

the pioneer

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Gautam Adani to invest Rs 65,000 cr in energy, cement

KUBRA ALI'S JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT



Balayya's Daaku Maharaja is a typical paisa vasool FILM



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

"I did not give clean chit to KTR. I am a fighter and I will not fear even if a by-poll comes. There is no change in my comments on HYDRAA. I am appealing to the government to rethink on HYDRAA".



- Danam Nagender, Khairathabad MLA, Telangana

DON'T MISS...

Wholesale shops see demand for kites

Wholesale kite shops in Hyderabad are witnessing demand as Sankranti approaches, with kites starting at 3 for just Rs 10. The festival sees lakhs of kites flown across the city and Telangana, and citizens are also opting to buy in bulk since kites often get cut off mid-flight. When asked, Prasanth, a shop owner in Dhoolpet, shared that small and medium paper kites are in high demand, especially...

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'Ensure welfare benefits to all eligible'

A coordination meeting on the implementation of welfare schemes, such as Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, Indiramma Houses, and the issuance of ration cards was held at the Hanmakonda District Collectorate meeting hall on Sunday. The meeting was attended by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Konda Surekha, Minister for Endowments, Dhanasari Anasuya...

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Indichip inks deal with Andhra govt

Indichip Semiconductors Ltd along with its joint venture partner Yitao Micro Technology (YMTL) from Japan on Saturday inked an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh government to establish India's first private semiconductor manufacturing facility with an investment of Rs 14 000 crore. This cutting-edge facility will focus on manufacturing Silicon Carbide (SiC) chips contributing to India's technological advancement and sustainability goals. The...

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India defeat Ireland by 116 runs

A collective batting performance headlined by Jemimah Rodrigues' maiden hundred formed the cornerstone of India's commanding 116-run win against Ireland in the second women's ODI here on Sunday as the hosts took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. India scored a massive 370 for five riding on three half-centuries and a ton before restricting Ireland to 254 for 7 in the stipulated 50 overs. It was the elegant...

-SPORTS

Producer Suresh Babu, actors Rana, Venkatesh booked for trespassing

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A case was booked against actor Venkatesh Daggubati, his nephew and actor Rana Daggubati, their family members, including producer D Suresh Babu over demolition of a hotel here run by a businessman on the land taken on lease from the Daggubati family, police said on Sunday.



Suresh Babu



Venkatesh



Rana

Daggubati family had leased the premises on a plot in Filmnagar in 2014 and after execution of registered lease deed, he started running a hotel there.

He said as the lease deed was in existence, Venkatesh and others tried to vacate him from the premises, after which he filed a suit for injunction against them, which is pending before the City Civil Court. An interim injunction order was passed which is extending from time to time, he said. The complainant further said, however, the accused persons along with some anti-social elements entered into the leased property and demolished the structure in January 2024, prompting him to approach the Nampally court, which directed the police to register a case and investigate.

Following a local court's direction, the FIR was registered at Filmnagar police station on January 11 under various IPC sections, including criminal conspiracy, house trespass and others against the actors and their family members

Following a local court's direction, the FIR was registered at Filmnagar police station on January 11 under various IPC sections, including criminal conspiracy, house trespass and others against the actors and their family members. The complainant is one of the accused in the case related to an alleged attempt to poach BRS MLAs, and he was arrested in October 2022 and later granted bail. According to the complainant, the

Congress promises Rs 8,500 to unemployed for Delhi polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday promised to give Rs 8,500 every month to educated unemployed youths in Delhi for one year if it comes to power in Delhi.

This is the third scheme launched by the Congress ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls. The financial assistance will be provided under the 'Yuva Udaan Yojana' and it is not free, AICC general secretary Sachin Pilot said at a press conference.

"We will provide financial assistance to youths who can show their skills in a company, factory or organisation. They will get money through these companies. This is not a scheme under which one will get money while sitting at home," Pilot said. "This help will not be just financial. We will try that people are absorbed in those fields where they have received training... so that they can... improve their skill set," he said.

He alleged that the BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party had totally ignored the youth in the past 11 years when they were busy building the "Raj Mahal" and "Sheesh Mahal", respectively.

During the press conference, AICC Delhi in-charge Qazi Nizamuddin, Delhi Congress president

Continued on Page 2

Ideology-based student politics missing in universities: Revanth

Student politics need of the hour in universities, says CM

Leaders changing parties for posts: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that ideology-based student politics has disappeared, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that it is imperative for students to be active in politics in universities.

The CM said that George Reddy and Vidyasagar Rao strictly followed their ideologies during their student politics days at Osmania University. There is a need to encourage student politics, he added.

"The absence of ideology in politics is the main reason for increasing defections. Leaders are changing parties for posts. Students who follow their party ideologies will be loyal to their political organisations forever. Revival of ideology-based student politics is the need of the hour," the CM said.

He said he had decided to bring back the glory of universities soon after assuming office.

"University students played an important role during the Telangana Movement. The active role played by students in politics led to the formation of Telangana state," he said.

Addressing the gathering after releasing the autobiography of former Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy releasing the autobiography of former governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao in Hyderabad on Sunday

on Sunday here, the CM said that it was a delightful moment.

"I had an opportunity to meet leaders who became my role models during my political career spanning 35 years on a single platform today. Admirers of Vidyasagar Rao including myself fondly called senior most leaders as Sagar ji," he said.

The CM said that Sagar ji served as the Governor of two states and upheld Telangana's honour. It is commendable that Vidyasagar Rao spent five decades in active politics without facing a single allegation and stands as an ideal for Telangana,

he said. The CM said that those who want to excel in politics should read the book UNIKA.

Stating that he has no differences with anyone, the CM made it clear that he is ready to meet everyone to develop Telangana and for that, he would seek everybody's cooperation.

The Chief Minister said that he had already requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cooperate in developing Telangana and make it a one trillion US Dollar economy state.

Continued on Page 2

Will BJP change its stand on HYDRAA & Musi clean-up?

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU
venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD



HYDRAA demolition

Will the BJP change its stand on HYDRAA and the cleaning of the Musi River and its beautification? Whether the BJP changes its stand on HYDRAA and Musi clean-up is a different thing, but BJP leaders will have to face some embarrassing moments in future. Telangana BJP leaders certainly got into serious trouble after senior BJP leader Ch. Vidyasagar Rao's comments. Showering praises on Chief

Minister Revanth Reddy in the presence of BJP leaders like Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Haryana

Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Rajya Sabha Member Dr K. Laxman and others, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao said that Revanth's HYDRAA idea was a good one. He also congratulated Chief Minister Revanth Reddy regarding HYDRAA as well as the Skill Development University.

Vidyasagar said the government should clean the Musi River and make Hyderabad a beautiful city and that the government should implement Koneru Ranga Rao's report.

"The government should protect the land rights of tribals. The people would

Continued on Page 2

Govt release guidelines for Rythu Bharosa assistance

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has issued Rythu Bharosa guidelines on Sunday. It was announced that the Rythu Bharosa scheme will be implemented from January 26. It has been clarified that under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, crop investment assistance of Rs 12,000 per acre per year is being given.

As per the guidelines--The government has decided to provide Rythu Bharosa assistance to pottadars based on the area of cultivable land registered in the Bhu Bharati portal. Non-cultivable lands were removed from Rythu Bharosa. ROFR pottadars are also eligible for Rythu Bharosa. The Telangana government has decided to deposit the Rythu Bharosa

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Ponguleti narrowly escapes after car tyres burst

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy narrowly escaped a mishap on Sunday evening when two tyres of the car he was traveling in burst while en route to Khammam. The driver, however, swiftly managed to regain control of the vehicle. The incident took place at Tirumalayapalem as the Minister was returning to Khammam from Warangal.

The security personnel traveling with the Minister heaved a sigh of

relief. MLA Tellam Venkat Rao and others were also present in the car.



Revanth silent as violence against minorities rise in TG: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is a silent spectator as violence against minorities is increasing in Telangana, BRS MLC Kavitha said. She said that the RSS-linked CM is neglecting minorities and that promises made by the Nehru-Gandhi family to Telangana's minorities have been forgotten by the Congress.

She demanded that the Congress government should immediately implement the party's Minority Declaration.

During her Nizamabad visit on Sunday Kavitha said that the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, speaks

extensively about democracy, while Congress workers wreaked havoc at the BRS office. Is violence the new strategy of the Congress, she asked. Kavitha said the Congress' hypocrisy has been exposed and that while Rahul Gandhi preaches about the Constitution his party workers engage in vandalism.

"Rahul Gandhi carries a copy of the Constitution in his hand and says that it must be protected. But today BRS's offices are being attacked by Cong activists and nobody says anything. This is not protecting the Constitution. This is not protecting the rights of people. We demand an answer from Rahul Gandhi," she said.



IPL 2025 from March 23: BCCI

PNS ■ MUMBAI

BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla on Sunday said that the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) will get underway from March 23. Shukla made the announcement after the BCCI Special General Meeting in Mumbai on Sunday.

During the meet, Devajit Saikia and Prabhatej Singh Bhatia were elected as the new BCCI secretary and treasurer respectively. They were both elected unopposed after being the only ones to file nomination for the posts vacated by Jay Shah and Ashish Shelar. The IPL will follow the International Cricket Council's Code of Conduct regulation for participating players during the upcoming season which will start on March 21 while the Women's Premier League will be played across four cities, the governing council decided on Sunday. While Rajeev Shukla had told mediapersons that



BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla with the

"From now on, ICC's sanctioned penalties will be imposed for Level 1, 2 or 3 offences. Till date, IPL had its own Code of Conduct but going forward, Playing Conditions will be followed as per ICC T20I regulations," an IPL GC member said on conditions of anonymity. Meanwhile, the four centres where Women's Premier League matches will be held are: Lucknow, Mumbai, Baroda and Bengaluru.

PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh tunnel in Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The security forces on Sunday intensified sanitization efforts and area domination exercise in Kashmir, a day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the valley for the inauguration of the strategically important Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district, officials said.

The Prime Minister is likely to address a public rally after the inauguration of the tunnel at Gagangir, the officials said, adding the venue is now off-limits for the public.

Built at a cost of Rs 2,400 crore on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, the strategic 6.5-km Z-Morh tunnel will be a major step towards making the Ladakh region accessible by road throughout the year. The work on the project began in May 2015 and was completed last year.

The soft opening of the tunnel was done in February 2024.



The tunnel is vital in terms of the defence needs of the country in the Ladakh region and also connecting the youngest Union Territory to the rest of the country.

Situated at an altitude of 8,650 feet, the Z-Morh tunnel is a two-lane road tunnel equipped with a parallel 7.5-

metre-wide escape passage for emergencies. The tunnel ensures seamless connectivity between Gagangir and Sonamarg, and will ease summer travel to Ladakh.

Along with the under-construction Zojila tunnel, the Z-Morh tunnel will ensure uninterrupted connectivity to Baltal and Ladakh regions for civilian and military traffic.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), which oversees the project, has said the "engineering marvel" is a game changer for the region.

Meanwhile, the deployment of security personnel has been increased in the vulnerable areas and dozens of checkpoints have

been set up at important intersections in various districts to ensure that anti-national elements are not able to move around freely, they said.

The officials said that random checking and frisking of people and vehicles, including two-wheelers, have been intensified while patrolling is also taking place.

With Zojila tunnel, MEIL has major role in the project

Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Ltd (MEIL) has played a major role in the reconstruction of Kashmir under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The prestigious Zojila Pass tunnel that will provide all-year connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union Territories is being

constructed by MEIL.

The single-tube Zojila tunnel, from Baltal in the Ganderbal district of central Kashmir to Minimarg in Drass town of Ladakh's Kargil district, has an approach road of 18 km.

"The total length of the project from Sonamarg to Baltal is 31 km. From Sonamarg to Baltal it is

18 km. Then the main tunnel starts from Baltal and goes to Minimarg. It is 13-km long. The work is going on at a rapid pace on both the projects," Intiaz Ahmed, the construction manager of MMEIL said.

MEIL is constructing the tunnel using the new Austrian tunneling method.

Monday Mirchi

SMITA SABHARWAL'S PINK OBSESSION CREATES WAVES

Telangana State Tourism Secretary, Smita Sabharwal, is making waves not just for her creative initiatives but also for her curious choice of colours. When she unveiled the "Telangana Zarur ana" logo, official Telangana tourism, the striking pink lettering instantly caught attention, with whispers floating around about the lingering charm of the pink party BRS. To be able to pull off such a thing in Congress government is a big deal. The logo gained even more traction when Congress leader Pawan Khera endorsed it on X, raising eyebrows further. But the twist came at an event with Tourism Minister Jupally, where the logo's pink took a backseat, replaced by a demure white. While the official word is yet to surface, tongues are wagging in bureaucratic circles about how the iconic pink—symbolic of Telangana's previous political era—continues to pop up, even after the power equations have shifted. It seems the allure of pink is hard to let go, leaving many wondering if it's more than just a design choice.

HYDRAA POLICE STATION: VISHWAJEET IPS' VISION BECOMES REALITY

The transformation of EV&DM into HYDRAA, with its newly granted police station status, marks a pivotal moment in Hyderabad's governance. While the spotlight often shines on HYDRAA Chief AV Ranganath, the roots of this evolution go back to the leadership of Vishwajeet, IPS, the former head of EV&DM. Vishwajeet's tenure as EV&DM chief laid the foundation for HYDRAA's current powers. Recognising the need for a robust enforcement mechanism to address land grabbing, encroachments, and public asset protection, he relentlessly pushed for the establishment of a dedicated police station. His vision has now come to life, empowering HYDRAA to handle complex cases with the autonomy and authority of law enforcement. Currently serving as SP CID, Vishwajeet's career has often been under the spotlight. For the uninitiated, he was once perceived as close to BRS, particularly after the controversial Nerella incident in Sircilla. Following this, he was moved to Hyderabad, where he served as the EV&DM chief and wanted it to be given police station status.

VIKARABAD COLLECTOR PRATIK JAIN FACES CRITICISM AMID SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ

Vikarabad Collector Pratik Jain is facing criticism for his frequent public appearances with Tirupathi Reddy, brother of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The backlash intensified after an event where students were made to wait barefoot under the scorching sun, drawing ire from both social media users and bureaucratic circles. In response, Pratik highlighted his initiatives for improving residential schools, including launching a "Movie Club" to inspire students through films. He shared that Hidden Figures was screened for Social Welfare Girls' Schools with help from the Trainee Collector, while The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind is planned for boys' schools. The screenings are

held at night to avoid disrupting academic schedules. Reflecting on his broader efforts, Pratik tweeted, "After months of planning and executing, we've seen some results in schools and hostels, but it's a long way to go to match the hostels I stayed in at IIT Guwahati. As the saying goes—dreams are the ones which don't let us sleep." He added that all repairs were carried out using local labourers, a practice he adopted during his ITDA tenure. While his efforts are commendable, criticism continues to loom over his public conduct, leaving many unconvinced of his intentions.

KTR'S ANGER AT DANA KISHORE SPARKS POLITICAL STORM

The ongoing fallout from the Formula E case has reportedly left KTR furious with Principal Secretary MAUD Dana Kishore, a senior bureaucrat whose role in the event has become a subject of intense whispers in administrative corridors. While the specifics of KTR's ire remain closely guarded, insiders suggest the controversy surrounding Dana Kishore may extend far beyond Formula E, hinting at deeper issues that have ruffled feathers within the BRS ranks. Adding to the intrigue is Dana Kishore's impending retirement in 2026, a timeline that some believe could shield him temporarily. However, whispers are growing louder that should the BRS return to power, KTR's displeasure could translate into a relentless pursuit of accountability, ensuring that Dana Kishore faces consequences. As political and bureaucratic tensions simmer, all eyes are on how this high-stakes drama will unfold.

DANAM NAGENDER HITS OUT AT DCP, CITES POLITICAL VENDETTA

Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender has publicly expressed his frustration with the DCP, accusing the officer of creating unnecessary turbulence in the area. Nagender claimed that the DCP is acting as though he is "supreme" and unnecessarily magnifying incidents to project himself as a champion of justice. "Because of this DCP, the government, especially Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, is getting a bad name," Nagender said. The MLA further alleged that the DCP's actions go beyond his duties, filing cases indiscriminately, and even digging up decades-old matters. "When I contested for the parliament elections, this DCP filed 12 cases against me. If such officers are given unchecked freedom, it will harm the government more than anyone else," he remarked. Nagender dismissed any personal fear of the officer but urged the government to reconsider allowing such officials to operate unchecked. "Officers like him come and go, but the Chief Minister must think whether such officers are needed. This is not about me; it's about the government's reputation and stability," he added. The remarks have sent ripples through both political and administrative circles, leaving many to ponder the delicate balance between governance and the autonomy of law enforcement.

--Yours truly

Private carriers fleece Sankranti travellers, airline ticket prices soar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Every year during the Sankranti festival, lakhs of people travel to their hometowns to celebrate the festival with family. While half of them travel by private vehicles, trains, or RTC buses, the rest opt for private travel buses. This surge in demand has led private travel agencies to exploit the situation by significantly raising ticket prices.

From January 11 to 18, private travel agencies began blocking tickets as early as January 1 and increased the prices by three to four times. On regular days, a non-AC bus ticket from Vijayawada to Visakhapatnam costs Rs 750, an AC bus Rs 1,200, and a sleeper bus Rs 1,500. However, during the festival season, these charges have surged to Rs 2,000 for non-AC buses, Rs 3,000 for AC buses, and Rs 5,000 for AC sleeper buses. For routes like Vijayawada to Vizianagaram or Srikakulam, an additional Rs 500 is being

charged to passengers.

For the Vijayawada to Hyderabad route, where the regular fare for an AC bus was Rs 1,000, the price has now increased to Rs 2,500. Similarly, fares for AC buses from Vijayawada to Rayalaseema destinations such as Kadapa, Anantapur, and Tirupati have surged from Rs 1,200 to Rs 3,500-4,000.

Other routes have also seen sharp hikes. For instance, the AC sleeper bus from Hyderabad to Nellore, which normally costs Rs 1,500, is now priced at Rs 3,000. Non-AC sleeper buses, which were previously priced at Rs 1,000, are now charging Rs 2,500, while non-AC buses have seen an increase from Rs 850 to Rs 2,000. From Bengaluru to Nellore, AC sleeper tickets have risen from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,500, while non-AC sleeper fares have jumped from Rs 900 to Rs 2,000, and non-AC bus fares have gone up from Rs 800 to Rs 1,700.

On routes such as Guntur to

Hyderabad, where ticket prices for non-AC buses typically cost Rs 450, for AC buses Rs 500, and for AC sleeper buses Rs 650-750, the prices have been increased by Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 during the festive season. With lakhs of people expected to travel on private buses, the travel syndicate has found a way to take advantage of the situation.

G Kaavyasri, a software employee from Bengaluru, spoke to The Pioneer and shared that she has to pay an additional Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 per ticket for her family of four to travel to Guduwada for the Sankranti festival. She expressed frustration with the "flexi-pricing" policy, which she felt imposed a huge burden on passengers during the festive season. She urged the authorities to take strict measures to prevent private carriers from hiking prices by two to three times.

Meanwhile, Sankranti has also seen a dramatic rise in airline ticket prices. In recent

days, airfares for flights from Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Delhi to Vijayawada have increased by three to four times compared to regular days. With trains and buses fully booked, many passengers have turned to air travel, leading to soaring prices.

A flight from Bengaluru to Vijayawada, which typically costs between Rs 3,500 and Rs 3,750, is now priced at Rs 13,000 to Rs 16,000 for these three days. Flights from Hyderabad to Vijayawada, usually under Rs 3,000, have surged to Rs 11,000 to Rs 16,000. The fare for flights from New Delhi to Vijayawada has skyrocketed from Rs 6,500 to Rs 21,000. Flights from Chennai to Vijayawada have seen a fourfold increase, with fares reaching Rs 13,500. From Mumbai to Vijayawada, ticket prices have risen from below Rs 4,000 to Rs 12,000. Airport sources suggest that the high ticket prices may persist even after the festival season.

Former TDP MP Manda Jagannadham dead

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Nagarkurnool MP Dr Manda Jagannadham (73) died on Sunday. He was suffering from medical problems and was being treated at NIMS Hospital. However, Jagannadham died on Sunday after his condition became serious.

Jagannadham was a TDP MP and its politiburo member. He was elected an MP four times.

Later, Manda Jagannadham joined the BRS and lost the elections in 2014. During the 2019 and 2024 elections, he did not get a ticket. Dr Manda Jagannadham was a post-graduate doctor who had completed MS.

CM Revanth Reddy concedes death of former MP Dr. Manda Jagannadham

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy conduced the passing away of former MP Dr. Manda Jagannadham. The Chief Minister expressed his condolences to the bereaved family members. The CM said that Jagannadham's role as the Lok Sabha MP of Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha, social activist and a Telangana activist are commendable. CM Revanth Reddy said the senior Telangana leader played an active role in the formation of separate Telangana. Jagannadham's death is an irreparable loss for Telangana, The CM said conveying his deep sympathies to the bereaved family members.

Vidyasagar infused Telanganaism in BJP: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that former Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao is the leader who infused Telanganaism in the BJP.

He said that Vidyasagar Rao installed flexes much before the second phase of the Telangana Movement asking "Do you know when Telangana achieved freedom?" and this led to a serious debate.

Addressing a function held in connection with the release of Ch. Vidyasagar Rao's autobiography 'UNIKA' held on Sunday in Hyderabad, Sanjay said that Vidyasagar played a key role in taking the Telangana Movement forward. One can remember Vidyasagar whenever Telangana Liberation Day comes, he said. Vidyasagar is part of the movement which asked governments to hold the Telangana Liberation Day officially, he said.



Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya said that Vidyasagar Rao played a key role in helping the BJP to strike roots in Telangana although he was born and raised in a Communist family.

Raja Sabha Member Dr K. Laxman, former Congress MP T. Subbirami Reddy, and BJP leaders attended the function.

Fire breaks out in a house at Hayathnagar as gas leaks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An old couple making snacks for Sankranti in the limits of Hayathnagar saw sudden flames as their gas cylinder leaked on Sunday. With help from colony residents and then approaching firefighters the flames were doused.

An elderly couple has been living in an old house in Hayathnagar for some time. A gas leak occurred while they were cooking for the Sankranti, and the fire broke

out suddenly, said the Hayathnagar Police.

The couple tried to extinguish the fire, but it could not be brought under control. Unable to bring the flames under control, the couple called upon the locals for help. The locals made strenuous efforts to extinguish the fire but, when their attempts proved unsuccessful, they informed the fire department. The firefighters arrived at the scene and managed to douse the flames, added Hayathnagar Police.

TRAI releases report on telecom services in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a report on Independent Drive Tests (IDT) to assess the performance of telecom services provided by Bharti Airtel Ltd., BSNL/MTNL, Reliance JIO Infocom Ltd., and Vodafone

Idea Ltd. in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh LSA) during September-October 2024.

In Hyderabad, a report tested voice and data services of various mobile networks using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For voice services, Reliance JIO led with a perfect call setup success rate of 100%, while Airtel and Vodafone Idea had lower rates, with JIO at 0.3%.

99.85%. Vodafone Idea had a slightly lower rate of 98.92%.

In the call setup time, Reliance JIO was the fastest at 0.75 seconds, while Vodafone Idea took the longest at 11.82 seconds. BSNL had the highest call drop rate at 3.76%, above the benchmark of 2%. Reliance JIO, Airtel, and Vodafone Idea had lower rates, with JIO at 0.3%.

Will BJP change ...

Continued from page 1

cooperate with the programmes launched by the CM. Poverty can be eradicated through the CM's Skill Development Programme," Vidyasagar had said.

It may be recalled that the BJP staged many protests opposing HYDRAA and the demolitions of buildings in the Musi River area. Opposing HYDRAA, Telangana BJP leaders had asked the government to demolish the illegal buildings of AIMIM leaders if it had the guts before demolishing the houses of the poor. Whatever the reasons, the government stopped HYDRAA's operations for some time and resumed it recently by demolishing some houses here and there.

BJP leaders also organised several programmes including 'Musi Nidra' opposing the move to demolish houses on the Musi River's banks. The BJP leaders also warned the Congress Government that they will not remain silent if the government continues demolitions on the Musi River's banks. Whatever the reasons, the government stopped demolitions in the Musi River area and kept the topic aside.

However, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao's comments will definitely trouble the party in the coming days and force Telangana leaders to introspect on their stand on HYDRAA and the Musi project.

Congress leaders are now on 'cloud nine' after the comments of Ch. Vidyasagar Rao which cornered BJP leaders.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	
Purnima:	Jan 13 05:03 AM
Krishna Paksha Pratipada:	Jan 14 03:56 AM
Nakshatram:	
Ardra:	Jan 12 11:24 AM
Punarvasu:	Jan 13 10:38 AM
Rahukalam:	8:16 AM to 9:38 AM
Yamagandam:	11:01 AM to 12:24 PM
Varjyam:	10:27 PM to 12:02 AM
Gulika:	1:47 PM to 3:10 PM
Amritakalam:	None
Abhijit Muhurtham:	12:02 PM to 12:46 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 28°
Humidity: 55%
Sunrise: 6:49 AM
Sunset: 6:00 PM
Updated: January 12, 2025 5:00 PM

AP CM calls on well-off sections to uplift poor through P4 model

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday called on the top 10 per cent well-to-do sections of society to give an uplifting hand to the bottom 20 per cent for their development under the Public Private Partnership (P4) model.

Coinciding with the Sankranti festival, the CM made this appeal with the hope that everybody should prosper. He said the real festival arrives when everybody is developed.

"I wholeheartedly believe that only when financial disparities minimise and living



standards improve for everyone then real happiness will spread," said Naidu in an open plea to the wider society.

Highlighting that SwarnaAndhra@2047 vision

was unveiled with 10 principles for achieving a developed state in the next 23 years, the CM said zero poverty was its first principle.

Though people from various sections availed opportunities thrown by the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of development in the 90s to come up in life, Naidu stressed that still lakhs of families are languishing in penury.

According to the Central government statistics, the CM said there are many people suffering from acute poverty in the southern state's villages and towns, deprived of health, education, nourishing food,

drinking water and other basic essentials. To change this scenario and empower society, Naidu said he is proposing the P4 model and called on the top 10 per cent people in society to reach out to the bottom 20 per cent to uplift them.

"If you offer education, livelihood opportunities and skilling in an organised way then their (bottom 20 per cent) families will sustain," the CM added.

Wherever prosperous sections are settled, the TDP supremo called on them to lend a helping hand to an individual, family, community, village or a region to raise their living standards.

Revanth Reddy greets TG people on Sankranti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended heartfelt greetings to all Telangana people on the occasion of Sankranti festival. The Chief Minister wished everyone to celebrate Bhogi which showers blessings, Sankranti with glittering lights and Kanuma which brings joy in everyone's life.

The CM said that the Sankranti festival will bring cheers in the lives of nearly one crore farmers, poor people and agricultural laborer families in the state. This year, Sankranti marks the beginning of the implementation of four welfare schemes- Rythu Bharosa by enhancing the benefit to Rs

12,000 per acre, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa for landless agricultural laborer families, new Ration cards which provides food security and Indiramma houses for the homeless poor, the CM said.

The Chief Minister asserted that the People's Government resolved every welfare scheme should reach all eligible and expressed confidence that the Telangana State will achieve sustainable growth in all sectors including agriculture, employment generation and industrial sectors. CM Revanth Reddy hoped that people will celebrate Sankranti festival with pomp and gaiety and uphold Telugu tradition with freedom and prosperity.

No clean chit ...

Continued from page 1

distorted my comments and are campaigning that I spoke against the government," he said.

Danam said that a probe by the ACB and the ED is going on about the Formula E-Car Racing event.

He said that he has doubts that a quid pro quo deal took place involving transfer of funds in connection with the Formula E-Car Racing event during elections.

Danam said that facts will come out after the probe. "I did not give a clean chit to KTR. I am a fighter and I do not fear even a by-poll. There is no change in my comments on HYDRAA. I am appealing to the government to rethink about HYDRAA," he said. He said that BJP leaders did a one day 'Musi Nidra' in houses located on the Musi River bank. However, ACs were installed in the houses where the BJP leaders slept before they went there, he added.

Danam said that Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy had food brought from outside instead of having food from the houses of HYDRAA victims.

Govt release...

Continued from page 1

assistance in the farmers' accounts through the DBT method conducted by the RBI. NIC will act as IT partner. The District Collectors have been entrusted with the responsibility of redressal of complaints regarding the implementation of the scheme. The government has advised the director of agriculture to take appropriate action.

Congress promises...

Continued from page 1

Devender Yadav and NSUL, Congress' student wing, president Varun Chaudhary were also present.

"We will encourage them to work in the companies or factories and we will help you. So we will try to give via companies. This is not a scheme to give allowance to people sitting at home.

"Yes, this is a guarantee that if there is a person who is not able to be absorbed in any factory or company, then we are ready to bear. This is an encouragement for one year so that they can stand on their feet," Pilot said.

Pilot said that Congress' guarantee was the best tribute to Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary, which is celebrated as the 'National Youth Day'.

The leaders also launched the poster of the scheme during the press conference.

"I have full confidence that on February 5, people will give the Congress a chance to serve in the national capital with a good majority," he stated.

He said that while the government will provide the funds, private companies will

engage the registered youths to develop their skills and absorb them, or for the youth to start their own ventures.

Yadav said that the Congress stipend will channelise the skills of the youth to constructive work, to give direction to their lives, as in the past 11 years, people only witnessed "monopoly, price rise and corruption" but no jobs for the youth.

"The Congress government had turned Delhi into a world class city, but now lawlessness and joblessness rule the roost. When the Congress comes to power, all needs of the people will be fulfilled," he added.

On January 6, the Congress announced the 'Pyaari Didi Yojana', promising a monthly financial assistance of Rs 2,500 for women if it is voted to power.

On January 8, the party announced the 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana', under which it promised to provide free health insurance of up to Rs 25 lakh.

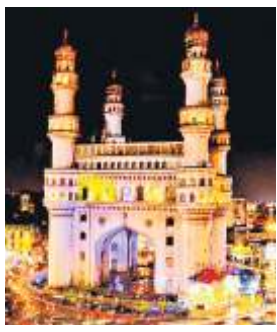
Polling for the 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5 and votes will be counted on February 8.

City Pioneer

sunday pioneer

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | JANUARY 13, 2025

03



Live Musical Orchestra

By Telugu Cine Geeta Sravanthi

Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, January 13, (4:30 pm to 9 pm)

Kuchipudi Dance Performance

By Sri Narashimha Kuchipudi Natya Bharathi

Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, January 13, (4:30 pm to 9 pm)

Classical music programme

By Parichary Arts Foundation

Venue

Conference Hall - Ravindra Bharathi January 13, (6 pm)

AMR Kite Festival 2025

Venue

AMR Planet Mall, January 11 to 13, (12 pm)

Rachakonda cops clear vehicular traffic near Panthangi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Police managed toll gates as people rush to Andhra Pradesh for Sankranti began on Sunday. The traffic was still from morning hours on Sunday at Panthangi toll plaza near Choutuppal. ACP Choutuppal alerted the police officers deployed near the toll plaza and said that vehicular traffic has been managed smoothly. The Rachakonda Police also urged the public before travelling to recharge their Fastag wallets, so that vehicles do not stand in queue for longer time and cause inconvenience to the people.

City's wholesale shops see demand for kites for Sankranti



SAMUEL JOSHUA
samueljoshua@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

Wholesale kite shops in Hyderabad are witnessing demand as Sankranti approaches, with kites starting at 3 for just Rs 10. The festival sees lakhs of kites flown across the city and Telangana, and citizens are also opting to buy in bulk since kites often get cut off mid-flight.

When asked, Prasanth, a shop owner in Dhoolpet, shared that small and medium paper kites are in high demand, especially among NGOs and children's organisations. He said, "We sold 5 kites for just Rs 12 in bulk last week, attracting many buyers

due to low price." He noted that with retailers increasing, the prices were hiked to more than Rs 30. Many kids are preferring wholesale shops to buy 3 to 5 kites with unique designs and wide shapes.

Prasanth also shared that medium and large kites are selling rapidly and announced the prices, where large kites cost Rs 20 for 3, premium wide-angle kites are Rs 30 each, and premium-quality designs cost Rs 50. The price of rarely purchased extra-large kites range from Rs 100 to Rs 500. He added that superfine cotton threads cost between Rs 100 and Rs 650, while thread machines or chakris are priced from Rs 50 to Rs 700, depending on their quality and size.

Prasanth noted that authorities from the Forest department had put up posters on all shops banning Chinese manja and glass-coated threads. Police officers also gave instructions to the shopkeepers in this regard. He added that the shop only sells cotton and lightweight plastic threads.

Meanwhile, teenager Nikhil expressed his love for kite-flying during Sankranti while buying kites from the shop. He shared that his school taught him about the dangers of Chinese manja to birds and humans. "I only buy cotton threads now, even if they break easily," he said, urging strict penalties for shop owners who violate the ban.

Global Kite & Sweet Fest is all set to begin today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 7th International Kite & Sweet Festival 2025 is all set to take place from January 13 to 15 at Parade Grounds, featuring participants from 16 countries. This event coincides with Sankranti, blending cultural celebrations with colorful kites and traditional sweets.

The event will be inaugurated by Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Monday at 4 pm.

During a curtain raiser at Tourism Plaza Hotel, Telangana Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao unveiled the official poster. He toured sweet stalls showcasing traditional homemade treats and appreciated the efforts of women from various states. The Minister emphasised the festival's role in celebrating Telangana's culture and enhancing Hyderabad's global reputation.

Calling Hyderabad a 'Mini India', he highlighted the city's diverse harmony. The event will feature 47 international kite flyers from 16 countries and 60 domestic kite club members from 14 states, showcasing unique kite designs. Stalls will offer a variety of national, international and Telangana's traditional sweets.

The Minister encouraged tourists to explore Telangana's heritage sites, temples, and cultural landmarks, which support local livelihoods. He also announced that the entry is open for all and also shared plans to expand the festival to rural and urban areas in the future.

Meanwhile, Tourism Secretary Smita Sabharwal described the festival as a unique global concept.

Authorities expect 1.5 million visitors and are coordinating with GHMC, Police and other departments to ensure a smooth experience for all.



Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao unveiling the International Kite & Sweet Festival 2025 official poster



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu lighting the lamp at Ramakrishna Math in Domalguda on the occasion of National Youth Day 2025 on Sunday

NATIONAL YOUTH DAY

Recognise the power within you and overcome setbacks: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

"Do not let failures define you. Recognise the strength within and move confidently toward your goals," said IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, addressing young minds on National Youth Day 2025. Drawing inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's teachings, he urged the youth to stay strong and determined in the face of challenges.

At an event organised by the Ramakrishna Math in Domalguda on Sunday, Sridhar Babu stated, "Many young people today feel defeated by small obstacles. A single failure can make them doubt their abilities. It is important to understand that setbacks are just steps toward success. Victory belongs to those who face challenges with unwavering resolve. When youth focus on a goal, they can achieve anything."

The Minister emphasised that mindset is key to success. He urged the youth to take charge of their lives, cultivate discipline, work hard and stay positive. He stressed the youth to prepare mentally and physically to overcome any challenge.

Producer Suresh Babu, actors Rana, Venkatesh booked for trespassing

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Film Nagar police registered a criminal case against film producer Suresh Babu, actors Venkatesh Daggubati, Rana Daggubati and Abhiram for trespassing to complainant property late in the night.

The case has been booked under Sections 448, 452, 458 of the IPC read with Section 120(B) of the IPC. The complaint was filed by the director of W3 Hospitality Services Pvt. Ltd., accusing the persons of illegal demolition and theft of property at two leased premises in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. The complainant alleged that despite a pending injunction from the City Civil Court and orders from the Telangana High Court, the accused, including D Suresh Babu and Venkatesh Daggubati unlawfully entered the properties and caused damage with the help of anti-social elements.



Camera traps installed inside Prof Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University in Rajendra Nagar limits

4 camera traps laid in limits of PJTGSAU: Forest officers

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

For the last three days, forest officials have received complaints that there is a panther-like wild animal roaming around Prof Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University in Rajendra Nagar limits. The two beat officers and Deputy Range officer have been conducting checks and are also going for walks in the morning.

As the information was widespread, the forest officials conducted checks on Sunday and installed four camera traps in limits of the university. Forest Divisional Officer Vijayanada Rao told The Pioneer, "Sunday is not the first day. The walker has been contacting us for the last three days saying there is a panther-like animal and our officers are on ground, conducting searches. We found no evidence.

The walker must have mistaken for pug marks but it could have been a jungle cat."

Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTGSAU) has also clarified that no evidence of leopard movement has been found on its campus, urging the public not to believe or spread rumours.

Following reports and rumours circulating in various media channels and social platforms about a leopard sighting on the university premises, the security team, along with local police and forest officials, conducted a thorough search on Sunday. For nearly four hours, teams inspected various locations across the campus, but no footprints or signs of a leopard were found, confirmed Dr Hussain, the university's in-charge security officer.

The university authorities emphasised that such baseless

reports have caused unnecessary panic among students and their families. They requested media outlets and the public to refrain from spreading misinformation that could create fear or anxiety among students and staff.

Although no traces of a leopard were discovered, the university has taken precautionary measures by increasing security patrols on the campus and installing trap cameras in key locations for continuous monitoring. Students have been advised to take necessary precautions, including avoiding unnecessary movement on campus roads during late hours.

Dr Hussain also confirmed that CCTV footage and checks near water bodies and other areas yielded no evidence of a leopard. Despite this, the university remains vigilant and has implemented measures to ensure campus safety.

Traffic advisory for Kite Fest at Parade Grounds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As per the Commissioner of Police, Traffic - I, North District, Hyderabad, the following traffic restrictions will be in place due to the International Kite and Sweet Festival-2025 at Parade Grounds, Secunderabad, from January 13 to 15, 2025.

Traffic will be diverted or stopped at

the following locations: Traffic from Rotary 'X' Road heading to SBH will be diverted at YMCA towards Clock Tower. Traffic from Rasoolpura heading to Plaza will be diverted at CTO 'X' Road towards Balamrai. Traffic from Picket heading to SBH and Tivoli will be diverted at Sweekar Upakar towards YMCA. Traffic from NCC heading to Plaza will be diverted at Tivoli towards

Brookbond. The Police announced that Parade Ground Gate No. 01 and East Gate will be for public entry.

It is advised to avoid the following junctions: Alugaddbai 'X', Sangeeth 'X', YMCA 'X', Patny 'X', SBH 'X', Plaza, CTO, Brookbond, Tivoli, SweekarUpakar, Secunderabad Club, Tadbund, Centre Point, Diamond Point, Bowenpally 'X', Rasoolpura, Begumpet

and Paradise. Police suggest passengers traveling by train or bus should start early. Use of Metro Rail is advised, if possible. Parking is available at Parade Ground East and West Gates, Cantonment Playground, Gymkhana Ground, and Bison Polo Ground.

For updates, follow Hyderabad Traffic Police on Facebook and Twitter. For emergencies, call 9010203626.



Blood donors at the two-day Mega Blood Donation Camp conducted at Suraj Bhawan, Ghasi Bazaar Market

TSCS collects 314 blood units during Mega Donation Camp

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society (TSCS), with support from Agarwal Samaj Telangana, collected 314 blood units during a two-day Mega Blood Donation Camp at Suraj Bhawan, Ghasi Bazaar Market, on Saturday. A second blood donation camp was also held at Bhagwati Bai Montessori School. The event was organised in collaboration with the Hyderabad Cutpiece Cloth Merchant Association and Wholesale Art Silk Cloth Merchant Association to sup-

port individuals with thalassemia, a blood disorder. All the collected blood will be donated to TSCS.

President of TSCS, Dr Chandrakant Agarwal and Manish Agarwal, President of Agarwal Samaj Telangana, thanked donors for their contributions and urged more participation. Vice-president Purushottam Agarwal, treasurer Naveen Agarwal and honorary secretary Kapoor Chand, along with representatives from the merchant associations participated in the two-day camp.

'Not 'marks', but the 'mark' students leave in society matters'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Highlighting that it is not the 'marks' that matter, but what students do to leave their 'mark' in society, Member of the Lok Sabha Etala Rajendar delivered the keynote address at Abhyasa International Residential School's 28th Annual Day on Sunday.

On this occasion, Etala emphasised that students are not just marks-producing machines; they should learn human values, respect for relationships; embrace India's ancient culture, traditions and customs.

Abhyasa, a 28-year-old boutique boarding school, hosted a mega theatre play, Samvidhan@75, at Shilpa Kala Vedita as part of Hemanth Utsav. The play marked India's constitutional history in the run-up to the 75th Republic Day in January 2025.

CEO Vinayaka Kalleetla shared that learning is not just confined to schools but continues throughout life. He



MP Etala Rajendar being felicitated by CEO Vinayaka Kalleetla at Abhyasa International Residential School's 28th Annual Day on Sunday

highlighted how the demand for residential schools has decreased post-COVID, though they provide safe, time-efficient learning.

Meanwhile, guest Karuna Gopal spoke about India's remarkable growth and its potential to achieve greater success.

The event also recognised meritorious students with awards and certificates. The 90-minute opera, performed by 400 students, traced India's history from 5000 BCE to present, showcasing the students' talents and involvement. This rare achievement was admired by all present.

9,913 applicants owning plots in Hyd apply for Indiramma houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In Greater Hyderabad, 10,70,463 applications were received under the Prajapalana and 9,913 applicants were found to own house plots, said Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar on Sunday.

He said that priority will be given to those who are homeless.

State Minister for BC Welfare and Transport, and Hyderabad District In-charge Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar has assured that every eligible persons in

Telangana will be granted a ration card and Indiramma house.

Speaking at a meeting held at the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) with public representatives and officials on Sunday, the Minister emphasised the government's commitment to welfare schemes.

In Greater Hyderabad, a total of 10,70,463 applications were received under the Prajapalana initiative, of which 50 per cent have been surveyed. Among these, 9,913 applicants were



Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar at the meeting in the GHMC

found to be owning house plots.

However, considering the unique challenges related to land availability in Hyderabad, it was suggested by public representatives that special measures should be taken to benefit the underprivileged. Consequently, an action plan has been devised to either construct multi-story buildings or redevelop slums to provide housing.

The Minister assured a transparent and fair process for selecting beneficiaries through surveys and field verifications,

ensuring no eligible individual is left out. He urged citizens to cooperate with the survey teams and provide any additional information post-survey.

A total of 3,500 Indiramma houses will be allocated per constituency. Field verifications will be conducted between January 16 and 20, followed by ward-wise gram sabhas from January 20 to 24 for beneficiary selection. Data entry will be completed by January 25, and new ration cards and housing beneficiary lists will be announced starting January 26.



A thief cutting open ATM at Pitlam village in Kamareddy district early Sunday

Thieves cut open ATM, loot Rs 17 lakh

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Thieves ran amok in the district in the early hours of Sunday. A thief was captured by a CCTV camera breaking an SBI ATM in Pitlam village. He cut open the ATM using a gas cutter and made off with Rs 17 lakh.

The incident shook the police in Kamareddy. The thieves could successfully break open the ATM and left with the booty.

Ticket price hike for Ram Charan starrer 'Game Changer' revoked

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has revoked its earlier orders allowing an increase in ticket prices for actor Ram Charan starrer 'Game Changer'.

Following a request made by the makers of 'Game Changer', the state government had issued orders on January 3 permitting screening of six shows on January 10 (including extra show at 4 am) with an additional amount of Rs 150 for multiplex theatres and Rs 100 for single theatres.

While allowing additional shows and hike in prices, the government had said advertisements on adverse impact of narcotics and drugs and cyber crime should be screened. However, the High Court passed interim directions on January 10 to review the decision issued to enhance the ticket rates on Rs 150 for multiplex and Rs 100 for single theatres from the regular rates, within 24 hours from the date of receipt of a copy of the order and also to not allow early morning shows.



Ashok Goud

'Swami Vivekananda's teachings continue to inspire youth'

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Madduri Ashok Goud, chairman of Madduri Foundation and District President of the BC Welfare Association, paid glowing tributes to Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

He highlighted Vivekananda's love for India and his dream of restoring the nation to its ancient glory. "Swami Vivekananda was not only a spiritual teacher but also a true patriot who worked to educate the poor and uplift society. His teachings continue to inspire not just India but also the Western world," he noted.



Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Endowments Minister Konda Surekha and Panchayat Raj Minister Dhanasari Anasuya at a review meeting in Warangal on Sunday

Ensure welfare benefits to all eligible people: Ministers to Collectors

● Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy made it clear that the government is committed to the welfare of the poor

PNS ■ HANMAKONDA

A coordination meeting on the implementation of welfare schemes, such as Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, Indiramma Houses, and the issuance of ration cards was held at the Hanmakonda District Collector meeting hall on Sunday.

The meeting was attended by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Konda Surekha, Minister for Endowments, Dhanasari Anasuya Seethakka, Minister for Panchayat Raj and officials.

Minister Srinivas Reddy reviewed the schemes and provided direction for effective implementation. He gave instructions to District Collectors and officials on how to coordinate the schemes in their respective districts.

He further mentioned that the state government would launch these four prestigious schemes on January 26. He asserted that the government was committed to fulfilling the dreams of the poor and would continue to work towards poverty alleviation.

ed the importance of the effective implementation of these schemes and urged all officials, in coordination with the Indiramma committees, to ensure smooth execution.

Minister Dhanasari Anasuya stressed the need for officials to be cautious while selecting beneficiaries and to ensure that the most deserving and poorest individuals benefit from the government schemes.

Hanmakonda District Collector, P Pravinia, said that the district had prepared a detailed plan for the implementation of the four schemes, including Rythu Bharosa and Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa.

Warangal District Collector Satya Sharada mentioned that 158 teams had been formed across 13 mandals to identify eligible beneficiaries for the four schemes.

State Government Whip Ramachandra Naik thanked the Chief Minister and Ministers for their efforts in launching these welfare schemes.

Later, at a media conference, Minister Srinivas Reddy reiterated the government's commitment to development and welfare, emphasising that the Chief Minister's goal was to ensure every eligible person benefits from the schemes.

Need to resolve border disputes between Revenue and Forest Depts stressed

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has emphasised the need for action to resolve revenue and forest land border disputes.

On Sunday, the Minister held a review meeting along with Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, District Collector Muzammil Khan, Additional Collector P Sreeja, and officials from the Revenue and Forest Departments at his residence here.

The Minister stated that farmers have been cultivating land at the grassroots level for the past 40 years, as per the assignment titles distributed by the government, and that these land issues should be resolved through coordination between Revenue and Forest officials.

The Minister added that modern

equipment would be provided if necessary for land surveys. He also suggested selecting a village in each constituency as a pilot project to take action for resolving revenue and forest land disputes.

He highlighted that there were boundary issues regarding 1,500 acres of revenue and forest lands in 15 survey numbers in the district, and actions should be taken to resolve them through surveys.

Srinivas also mentioned that some people living abroad are claiming ownership of lands, and officials should conduct field inspections to accurately gather information on who currently possesses the lands.

Mentally challenged woman raped by three men in Medak district

PNS ■ MEDAK

A mentally challenged woman in her mid 30s was allegedly gang-raped by three men in Medak district and the incident came to light while analysing CCTV footage by police in connection with a theft case, according to police on Sunday.

The incident happened on January 8 night in Chegunta mandal, they said.

As part of an investigation following a theft complaint, the police were verifying CCTV footage of an area. They came across footage captured by a camera where-in three men were seen forcibly taking away a woman near the roadside.

Police who took up further investigation identified the three persons and picked them up and during their questioning they "revealed" that they allegedly sexually assaulted the woman.

The victim, who is mentally challenged and found wandering in the area for the past three to four days, has been shifted to 'Bharosa' support centre by the police.

She was subsequently identified as a native of Nizamabad district who had left her home a week ago. Police informed her parents and based on a complaint, a FIR was registered on Saturday, a police official said. Further investigation is underway.

Shah Cricket Cup-2025 inaugurated in Shadnagar

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The much-anticipated Shah Cricket Cup-2025 tournament was inaugurated at the mini stadium in Shadnagar by MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and former MLA Choulapalli Pratap Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Shankar emphasised the importance of sportsmanship, stating that winning and losing are natural aspects of any sport.

"There is always something to learn from defeat. Playing friendly games and focusing on self-improvement after every match is what truly matters," he remarked. Pratap Reddy advised the youth to develop positive habits through sports. He urged them to avoid bad influences and work towards bringing pride to their families and the region.



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar playing cricket after inaugurating Shah Cricket Cup-2025 tournament in Shadnagar on Sunday

Police place BRS leaders, activists under house arrest

PNS ■ YADADRI-BHUVANAGIRI DISTRICT

In the aftermath of attack on the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) office in Bhuvanagiri, tension erupted in the Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district.

As a precautionary measure, the police placed Nalgonda former MLA Bhupal Reddy and his supporters, as well as Tungaturthi former MLA Kishore under house arrest. The police took action in view of the BRS

call for protest in Bhuvanagiri.

The situation remained tense, with both parties blaming each other for the unrest. A large police force has been deployed to maintain peace. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation to prevent further escalation.

The clash highlighted the ongoing political friction between BRS and Congress ahead of the upcoming local body elections, as both parties continue to vie for political dominance in the region.



BRS activists staging a protest in Bhuvanagiri on Sunday

Ministers reiterate government's commitment to farmers' welfare

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The Telangana government has announced a series of welfare initiatives aimed at empowering farmers and rural communities. In a high-level review meeting held at the Uday Aditya Bhavan in Nalgonda District Collectorate, officials and people's representatives discussed the implementation of key schemes, such as Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, new ration cards, and Indiramma housing projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Sukhender Reddy announced that under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, the government would provide Rs 12,000 per acre to farmers. He directed officials to ensure that only eli-



Ministers Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao and Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukender Reddy at a review meeting in Nalgonda on Sunday

gible farmers receive the benefits by conducting field inspections to identify landowners.

Minister Venkat Reddy reiterated the government's commitment to improving the lives of the underprivileged. He highlighted that in previous government, only

797 double-bedroom houses were distributed in the Nalgonda constituency over a decade, whereas the current administration would sanction 3,500 houses annually per constituency. Beneficiaries of Indiramma housing projects will be identified through Gram Sabhas, prioritising those in urgent need. Reddy emphasised that the government is committed to ensuring transparent governance and delivering services directly to the people.

Minister Nageshwara Rao announced that the schemes, including Rythu Bharosa, Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, Indiramma Housing, and new ration cards, will be officially launched on January 26 as part of the Republic Day celebrations.

The state government's efforts to provide financial stability to farmers and housing for the underprivileged reflect its commitment to social welfare and rural development.

Bank guarantee requirement for rice millers opposed

PNS ■ YADADRI

Rice millers have been adopting negligent attitude in providing the required bank guarantees for the paddy handed over to them by the civil supplies department for milling. Even a month after receiving the paddy, neither the president of the rice millers' association nor any other member has submitted the necessary bank guarantee to the department.

The state government had asked for a 20 per cent bank

guarantee from the millers, citing concerns over problems with the timely supply of Custom Milling Rice (CMR) and the diversion of paddy to unauthorised markets. However, the rice millers have been resistant, refusing to provide the guarantee. As a result, the civil supplies department has been storing the paddy in warehouses rather than entrusting it to the millers for milling. Some millers, in response, have offered a 10 per cent bank guarantee, but none have provided the full required amount.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
REVENUE DEPARTMENT
 Proc.No.G1/273/2024
 Office of the District Collector, Karimnagar, Dt: 02-01-2025
FORM-VII
 (See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013)

DECLARATION

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector, Karimnagar that a total of (40-15 %) acres of land specified in the "Schedule" below situated in the limits of Chigurumamidi Mandal of Karimnagar district is required for public purpose, to fit for, Gourevelli D4 Right Side Main canal from Km 19.127 to 19.600 including its Minors & Sub Minors.

Accordingly the Executive Engineer, Division No.3 of Irrigation Circle No.1, Huzarabad, Siddipet has filed requisition in Appendix-I & II for Acquisition of (40-15 %) acres of land required for public purpose, for excavation of Gourevelli D4 Right Side Main canal from Km 19.127 to 19.600 including its Minors & Sub Minors.

Accordingly the notification in Appendix-I & II U/s 11(1) of the LARR Act, 2013 for acquisition (40-15 3/4) acres of land was already published in four modes.

Further, calling the objections from the notified persons within stipulated period. Accordingly objections have been received within (60) days on the matter under section 15 of the Act and the objections are taken into consideration.

Based on Sub Division Record & Enjoyment survey the lands for an extent of (40-15 3/4) acres coming under acquisition.

Therefore, declaration is made that a piece of land measuring, an extent of (40-15 3/4) gts. of standard measurement under acquisition for the above Project in the Chigurumamidi mandal of Karimnagar district, whose detailed description is as following:

Name of the Village: Sundaragiri, Name of the Mandal: Chigurumamidi, District: Karimnagar Km Distributory-4 on Gourevelli Right side Main canal from 19.127 to Km 19.600		Name of the Village: Indurthi, Name of the Mandal: Chigurumamidi, District: Karimnagar Distributory-4 on Gourevelli Right side Main canal from Km 24.400 to Km 26.500									
Sr. No.	Type of land (Dry/Wet etc.)	Under Acquisition (in acres)	Name(s) of Paddar(s) with Father's / Husband's Name	Name(s) of Enjoyer(s) with Father's / Husband's Name	Details of Structures trees etc	Sr. No.	Type of land (Dry/Wet etc.)	Under Acquisition (in acres)	Name(s) of Paddar(s) with Father's / Husband's Name	Name(s) of Enjoyer(s) with Father's / Husband's Name	Details of Structures trees etc
1	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Samavva (Langiah)	()	-	201	Dry/patta	0-21	Ganta Ankus (Venkataiah)	Ganta Ankus (Govt Lands (Govt Lands))	-
2	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Anitha (Parsharamulu)	()	-	202	Dry/patta	0-21	Komre Chinnarajiah (Ramaiah)	Smashanavatika (Smashanavatika)	-
3	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	203	Dry/patta	0-01	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	-
4	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	204	Dry/patta	0-01	Pesaru Venkatrajam (Chinna Venkataiah)	Pesaru Venkatrajam (Chinna Venkataiah)	-
5	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	205	Dry/patta	2-07	Pesaru Venkatrajam (Chinna Venkataiah)	Pesaru Venkatrajam (Chinna Venkataiah)	-
6	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	206	Dry/patta	0-37	Radharamu Ramulu (Venkataiah)	Radharamu Ramulu (Venkataiah)	-
7	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Anitha (Parsharamulu)	()	-	207	Dry/patta	0-01	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	-
8	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	208	Dry/patta	0-01	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	-
9	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	209	Dry/patta	0-01	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	Daripelli Balah (Rajiah)	-
10	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	210	Dry/patta	0-30	Chandraiah (Rajiah)	Chandraiah (Rajiah)	-
11	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	211	Dry/patta	0-30	Karaventi Raju (Balalah)	Karaventi Raju (Balalah)	-
12	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	212	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
13	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	213	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
14	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	214	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
15	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	215	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
16	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	216	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
17	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	217	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
18	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	218	Dry/patta	0-30	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	Ganta Ramesh (Banaiiah)	-
19	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	219	Dry/patta	0-13	Aluvula Yadagin (Mallaiah)	Aluvula Yadagin (Mallaiah)	-
20	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	220	Dry/patta	0-27	Kola Radhava (Odiaiah)	Kola Radhava (Odiaiah)	-
21	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	221	Dry/patta	0-31	Shek Hussain (Chinna Kasim)	Shek Hussain (Chinna Kasim)	-
22	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	222	Dry/patta	0-31	Bikkant Sarojana (Balara)	Bikkant Sarojana (Balara)	-
23	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	223	Dry/patta	0-31	Thalla Sampath (Mallaiah)	Thalla Sampath (Mallaiah)	-
24	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	224	Dry/patta	0-08	Shek Hussain (Chinna Kasim)	Shek Hussain (Chinna Kasim)	-
25	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	225	Dry/patta	0-08	Dyava Kishan Reddy (Prathap Reddy)	Dyava Kishan Reddy (Prathap Reddy)	-
26	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	226	Dry/patta	0-08	Nampalli Venkatesh (Komuriah)	Nampalli Venkatesh (Komuriah)	-
27	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	227	Dry/patta	0-08	Bikkant Srikant (Balara)	Bikkant Srikant (Balara)	-
28	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	228	Dry/patta	0-08	Bikkant Srinivas (Balara)	Bikkant Srinivas (Balara)	-
29	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	229	Dry/patta	0-14	Chatta Ramadevi (Sathiah)	Chatta Ramadevi (Sathiah)	-
30	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	230	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
31	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	231	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
32	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	232	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
33	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	233	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
34	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	234	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
35	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	235	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
36	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	236	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
37	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	237	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
38	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	238	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
39	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Sakrishna (Langiah)	()	-	239	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-
40	Dry/patta	1-00	Pesaru Nagarjun (Komuriah)	()	-	240	Dry/patta	0-23	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	Chatta Rajiah (Venkataiah)	-

Further, the Gramsabha U/s 11(2) and Socio Economic Survey had been conducted U/s 16 on the contents of the PN on 13-11-2024 & Public hearing conducted U/s 16(4), 16(5) on 13-11-2024, A.Ct. 2013.

As provided U/s 16 of the Act, Socio Economic Survey completed. Number of families to be resettled with this acquisition is Nil. No families livelihood is affecting. Therefore RRR is not applicable.

Mines of coal, iron-ore, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Karimnagar on any working day.

Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer Sd/- Addl. Collector Sd/- Dist. Collector
 Karimnagar Karimnagar Karimnagar

DIPR No. 575/A/APP/Pub/2024-25



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Rising drug menace

Amit Shah's contention that seven per cent of Indians are into substance abuse is an eye-opener; the Govt must act now

India is grappling with an escalating threat that cuts across social and economic lines: the increasing prevalence of drug abuse. With seven per cent of the population reportedly engaged in narcotics use, the issue has become a pressing concern for policymakers, law enforcement agencies and society at large. Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently underscored the severity of the problem, describing it as a "cancer" that could destroy the nation's future generations. Speaking at the 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' conference, Shah highlighted the government's intensified efforts against the drug menace. In 2024 alone, narcotics worth Rs16,914 crore were seized, a record-breaking figure. Comparing the past two decades, Shah noted that from 2004 to 2014, 3.63 lakh kilograms of drugs were seized, whereas from 2014 to 2024, the figure had risen seven-fold to 24 lakh kilograms. Despite this, the drug menace has only increased with even school going children also becoming drug addicts. The discovery of at least 50 illegal labs across the country underscores this issue. With stringent actions against traditional narcotics, there is a worrying shift towards the production and consumption of synthetic drugs, a trend that demands immediate intervention.



India's geographical location plays a significant role in its vulnerability to drug trafficking. Positioned near the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) and the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand), the country serves as both a transit and a destination hub for narcotics. Social factors such as unemployment, poverty, and peer pressure further exacerbate the issue, especially among the youth, creating a vicious cycle of addiction and criminality. Since 2019, the Modi government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to tackle the drug crisis. Enhanced enforcement efforts have led to record-breaking seizures, reflecting improved coordination and action against traffickers. However, the drug menace has only increased. India needs to focus on strengthening its law enforcement framework, ensuring that agencies have access to advanced training, technology and resources to dismantle drug networks. The regulation of precursor chemicals must be tightened to prevent their misuse in synthetic drug production. Rehabilitation facilities must be expanded to provide holistic support to those battling addiction, while nationwide public awareness campaigns should be intensified to foster a culture of prevention. The fight against drugs also requires regional and global cooperation. Neighbouring countries must work together to address cross-border trafficking, share intelligence and coordinate enforcement actions. At the domestic level, fostering collaboration between governments, non-profits and local communities is essential to sustain long-term efforts. The drug menace in India is not merely a law enforcement challenge but a societal crisis that demands collective action. The government must step up the efforts before it becomes a full-blown crisis.

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PICTALK



People buy kites ahead of 'Makar Sankranti' festival, in Amritsar

Showcasing rural India's resilience and vision for Viksit Bharat 2047

From showcasing GI-certified products to championing organic farming, Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 underscored rural India's vital role in nation building

Rural India, often described as the soul of the nation, has been a cornerstone of India's economic and cultural identity. The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025, organised by NABARD and inaugurated by the Prime Minister, illuminated the remarkable strides made by rural communities. This event brought together policymakers, entrepreneurs, artisans, and thought leaders to celebrate and further the progress of rural India while envisioning a sustainable and inclusive future. Held under the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047', the Mahotsav provided a platform to showcase the diverse achievements of rural India. From GI-certified products and tribal crafts to organic agriculture and women-led entrepreneurship, the festival underscored the untapped economic and cultural potential of rural areas, particularly the North-Eastern region. In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister emphasised the pivotal role of rural India in achieving a Viksit Bharat



by 2047. He highlighted the government's focus on enhancing rural infrastructure, promoting financial inclusion, and empowering marginalised communities. The Prime Minister's speech set the tone for the event, reinforcing the idea that the path to India's growth lies in the empowerment of its villages. NABARD Chairman, Shaji KV, delivered a compelling address, reflecting on the transformative journey of rural India over the past decade. He pointed to significant advancements such as improved infrastructure through the Prime Minister Gram Sadak Yojna, wide-

spread electrification, digital connectivity, and the GI tagging of rural products. These initiatives, he stated, have bridged the gap between rural and urban areas, creating opportunities for inclusive economic growth. The Mahotsav also featured dynamic panel discussions that explored critical aspects of rural development. One panel delved into the potential of organic agriculture, discussing how climate-smart practices can address food security, environmental sustainability, and economic empowerment. Highlights included the success of the "GOBAR-Dhan" Yojana, which has already established over 2,300 biogas units, and the expansion of the organic agriculture market, now valued at Rs16,800 crore. Another panel emphasised the importance of empowering cooperatives, with NABARD's initiatives in digitising over 67,000 cooperative societies playing a transformative role in making banking more accessible and affordable for rural populations. The event wasn't just about discussions and

economic progress—it was also a celebration of India's rich cultural heritage. Vibrant performances brought to life the diverse artistic traditions of rural India. It provided rural entrepreneurs and artisans with access to broader markets, strengthened partnerships between stakeholders, and emphasised sustainable practices. The festival also resulted in actionable policy recommendations, including the promotion of digital literacy, enhanced support for organic farming, and initiatives to boost rural infrastructure and healthcare. As the event concluded, it left a resounding message: the future of India lies in the empowerment of its villages. With the collective efforts of organisations like NABARD and the unwavering support of the government, rural India is poised to lead the nation into a brighter, more sustainable future, aligning perfectly with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. (The writer is a development writer; views are personal)



PRABHA GUPTA

Pioneering meteorology and AQ management



RAJESH VERMA

IMD has evolved from focusing on weather forecasting to becoming a key player in climate research, disaster management and air quality monitoring

The completion of 150 years of establishment of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is a matter of great pride for every Indian. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), established in 1875, has played a pioneering role in meteorological and atmospheric studies in India. Initially focused on weather forecasting and seismology, the Department gradually expanded its scope to include climate research, disaster management, and environmental monitoring. IMD was perhaps the first institution in India to start systematic long-term measurement of solar radiation, precipitation chemistry, ozone, and aerosol optical and physical properties.

Recognising the importance of atmospheric composition, IMD became an active partner in global atmospheric environment monitoring and research programs and contributed significantly towards ozone hole, air quality, precipitation chemistry, climate change, solar dimming and brightening research. The Earth's climate system has demonstrably changed since the pre-industrial era. IMD has a key responsibility in understanding the science of climate change and variability as well as adaptation and mitigation strategies. It plays a prominent role in facilitating a broader use of climate information, products and services. IMD has been mandated to operate the national meteorological observing systems; develop and maintain data archives; undertake climate monitoring; and carry out climate diagnostics, climate analysis and climate assessment. All this reliable and authentic data and information collected over 150 years has provided a proper assessment of climate change in India and has also helped in developing policy formulation for adaptation and mitigation measures. The air quality forecast and assessment system helps CAQM and other pollution control authorities in the country to make decisions for air quality management including the implementation of GRAP. The problem associated with air pollution is very complex as



many factors contribute to changes in concentrations of the main pollutants. The major factors are anthropogenic emissions, urbanisation, specific topography, emissions sources, environmental factors and meteorology. The advances in computational resources allowed the use of advanced deterministic chemical transport models, leading to more accurate air quality forecasts, replacing the previous empirical and statistical approach which has some limitations. The scientists at India Meteorological Department and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, Ministry of Earth Science jointly developed the advanced Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS). The advanced modelling framework consists of a high-resolution fully coupled state-of-the-science Weather Research and Forecasting model coupled with chemistry (commonly known as WRF-Chem), and ingest data from satellites on aerosol optical depth, surface data from air quality monitoring stations across India and high-resolution emissions from various anthropogenic and natural sources including dust and stubble burning, to create more accurate initial conditions using state-of-the-art data assimilation techniques,



THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL METEOROLOGY HAS WITNESSED TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATIONS, WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES ENABLING PRECISE, REAL-TIME INSIGHTS INTO ATMOSPHERIC DYNAMICS AND AIR QUALITY

to improve forecasts. The chemical data assimilation is further integrated with dynamical downscaling at a 400-meter resolution to provide a very high spatial resolution air quality forecast for the Delhi region. The prediction part of the system consists of two modelling frameworks, one is based on the NCAR atmospheric chemistry transport model (WRF-Chem) and the second one is based on the Finnish Meteorological Institute model SILAM (System for Integrated modelling of Atmospheric composition). The models take into account the latest land use land cover (LULC) change information over Delhi, background aerosols and pollutants, long-range transport of dust from dust storms and particulate matter from stubble burning. The predictions are now available up to 72 hours lead time at 400 meter resolution and 10 days in advance at 10 km resolution for the Delhi region. The advanced warning system provides (a) an air quality forecast at 400 meters for the Delhi/ NCR region, (b) an air quality forecast on primary and secondary stress of Delhi/NCR at 400 meters resolution, (c) an air quality forecast at 10 km resolution for entire South Asian region, (d) real-time observations of air quality over Delhi/NCR region, (e) details about natural

aerosols like dust (from dust storms) and particulate matter using different satellite datasets, (f) Near real-time fire information over India, (g) forecast of the contribution of non-local fire emissions. Consistent efforts are required to further improve the model performance. The field of environmental meteorology has witnessed transformative innovations, with cutting-edge technologies enabling precise, real-time insights into atmospheric dynamics and air quality. The accuracy of air quality forecasts is essential for mitigating the health impacts and economic costs of air pollution. IMD and associated institutions are continuously striving for improvement in environment monitoring and air quality prediction. IMD's historical contributions have not only improved the scientific understanding of India's unique atmospheric conditions but have also played a critical role in global efforts to combat air pollution and climate change. Many compliments to the meteorological community for their hard work in making IMD a global leader in the field of weather and climate. (The author is Chairperson of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas; Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONGRESS CHALLENGES AAP

Madam — The Election Commission of India has announced the date for polling for 70 assembly seats in Delhi. Though a tough fight between the incumbent AAP and the BJP is on the cards, the Congress has thrown down the gauntlet by fielding strong candidates against the AAP heavyweights like Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi Marlena. Unlike the two previous occasions when it didn't contest assembly elections on a serious note and drew a blank, this time the Congress is leaving no stone unturned to corner the AAP on various issues such as the liquor scam and the Sheeshmahal row. But the Congress' revival plan in Delhi has rattled the already crumbling INDIA bloc. Almost all parties of this bloc have openly thrown their weight behind the AAP. But for the Congress, the biggest shock has come from its oldest and most trusted ally, Lalu Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal. After Lalu Yadav backed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's willingness to lead the Opposition alliance instead of Congress leaders, his son Tejasvi Yadav dropped the bomb on the Congress by saying that the INDI alliance was only for Lok Sabha elections. Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

CEO CRITICISED FOR 90 HOUR PROPOSAL

Madam — L&T Chief has gone a few steps ahead of what Infosys's Narayana Murthy has prescribed and as expected, his suggestion of 90 hours a week and working even on Sundays has stirred up a debate. His remark to justify how long you can stare at your spouse is weird to say the least. Subrahmanyam should have looked at his former boss A N Naik's comment on regretting not spending enough time with his wife and children during his working life and after hanging up his boots, he was repenting it and said he is trying to wash his sins. Ultimately, at the end of the day, it is all about productivity and creating a positive work environment in the organisation and not spending long hours at the office.

Devastating wildfire in LA



In the wildfire that has engulfed Los Angeles in America, at least 11 people have died as the fire destroyed thousands of homes and more than 10,000 buildings, including schools, hospitals and so on. It has forced 180,000 people to evacuate their homes. The true death toll is not known. The fire, coupled with strong winds, has severely degraded air quality by releasing hazardous

smoke posing immediate and long-term risks to public health. The fire has already consumed around 22,000 acres of land. It is also said that climate change had made the grasses and shrubs that are fuelling the Los Angeles fire more vulnerable to the burning. Firefighters have been trying their level best to contain the spread of fire, but only 11 per cent of the fire had been contained to date. It is estimated that the total damage and economic loss from this wildfire disaster could reach nearly 4 per cent of the annual GDP of the state of California. Heavy rain and a shift of wind direction alone could diminish the present situation. The wildfire in Los Angeles is a warning to other countries across the globe to be more cautious about climate change. P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

These types of talks always come from the top, but implementation happens at the bottom, so if he really means what he said, he should walk the talk and work 90 hours a week for a year or two to set an example, and if it helps in improving business performance, then he should expect others to follow suit. In a top-down approach, if these CEOs push their employees beyond a point, it will only result in more burnout, and productivity is bound to suffer, needless to mention that mental and physical health will take a huge toll. Bal Govind | Noida

MINOR BEHIND SCHOOL BOMB THREATS

Madam — Sending fake bomb threats to more than 23 schools in Delhi by a minor student of class 12 is not only a grave crime but also poses a severe crisis for both society and the administration. Such baseless and deplorable acts create an atmosphere of tension in schools and spread chaos across the entire city. Security agencies are forced to waste their time and resources on non-existent threats, diverting their focus and strength from genuine emergen-

cies. This incident also highlights how excessive examination pressure can heavily impact students mentally. However, this does not justify the right of any student to spread terror in society. If a student is experiencing mental stress due to exam pressure, they require guidance and proper mental support, not engagement in acts that cause fear and unrest in the community. In such cases, it is the responsibility of both the law and the education system to provide students with the right guidance. They must be taught that false threats are not only harmful to society but also leave an undesirable and severe impact on their personality and future. Despite being a minor, children must understand that their actions do not only affect their own future but also deeply impact the entire society. Education and guidance are the tools that can help in their development into responsible and sensitive citizens. R K Jain | Barwani

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE CHAINS OF DEPRIVATION

The feeling of deprivation dominates most of us, leaving many of us caught in an endless cycle of unfulfilled desires



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Feeling of deprivation dominates life, one should not be surprised by this statement and this applies to all of us with some exceptions. You have guessed it. These fortunate souls are devotees of God. Let me substantiate what I have stated.

Do you agree that we have many unfulfilled desires; all of us have? Some of these are deep desires; those remain unfulfilled throughout our lives. The first one is to have plenty of money. What is plenty? Yes, it varies from person to person, but don't we change the quantum? I have done it throughout my life. What I had hoped for when I was a child has been exceeded many times over, but I still feel that more is what will really please me. By the way, I am one of those fortunate souls, whose needs have always been fulfilled, barring a few short spans. An extreme example is that of having a cycle and desiring a scooter. Once that is obtained, a car will be nice to have. This goes on till one gets to desire a private jet.

Then, come sexual feelings. From childhood, these feelings are never far away from our thoughts. And these are fanned by what we are exposed to by ads and what we choose to associate with like going on internet. Even children do so and giggle with friends. One may question why this feeling is so widespread. Because the creation can only be sustained by procreation. Even Lord Krishna has allowed this activity when He stated in the Bhagavad-Geeta, "I am passion in beings, according to religious principles," (7.11) But what human beings do not even animals do, i.e. make sex an overpowering urge. Even marriage does not satisfy it, though one feels in childhood that it would. Because sexual acts have a purpose, and cannot be made a burning desire.



The third enemy of us human beings are fearful thoughts. The underlying reason is our being small, very small in the overall context. We are also mostly ignorant, i.e., do not know what is good for us. Our intelligence is mostly flawed. There is spiritual intelligence, which is what the Bhagavad-Geeta is all about. Don't we avoid reading it? Because it will expose how little we know. This feeling of safety can only come from God, because only He can ensure it. Unfortunately, most of us avoid taking shelter of God, even though we know about Him.

Why don't we? Whatever we may say we really don't have much faith in God. Most of us feel that God is superior to us but not someone we must take shelter of, though God is everything. (7.19) Then, spiritual practices are considered utterly boring. Do we feel that they should be enjoyable like watching television? They are 'tapa' (austerities), as they should be. Our deeply embedded emotions like greed, lust and enviousness would not let us take shelter of God. The feeling that we can manage on our own also defeats us, even though we keep failing repeatedly in whatever we wish to achieve.

But everyone is not unintelligent. Many do take shelter of God and would never have second thoughts. Isn't this proof enough that they must be getting rewarded. Yes, God begins to guide and help them. One would know what is really desirable like peace, not unlimited sense enjoyment. God is so kind that He provides what we really need and He protects what is worth protecting. (9.22) God only can extricate us from our suffering caused by our past impious acts. (18.58) The list goes on, but one will only experience them if one gets started.

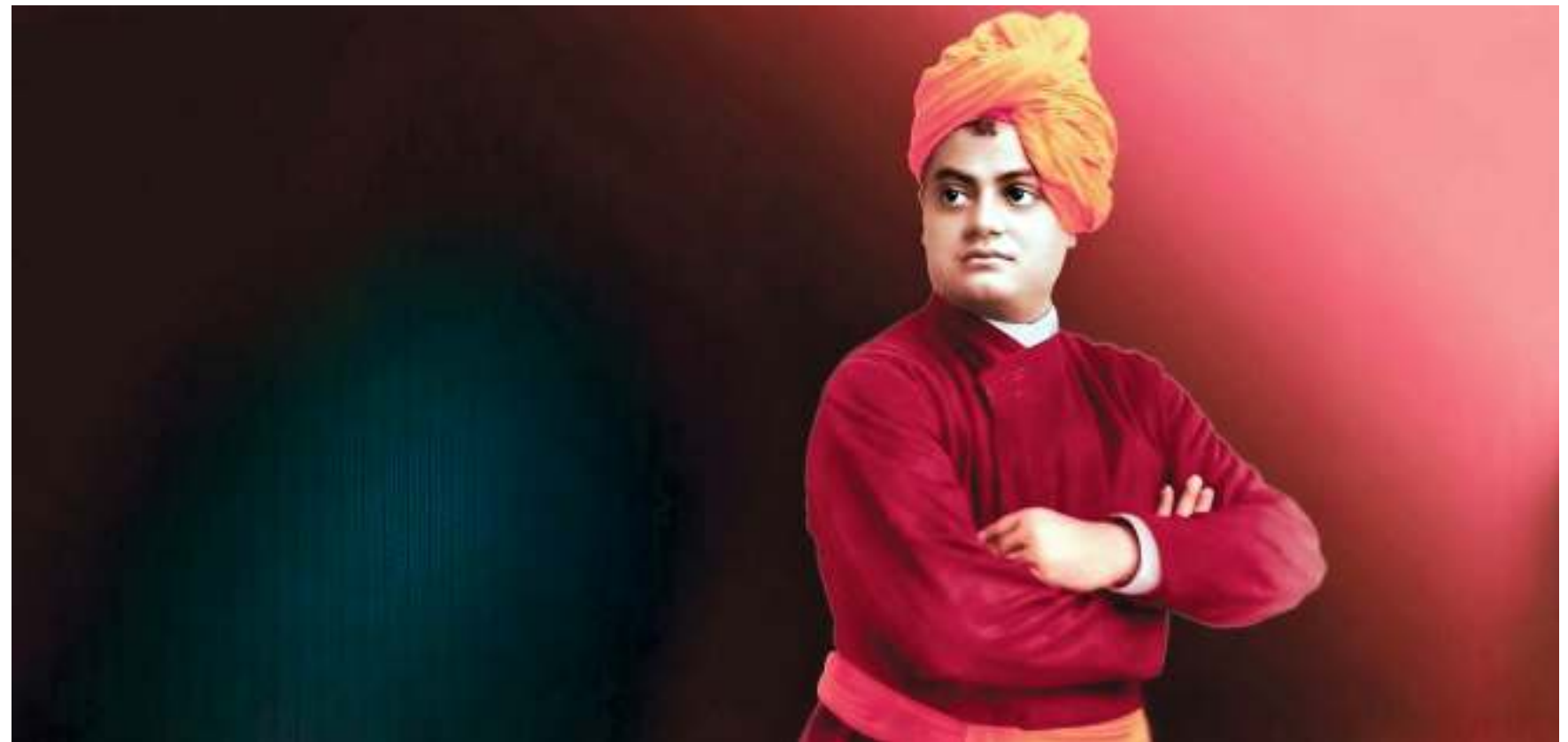
(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views are personal)

Vivekananda: A vision for an inclusive world



AMAL CHANDRA

As we celebrate Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, it is crucial to revisit his teachings, not just as historical artefacts but as living ideas relevant for today



Swami Vivekananda, born Narendranath Datta on January 12, 1863, is one of India's most remarkable spiritual leaders and thinkers. His birth anniversary is more than a mere occasion to honour his memory; it is an invitation to reflect on his profound legacy and the enduring relevance of his ideas. While his role in revitalising Hinduism and introducing Indian philosophy to the Western world is well-documented, some aspects of Vivekananda's thought remain less explored yet deeply significant. In a world grappling with numerous social, ethical, and philosophical challenges, his teachings serve as a quintessential guide.

Vivekananda was much more than a spiritual icon; he was a pragmatic philosopher who firmly believed in the application of spiritual principles to practical life. His famous assertion that 'service to humans is service to God' exemplifies his view that spirituality should be lived, not merely theorised. He encouraged people to engage in social service, emphasising that true religion manifests in the form of compassion, kindness and action.

This perspective feels especially resonant in our modern times, where there is often a disconnection between spiritual practices and real-world issues. Vivekananda's message is a call to integrate spirituality with daily life, urging individuals to act with empathy and responsibility toward others.

One of the most forward-thinking aspects of Vivekananda's philosophy was his vision of education. He was deeply critical of the colonial education system, which he believed produced clerks rather than thinkers and visionaries. For Vivekananda, education was not merely about accumulating knowledge but about developing the whole person—intellectually, morally and spiritually. He emphasized the need for self-reliance and character-building, which he saw as the true objectives of education. In today's educa-



HE WAS A PATRIOT WHO DEEPLY LOVED INDIA, YET HIS NATIONALISM WAS INCLUSIVE, ROOTED IN THE CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL WEALTH OF THE NATION RATHER THAN IN AGGRESSION OR EXCLUSION

tional discourse, which increasingly values holistic development and critical thinking, Vivekananda's ideas are strikingly prescient. His approach encourages educators and policymakers to think beyond conventional curricula, fostering environments that nurture creativity, ethics, and personal growth. At a time when women's rights were severely restricted, he advocated for their education and empowerment, highlighting the significant role women could play in shaping society.

He often drew from India's spiritual heritage, pointing to historical examples of women who had achieved great intellectual and spiritual heights. In a world that continues to struggle with gender disparities, Vivekananda's vision offers a timeless reminder of the importance of creating opportunities for all, irrespective of gender. His thoughts encourage us to work towards dismantling barriers and fostering a society where everyone can achieve their potential. Another fascinating aspect of Vivekananda's thought was his balanced approach to nationalism and internationalism.

He was a patriot who deeply loved India, yet his nationalism was inclusive, rooted in the cultural and spiritual wealth of the nation rather than in aggression or exclusion.

His famous speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 exemplified his belief in the unity of humanity. In his view, true patriotism did not mean hostility toward others but an appreciation of one's culture while respecting and learning from others. This approach is particu-

larly relevant today, as we navigate the complexities of national pride in a globalised world. Vivekananda's inclusive nationalism provides a framework for fostering pride in one's heritage while promoting global solidarity. Less commonly discussed, yet equally significant, is Vivekananda's respect for science and rational inquiry. Unlike many of his contemporaries who saw religion and science as oppositional forces, Vivekananda believed they could complement each other. He encouraged the cultivation of a scientific temper, advocating for a worldview that embraced both rationality and spirituality.

His open-mindedness toward scientific discoveries and his belief in the power of reason present a balanced perspective that is incredibly relevant in today's age of rapid technological advancement. Vivekananda's stance reminds us that faith and reason need not be in conflict but can coalesce to enrich our understanding of the world. Vivekananda was also a pioneer of interfaith dialogue, advocating for the respect and understanding of all religious traditions. He saw the diversity of faiths not as a barrier but as a testament to the multifaceted nature of truth. His inclusive attitude towards different religions stands as a powerful counter to the sectarian violence and religious intolerance that plague many societies today. Vivekananda's vision of interfaith harmony reminds us of the need for empathy and respect in a world often divided along religious lines.

His approach encourages us to find common ground and to cel-

brate the richness that diverse spiritual traditions bring to humanity. The legacy of Swami Vivekananda is multifaceted.

He was a monk, a philosopher, a nationalist, and a reformer, whose ideas continue to inspire millions worldwide. His teachings invite us to reflect on our personal and collective responsibilities, urging us to work towards a world that is more just, compassionate, and inclusive. Vivekananda's emphasis on the practical application of spiritual principles, disagreement with the imposition of vegetarianism, advocacy for education that nurtures the whole person, progressive views on gender, inclusive nationalism, and respect for both science and interfaith dialogue, all remain remarkably relevant.

His vision offers solutions to many of the challenges we face today, from educational reforms to gender equality, from religious harmony to ethical living. As we celebrate his birth anniversary, it is crucial to revisit Swami Vivekananda's teachings, not just as historical artefacts but as living ideas that can guide us toward a better future. His message is clear: "Arise, awake" - true greatness lies in the ability to apply timeless principles to the needs of the present, to foster a world where humanity can thrive in all its diversity.

Swami Vivekananda's life and work remain a beacon, illuminating the path to a world that values compassion, justice, and the collective wellbeing of all its inhabitants.

(The writer is a policy analyst, political commentator, and columnist. Views expressed are personal)

The future of turmeric exports: India's path to securing global market dominance

By adapting to domestic production practices with the changing global demand and fostering a collaborative ecosystem, India can secure its future exports in the global market

For centuries, India has been known as the 'Land of Spices', producing and exporting a wide variety of products, renowned for their distinctive flavour, aroma and health benefits. One such spice is turmeric, known as the 'Golden Spice of India', which has spread through trade beyond South Asia to different parts of the world. Today, turmeric is cultivated in many South Asian countries, China, Africa and the Caribbean and has multiple end-uses spanning industries such as food, pigment, dye, nutraceuticals, cosmetics and medicine. With global demand rising and growing demand for high-quality curcumin for preventive healthcare, sever-



ARPITA MUKHERJEE

al countries, such as Myanmar, Fiji, and Indonesia, are among the top five producers. India continues to be the largest exporter with close to 67 per cent of global exports in the year 2023. While the export value has increased from USD 182.53 million in 2017 to USD 212.65 million in 2023, the share in exports is showing a

slow decline, with new exporting countries like Fiji coming up. Global demand is also shifting towards turmeric, which has high curcumin content and organic varieties. Developed markets like the EU and the USA are emerging as key centres for the consumption of high-quality turmeric that meets stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and quality standards. The share of the USA in the imports of turmeric increased from 13.80 per cent in 2017 to 18.98 per cent in 2023, making it the first largest importer followed by India. We continue to import significant amounts of turmeric (especially dry), mainly from Vietnam, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Much of our

exports are in raw and powder format, where processing and further product developments are done in markets like the European Union (EU). Within the EU, countries like the Netherlands and Germany have become key exporters along with other countries like the USA. Some reasons for lower value addition in India include the inability to supply more than 10 per cent of the global requirement of turmeric with higher than 5 per cent curcumin, high use of pesticides and insecticides, lack of market knowledge and limited R&D and innovative products. The country must evolve from just a raw turmeric supplier by innovating, ensur-



ing quality, and adopting sustainable and good agricultural practices to maintain India's global dominance and move up the global value chain. Several companies have made strides in this direction by producing curcumin extracts for pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals. Products like Vicco Turmeric Cream combine turmeric with modern cosmetics, linking Ayurvedic

traditions with contemporary personal care. High-curcumin variants, such as Lakadong turmeric, are gaining international recognition for their medicinal benefits. The number of Geographical Indication (GI) turmeric has increased to six as of December 31, 2024. However, to achieve the Indian Government's objective of making India the global hub for turmeric production and to meet the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's projected target of turmeric exports of USD1 billion by 2030, further action is required. Establishing a National Turmeric Board, announced by the Prime Minister, is one such step towards consolidating and implementing com-

prehensive regulations governing the entire turmeric value chain, imperative to enhance the sector's global competitiveness. Additionally, although the standards of domestically produced turmeric align with international regulations, such as the CODEX, global turmeric users require higher curcumin content, with sustainable farming practices and for that targeted R&D is needed to improve the curcumin content of the produce. Export processes and compliance requirements need to be streamlined and simplified. Signing mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) for standards and organic may help. For example, the MRA for organic products signed

between India and Taiwan in 2024, is a step in the right direction. Similar MRAs need to be signed between India and its key turmeric export destinations like the EU and the USA, which will reduce the cost and time of certifications and testing. By aligning domestic production practices with the changing global demand and fostering a collaborative ecosystem, India can secure its future exports as a reliable and preferred supplier of high-quality turmeric in the global market.

(The writer is professor, at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. With inputs from Eshana Mukherjee. Views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS



Trump 2.0, AI to influence global trade in 2025: Experts

Geopolitical tensions the potential for a renewed US-led trade war under President-elect Donald Trump rising sustainability-driven barriers China's overcapacity in key sectors and rapid advancements in AI will significantly impact global trade in 2025 according to experts. They said Indian exporters and importers should work hand in hand with the government to deal with these challenges. India they said need to prioritise their AI (artificial intelligence) strategy as it promises to transform trade logistics and supply chain management and reshape traditional trade patterns. AI is fast emerging as an important vehicle for future trade's journey. The AI-driven digital transformation is poised to boost not only services trade but it may also create whole new categories of tradable AI-powered goods -- from autonomous vehicles to robotics and beyond trade expert and Hi-Tech Gears Chairman Deep Kapuria said. He said while geopolitical tensions are beyond the competency of the private sector to influence businesses from the developing world need to invest resources to comply with growing needs to meet sustainability parameters both environmental and social.



FPIs withdraw Rs 22,194 cr in Jan amid weak earnings

Foreign investors have withdrawn Rs 22,194 crore from Indian equities this month driven by expectations of a weak earnings season a steady rise in the US dollar and concerns over tariff war during Donald Trump's presidency. This came following an investment of Rs 15,446 crore in the month of December data with the depositories showed. Foreign investors have scaled back their investments in Indian equities significantly amid global and domestic headwinds. This exodus of foreign money from the Indian markets could be attributed to multitude of factors such as expectation of yet another weak earnings season concerns over the tariff war under Trump's presidency slowdown in GDP growth still high inflation numbers and uncertainty over the commencement of the interest cut in India Himanshu Srivastava Associate Director Manager Research Morningstar Investment Research India said. Additionally record low level of Indian rupee surge in US bond yields coupled with rich valuation of Indian markets also makes Indian equities relatively unattractive for foreign investors.



Mcap of five of top-10 most-valued firms tumbles

The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most-valued firms tumbled Rs 1,85,952.31 crore last week with HDFC Bank taking the biggest hit in-line with a weak trend in domestic equities. Last week the BSE benchmark slumped 1,844.2 points or 2.32 per cent and the Nifty dropped 573.25 points or 2.38 per cent. While Reliance Industries HDFC Bank ICICI Bank State Bank of India and ITC faced erosion from their market valuations Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Bharti Airtel Infosys Hindustan Unilever and the latest entrant in the top-10 pack -- HCL Technologies were the gainers. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank dropped by Rs 70,479.23 crore to Rs 12,67,440.61 crore. The Kolkata-based diversified entity ITC's valuation tumbled Rs 46,481 crore to Rs 5,56,583.44 crore. The mcap of State Bank of India slumped Rs 44,935.46 crore to Rs 6,63,233.14 crore and that of Reliance Industries eroded by Rs 12,179.13 crore to Rs 16,81,194.35 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation declined by Rs 11,877.49 crore to Rs 8,81,501.01 crore. However TCS added Rs 60,168.79 crore taking its mcap to Rs 15,43,313.32 crore.

Gautam Adani to invest Rs 65,000 cr in energy, cement

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Industrialist Gautam Adani on Sunday called on Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and announced an investment of Rs 65,000 crore in the Adani Group's energy and cement projects in the state officials said.

Adani met Sai at the latter's official residence in Chhattisgarh capital Raipur a statement issued by the state's public relations department said.

During the meeting Adani announced a planned investment of Rs 60,000 crore to expand the group's power



plants in Raipur Korba and Raigarh in the state. This expansion will enhance Chhattisgarh's total power generation capacity by an additional 6,120 MW the statement said.

Additionally the Adani Group chairman also committed Rs 5,000 crore for the

development and expansion of the group's cement plants in the state it said.

On the advice of the CM Adani also assured the state government of a Rs 10,000 crore impetus over the next four years to support initiatives in education healthcare skill development and tourism under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and beyond from the Adani Group the statement said.

The meeting also explored potential collaborations in manufacturing defence-related equipment and establishing data centres as well as a Global Capability Centre in Chhattisgarh it said.



Indichip Semiconductors inks deal with Andhra govt to set up Rs 14,000 crore facility

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Indichip Semiconductors Ltd along with its joint venture partner Yitoo Micro Technology (YMTL) from Japan on Saturday inked an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh government to establish India's first private semiconductor manufacturing facility with an investment of Rs 14,000 crore.

This cutting-edge facility will focus on manufacturing Silicon Carbide (SiC) chips contributing to India's technological advancement and sustainability goals.

The southern state pledged to provide land at Orvakal mega industrial hub in Kurnool along with the necessary infrastructure and ecosystem to make this project

a success.

"The new SiC fab facility will begin with a production capacity of 10,000 wafers per month ramping up to 50,000 wafers per month within two to three years. This strategic investment is aligned with India's Atma Nirbhar Bharat vision and addresses the growing global demand for energy-efficient technologies electric vehicles and renewable energy solutions" said an official press release.

The deal was struck in the presence of Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh and Industries Minister TG Bharat.

"This investment is a testament to Andhra Pradesh's ability to attract cutting-edge industries through innovative policies and robust infrastructure" said Lokesh.

Government partially restores gas supply to IGL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has increased cheaper gas supply to city gas retailers IGL Adani-Total and Mahanagar Gas restoring a major part of the allocation that was cut in 2024 according to regulatory filings by the companies.

The government in October and November last year had cut supplies of the so-called APM Gas (low-priced natural gas coming from old fields such as Mumbai High and Bassein fields in the Bay of Bengal) to city gas retailers by as much as 40 per cent in view of limited output.

This led to city gas retailers hiking CNG prices by Rs 2-3 per kg and planning more increases as they replaced lost volumes with higher-priced input fuel.

The price hike made CNG less attractive when compared to alternate fuels like diesel. Following this the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in a December 31, 2024 order rejigged some allocations of gas produced from below ground and undersea.

The ministry ordered a cut in gas supplied to state-owned GAIL and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) for production of LPG and diverting those volumes to city gas entities.

Amnesty Scheme for customs may be announced in Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to reduce litigation Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the upcoming Budget may announce an Amnesty Scheme for customs to foster ease of doing business.

The main asks of the industry would certainly be aligned with the objectives of the government and one objective of the government has been litigation reduction. On that front having an amnesty scheme for customs especially covering pre-GST legacy taxes like additional duty special additional duty has been one of the asks of the industry Price Waterhouse Co LLP managing director Anurag Sehgal said.

The government had in the past announced amnesty schemes for excise and service tax and even for the income tax but not for customs.

There are estimates that over 40,000 cases were pending in various courts and tribunals pertaining to customs duty alone.

Another consultancy firm EY India said customs litigations are pending at various forums for a very long time and the same require time and effort to be spent by both the taxpayer and the government in resolving them.

EY India also suggested that a one-time dispute/litigation resolution/settlement scheme should be introduced under



the Customs Law to settle and resolve pending disputes.

According to Deloitte India partner Mahesh Jaising the government should end long-drawn litigation to resolve long-standing disputes alleviate the burdened judicial pipeline and upgrade the law to keep pace with technological advancements and international best practices.

An amnesty scheme along the lines of Sab ka Vishwas will be a welcome decision. The industry has been waiting for such a scheme for years to address pending litigation matters under customs. This will especially help small businesses avoid past disputes and move ahead with a clean slate Jaising said.

Another important wishlist of the industry on customs would be rate rationalization to support the Make in India ini-

tiative Sehgal said. You have PLI Phased Manufacturing Programme coming up in many sectors. So rate rationalization would help promote investment in India he said.

Besides he said the industry is expecting the review of exemptions. Review of exemptions is very important because there are certain exemptions which are very critical for sectors like sustainable green tech maybe MSMEs healthcare where industry wants that they should be reviewed and extended he added.

Asked about the increase in duty on gold in view of rising import Sehgal said it was reduced only in the July Budget so tinkering with rate on this high value and sensitive item may not come so quickly.

Chennai among top 3 Indian cities for women's Social and Industrial inclusion: Study

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Chennai has been recognised as one of the top three cities in India excelling in social and industrial inclusion for women according to a recent study.

As many as eight cities from Tamil Nadu have figured in the list with the capital city ranking second for being the most inclusive safe and resilient and sustainable city for working women.

As per the Top Cities for Women in India 2024 report by Avtar group South India emerged as the most gender-inclusive region with 16 cities in the south featuring in the top 25.

Bengaluru has surpassed Chennai to secure the top position as the best city in the country for working women in 2024 it said.

Avtar Group Founder-President Saundarya Rajesh said Chennai came second for being the most inclusive safe resilient sustainable city for working women and



Tamil Nadu dominated the survey results with Coimbatore Tiruchirappalli Vellore Madurai Salem Erode and Tiruppur also being on the top of the list.

Cities are the foundations of opportunity. They shape how women live work and thrive. A clear understanding of the core principles and cultural fabric of our cities is crucial for advancing women's progress and inclusion. Rajesh said on the findings.

To realise the dream of Viksit Bharat by 2047 we need women professionals to succeed on par with men. This is possible only if cities are truly gender inclusive and offer an atmosphere where women's strengths can be optimised she added.

Indian Gas plans to offer 3-6 month contracts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) has sought regulatory approvals to launch 3-6 month gas contracts benchmarked to international gas prices its chief executive Rajesh Kumar Mediratta said.

IGX currently allows gas suppliers to sell the fuel on the exchange for durations ranging from daily weekly fortnightly and monthly. It also offers intraday trading at a fixed price. Mediratta said the exchange has applied to the regulator Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) for permission to launch three-month and six-month delivery contracts indexed to gas benchmarks such as FIXI and Platts JKM WIM and Dated Brent. We are awaiting a clearance from PNGRB he said. The new long-duration contracts will have a payment cycle of a fortnight compared to the current system of payments being made in 2-3 days after delivery.

CII suggests 10-point agenda on ease of biz reforms in Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi Jan 12 (PTI) Ahead of the upcoming Budget industry body CII on Sunday suggested a 10-point agenda to drive ease of doing business reforms aimed at reducing compliance burden simplifying regulatory frameworks and improving transparency. Among the urgent policy interventions the industry body has recommended that all regulatory approvals -- central state and local levels -- must mandatorily be provided only through the National Single Window System.

It has also pitched for expediting the process of dispute resolution by improving the capacity of courts and placing greater reliance on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism.

For streamlining environmental compliances Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said a unified framework could be introduced which consolidates all requirements into a single



document.

Emphasising that easy access to land is important to facilitate new or expanding businesses it said that states may be incentivised to develop an online integrated land authority with an objective to streamline land banks digitise and integrate land records provide information on disputed land and guide necessary reforms.

To assist industry in land acquisition across nation the India Industrial Land Bank (IILB) which provides information on land across majority of states can be evolved into a national-level land bank with dedicated central budget support it said.

While India has over the last decade remained focused on improving ease of doing busi-

ness (EoDB) there is a need to maintain the momentum especially in certain specific areas the CII stated.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said Simplifying regulatory frameworks reducing compliance burdens and enhancing transparency should continue to remain our focus agenda for next several years. Compliances for industry related to various areas such as land labour dispute resolution paying taxes and environment offer a vast scope for reduction vital for boosting competitiveness driving economic growth and employment generation.

To ensure timely processing of industry applications and delivery of services from the central ministries an Act imposing statutory obligation on all public authorities for time-bound delivery of services and redressal of grievances could be passed with provision of deemed approval beyond the prescribed timeline CII suggested.

Significant % of iPhone, Android users faced issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Significant percentage of iPhone Android users in the country said they have experienced call connection issues after the latest software upgrade online platform LocalCircles said in its latest report.

According to the survey 60 per cent of iPhone users and 40 per cent of Android users in the country have shared that they are experiencing problems in their services after the latest software

upgrade. Call failure is the biggest problem that iPhone users are facing be it a normal call or app-based calls while freezing of apps is the biggest issue for Android users.

The report noted that 6 in 10 apple iPhone users surveyed who have upgraded to iOS 18 or higher are having difficulties. 28 per cent of the respondents stated that most/some of voice and OTT calls don't connect or drop. 12 per cent stated screen of the



phone goes dark 12 per cent stated apps are hanging.

The survey conducted between November 12 to December 26 claims to have received over 47,000 responses (31,000 from users of Apple iPhone devices and nearly 16,000 from users of Android devices) located in 322 districts of India.

The survey found that Nearly 9 in 10 apple iPhone users surveyed who have upgraded to iOS 18 and are having difficulties attribute it to the iOS and no one

attributed their problems to their WiFi or mobile network.

Apple has been issuing updates of its latest operating system iOS 18.

In October the company had issued an iOS 18.0.1 update to fix screen and camera freezing issues in select models of iPhone 16. The update mentioned fixing issues related to memory allocation on some iPhone models. The company's latest update 18.2.1 provides important bug fixes.

India's coal import rises 2 pc to 182 MT in Apr-Nov period

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal import rose by two per cent to 182.02 million tonnes (MT) in the April-November period of the current fiscal year.

The country's coal import was at 178.17 MT in the year-ago period according to data compiled by business-to-business e-commerce company junction services ltd.

However the country's coal import dropped to 19.57 MT in

the month of November over 22.30 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal.

There was a drop in volumes which was in line with market expectation. Ample availability in the domestic market reduced import demand from consuming sectors such as sponge iron and steel. Also the comfortable stock position at power plants resulted in muted demand for imports junction MD and CEO Vinaya Varma said.

FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

KUBRA ALI'S JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT

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Kubra Ali is a fearless woman who challenges societal norms and redefines what women can achieve. As a passionate advocate for empowerment, she is driven by a bold vision to inspire others and prove that women can reach extraordinary heights when they dare to dream big, work tirelessly, and stay true to their authentic selves.

Reflecting on her journey in an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, Kubra said, "My journey to becoming Mrs England Globe and Mrs Canada Globe has been nothing short of life-altering. It is a testament to the adage that 'where there's a will, there's a way.'"

Ali started her career in media, working as a TV host, news presenter and anchor in Canada. She used her platform to give a voice to people who needed to be heard and to make a positive impact on her community.

Then, Ali unexpectedly entered the world of pageantry. She found the Mrs Globe competition inspiring because it celebrates women for their intelligence, accomplishments and the good things they do for the world. It wasn't easy competing in Mrs Canada Globe, but Ali stayed true to herself and worked hard. She was thrilled to win the People's Choice Award, showing how much people connected with her.

Ali faced many challenges that tested her strength, her ability to adapt and her determination. But she overcame these challenges and learned that if you're strong and keep trying, you can achieve anything. "The journey was filled with challenges that tested my ability to cope with, adaptability and determination. As the old saying goes, 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger'. Every obstacle I faced

In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, Kubra Ali, a fearless trailblazer and advocate for women's empowerment, opens up about her inspiring journey of breaking societal barriers and redefining what women can achieve.

served as an opportunity for growth," she added. Ali's story isn't just about winning awards. It's about showing that true success comes from going beyond what others expect of you. She wants to inspire women to chase their dreams without fear and to change the way we think about success. "Winning Mrs England Globe in 2024

was more than just a title, it represented the power of stepping out of one's comfort zone and pursuing dreams fearlessly," she said.

As Ali prepares to represent England in the Mrs Globe 2025 competition in Beijing, she carries a message of hope and endless possibilities. She believes that real success

comes from doing better than anyone expects and staying true to yourself. Ali is more than just a pageant winner; she's a symbol of empowerment, showing women that they can reach their full potential and make a lasting difference in the world.

Ali believes that every woman has the power to break free from the limits society puts on them and create her own path to success. Her journey proves that with big dreams, hard work and staying true to yourself, anything is possible. "These titles have allowed me to amplify causes close to my heart, encourage women to embrace their potential, and redefine what it means to succeed in today's world," Kubra concluded.



From Cirrhosis to Cancer

Every glass raised in celebration could also be a step closer to an invisible battle within. Liver cancer, one of the deadliest forms of cancer, often arises from cirrhosis—a chronic liver condition that quietly scars the liver over time. Cirrhosis itself is frequently linked to alcohol consumption, turning the joy of one drink into a potential future of liver damage and cancer. But here's the good news! With awareness and action, the cycle from alcohol to cirrhosis to cancer can be broken before it's too late.

How Alcohol and Cirrhosis are related?

Liver Cirrhosis is a dangerous, irreversible condition where the liver becomes severely scarred and loses its ability to function properly. While there are various causes, such as hepatitis or fatty liver disease, alcohol abuse is one of the leading—and preventable—causes of cirrhosis.

Dr. K. Chaitanya Laxmi Reddy, Consultant Psychiatrist, Asha Hospital, Hyderabad, "When someone drinks heavily, the liver, which breaks down alcohol, can suffer serious damage. Chronic (long-term) and excessive drinking can lead to various liver issues, with cirrhosis being one of the most severe outcomes. Over time, the liver struggles to process large amounts of alcohol, leading to inflammation and damage. As the liver continues to be overwhelmed, it starts to develop scar tissue, which impairs its ability to function properly. Eventually, this excessive scarring results in cirrhosis, a condition where the liver is severely damaged and unable to perform its vital functions." And with cirrhosis comes an elevated risk of developing liver cancer many people are unaware of the damage until it's too late.

Alarming numbers

Chronic liver disease (CLD) is a growing global health concern, leading to approximately 2 million deaths each year. Among these, cirrhosis accounts for a staggering 1.16 million deaths. In India, the situation is equally alarming, with liver disease responsible for around 2.95% of total deaths and contributing nearly 18.3% of all cirrhosis deaths worldwide. In fact, in 2020, liver cancer was the tenth most common cancer in India, with 34,743 new cases and 33,793 deaths annually.

The critical link between cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) cannot be overlooked; nearly 70% of HCC cases arise in patients with cirrhosis. Alcohol misuse has emerged as a leading cause of cirrhosis, making it a significant contributor to the rising rates of liver cancer.

"Many individuals remain unaware of the long-term damage that excessive alcohol consumption can inflict on

their liver, paving the way for cirrhosis and, ultimately, HCC. This emphasizes the urgent need for increased awareness and proactive measures to prevent cirrhosis and its life-threatening consequences, highlighting the importance of making informed lifestyle choices to safeguard liver health," Dr K Chaitanya shares.

Prevention is the key

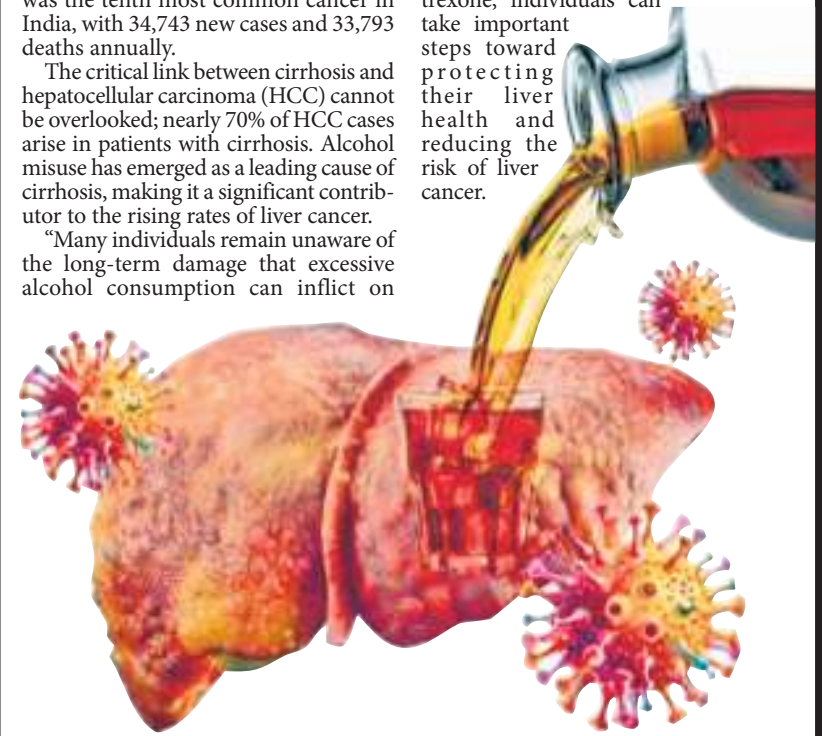
While limiting alcohol intake is the best way to prevent cirrhosis, those struggling with alcohol dependence can seek support through counseling, support groups, medical treatments such as naltrexone, and rehabilitation programs.

This medication has shown promise in helping individuals manage their cravings and maintain abstinence, particularly for those with compensated cirrhosis.

A recent study presented at the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL), revealed promising results for treating alcohol use disorder in cirrhosis patients. The study found that naltrexone, a medication typically used to treat addiction, helped reduce cravings and supported abstinence in patients with compensated cirrhosis. After three months, 64% of participants receiving naltrexone remained alcohol-free, compared to 22% in the placebo group. This finding offers hope for those looking to manage their addiction and reduce the risks associated with alcohol-induced cirrhosis.

Additionally, regular liver function tests, especially for those at risk, are essential for early detection of liver disease. It goes without mentioning the importance of lifestyle changes, including a balanced diet, exercise, and limiting alcohol consumption, which can greatly reduce the chances of developing cirrhosis and, by extension, liver cancer.

Liver cancer often develops silently, but it can be prevented. By cutting back on alcohol and seeking assistance when needed, individuals can lower their risk of cirrhosis and the irreversible damage that can lead to cancer. This Liver Cancer Awareness Month serves as a reminder to reflect on our drinking habits and the significant impact they can have on our health. It's crucial to spread awareness about alcohol's role in liver disease. With support and treatment options like naltrexone, individuals can take important steps toward protecting their liver health and reducing the risk of liver cancer.



LUXURY MEETS STORYTELLING

A monumental merger between global conglomerate SRAM & MRAM Group and the renowned film production company Paradigm Pictures AD Ltd was unveiled at an exclusive event held at the prestigious Warren House. This partnership signifies a groundbreaking venture that combines luxury, technology, and storytelling, poised to revolutionize the entertainment landscape in India and beyond.

Dr. Sailesh L. Hiranandani, Chairman of SRAM & MRAM Group, and Arvind Dharmaraj, Chairman of Paradigm Pictures, attended the event. This merger signals SRAM & MRAM Group's strategic foray into the high-end entertainment sector in India, further cementing its legacy of innovation.

The group has earned its reputation through a diverse portfolio that spans technology, finance, agriculture, healthcare, energy, hospitality and infrastructure. The group's leadership in pioneering technological advancements and sustainable practices has made it a global powerhouse. With this merger, SRAM & MRAM bring

their expertise into the entertainment industry, aiming to blend technical excellence with Paradigm Pictures' creative brilliance.

"Our vision is to create a world-class film city, seamlessly blending cutting-edge technology with elite talent from Europe and the US, redefining the standards of storytelling and production excellence," stated Dr. Sailesh L. Hiranandani, outlining the group's aspirations.

A cornerstone of the merger is the proposed development of a 50-acre film city, set to commence construction soon.

Envisioned as a global benchmark for film production, this facility will offer comprehensive infrastructure, including customizable sets for schools, hospitals, and residential spaces. This all-encompassing ecosystem will simplify the filmmaking process for creators.

The film city will feature

- **World-class studios**— Equipped with advanced VFX capabilities and top-tier dubbing and editing suites.

- **Luxury preview theatres**— Five theatres with Dolby Atmos technology, including two with over 100 seats for press screenings and three

- with 25 ultra-premium seats for exclusive previews.

- **Opulent lodging and resorts**— Ten high-end resorts, each with private pools and four-bedroom

- accommodations for celebrities, alongside a 100-room facility for film crews.

- **Recreation and event spaces**— featuring a café, pub, conference

- halls, and a sophisticated venue for audio launches, effortlessly combining production and leisure.

- Paradigm Pictures AD Ltd showcased its cinematic prowess at the

- Warren House event with its award-winning Cannes short film. Celebrated for its compelling storytelling, Paradigm Pictures has achieved streaming milestones with V1 Murder Case and Harkara, each surpassing 100 million minutes on Amazon Prime Video. With seven projects currently in development, the studio continues to shape impactful narratives that resonate across the globe.

- Global and Pan-Indian productions in pipeline**

- The newly merged entity is poised to begin production of high-profile pan-Indian films once the state-of-the-art film city enters its construction phase. The first slate of five films will draw inspiration from novels and real-life stories and feature celebrated actors. Simultaneously, the collaboration will expand into European and American markets, combining Indian storytelling traditions with global filmmaking expertise to deliver internationally appealing projects.

- Elevating the merger's allure, the alliance with RingDance Entertainment will bring the**



- Nordic Casefiles trilogy to life, inspired by the acclaimed novel Bird Whisperer by Ruud & Mild. This ambitious project includes:**
- **RUUD & MILD**— Nordic Casefiles (Game) – A real-time interactive mystery-solving experience.
- **BIRD WHISPERER (TV Series)**— A deep dive into Scandinavian crime stories.
- **PARISTAN (Feature Film)**— A powerful tale of a father's search for his missing son in Stockholm, revealing hidden truths.

- The event witnessed the presence of distinguished guests, including representatives from BBC, Netflix, and associates of renowned director Danny Boyle. Attendees celebrated the merger with awards recognizing contributions to technology, the arts, and sustainable development.
- This historic evening at Warren House heralds a transformative chapter in global entertainment, setting the stage for groundbreaking projects destined to captivate audiences worldwide.

-



Vinspace Launches in Secunderabad: A Dynamic Hub for Entrepreneurs and Creators, a modern coworking space. The launch event featured the Founding team - Vinita Surana, Aamer Siddiqui, Shresha Surana, and Piyush Gupta - and a star-studded guest list of influencers and celebrities, Entrepreneurs and Business Owners. With amenities like a mini studio, podcast setup, and creator's hub, Vinspace offers a vibrant ecosystem for collaboration and growth, aiming to redefine coworking in Hyderabad.



A celebration of culture, craft and creative at Sphoorthy engineering college, Nadergul, Hyderabad has marked with grandeur and enthusiasm, showcasing the vibrant traditions and unity and Indian culture, uniting the college community in the spirit of Sankranti. & celebration also witnessed the National youth day 2025 on the college premises



Loyola Academy Degree and PG College celebrated its 46th College Day with great exuberance and fanfare. The chief guest for the program was Dr. Gaddam Naresh Reddy, Registrar, Osmania university, and the guest of Honour was Dr. Sujiv Nair, Global Chief HR Officer, whose August presence added value to the celebrations.



Guru Nanak Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital hosted a momentous White Coat Ceremony for its incoming batch of medical students, marking the beginning of their journey into the field of homoeopathic medicine. The ceremony took place on the campus, Medical College and Hospital, and Chancellor of Guru Nanak University G.S. Kohli, in his address at the White Coat Ceremony



CARE Hospitals, one of India's leading healthcare providers, successfully treated a rare and life-threatening carotid artery dissection in a 29-year-old patient through a groundbreaking 20-minute procedure. This swift intervention not only saved the patient's life but also highlighted the hospital's clinical excellence and advanced capabilities in addressing critical vascular conditions.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



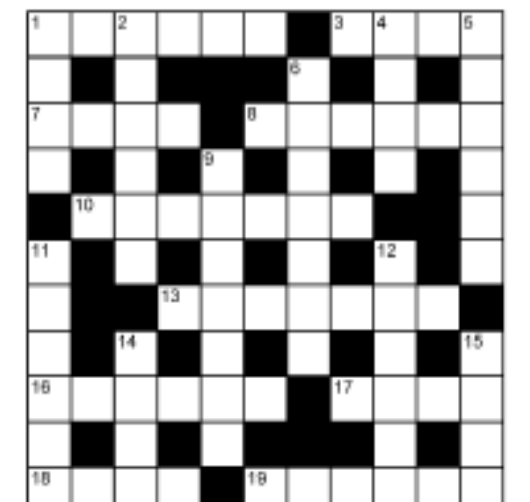
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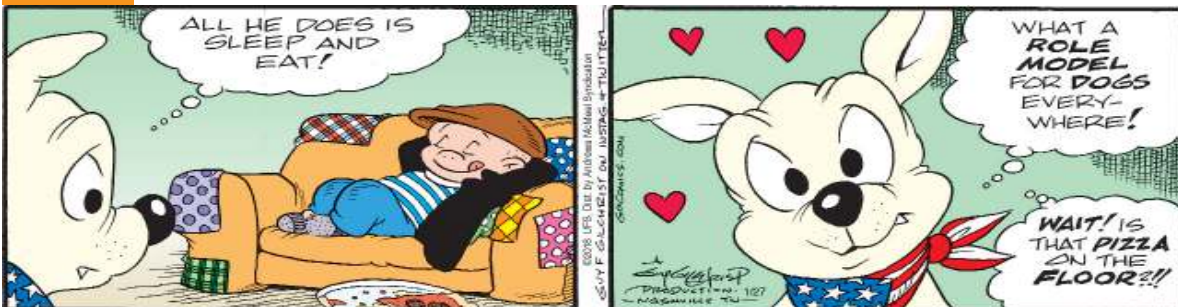
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

3			6		1			
4	2		5					
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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 1 Noon
- 3 Costing nothing
- 7 Contact by telephone
- 8 Purchasing
- 10 Rich
- 13 Very sore
- 16 A floor covering
- 17 Large boat
- 18 A red gemstone
- 19 Selected
- 6 Going very quickly
- 9 Less dirty
- 11 Cup and _____
- 12 Small trees
- 14 A ripping sea creature
- 15 Twirl around

DOWN

- 1 One of the planets
- 2 A meal
- 4 Water from the sky
- 5 Ninety less ten



BALAYYA'S **DAAKU MAHARAAJ** IS A TYPICAL PAISA VASOOL FILM

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Story

A tea estate owner Krishna Murthy (Sachin Khedekar), who is also running a school, in Madanapalle is facing troubles from local MLA Trimurthulu Naidu (Ravi Kishan). Krishna Murthy's granddaughter Vaishnavi is in danger. So, a servant (Makrand Deshpande) calls Maharaj (Balakrishna), who is in Bhopal, to safeguard her. Maharaj comes down to Madanapalle and joins the estate as driver Nanaji and saves the little kid from Trimurthulu Naidu and his goons. The story turns into another interesting plot when a goon called Balwanth Singh Thakur (Bobby Deol) tells him that Daaku Maharaja is hiding in Madanapalle. Who is Daaku Maharaja, what is his background story? What happened between Daaku Maharaja and Balwanth Singh Thakur, and what is their relation with the small girl Vaishnavi? What are the roles played by Nandini (Shraddha Srinath) and Kaveri (Pragya Jaiswal) in Daaku Maharaja's life? If you want answers for these questions, you have to see the film.

Analysis:

Bobby Kolli is a clever director and writer, because when he got a big star like Balakrishna, he didn't go for an experimental story or something else. He sticks to a regular formula, but narrating it in a new style. He used Balakrishna's mass appeal and his onscreen presence to perfectly fit his story. That's what he did with 'Daaku Maharaja'. The story is not new and sometimes one can predict also, but the director narrated it in a new manner with interesting action sequences.

If you remember Rajamouli's 'Simhadri' story where Jr NTR hails from Andhra, who goes to



After delivering a hit 'Waltair Veerayya', with Mega Star Chiranjeevi, director Bobby Kolli, joined hands with another star Nandamuri Balakrishna for 'Daaku Maharaja'. On the other hand, Balakrishna delivered three consecutive hits with 'Akhanda', 'Veera Simha Reddy' and 'Bhagavanth Kesari' and can he continue the success streak with this 'Daaku Maharaja'? The film released today to cash in on the Sankranti holidays. Here is the story and how it fares.

Kerala, helps people there and is named as Singamanalai. Back again to his family and when he was in hospital, someone revealed the flashback of Kerala story and how he helped people there. It seems director Bobby has taken something like this where a person hailing from Andhra went to Madhya Pradesh and helped people in some village and became a Daaku Maharaj. The same person returns to save a family in Andhra, when he gets

injured, someone reveals his flashback.

Bobby is telling the same kind of story, but the treatment is different. Here in this film, he used Balakrishna's mass appeal with the dialogues and action episodes. For Balakrishna, the character in this film is definitely projected in a new dimension. In most of his earlier films, his character was filled with loud dialogues and mass appeal action scenes. But in this film, though there are typical Balayya's

punch dialogues, they were shown in a subtle manner and the action scenes designed in a very stylish way.

The first half of the film is very interesting with a local MLA threatening a tea estate owner and then Balakrishna enters into their family as driver Nanaji. How he saves the girl child and the encounters between Balakrishna and goons are narrated in an interesting way with the interval scene is definitely the highlight. The second half is a bit slow where the director narrates the flashback episode and the story that happened in Madhya Pradesh. Another plus point is that the director didn't drag these action scenes, but choreographed very well. The director also captures some good emotional scenes between the little girl and Balakrishna. In the second half too there are few emotional scenes, but when compared to the first half, the second half is a bit lag. The Chambal episode definitely gives something new, but the climax is not up to the mark.

When it comes to the performance, Balakrishna steals the show with three different get-ups. He is at his best, especially in the emotional scenes with the small girl and his intense performance. He is good at action sequences and also delivered his typical punch dialogues. Definitely, it's Balakrishna's show completely from the beginning. Shraddha Srinath once again came up with flying colours and provided a strong impact, though her character is very less. On the other hand, Pragya Jaiswal, known for her glamour role, is shown in a serious character in this one. Bobby Deol, after the success of 'Animal' is a regular in South films as a villain. He acted in a negative role and looked good. Sachin Khedekar played the grandfather role several times and this is another one. Chandini Chowdary, Divi Vadithya are there in supportive roles. Urvasi Rautela added glamour quotient to the film. Ravi Kishan is seen in a regular one. There are plenty of actors like Makrand Deshpande, Shine Tom Chako, Aadukulam Naren, Satya, Jeevan Kumar and

VTV Ganesh who did their job well.

The cinematography is definitely one of the highlights with Vijay Kartik Kannan coming up with beautiful and rich visuals. He earlier worked for 'Jailer' and now he has shown Balakrishna, especially in action scenes, in a different way. S Thaman's background score is another pillar for this one. Though he failed for the other Sankranti film, he is at his best for this 'Daaku Maharaja'. His background score elevated many scenes, especially Balakrishna.

Finally, 'Daaku Maharaja' is a complete paisa vasool film with its commercial ingredients. Balakrishna is at his best and director Bobby Kolli narrated the old story in a new style. The punch dialogues of Balakrishna, his mass action, the emotional scenes definitely enthrall his fans, they can celebrate the festival with this one.

Film: Daaku Maharaja
Cast: Nandamuri Balakrishna, Pragya Jaiswal, Shraddha Srinath, Urvasi Rautela, Sachin Khedekar, Bobby Deol, Chandini Chowdary, Ravi Kishan and others
Music: S Thaman
Cinematography: Vijay Kartik Kannan
Producers: Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya
Director: Bobby Kolli
Release date: January 12, 2025
Rating: 3/5

Anil Ravipudi rejected Thalapathy Vijay's last film?



Director Anil Ravipudi gets a big chance to direct Tamil superstar Vijay's last film, but it seems, the director is in no mood to direct it. This was revealed by none other than the Tamil actor VTV Ganesh, who is also popular in Telugu with his trademark dialogue 'Evadra nuvvu intha talented ga vunnav'. On Saturday evening at the 'Sankranti Vasthunnam' music festival, the actor spoke about director Anil Ravipudi and revealed this news.

When VTV Ganesh got his chance of speaking, he requested director Anil Ravipudi also on to the dais and Anil agreed. In his speech, he revealed that Vijay wanted to remake Anil Ravipudi's hit film 'Bhagavanth Kesari', so he called Anil Ravipudi and asked him to direct it. "But Anil Ravipudi rejected Vijay sir's offer as he didn't want to do a remake," said VTV Ganesh. When Ganesh said that Anil rejected the offer, Anil was blank faced and asked Ganesh to stop revealing that news. Though Anil tried to do the damage control for Ganesh's comments, Ganesh went on and said that Vijay called Anil, but he rejected the offer as he is busy with the present film 'Sankranti Vasthunnam'.

But later, Anil clarified on Ganesh's news and said that he didn't reject it. "Vijay sir called me and we had some meaningful discussion in a good atmosphere. The details about Vijay69 will be announced by the makers officially and this is not the best stage to talk about that film," said Anil Ravipudi, to clarify about it. Anil agreed in his speech that Vijay and he discussed Vijay's last film. The music event went in a very good atmosphere, but because of Ganesh's news about Anil and Vijay film, spoiled the evening.

I DON'T THINK ABOUT THINGS WHICH ARE OUT OF OUR CONTROL: VENKATESH

Senior actor Venkatesh is coming up with 'Sankranti Vasthunnam' for this Sankranti festival. Anil Ravipudi is the director, while Aishwarya Rajesh and Meenakshi Chaudhary are the female leads. Speaking about the film, Venkatesh is very confident about the success. "Earlier, many of my films were released at this festival and were successful. I am confident that this 'Sankranti Vasthunnam' is also going to be a hit," said Venkatesh. The actor said that the film is a perfect one for the festival with lots of entertainment. "When director Anil Ravipudi narrated the line of the story, a husband and ex-cop, dedicated wife and an ex-girlfriend, I felt it has elements of a successful story. There is a small crime also added to the story and I know that this film is definitely a minimum guarantee one," said Venky. He added that his combination with director Anil is very successful and also both worked in a friendly atmosphere.

"I tried a different comedy in this one and definitely it looks fresh to the audience. I want to do more films with Anil as we had a good rapport after working three films," said the actor. Talking about the song which he crooned, he said that it is his idea. "When I heard the song at two-o'clock at night, I danced without knowing. Some crazy energy is there in the song, so I said that I will sing the song. That day my voice was also clear and there are English words in the lyrics, which made my job easy," said Venky about the song.

When asked about the hits and flops affecting him and his career, he said 'no'. "I give my best for every film and work honestly and sincerely. Hits and flops are not in our hands and I don't think too much about things that are not in our control," said the actor. Venky praised the two female lead actresses and said they performed very well. The promotions are crazy for this film and those videos are viral on the Internet and social media. "Actually, the music has come out very nice. On the other hand, I like dancing very much. Anil and the two female leads with a lively team wanted to do something new to promote the film. Luckily, our promotions attract many people and I am happy that they enjoyed it," said Venkatesh.

About his web series 'Ran Naidu' season 2, he said it may come in March. "I completed my dubbing part," he said. About his upcoming films, there are story discussions happening at Suresh Productions, Sithara Entertainments, Mythri and Vyjayanthi Movie production houses. "Nothing has been finalised as it is still at the discussion stage," said Venkatesh.



Rashmika Mandanna injured, three films shoot delayed

Top actress Rashmika Mandanna injured her leg while doing her gym. The actress is busy with Down South and also a Hindi film with Salman Khan. The actress has taken to social media and put a picture of her with the injured leg and says that the injury may take time to heal.

The actress delivered a hit film with 'Pushpa 2 The Rule' and before that her Hindi film 'Animal' became a huge blockbuster. She is one of the highest paid actresses and also most demanded not only in South, but also in Hindi. "Injured myself in my sacred gym shrine," she said in her Instagram.

She mentioned and apologized to the filmmakers of 'Thama', 'Sikandar' and 'Kubera' for the delay in the shoots due to her injury. "To my directors, sorry for the delay... I'll be back soon enough just making sure my legs are fit for action (or at least fit for hopping). In the meantime, if you need me...I'll be the one in the corner doing a highly advanced bunny hop workout," she said about her injury. Rashmika is also acting in another Hindi film 'Chhaava' and a Telugu film 'The Girlfriend'.

Big shock to Dil Raju

The Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments gave ticket price hike and also extra shows to Dil Raju film 'Game Changer'. He also distributed Balakrishna's 'Daaku Maharaja' in Nizam and his other film 'Sankranti Vasthunnam' was released on January 14. But after the High Court comments, both the governments revoked their GOs and not allow the price hike and also cancel the benefit shows.

This news is a big shock to Dil Raju. Not only this, the film 'Game Changer' collections are also not encouraging and the critics also do not like the film much. Apart from this, the producer apologized for his comments at his film event in Nizamabad, a few days back. He said, "People of Telangana get vibes only for meat and palm wine." This comment became viral and many criticised him for his remarks, saying that the people of Telangana were hurt. So, he released a special video saying that his comments are unfortunate and apologized to the people of Telangana.



VAISHNAVI IS GOING PLACES

Telugu girl Vaishnavi Chaitanya became sensational with the blockbuster film 'Baby'. She became a household name and a star after the success of that film and now she is busy with multiple projects in Telugu. The film collected more than Rs 100 crore and the actress also won Best Actress Filmfare Award for her performance in the film.

Now, the actress is going places as she signed a Tamil film and two Kannada films, according to a source. The actress is always choosy about her roles and gives importance to the story. "She likes her role and okayed the Kannada film opposite a big star, but she is waiting to announce the details by the production house," added the source.

Even many Tamil filmmakers approached her with different scripts, but she agreed to do two Tamil films, said the source. "She wants her role to be strong and impact the film," added the source about the Tamil films. With two Telugu projects and now Kannada and Tamil films added to her kitty, Vaishnavi is now definitely one of the most demanded actresses in Down South in the coming days.



Manchester City wins 8-0 against Salford City in FA Cup

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City routed fourth-division Salford City 8-0 in the FA Cup as Premier League teams flexed their muscles against lower league opposition. Shocks were in short supply as Liverpool and Chelsea booked their place in the next round with heavy wins. Brighton, Bournemouth and Leicester also romped to victories. Those six clubs scored a combined 32 goals. The third round is traditionally one of the most anticipated weekends in English soccer as top flight clubs enter the competition with the prospect of upsets. But it was a day when the might of the Premier League was underlined, with high-flying Nottingham Forest and Wolverhampton also going through. The biggest shock was Brentford's 1-0 loss to the bottom team in division two, Plymouth. United greats humbled City showed no mercy against neighbor Salford, which is co-owned by Manchester United icons David Beckham, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Gary and Phil Neville and Nicky Butt. Despite

resting a number of star players, Pep Guardiola's four-time defending Premier League champion was rampant at Etihad Stadium, with rising talent James McAtee hitting a second half hat trick. City prospects Divin Mubama and Nico O'Reilly also made the score sheet. "They were incredible — commitment, aggressive — there were so many things that I liked," Guardiola said. "With everyone (there) was respect. You cannot win by that margin if you don't respect the opponent." Jack Grealish was also on target for City, scoring his first goal for the club in 38 games. His last goal for City was in December 2023. Giggs, who is also Salford's director of football, was on the touchline to watch the action and had to endure taunts from the home fans. Scholes and Butt, meanwhile, looked glum when television cameras focused on them in the executive seats. Promotion-chasing Salford had won its last six games without conceding a goal. "You always know you're at the mercy of the quality of the competition. Man City and Pep have never disrespected anybody



and tonight they showed us why they are what they are and why he is who he is," manager Karl Robinson said. "I said to the players

I would have taken eight goals conceded in seven games, I just didn't expect them to all come in one."

Quad chasing Liverpool's bid to win an unprecedented quadruple is still on after a 4-0 victory over Accrington Stanley.

The Premier League and Champions League leader is also into the semifinals of the English League Cup. Fourth-division Accrington was never expected to prevent Arne Slot's team from advancing to the fourth round and Diogo Jota, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Jayden Danns and Federico Chiesa scored for Liverpool at Anfield. Rio Ngunuwa, aged 16, became Liverpool's second youngest debutant. Chiesa's goal was his first since joining Liverpool from Juventus in the offseason following an injury-disrupted start at Anfield. Big wins Chelsea won 5-0 against fourth-division Morecambe at Stamford Bridge. Tosin Adarabioyo and Joao Felix scored two goals each for the eight-time winner. Leicester was fighting relegation but thrashed second-tier Queens Park Rangers 6-2 for only its second win under manager Ruud van Nistelrooy. The Dutch coach hadn't won since his first game in charge at the start of December against West Ham. James Justin scored twice and Jamie Vardy converted a second-half penalty.

Georginio Rutter scored twice in Brighton's 4-0 win at Norwich. Norwich's American striker Josh Sargent went on as a 79th-minute substitute after recovering from groin surgery that had sidelined him since Oct. 27. Bournemouth's Dango Ouattara struck a double in a 5-1 victory against West Brom. Forest advances sitting third in the Premier League, Forest notched its seventh straight win by beating Luton 2-0. Ryan Yates and Ramon Sosa scored. Wolverhampton advanced 2-1 at second-division Bristol City. Plymouth shocks at the bottom of the second division, Plymouth is in danger of being relegated to the third tier and last month parted ways with manager Wayne Rooney. But it turned giant-killer with a late winner against Brentford. Morgan Whittaker's 82nd-minute strike ended Plymouth's 11-game winless run and secured a famous Cup upset. Former Manchester United prospect Demetri Mitchell scored twice to help third-division Exeter beat second-division Oxford 3-1 and reach the fourth round for the first time in 44 years.



Australian Open: Zheng Qinwen starts her bid for another final

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Zheng Qinwen's tennis resume is quite different from what it was when she showed up at the Australian Open a full year ago. No matter everything she accomplished in 2024 — a runner-up finish at Melbourne Park; an Olympic gold medal for China — she felt jitters before entering Rod Laver Arena on Sunday. After overcoming some hiccups late in the opening set of her first-round match on a stormy Day 1 at the season's first major tennis tournament, Zheng came through with a 7-6 (3), 6-1 victory against Anca Todoni, a 20-year-old qualifier from Romania who has won one Grand Slam match in her career. "Actually, I feel really nervous," said Zheng, who is seeded No. 5. "I started to feel nervous already since yesterday, 'cause I felt special emotion for the Australian Open. ... I really like it here." As well she should. It was 12 months ago on Melbourne's hard courts that Zheng made it all the way to the final before losing to Aryna Sabalenka. The two-time champion began her bid for a third consecutive title with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over 2017 U.S. Open title winner Sloane Stephens. Alexander Zverev, the men's No. 2 seed, faced Lucas Pouille in the last match at Rod Laver Arena. Two of the first three men's

contests to conclude both went five sets. Kei Nishikori, the 2014 U.S. Open runner-up, saved a pair of match points in the third set and came all the way back to beat qualifier Thiago Monteiro 4-6, 6-7 (4), 7-5, 6-2, 6-3, while No. 6 Casper Ruud, a three-time finalist at majors, defeated Jaime Munar 6-3, 1-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1. Nishikori, competing in Melbourne for the first time in four years after a series of hip, ankle and knee injuries, raised his arms and threw his head back, causing his black hat to fall off, after improving to 29-8 in five-sets, including 8-1 at the Australian Open. Before her run in Australia last January, Zheng had only played in eight major tournaments, making one quarterfinal. Her big-hitting breakthrough opened a season in which she wound up with a gold draped around her neck at the Paris Games in August. The 22-year-old Zheng's power-based game is best suited for hard courts, and playing indoors doesn't hurt, either, so she eventually was quite comfortable against Todoni under a closed retractable roof, while thunder and lightning and a serious downpour suspended action on the courts that can't be covered. Still, Zheng frittered away set points while serving for the opener at 5-4, then was forced to save set points for Todoni later. Afterward, Zheng said

that being nervous usually makes her focus better, but this time, it didn't make "me play my best tennis out there." Maybe that's because it was her first match of the season. Still, she was good enough on this day. The second set was more one-sided, and Todoni took a medical timeout for treatment on her lower back after three games. Zheng was among only a handful of players able to complete matches in the early going at what is now a 15-day tournament after a Sunday start was instituted last year. That extra time, which spreads out the first round across three days, could be particularly helpful this week, when Monday's packed program already included matches for Novak Djokovic, Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz, Coco Gauff and Iga Swiatek. No. 29 Linda Noskova was the first seeded player to exit the bracket, just a year after she stunned Iga Swiatek in Melbourne. Noskova lost 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 to Clara Tauson, while seeds who won Sunday included No. 11 Paula Badosa; No. 14 Mirra Andreeva, No. 18 Donna Vekic; and No. 30 Leylah Fernandez, the 2021 U.S. Open runner-up. "To be able to play a match and to finish a match with a roof, it's much more easy than ... To stop with the rain," said 20th-seeded man, Arthur Fils, who eliminated Otto Virtanen of Finland 3-6, 7-6 (4), 6-4, 6-4.

Bangladesh omit Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Das from Champions Trophy squad

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Sunday omitted former skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who has been suspended from bowling in international and domestic cricket because of an illegal action, from their Champions Trophy squad. Shakib, who failed a test of his bowling action at the Loughborough University in England last month, also could not procure a positive assessment in a second independent test conducted at the Sri Ramachandra Centre for Sports Science in Chennai recently. The omission from the 15-member Champions Trophy squad could also mark the end of the 37-year-old's ODI career. The tournament begins on February 19. Shakib, who was retired from Test and T20I formats, was reported for a suspect bowling



action during a one-off appearance for Surrey in the County Championship in September last. On-field umpires Steve O'Shaughnessy and David Millns made the report, which was termed "shocking" by Bangladesh Cricket Board officials. No place for Litton also Bangladesh, who will open their Champions Trophy

campaign against India in Dubai on February 20, have also left out seasoned wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das after his recent modest outings. Das could not make a fifty in his last 13 ODI innings. His last 50-plus score was against India at Pune in October 2023. In fact, the 30-year-old's last seven innings read: 6, 1, 0, 0, 2, 4, 0.

Other than these two big names, all-rounder Afif Hossain, and pacers Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud too failed to get a place in the squad which will be led by Najmul Hossain Shanto. Najmul is returning to the side after missing the home ODIs last year against the West Indies due to a hamstring injury. Along with Najmul, experienced Mushfiqur Rahim and Mustafizur Rahman and promising top-order batter Towhid Hridoy too have made a comeback. Bangladesh squad: Najmul Hossain Shanto (capt), Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Towhid Hridoy, Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Hasan, Mahmudullah, Jaker Ali, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Rishad Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Parvez Hossain, Nasum Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan, Nahid Rana.



Sumit Nagal knocked in opening round

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

A profligate Sumit Nagal's Australian Open campaign ended in a straight-set defeat against world number 25 Tomas Machac in the men's singles event here on Sunday. The top Indian singles player failed to capitalise on his chances, losing 3-6 1-6 5-7 to his opponent from Czech Republic, who dominated with his superior consistency and precision. Nagal, ranked 91st, started the match confidently, dropping just two points in his first three service games. However, a double fault and a string of forced and unforced errors saw him lose his serve in the seventh and ninth games, handing Machac the opening set. In the second set, Nagal had an early chance to break Machac in the opening game, but the Czech player held firm, saving the breakpoint. From there, Machac seized control, wrapping up the set in just 36 minutes as Nagal struggled to keep up. Trailing by two sets, Nagal mounted a spirited fightback in the third set, securing an early break and racing to a 3-0 lead, which he extended to 5-3. However, a flurry of errors, including another double fault, allowed Machac to stage a comeback with a crucial break. The Czech player capitalised on the momentum, closing out the match and ending Nagal's campaign.

India defeat Ireland by 116 runs, take 2-0 lead in Women's ODI series

PTI ■ RAJKOT

A collective batting performance headlined by Jemimah Rodrigues' maiden hundred formed the cornerstone of India's commanding 116-run win against Ireland in the second women's ODI here on Sunday as the hosts took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. India scored a massive 370 for five riding on three half-centuries and a ton before restricting Ireland to 254 for 7 in the stipulated 50 overs. It was the elegant skipper Smriti Mandhana, who was first off the blocks with an attacking 73 off just 54 balls, while Rodrigues' first hundred (102 off 91 balls) ensured a smooth finish for the hosts. Newcomer Pratika Rawal (67 off 61 balls) and seasoned Harleen Deol (89 off 84 balls) also made merry on a sub-par bowling attack. Ireland batted steadily but never had the



firepower to surpass a gigantic Indian total. Save Christina Coulter Reilly's 80, there wasn't much fight from the other batters as off-spinner Deepti Sharma emerged as the pick of the Indian bowlers with figures of 3 for 37. Seamer Titas Sadhu got 1 for 48 in 10 overs. Earlier, India's total was based on two big stands -- 156 off 19 overs between Mandhana and Rawal and 183 off 28

overs between Rodrigues and Deol. In all, Indian batters smashed an astounding 44 boundaries and three sixes in 50 overs. As far as Rodrigues was concerned, her record has been one that flattered to deceive with just six half-centuries across 40 games. But once she got the boundary off medium pacer Arlene Kelly, the relief was palpable as she did a mock guitar-playing act with her willow. "It has been a long wait to get this hundred. Glad that the team gave me a role at No. 4 and I could deliver," Rodrigues told broadcasters Star Sports at the innings break. "Today, the important thing for me was to be till the 50th over. Getting runs is not a problem, I am good at that, but being till the end was important and glad I could do that." She said during their 183-run stand, it took some time for her and Deol to assess the nature of the track.

Gavaskar, Kamblī among stalwarts felicitated as Wankhede's 50th anniversary celebration begins

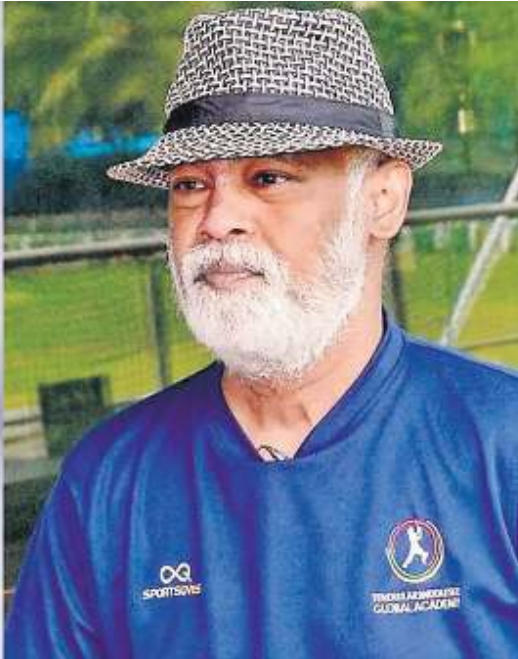
PTI ■ MUMBAI

Some of Mumbai's cricketing heroes, including legendary batter Sunil Gavaskar and former player Vinod Kamblī, were on Sunday felicitated by the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) at the opening event of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Wankhede Stadium. The main event will be held on January 19 at the Wankhede Stadium. A host of other cricketing stalwarts, including Sanjay Manjrekar, Wasim Jaffer, Raju Kulkarni, Chandrakant Pandit, Lalchand Rajput, Shobha Pandit and Arundhati Ghosh, who all had contributed to the rich legacy of Mumbai cricket, were also felicitated. Gavaskar was the first Mumbai captain to be felicitated on Sunday. He was presented a memento by MCA President Ajinkya Naik. "It is indeed a very big honour for me to be here at this iconic venue that has given Indian cricket so much, the 2011 Cricket World

Cup being the icing on the cake, and to be part of the start of the celebrations of 50 years of Wankhede Stadium," Gavaskar said. "As an opening batter, I couldn't miss the start so I am here. I want to wish the MCA all the best and also want to express my deepest sense of gratitude for giving me opportunities since school cricket. "I am what I am because MCA lifted me and helped me to take those steps and subsequently supported me even when I was playing for India...I want to thank you all for having me here," he said. Gavaskar was also a member of the Indian team that played the inaugural Test at the Wankhede Stadium against the West Indies in 1974. Kamblī, who was recently discharged from a local hospital after being admitted to the ICU on December 21 due to health complications, was also present on the occasion. He was seen being escorted around as he is still on the recovery path.



After his felicitation, Kamblī spoke about his playing days at the iconic venue.



"I remember I smashed my first double hundred here against England and then went on to score

many more hundreds in my career," he said. "If anyone wants to play for India

like me or Sachin (Tendulkar), then I would advise that you should keep working hard and never leave doing that because that's what Sachin and me did since our childhood days." Speaking on the occasion, MCA President Naik said, "Wankhede Stadium's 50th anniversary is a special occasion for us. Today was the start of the grand celebration. "Our main goal behind this week-long event is to inform the next generation about Mumbai's cricket history and contributions of men's and women's players who played for Mumbai and inspire the young generation to take forward this legacy." Former MCA President Vijay Patil was also felicitated. The Sports Journalists Association of Mumbai (SJAM) was also felicitated for the support and contribution to Mumbai cricket. As part of the week-long celebrations, two exciting cricket matches involving teams from MCA, SJAM, Consul Generals and IAS Officers were held. Legends like Sachin Tendulkar,

Rohit Sharma and Dilip Vengsarkar will also be part of the grand celebrations. The other stalwarts who are expected to join the celebrations are former India skipper Ravi Shastri, Ajinkya Rahane, current T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav and former national women's team captain Diana Edulji. The main event will also feature Mumbai's legendary men's and women's players from domestic and international cricket. The 50th anniversary celebrations will continue throughout the week. MCA will felicitate the groundsmen of clubs and grounds, and organise Polly Umrigar Health Camp and special lunch for them on January 15. This will be followed by felicitation of the members of the Mumbai team which played the first First-Class match at the Wankhede Stadium in 1974. The MCA will also release a coffee table book on January 19, while a commemorative postal stamp will also be issued.