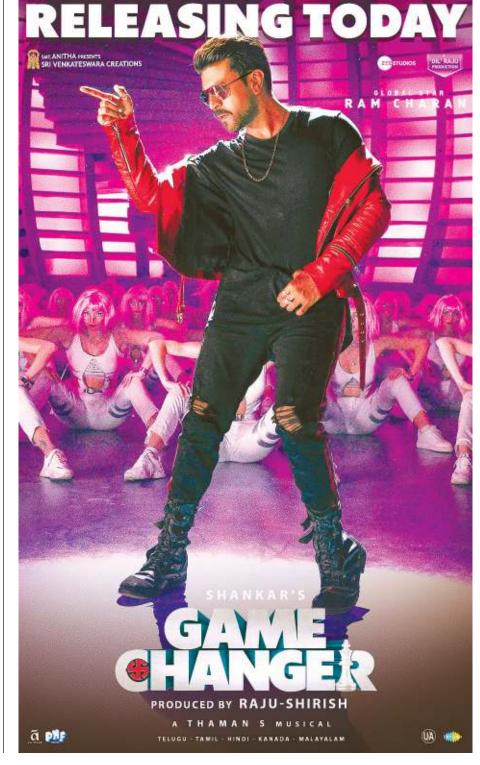


irector Sukumar, who recently delivered the blockbuster film Pushpa 2, has another reason to celebrate. His daughter, Sukriti Veni Bandreddy, is all set to make her debut with the film Gandhi Tatha Chettu. The trailer of this film was launched by superstar Mahesh Babu through his social media.

Padmavati Malladi has directed the film, while Naveen Yerneni, Yalamanchili Ravishankar and Shesha Sindhu Rao have jointly produced it. Sukumar's wife, Tabitha Sukumar, is presenting the film. Interestingly, *Gandhi Tatha Chettu* has already won awards and appreciation at several international film festivals. Sukriti Veni also received the Best Child Artist award for her performance.

The movie is set for a worldwide theatrical release on January 24, announced the makers. Mahesh Babu launched the trailer and said on his social media, "Happy to launch the trailer of #GandhiTathaChettu... Looks heartwarming and deeply touching... My best wishes to Sukriti and the entire team for their journey ahead." The story revolves around a girl named Gandhi, who, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's principles, strives to protect her grandfather's beloved tree and her village. The emotional narrative appears to be centered on how the girl follows the path of non-violence to achieve her goal. Sukumar himself plays a role in the film alongside his daughter Sukriti Veni.

Director Padmavati Malladi stated, "This film follows the story of a 13-year-old girl who, inspired by Gandhi's ideals, tries to save her village. It's a story every parent should show their children. The film conveys emotions that will touch every heart, leaving viewers with an indescribable feeling."



Tottenham beats Liverpool 1-0 in English League Cup semifinals

PTI ■ LONDON

ucas Bergvall's first goal for Tottenham secured a 1-0 win over Liverpool in the on Wednesday in a first-leg match notable for a serious-looking injury to Rodrigo Bentancur and the first instadium appropriement by stadium announcement by a referee in the English game. The 18-year-old Bergvall slotted home the winner in the 86th minute following a pass from Dominic Solanke, who thought 10 minutes earlier that he had given Tottenham the lead. That goal was ruled out after a VAR check for offside and referee Stuart Attwell communicated the decision via a wireless microphone to spectators inside Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and to TV viewers.

In the sixth minute, Bentancur — the Uruguay midfielder who plays for Tottenham — fell to the ground and lay prone after landing awkwardly when

attempting a header from a corner. He was carried off on a stretcher, to applause from a stretcher, to applause from around the ground, after receiving treatment during a 10-minute delay and Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou confirmed after the game that Bentancur was "conscious" and talking. The second leg is at Anfield

on Feb. 6.

Newcastle leads Arsenal 2-0 after the first leg of the other semifinal match.

Liverpool, the defending League Cup champion, saw its 24-match unbeaten run in all competitions come to an end and there was a hint of controversy about only the team's second loss of the season.

Visiting players and manager Arne Slot were unhappy that Bergvall was on the field to score what proved to be the winning goal after he escaped collecting a second vellow card for a foul on yellow card for a foul on Kostas Tsimikas moments earlier. Indeed, Tsimikas was off the field, waiting to come



Sweden midfielder tucked home his finish.

Slot earned a yellow card himself for his protests, though he shook Attwell's hand after the final whistle.

"The decision he made had a lot of impact on the result tonight," Slot said.
Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk said it was "quite obvious" that Bergvall deserved a second yellow card

'And a minute later he scores the winner," Van Dijk said. "He (Attwell) made a mistake, in my opinion. And I told him that."

It was a busy end to the match for Attwell, who took center stage after there was a video review following Solanke's strike in the 76th minute. After being notified that Solanke was offside, Attwell used the public address system to declare the goal had been ruled out, in an NFL-style announcement.

back on having received treatment following bergvall's tackle, when the process in England that has been widely used in other sports, and in soccer at the Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 2023 and other FIFA

Kinsky's dream debut Three days after signing from Sparta Prague, Antonín Kinský – a 21-year-old goalkeeper from the Czech Republic — was handed his debut by Tottenham and he kept a clean sheet after producing a string of great saves, notably from Liverpool substitute Darwin Nunez.

His parents and sister were in the crowd to watch him play his first match in English soccer and he was emotional after the game. "I have never dreamed this," Kinský said.

Tottenham signed the highly rated Kinský with firstchoice goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario currently



Aiming for hat-trick of SA20 titles: Markram

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Sunrisers Eastern Cape Skipper Aiden Markram says his side is pumped up to make it a hat-trick of titles at the SA20 as it faces MI Cape Town in its opening game. Markram's team has won both

the editions of the competition so far. The tournament begins days after South Africa blanked Pakistan in a Test series at

"Definitely still really pumped to try and get a third one this guarantees and it's a hugely impetitive tournament. hopefully in a month's time something cool can happen," Markram said during the Day Captains' press

conference here. Former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said his side Joburg Super Kings haven't got the ideal weather to finalise its preparations as it has rained for the last few days in Johannesburg, but his players are surely up for a fight.

From my side, the weather has been a bit of a downer down in Joburg, it's been pretty wet. But from a squad perspective, some great signings in Joburg too, and vou know the likes of Jonny Bairstow, Devon Conway, (Matheesha) Pathirana," du

Plessis said. "Those three guys and said.

It is a topic that shadowed tennis in 2024 and is still a talking point

as the 2025 Grand Slam season

opens at the Australian Open on

Sunday (Saturday EST): doping

and the cases involving Jannik Sinner — which actually is still not

fully resolved — and Iga Swiatek.

Both spent much of last year at No.

1, and Sinner still will hold that

spot in the ATP rankings when he

steps on court at Melbourne Park

to begin the defense of his

championship, one of two major

trophies he won over the past 12

Swiatek, a five-time Slam champ

and the woman leading the WTA

rankings most of the past three

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

months.

(Tabraiz) Shamsi, obviously, have a lot of experience that comes with them. So, all in all, our squad are looking very balanced. Two injuries, that wasn't ideal for our pace attack for Nandre Burger and Lizaad Williams. But we still feel we have enough options to put out a well balanced

team," he added. MI Cape Town's Rashid Khan said his side was determined to put a better show in the third edition.

"I think from the first year we to try and get a third one this year. Obviously, (there are) no and it just didn't go our way. We had some great cricket last vear as well some wonderful cricket," he said.

"But it was just more about the result, it didn't come our way. In the fresh year, we'll go with a fresh mind. We have some new faces in the team. We're looking forward to the new challenges and hopefully this year it won't be the same in the last few years."

Paarl Royals' captain David Miller said competitiveness in the league has benefitted South African cricket to a major extent.

"It's been two special years for us, but also for the competition itself. Just playing with the competitive iuices that we have, all the games are really fun to be a part of, as well as having încredible overseas players, all the coaches are around," he

I think he will be the next captain: Gavaskar on Jasprit Bumrah

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar is in awe of Jasprit Bumrah's leadership qualities and reckons the peerless fast bowler will succeed Rohit Sharma as the next captain of the Indian team following his extraordinary display in the Border-Gavaskar

Bumrah recently produced one of the best-ever bowling performances by an overseas pacer in Australia and picked 32 wickets over five Tests.

He was also captain during India's only victory in the series, helping the visitors to a convincing win at the Optus Stadium in Perth in the opener. "He could be the next man. I think he will be the next man. Because he leads from the front, he has got a very good air about him, the air of a leader but not somebody who is going to pressure on you," Gavaskar



aired his views on Channel 7. The batting great added, "Sometimes, you have captains

who put a lot of pressure on vou. With Bumrah you can see that, he expects the others to do what their job is, why they are in the national team, but it doesn't seem to pressurise anybody. Bumrah has

spearheading the Indian pace attack for some years now and his guidance has helped the likes of Mohammed Siraj to

grow as a fast bowler.
"With the fast bowlers, he has been absolutely brilliant, standing at mid-off, mid-on and every time just being at hand to tell them. I think he was absolutely brilliant and I won't be surprised if he takes over very soon.

Bumrah took his wickets at an incredible average of 13.06 and an even better strike rate of 28.37 before pulling up injured

midway through Australia's first innings at the SCG in the final Test.

In Bumrah's absence, the home team chased down 162 on the third day to win the series 3-1. The lead pacer was handed the captaincy in the final Test after the out-of-form Rohit Sharma "opted out" but a back spasm prevented Bumrah from bowling on the crucial third

Bumrah destroyed Australia in Perth with eight wickets, grabbed six wickets in the first innings at the Gabba, and nearly turned the Boxing Day Test on its head with his exploits on the fourth afternoon at MCG.

In the series decider at SCG, Bumrah sent back Usman Khawaja and Marnus Labuschagne early in Australia's first innings but could only bowl one over after lunch on the second day when the game was evenly poised.



McSweeney returns to Australia squad for Sri Lanka tour

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Nathan McSweeney was recalled to Australia's test squad on Thursday to tour Sri Lanka, less than three weeks after being dropped from the top order.

Australia's selectors announced their squad Thursday for the two-test tour, with several fresh faces added to the group that played India in Sydney last week. Australia won the fivetest series 3-1 a nd clinched a spot in the World Test Championship against South Africa at Lord's in June.

Steve Smith will lead the squad to Sri Lanka while regular skipper Pat Cummins is on leave as his wife awaits the birth of the couple's second child.

Australia's selectors concentrated on spin for the two Sri Lanka tests, with uncapped 21-year-old Cooper Connolly among the seven full or part-time slow bowling options in the 16-man squad. Connolly, a left-arm allrounder, has represented Australia in limited-overs cricket and has been called up for his maiden test campaign along with specialist spinners Todd Murphy and Matthew

Kuhnemann. McSweeney scored 72 runs at an average of 14.4 in his first three tests against India, before being replaced by Sam Konstas for the Melbourne Cricket Ground test starting Dec. 26.

has batted at No. 3 for South Australia state this season averaging 97 — but has previously batted further down the order. Cricket Australia also said

The 25-year-old McSweeney

Cummins was "focusing on an ankle issue which was managed through the test summer" and fellow paceman Josh Hazlewood was continuing his recovery from a calf injury. Mitchell Marsh was omitted for the tour, joining Hazlewood in focusing on the 50-overs Champion's Trophy in Pakistan which immediately follows the test tour.

The first test begins Ia the second Feb. 6, both at spinfriendly Galle International Stadium. A one-off one-day international is scheduled for Feb. 13, also at Galle.

"Sri Lanka is a challenging and exciting place to tour given the different conditions players may be presented with," selector George Bailey said. "This squad provides several ways to structure the XI depending on what type of wickets we may encounter in each match."

Australia squad: Steve Smith (captain), Sean Abbott, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Sam Konstas, Matt Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Nathan McSweenev. Todd Murphy, Mitchell Starc, Beau Webster.

Mandhana-led India eye dominant show in first-ever bilateral series against Ireland

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Riding high on a dominant performance against the West Indies, India under Smriti Mandhana will look to carry forward their winning momentum when they take on Ireland in the first-ever women's bilateral series, with the opening ODI scheduled here on Friday.

India had swept the West Indies 3-0 in the ODI series, following a 2-1 triumph in the T20 series. Mandhana emerged as the top run-scorer across formats, scoring 148 runs in the ODI series, including two half-centuries, and 193 runs in the T20s, with three successive

Notably, she scored five consecutive halfcenturies, only missing out in the final ODI and Mandhana will look to bring the same form as she leads the team in the absence of regular captain Harmanpreet



Kaur, who has been rested alongside fast

bowler Renuka Singh.
With Kaur and Renuka missing, the responsibility shifts to the rest of the batters, including Harleen Deol, Pratika Rawal, and Jemimah Rodrigues, to step

Deol was the top scorer in the ODI series with 160 runs, including a brilliant 115, while Rawal and Rodrigues also had solid outings, scoring 134 and 112 runs, respectively, with a fifty each in the ODIs. In the bowling department, Renuka's absence will be felt as she was the leading wicket-taker with 10 wickets in the ODI series against the West Indies.

The onus will now fall on newcomers Titas Sadhu and Saima Thakor to make their mark.

Sadhu, 20, who has three wickets in ODIs and 13 wickets in T20Is, will be expected to provide early breakthroughs, having impressed with her pace and swing in domestic and recent international cricket. Saima, 28, will also look to continue her good form after taking seven wickets in eight ODIs so far.

Vice-captain and off-spinner Deepti Sharma will be crucial, especially after her career-best bowling performance of 6 for 31 in the third ODI against the West Indies. Priya Mishra and Tanuja Kanwar will play key roles in supporting Deepti.

This whole process was pretty abstract sometimes and hard to considered accidental — the result understand," Swiatek said, surely

speaking for many observers. Which is why, perhaps, Dutch captain Paul Haarhuis said what he did after his team lost to Sinner's

Italy in the Davis Cup finals. "Jannik, in my personal opinion, is an unbelievably nice guy (and) great player," Haarhuis said, "but we (might) never know what

happened." Are there other noteworthy cases in tennis?

While Sinner and Swiatek will compete in Melbourne, another player involved in a recent ITIA case won't: Max Purcell, who won men's doubles titles at the U.S. Open in September and Wimbledon in 2022 and was a twotime runner-up at the Australian Open.

Purcell didn't test positive, though. Instead, he accepted a provisional suspension for, as he described it, having "unknowingly received an IV infusion of vitamins above the allowable limit."

"I have no good words for it," said Jordan Thompson, Purcell's doubles partner in New York last



seasons, is currently No. 2 behind Aryna Sabalenka, who will be chasing her third consecutive title

in Australia. "Obviously, there are going to be some negative comments," Swiatek said. "You're not going to avoid that."

Most current players prefer to remain silent when asked about the cases. But there are those who have been happy to weigh in, including 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic, raising questions about

whether Sinner and Swiatek were treated the same as other players facing similar circumstances and why their situations were kept under wraps for months.

"I sit and wonder, Why such a big difference in treatment and judgment?" was two-time major champion Simona Halep's reaction to Swiatek's punishment. "I can't find, and I don't think there can be, a logical answer."

Halep initially was banned for four years after testing positive for the banned drug Roxadustat at the 2022 U.S. Open, then had that penalty reduced to nine months on appeal — although she already had been off the tour longer than that. She was supposed to compete at Melbourne Park for the first time in three years, but withdrew from qualifying because of knee and shoulder pain.

No one has been louder about the subject lately than Nick Kyrgios, the 2022 Wimbledon runner-up who missed nearly all of the past two seasons because of injuries. He has been commenting regularly, in real life and online, even taking a iab (that he said was in jest) at Cruz Hewitt after the 16-year-old son of Australian Davis Cup captain Lleyton posted a photo with Sinner

from a practice session. "It's been handled horrifically in our sport. Two world No. 1s, both getting done for doping, is disgusting for our sport," Kyrgios said at the Brisbane International, the first event of his comeback. "It's a horrible look."

Where do things stand with Jannik Sinner's positive drug tests? Sinner was the dominant player in

men's tennis last year, and there's little reason to think that won't continue. In 2024, he went 73-6 with eight titles, including at the U.S. Open, and led Italy to the Davis Cup. He heads into the Australian Open on a 14-match winning streak.

Hanging over it all is this: Two positive tests for a trace amount of an anabolic steroid in March were

melatonin, that Swiatek was taking for jet lag and sleeping issues. She missed three tournaments —

nonprescription

although the real reason wasn't made public in August; the revealed at the time — and finished International Tennis Integrity serving her punishment after the revealed at the time — and finished

suspension in late November after

testing positive for a banned heart

medication known as TMZ. She

failed an out-of-competition test in

August, and the ITIA accepted her

explanation that it was caused by

contamination of

medication,