

the pioneer

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**Priyanka is 'Stree Shakti',
Rahul 'Yuva Shakti':
Kharge**



SHILPA SHIRODKAR
TARGETED ME BECAUSE SHE NEEDED
SOMETHING NEW TO LATCH ON TO: KASHISH



**Unfazed by Game Changer disaster,
Charan's focus shifts to his
next film**

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The officials and the police are supporting real estate brokers and goons. Brokers are grabbing the lands of the poor around Hyderabad with the help of the police and revenue officials by creating fake documents. They are also attacking the poor. I went to Arundathi Nagar, Balaji Nagar and Jawahar Nagar. The Revenue Minister, Collector and the CP spoke to me. Six months have gone by since I became an MP. I am seeing the tears of the poor everyday

- Eatala Rajender, BJP MP

DON'T MISS...

Comprehensive land reforms on the anvil

Revenue Department Principal Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Land Administration Navin Mittal gave a presentation on the Telangana Bhu Bharati Act, 2025. He said that the vision of the government is to bring in comprehensive land reforms aimed at streamlining revenue administration and to increase accountability. He stated that the Act promotes an efficient agricultural ...

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Neutral expert backs New Delhi's stand

A World Bank-appointed neutral expert has backed New Delhi's position on the framework to resolve certain disputes between India and Pakistan on Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects. While India has been pressing for resolution of the issues by the neutral expert as mandated under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between the two countries, Pakistan has been backing the Permanent ...

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Sensex crashes 1,235 points

Benchmark Sensex tanked 1,235 points to settle at more than seven-month low due to an across-the-board selloff triggered by global tariff war worries and persistent foreign fund outflows, making investors poorer by over Rs 7 lakh crore. The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,235.08 points or 1.60 per cent to settle at 75,838.36 dragged by losses in ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries. During the day, the BSE benchmark ...

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India wins in U19 Women's T20 WC

Debutant left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma recorded astonishing figures of 5/5, including a hat-trick, as India demolished Malaysia by 10 wickets in an utterly one-sided U19 Women's T20 World Cup match that was done and dusted in less than 18 overs here on Tuesday. Vaishnavi's figures are the best ever in the tournament's history as Malaysia were bundled out for a paltry 31 in 14.3 overs. Fellow left-arm spinner Ayushi Shukla (3/8) also chipped ...

-SPORTS

TG makes major strides Pockets many investment deals at Davos

- Unilever to establish 2 manufacturing units
- CtrlS, Skyroot & promise investments

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has bagged many investment deals and partnerships during the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos. Led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and IT & Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu, the delegation held high-level meetings with global industry leaders resulting in many agreements.

Unilever CEO Hein Schumacher has agreed to establish a palm oil factory and refining unit in Kamareddy district. Unilever announced that it will also establish a bottle cap manufacturing unit to meet the demand for caps used in liquid packaging. The CM highlighted Telangana's strategic location, ease of doing business and sustainable policies during the discussions.

"We are here to support Unilever's growth in Telangana. This partnership will grow alongside our commitment to sus-



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, IT & Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu and officials of the Telangana Rising delegation meet Hein Schumacher, CEO, Unilever, and Willem Uijen, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Unilever, to discuss investment and business opportunities for the global FMCG giant in Telangana

"We are here to support Unilever's growth in Telangana. This partnership will grow alongside our commitment to sustainability and fairness for people and the planet," Revanth said.

Sridhar Pinnareddy, the CEO of CtrlS Datacenters, signed an MoU with the Government to invest a Rs 10,000 crore facility in Hyderabad. This will be Asia's largest data hub with a 612 MW capacity, cementing Telangana's leadership in digital infrastructure.

Govt signs 3 MoUs worth Rs 15,000 cr with MEIL

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/DAVOS

Telangana govts signs three major MoUs with Megha Engineering worth Rs15000cr. Government of Telangana and MEIL Sign MOU for 2160 MW Pumped Storage Project. The Government of Telangana has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited to establish a modern Pumped Storage Project. The MOU was formalized

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16 Naxals, including top leader killed in encounter

PNS ■ RAIPUR/BHUBANESWAR

Sixteen Naxals, including a top leader of the CPI (Maoists) who was carrying a reward of Rs 1 crore, were killed in a joint operation by central and state police forces along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday termed the encounter as "another mighty blow to Naxalism" and asserted the Narendra Modi government's resolve for a Naxal-free India and the joint efforts of the security forces to eliminate the menace from the country. Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district superintendent of police Nikhil Rakhecha said of the deceased, one has been identified as Jairam alias Chalpati, a central committee member of the CPI (Maoist), who was carrying a bounty of Rs 1 crore. The identity of the remaining cadres was yet to be ascertained.

"Another mighty blow to Naxalism. Our security forces achieved major success towards building a Naxal-free Bharat. The CRPF, SoG Odisha, and Chhattisgarh Police neutralised 16 Naxalites in a joint operation along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border. With our resolve

Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district superintendent of police Nikhil Rakhecha said of the deceased, one has been identified as Jairam alias Chalpati, a central committee member of the CPI (Maoist), who was carrying a bounty of Rs 1 crore

for a Naxal-free India and the joint efforts of our security forces, Naxalism is breathing its last today," Shah wrote on X.

Giving details of the incident, police said two women Naxalites were killed during a joint operation on Monday along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border. A large cache of firearms, ammunition and IEDs, including a self-loading rifle, were recovered from the encounter site.

A fresh exchange of firing took place late Monday night and it continued till early hours of Tuesday in a forest under

Continued on Page 2



Maoist leader from Nalgonda dies in gun battle

TG to speed up solar projects for SHGs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has decided to speed up solar power projects for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Indira Mahila Shakti Programme, emphasising renewable energy entrepreneurship and women's empowerment.

A high-level meeting regarding this chaired by Energy Department Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultanina was held at the secretariat on Tuesday.

Highlighting the transformative potential of the scheme, Sultanina said that SHGs, which began as small savings groups, are now poised to operate solar power plants worth crores. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating

the programme by ensuring land allocation, financial support and technical assistance. SBI officials have assured support



including exploring options for interest subvention to enhance financial viability. The CMD of TSSPDCL, Musharaff, has promised

timely payments through the Prapthi Portal for the power generated. TGREDCO's VC & MD, V. Anila, said that the tendering process and vendor empanelment had been completed, with plans to provide technical training to SHGs for plant maintenance. The vendors committed to adhering to quality standards and requested a streamlined payment mechanism post-installation.

The meeting concluded with a pledge to successfully install 1,000 MW solar power plants across SHGs, village organizations and mandal samakhyas. This scheme aims to integrate renewable energy into rural development and empower women to play a pivotal role in the energy sector.

IT raids places connected to TGFDC Chairman Dil Raju

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Income Tax Department conducted searches at many locations linked to prominent film producer Dil Raju and others here on Tuesday, official sources said. The searches were carried out in connection with tax evasion charges, they added.

Dil Raju, whose real name is Venkata Ramana Reddy, is a leading film producer and the Chairman of the Telangana Film Development Corporation (TGFDC).

Locations connected to some other film producers are also being

searched, the sources said. IT officials took Dil Raju's wife to the bank to open lockers. Many places are being raided in the city including some in Jubilee Hills and Banjara Hills, they said.

Mythri Movie Makers who made 'Pushpa: The Rule' and its producer Erneni, also came under the scanner. The IT team also raided the properties of producer Abhishek Agarwal, known for films like 'The Kashmir Files' and 'Tiger Nageswara Rao'. The IT department reportedly searched the offices of Mango Media, a prominent distributor of Telugu films.



Special CS Ramakrishna grilled on Kaleshwaram finances

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Special Chief Secretary of the Finance Department, Ramakrishna Rao, appeared before the Kaleshwaram Commission chaired by Justice PC Ghose to answer questions regarding the Kaleshwaram Project.

The interrogation centred around affidavits submitted by Ramakrishna Rao and the CAG report with emphasis on loans, project designs and budget allocations.

The commission asked questions about the funding of the Kaleshwaram Corporation, revenue generation and adherence to regulations in the project's design.

Ramakrishna said that the government was responsible for the project's designs and admitted that no core committee records existed on the project's execution.

Continued on Page 2

Congress endangering Hyd's livability: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao expressed deep concern over the deteriorating condition of Hyderabad under Congress rule.

Addressing a meeting of MLAs and MLCs at the residence of former

minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, he pointed out that the city, once a symbol of development, is now grappling with multiple problems due to administrative failures. KTR emphasized that Hyderabad, being Telangana's economic engine, cannot afford to lose its edge.



TG demands 71% of Krishna River water

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Krishna River Management Board's (KRMB) meeting chaired by Board Chairman Atul Jain concluded at the Jalsaudha in Hyderabad with discussions centring around water sharing between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Telangana Irrigation Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja, Telangana ENC Anil Kumar, and AP ENC Venkateswara Rao attended the meeting along with engineers and senior officials from both states.

After the meeting, Rahul Bojja reiterated Telangana's demand for a 71% share in Krishna waters, align-

ing with the state's catchment area. "We have protested against the current 66:34 ratio. Telangana deserves its rightful 71% share and until this



is finalised, the share should be split equally," he asserted.

Bojja also raised concerns about water diversion and called for the installation of telemetry systems at 11 locations to ensure transparency. The AP ENC assured a response on

telemetry installation within a week. Telangana ENC Anil Kumar requested the withdrawal of the CRPF from Nagarjuna Sagar and addressed the need for repairs at the Srisailem project. The Board chairman confirmed that repairs to the dam sluice would be undertaken.

The KRMB Chairman said that while the 66:34 ratio would continue temporarily, efforts would be made to reassess and increase Telangana's share based on the situation. The meeting stressed the longstanding disputes over water sharing with Telangana maintaining its demand for an equitable allocation.

Trump withdraws US from WHO Signs executive order



PNS ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order beginning the process of withdrawing America from the World Health Organisation, the second time in less than five years that the US has

made a move to withdraw from the world body.

It was among dozens of executive actions he signed after being sworn in on Monday for a second term, on issues ranging from immigration to foreign policy to climate change.

Continued on Page 2

Eatala slaps real estate broker

Alleges Police, Revenue officials backing brokers to encroach lands of poor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MP from Malkajgiri Eatala Rajender slapped a real estate broker on Tuesday. The real estate agent was accused of encroaching poor people's lands. Expressing anger over a real estate broker who was causing trouble to the poor in Ekashilanager under Pocharam Municipality in Malkajgiri district,

Rajender and his followers attacked the real estate broker and his men.

Eatala said, "The officials are supporting brokers. The real estate brokers are encroaching the lands of the poor with the support of police and revenue officials while creating fake documents around Hyderabad city. The officials are extending their support to the goons. It is like a fence eating a crop."

Knowing that the lands are being occupied and injustice is being done to the poor with the complaint of the poor, Rajender went to the spot on Tuesday to inspect the area. The real estate brokers said that they will block the MP and even burn the tents. In this background, the brokers came in order to examine the lands there. Enraged while seeing the broker and his men, Eatala slapped

the broker. Later, the BJP workers also attacked the real estate broker and his men.

Later speaking to the media, Rajender said that he has been seeing the tears of the poor for the last six months. He warned, "Khabardar, if anyone tries to trouble the poor. The brokers are troubling the poor owners of the houses."

Rajender said, "I came here after informing the local Minister and the police. However, the goons tried to threaten the poor even after I came here. The goons warned the poor to inform me. The police are losing their respect day-by-day. We will chase away goons while taking the responsibility to protect the poor if police fail to provide security to the poor."



Real Estate broker, who received a slap from Eatala Rajender, arguing with local woman



Officials in a workshop on BhuBharathi and Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy was held at Secretariat on Tuesday

Naidu's strategic backfoot on his son's elevation

What would a mature politician do to strengthen his position? It could be simply taking a step backwards and describing it as taken in the interests of alliance partners! This appears to be true if one takes a look at the blitzkrieg over the possible elevation of the AP Minister for Information Technology, Nara Lokesh, the son of AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, as the Deputy Chief Minister.

There was a sudden demand in the TDP to elevate Lokesh as the Deputy Chief Minister as TDP cadres gave Lokesh credit for the TDP having one crore plus membership, for setting up a helpline for party activists to seek help if they face problems and for providing insurance coverage to them.

The campaign for Lokesh seems well for TDP cadres who play the role of big brother in the ruling NDA alliance comprising the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the BJP. But it could be a bitter pill for the other two partners, especially the JSP, as its leader Pawan Kalyan is now the Deputy Chief Minister and everybody considers him as the 'No. 2' in the AP Cabinet.

Everyone knows that the JSP, a crucial partner of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), contributed much to bring the alliance to power by giving up several seats to prevent vote splitting. That helped the NDA a lot. Chief Minister Chandrababu himself acknowledged the JSP's magnanimity in making the alliance a grand success.

The NDA combine bagged

Meanwhile, the sudden demand for the elevation of Lokesh as Deputy Chief Minister hit the NDA partners like a bomb. This is particularly true of JSP cadres as their leader is now the No. 2 in the Cabinet. In other words, if Lokesh is made the DyCM, he will become equal to Pawan Kalyan



leader is now the No. 2 in the Cabinet. In other words, if Lokesh is made the DyCM, he will become equal to Pawan Kalyan.

Given the fact that the NDA is struggling to wriggle out of the obligation to implement the 'Super Six' social welfare

schemes due to financial problems, it may not be desirable for the TDP to offend the JSP by elevating Lokesh as the Deputy Chief Minister. That can hurt JSP supremo Pawan Kalyan.

Lokesh may be the political successor of Chandrababu Naidu. But giving him a higher post would land the NDA in trouble even in the absence of a strong opposition. Strictly speaking, the YSRCP is not in a position to create problems for the NDA. Although it has no principal opposition tag, the YSRCP has cadres in almost all Assembly constituencies. However, it is still not able to get over the feeling of not having the principal opposition tag.

It is those who want to work under Lokesh in future who are behind the demand to make him DyCM. But Chief Minister Chandrababu has put a full stop to the demand

to elevate his son as the Deputy Chief Minister. Chandrababu knows that such a demand could irritate the JSP and its possible consequences could be serious.

JSP cadres hope that Pawan might get an elevation with the blessings of Prime Minister Modi in future and don't want anything that could hit the prospects of their leader. Pawan thinks that his DyCM post was earned through hard work and everyone in the JSP thinks that their leader should not be downgraded by giving the same post to others.

When Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy was the CM of United AP, he decided to remove senior Congress leader M Satyanarayana Rao (MSR) from the Cabinet after some embarrassment. YSR offered him the RTC Chairman post. MSR reluctantly accepted it

after abolishing the posts of other RTC Directors making him 'synonymous' with RTC. Similarly, Pawan has been made comfortable by not allowing anybody to become equal to him in the Cabinet.

During YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's rule, there were five Deputy Chief Ministers as Jagan gave all prominent castes a Deputy CM post. Actually, the Deputy Chief Minister post has no constitutional recognition.

Generally, Chandrababu is known for floating ideas for public debate. He is believed to have conveyed his thoughts to TDP cadres to get it discussed by the public and may implement the idea if the feedback is encouraging. A senior politician like Chandrababu would experiment like this to gauge the public mood. The issue of elevating Lokesh was one such thing.

Is TPCC chief Mahesh readying lists in Australia?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

During his recent New Delhi visit TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said that appointments to the TPCC Executive Committee will be done by January-end. However, Mahesh is now in Australia. Rumours in Gandhi Bhavan circles indicate that the TPCC chief might be now preparing the lists of Executive Committee members and

those for nominated posts.

Gandhi Bhavan sources said the TPCC chief who went to Australia on January 17 will be coming back on January 24, the day on which the Chief Minister will be returning from Davos. After returning, they may discuss the prepared lists and make changes if they want. Both the Chief Minister and the TPCC chief or the TPCC chief alone may go to New Delhi to give the lists to

the high command.

Rumours doing the rounds in Gandhi Bhavan said that it could be a difficult job to do the exercise in Hyderabad as many Congress leaders will pressure Mahesh for posts. So Mahesh went to Australia and may prepare the list there. It will help him to complete the process without any problems. One Congress leader said that it can help the party if the lists are prepared based on performance.

BRS MLA Padma Rao suffers heart attack

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA and former minister Padma Rao Goud suffered a heart attack while on a tour in Dehradun. Family members immediately admitted him to a hospital, where doctors performed a stent procedure. Medical professionals have assured that his condition is stable and he is now out of danger.

During his recovery, Padma

Rao returned to Hyderabad, where BRS working president K Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) reached out to him over the phone to offer his support and enquire about his health. "I am feeling better after treatment," Padma Rao conveyed to KTR. In response, KTR advised him to rest adequately before resuming his work.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Bandi Sanjay expressed his concern, stating, "Deeply

shocked to learn about Secunderabad MLA @TPadmaRao garu suffering a heart attack while on tour in Dehradun. Praying to Ammavaru for his swift recovery and hoping he regains full health soon."

The incident has drawn wishes for his speedy recovery from across the political spectrum, reflecting widespread concern for the senior MLA's health

Kidney racket busted at Alaknanda Hospital

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD



Rangareddy District Medical Health Officers seizing the Alaknanda Hospital on Tuesday.

District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) of Ranga Reddy district seized a nine-bedded Alaknanda Hospital in Kothapet of Saroornagar for alleged kidney transplantation.

It is alleged that the victims were demanded to pay nearly Rs 55 lakh and more for the kidney transplantation.

Health Minister Damodara Raja Narasimha has taken serious note of the illegal kidney transplantation racket unearthed at Alaknanda Hospital in Saroornagar, Hyderabad. The Minister reviewed details of the case with senior health department officials and issued strict directives for immediate action. He warned doctors and hospital authorities, stating that illegal activities in the medical profession will not be tolerated.

He directed authorities to take stringent legal action against the hospital management, involved doctors and any others connected to the case.

DMHO Venkateshwar Rao said submitted a preliminary report to the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare

All four individuals, hailing from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, were shifted to Gandhi Hospital for further medical care. Their condition is reported to be stable. Saroornagar Police said that as complainants were not coming forward, according to the DMHO, a case will be registered

that an unknown phone call was received regarding an alleged kidney transplantation racket at Alaknanda Hospital in Kothapet, Saroornagar mandal.

Acting on the information, the DMHO instructed the Deputy DMHO, Kandur Division, and the Medical Officer of Saroornagar PHC to conduct a thorough inquiry.

Their initial findings confirmed the illegal transplantation of kidneys at Alaknanda Hospital, which is registered with the DMHO office.

Four individuals involved in the illegal kidney transplantation were identified - two donors and two recipients.

The kidney transplantation procedure had already been

completed before the inspection.

All four individuals, hailing from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, were shifted to Gandhi Hospital for further medical care. Their condition is reported to be stable. Saroornagar Police said that as complainants were not coming forward, according to the DMHO, a case will be registered.

Photo Caption: Rangareddy District Medical Health Officers seizing the Alaknanda Hospital on Tuesday. Kidney Racket Busted at Nine bedded Alaknanda Hospital: DMHO seizes hospital

Deepika Pasham: Hyderabad: The District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) of Ranga Reddy district seized a nine bedded city hospital Alaknanda Hospital in Kothapet of Saroornagar for alleged kidney transplantation.

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Eatala joined BJP to wash away his sins: Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender, joined the BJP to wash away his sins, the Congress said. Eatala is the cause of many of the sins of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and his family, it added.

The Congress demanded that former Ministers Eatala Rajender and T. Harish Rao should reveal their assets before and after 2014. Eatala should explain why the BRS expelled him as he was the Finance Minister in the BRS admin. The Congress said the BRS expelled Eatala from the party and government as he was grabbing lands.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday, Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Sai Kumar said that the 'commission' culture started first in the BRS. However, the Congress is the party of government schemes, he said. He said that Eatala Rajender and Harish Rao were the 'care of address' for 'commissions' at the Secretariat during BRS rule.

TG makes major ...

Continued from page 1

Industries Minister Sridhar Babu said that data is the new oil and together we're driving the future of tech and growth in Telangana.

The Telangana Government signed an MoU with Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace for an integrated rocket manufacturing and testing facility, with an investment of Rs 500 crore. This facility will be one of the largest private-sector initiatives in space technology.

Revanth Reddy expressed his happiness saying, "The partnership with Skyroot underscores Telangana's strategic focus on space and aerospace. Hyderabad will soon become the focal point of private-sector space programmes."

Skyroot co-founder

Pawan Kumar Chandana praised the Telangana Government's vision, stating, "This is a great time for Telangana, and we are excited to contribute to its remarkable journey."

Tarek Sultan, the Chairman of Agility met Industries Minister Sridhar Babu to discuss sustainable income-generating initiatives for farmers.

Chief Growth Officer Su Le, explored opportunities in the semiconductor industry and praised Telangana's policies.

Eng. Khalid Mohammed Al-Salem, President of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, assured keen interest in Telangana's investment ecosystem. Discussions were held on expanding the groups' hub-and-spoke model in Telangana with land identification underway.

Govt signs 3 MoUs ...

Continued from page 1

during the World Economic Forum in Davos, reinforcing Telangana's commitment to renewable energy and sustainable development.

Under this partnership, MEIL, the Hyderabad-based infrastructure company, will set up a 2,160 MW Pumped Storage Project in Telangana. The project represents a landmark initiative with a proposed investment of Rs 11,000 crore and is expected to create over 1,000 jobs in the construction phase, with an additional 250 jobs during the operations phase.

The company will also initiate campus recruitment drives within Telangana to fulfil the project's workforce requirements. This collaboration reflects Telangana's proactive approach to fostering investments, which align with its sustainability, renewable energy and development goals.

The Government of Telangana and Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited have signed

a landmark Memorandum of Understanding to establish a cutting-edge Battery Energy Storage System project across various strategic locations in Telangana. This collaboration, formalized at the World Economic Forum in Davos, demonstrates Telangana's leadership in fostering renewable energy and sustainable development.

Under the agreement, MEIL, a Hyderabad-based infrastructure company with a strong legacy of innovation and excellence, will develop a cumulative 1,000 MWh Battery Energy Storage System across various strategic locations in Telangana. The project entails a significant investment of Rs. 3,000 crores and is poised to create over 1,000 direct jobs and an additional 3,000 indirect jobs within two years.

The Battery Energy Storage System will play a pivotal role in strengthening Telangana's renewable energy infrastructure by enabling efficient energy storage, grid stability, and peak load management. This initiative aligns with the state's vision of achieving sustainable energy goals

and fostering economic growth.

The Government of Telangana has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) to establish a world-class Wellness Resort at Ananthagiri in Telangana.

The MoU was formalized during the World Economic Forum in Davos, reflecting the state's commitment to promoting luxury tourism and regional economic growth.

Under this partnership, MEIL, a Hyderabad-based infrastructure company, will invest Rs 1,000 crore to develop the resort. The project is expected to generate over 2,000 jobs during construction and operations phases. The company will also conduct campus recruitment drives in Telangana to ensure local workforce participation.

This collaboration underscores Telangana's proactive approach to fostering investments in the tourism sector, aligned with the state's vision for sustainable development and economic progress.

66 dead, 51 injured in hotel fire at ski resort in northwestern Turkey

PNS ■ ANKARA

A fire raged through a 12-story hotel at a popular ski resort in northwestern Turkey early Tuesday during a school holiday, killing at least 66 people — at least two of them when they jumped from the building to escape the flames, officials said.

At least 51 people also were injured in the fire at the Grand Kartal hotel in Kartalkaya, in Bolu province's Koroglu mountains, some 300 km east of Istanbul, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said. The fire occurred near the start of a two-week winter break for schools, when hotels in the region are packed.

"We are in deep pain. We have unfortunately lost 66 lives in the fire that broke out at this hotel," Yerlikaya told reporters after inspecting the site.

Atakan Yelkovan, a hotel guest staying on the third floor, told the IHA news agency there was chaos on the upper floors as other guests tried to escape the fire, including by trying to climb down from their rooms using sheets and blankets.

"People on the upper floors were screaming. They hung down sheets ... Some tried to jump," Yelkovan said. Health Minister Kemal Memisoglu said at least one of the injured was in serious condition, while 17 other people were treated and released.

Special CS ...

Continued from page 1

Justice PC Ghose said that the project appeared to have been executed hastily without adhering to regulations. The commission also questioned the project's objectives and how it planned to generate revenue. Ramakrishna clarified that the project's goal was to sell water to industries.

The commission said that key policies regarding the project were not presented in the Assembly. It noted that business rules were violated during the release of funds, and financial records were not maintained properly. Ramakrishna revealed that loans were secured with government guarantees and were being repaid at interest rates between 9 and 10.5 per cent.

Congress endangering ...

Continued from page 1

"The city's global rankings as a livable and loveable city are now at risk. The Congress's failures are affecting not only Hyderabad but the entire state," he said.

He highlighted the city's decline over the past year, stating, "Under Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Hyderabad was a beacon of happiness. Today, it has become synonymous with challenges due to the Revanth Government's inefficiency."

During the meeting, elected representatives from Hyderabad brought up pressing issues like worsening sanitation, irregular drinking water supply, frequent power outages and increasing traffic problems.

KTR was briefed about water tankers already being deployed in several areas despite summer being months away. Legislators also raised concerns about the city's shifting reputation from a safe hub to a crime zone, coupled with increasing land grabs and a weakening law-and-order situation.

FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT AND LEGACY

KTR recalled the programmes launched during BRS's tenure like the Metro Rail, IT

growth, and the construction of world-class infrastructure.

"We turned Hyderabad into a global city. From building extensive flyovers to linking roads, our projects not only saved time but also earned the confidence of Hyderabad's residents," he said.

In stark contrast, he criticised the Congress government for failing to maintain these developments. "Even basic road repairs are ignored, leading to accidents and traffic woes. Sanitation, which we revolutionized with the Swachh Autos initiative, has now become a nightmare," KTR said.

He also criticized the government's failure to fulfil election promises. "Not a single ration card or pension was issued last year. The poor are left waiting endlessly," he said, adding that BRS leaders would continue to fight until Congress delivered on its promises.

KTR asked BRS legislators to relentlessly question the government until the issues faced by Hyderabad's residents are resolved. "The Congress government is failing people's wrath for ignoring the development of Hyderabad," he said.

16 Naxals, including ...

Continued from page 1

Hailing the security forces, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said under the BJP-led double-engine government at the Centre and the state, Chhattisgarh will get rid of the menace by March 2026.

He said strengthening the resolve of Prime Minister Modi and the union home minister to end Naxalism in the country by March 2026, the security forces have been continuously achieving success and moving rapidly towards fulfilling the target.

"This success of the soldiers is commendable. I salute their bravery," he said.

Forty Naxalites have been killed in separate gun fights in Chhattisgarh this year.

On January 16, 12 Naxalites were killed by security forces in Bijapur district. Later, Maoists, in a statement, admitted that 18 cadres were killed in the January 16 gunfight.

Last year, 219 Naxalites were neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh.

Trump withdraws ...

Continued from page 1

The World Health Organisation (WHO) came under intense criticism from Trump in 2020 for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which grew into a worldwide health crisis during the final year of his first term.

"That's a big one," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House when an aide presented to him an executive order on this to be signed by him.

"We paid USD 500 million to World Health when I was here, and I terminated it. China, with 1.4 billion people, has 350 dependents... Nobody knows what we have because so many people came in illegally. But let's say we have 325 (million people). They (China) had 1.4 billion people. They were paying USD39 million. We were paying USD500 million. It seemed a little unfair to me," he said.

"That wasn't the reason, but I dropped out (of WHO). They offered me to come back for USD39 million. In theory, it should be less than that, but, when Biden came back, they came back for USD500 million. He knew that you could have come back for USD39 million. They wanted us back so badly. So, we'll see what happens," he said. The order said Trump was sending a presidential letter to the United Nations secretary-general to formally notify him of the US plan to withdraw. The US noticed its withdrawal from WHO in 2020 due to its mis-handling of the COVID-19 pandemic that arose out of Wuhan, China, and other global health crises.

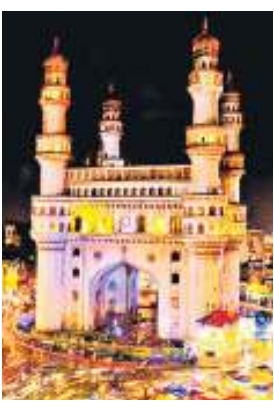
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HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 22, 2025

03



CITY EVENTS

Musical Programme

By Little Musicians Academy

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi
January 22,
(1:30 pm to 10 pm)

Shyam Benegal Tribute Film Festival

Mandi Movie

Venue

Lamakaan
January 22, (7 pm)

Free Mega Plastic Surgery Camp

By Seva Bharathi

Venue

Dr Ishwar Chander Charitable Hospital
January 17 to 30

CP inaugurates 7th Annual Sports & Games

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad 7th Annual Sports, Games, and Duty Meet 2025 was inaugurated on Tuesday at the Cyberabad Police Parade Grounds. Cyberabad Commissioner of Police Avinash Mohanty, along with Joint CP D Joel Davis, and Zonal DCPs, launched the event by releasing balloons and pigeons. The Commissioner received a ceremonial salute from police athletes before declaring the duty meet open. CP Mohanty congratulated the participants and encouraged all police personnel to stay active, emphasising the link between physical and mental health. He urged everyone, including senior officers, to participate and make exercise a daily habit. Health camps, including cancer screening and essential checkups, were organised for police personnel and families. CAR HQ DCP Sanjeev highlighted enthusiastic participation from five law-and-order zones and other wings, with over 953 participants, including 150 women.

Raja Singh appeals to CM to shift venue of Numaish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Goshamahal constituency T Raja Singh appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to shift the venue of the Numaish (All India Industrial Exhibition), which is being organised every year, from the existing place to city outskirts. Raja Singh said that traffic jams are taking place as thousands of people visit the exhibition everyday and the venue is in the centre of the city. The vehicles are halting for hours due to traffic jams near the exhibition crowd.



Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari addressing a workshop on Bhu Bharathi and Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy at the Secretariat on Tuesday

TELANGANA BHU BHARATI ACT

Vision is to bring in comprehensive land reforms, says Navin Mittal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Revenue Department Principal Secretary and Chief Commissioner of Land Administration Navin Mittal gave a presentation on the Telangana Bhu Bharati Act, 2025. He said that the vision of the government is to bring in comprehensive land reforms aimed at streamlining revenue administration and to increase accountability. He stated that the Act promotes an efficient agricultural land governance framework.

He informed that the present Act came

into being after studying similar Acts in 19 states and following the true democratic spirit, a draft Act was kept in public domain on July 1, 2024 and after incorporating various suggestions from the public, the Act was passed in the legislature. Subsequently, the Governor has given his assent and the Gazette notification was published on 4th of this month. He also stated that rules and regulations are being formulated while a user-friendly portal is being developed.

A workshop on Bhu Bharathi and Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy

was held at the Secretariat on Tuesday. Senior officials of the government attended the workshop. In her opening remarks, Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari said that the workshop is organised to explain about the two landmark initiatives of the government.

Later, Principal Secretary Energy Sandeep Kumar Sultania explained about the salient features of the Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy -2025 which seeks to establish the State as a leader in renewable energy. By providing incentives for development of renewable

energy projects like solar, pump storage projects, battery energy storage systems, green hydrogen, this policy aims to ensure energy security for the State while striving to provide clean, reliable and affordable power to consumers of the State.

Special Chief Secretaries Ramakrishna Rao, Ravi Gupta, Vikas Raj, Sabyasachi Ghosh, Principal Secretaries Danakishore, Rizvi, Christina Zongthu, Secretaries Buddhaprakash Jyothi, Lokesh Kumar, Yogita Rana, Special Commissioner I&PR Dr Harish and other officials attended the workshop.

VOTERS DAY INVITE



Chief Electoral Officer C Sudharshan Reddy meets Governor of Telangana Jishnu Dev Varma at the Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. During the meeting, he extended an invitation to the Governor to the National Voters Day celebrations on January 25 at Ravindra Bharathi

5,736 applications received at Prajavani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 5,766 grievance applications were submitted during Prajavani on Tuesday at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan.

Officials reported that the majority of applications, 5,332, were for the Indiramma Housing Scheme. Other submissions included 132 for the Panchayati Raj and Rural Development department, 131 for the Electricity department, 43 for revenue-related issues, and one for Pravasi Prajavani.

State Planning Commission Vice-President Dr G Chinnna Reddy and Public Administration Special Officer D Divya received applications.

Astrologer Venu Swami apologizes for comments on actor Nag and wife

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Astrologer Venu Swami has publicly apologized to the Telangana Women's Commission for his comments on actor Naga Chaitanya and Sobitha Dhulipala on Tuesday. Swami, who had earlier predicted that Naga Chaitanya and actress Sobitha Dhulipala would not stay together for long and would eventually separate, retracted his statement.

The remarks sparked outrage, prompting members of the Film Journalists Union to lodge a complaint with the Telangana Women's Commission. Following the complaint, the Commission issued notices to Venu Swami.



Astrologer Venu Swami appearing before Telangana Women's Commission chairperson Nerella Sharada to withdraw his statement

Commission chairperson Nerella Sharada on Tuesday. During his appearance, Venu Swami expressed regret, withdrew his comments and apologized to the Women's Commission. The Commission warned him against making such statements in the future to avoid further consequences.

Spanish language to be taught at EFLU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, has taken a step towards encouraging Spanish language education in India by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Instituto Cervantes, New Delhi, and the Embassy of Spain, New Delhi, in collaboration with the International Centre for Spanish Language, University of Salamanca.

This MoA was formalised on January 20, at a ceremony held on the EFLU campus. As part of this strategic partnership, the Department of



Hispanic and Italian Studies at EFLU is organising a comprehensive Teacher Training Programme from January 20 to 31.

The MoA was signed by Prof Lakshmi Haribandi, Vice-Chancellor (In-charge) of EFLU, and Dr Maria Gil

Burmans, Director of Instituto Cervantes, New Delhi, in the presence of the EFLU Registrar and other distinguished officials.

The training programme is poised to provide an enriching experience for participants, bringing together expertise from renowned faculty members of the University of Salamanca, EFLU and Instituto Cervantes.

The resource persons for this programme include Dr Maria Llorente and Dr Carmen from Spain, who will share their extensive knowledge and innovative teaching methodologies.

Marut Drones educates paddy farmers about direct seeding

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad-based Marut Drones demonstrated its Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) technology in Boothpur village of Mahbubnagar district. The company showcased its Direct Seeding Drone, equipped with a multi-row seeding mechanism for precise aerial seed dispersion. This innovative technology boosts productivity, lowers input costs, and conserves

water.

The event on Tuesday was attended by farmers, agricultural officers and dignitaries, including G Chinnna Reddy, Vice-Chairman of the Telangana State Planning Board. It showcased how drone-based direct seeding can transform rice cultivation.

CEO and Co-Founder Prem Kumar Vislawath explained that DSR drones can cut water usage by up to 92% and reduce the return-

on-investment period for drone owners to 1.5 years. He noted that DSR drones help tackle delayed monsoons, canal water issues and labour shortages. The technology eliminates the need for traditional nursery and transplanting processes. A single drone can seed up to 30 acres in a day, drastically reducing labour requirements from 50 lakh man-days to 33,333 man-days for 5,00,000 acres, improving cost efficiency.

Farmers expressed keen interest in the affordability and viability of drone seeding, raising questions about germination rates, operational training and government support. Through such demonstrations, Marut Drones aims to make drone technology accessible to farmers across Telangana, promoting sustainable and efficient agricultural practices to transform India's rice farming landscape.

Deepa Das Munshi says sports will promote friendship

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC incharge general secretary Deepa Das Munshi commented that sports will promote friendship and brotherhood and it does not have caste, religion and regional differences.

Deepa inaugurated Rajiv Gandhi 18th Under-19 Day and Night T-20 League Cricket Championship-2025 at Amberpet Water Works Grounds on Tuesday.

Later addressing the gathering, Deepa said that it is commendable that CM Revanth Reddy is working to establish a Sports University in Telangana for the first time in the country. She said that such competitions help the players

to develop their talent.

The organiser of the championship and former Rajya Sabha member and Cricket Federation of India chairman V Hanumantha Rao said that this Under-19 T-20 cricket competition has been organised in the name of Rajiv Gandhi for the last 18 years to develop the spirit of sports among the youth.

He said that every year he selects two cricketers and encourages them. Cricket players from Sri Lanka, UAE and Malaysia as well as from different states of the country are participating in these competitions.

AICC incharge secretary P Vishwanathan, Tamil Nadu MLA JA Hasan, MLC Baswaraj



Saraiah, Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Sai Kumar, former MLA Kommuri Prathap Reddy, former MLC B Kamalakar Rao, TPCC vice-

president Sangishetty Jagadeeshwar Rao, TPCC general secretaries - R Laxman Yadav, Bollu Kishan Cricket Federation of India working

president Shambula Srikanth Goud, Cricket Federation of Hyderabad president Adi Avinash and Sayyad Sadik Pasha, Amrjeeth Kumar, Rajanikanth, Mahender Goud, Shakeel, Manmohan and others participated in the programme.

The 11 teams participating in the championship are - United Arab Emirates, Karnataka, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu, Vidarbha, Maharashtra, Bihar, Chennai and Telangana.

On the first day of the championship, Hyderabad beat UAE, Karnataka beat Bengaluru and Chennai beat Telangana and in its second match Chennai Team beat Bihar.

HYDRAA police station to be set up beside Buddha Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) will set up its police station beside Buddha Bhavan. Commissioner of HYDRAA AV Ranganath inspected the proposed building and reviewed the facilities required for the station.

The Commissioner emphasised the need for proper infrastructure, including designated rooms and cabins resembling those of a standard police station. He also reviewed arrangements for complaint registration and facilities for complainants visiting the sta-



HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath inspecting the proposed building for HYDRAA police station

tion. Commissioner Ranganath instructed the officials to ensure that sign boards for the HYDRAA police station are

prominently visible. Additionally, he directed the provision of parking facilities for vehicles belonging to complainants.

ACROSS THE STATES



'BJP govt unable to stop custodial deaths in UP'

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav Tuesday alleged that the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh has not been able to stop the custodial deaths in the state. His remarks came a day after family members of a man who died in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal held the police responsible for his "custodial death", claiming they did not allow him to take essential medicines on time. Police dismissed the allegations, saying Irfan (45) was allowed to take medicines and the entire incident was captured by CCTV installed at the police outpost. In a post in Hindi on X, Yadav said, "Under the BJP government, the series of 'deaths in custody' is not stopping in Uttar Pradesh. In a recent case, the death of a person, who was taken from his home in the name of interrogation in Sambhal, sparked public outrage. The BJP government which is committing injustice is now in its last phase." Superintendent of Police of Sambhal Krishna Kumar had said the police outpost in charge allowed Irfan to take his medicine and he was offered water.



Over 20 IEDs, gelatine sticks recovered in Jharkhand

Over 20 IEDs and more than 50 gelatine sticks were recovered by security personnel from a forest in West Singhbhum district on Tuesday during an anti-Naxal operation, a senior police officer said. A total of 21 IEDs were recovered from the forest near Serengda village and defused by a bomb disposal squad on the spot. Superintendent of Police Ashutosh Shekhar said. Besides, 55 pieces of gelatine sticks were seized from the area and destroyed, he said. The IEDs were planted by suspected CPI (Maoist) members to target security personnel engaged in the anti-Naxal operation, he said. The district police have been carrying out a massive combing operation for the last few months, following inputs about the presence of top Maoist leaders in core Kolhan area of West Singhbhum, the officer said. Earlier this month, a minor girl was killed and a woman suffered injuries in an IED explosion in Jarakela area of the district.



'Ad-hoc judges can be appointed to deal with criminal cases in HCs'

The Supreme Court on Tuesday suggested the appointment of ad-hoc judges in high courts to deal with the huge pendency of criminal appeals. A special bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant referred to the data on pendency of criminal cases in several high courts and said in Allahabad High Court alone there were 63,000 criminal appeals pending. The CJ said in the Jharkhand High court the figure stood at 13,000, and similarly 20,000, 21,000, 8,000 and 21,000 criminal cases were pending in high courts at Karnataka, Patna, Rajasthan and the Punjab and Haryana respectively. The bench said it could partly modify the 2021 judgement to ensure ad-hoc judges were appointed to decide criminal appeals by division benches presided over by sitting high court judges. The CJ said no ad-hoc judge should be appointed in a high court if it was functioning with 80 per cent sanctioned strength of judges. "We will have to deal only with the condition that the ad hoc judges will be sitting on the benches which are dealing with criminal cases with one sitting judge as the presiding judge... to that extent we require that modification," the bench said.

Pregnant cow beheaded: Five taken into police custody

PNS ■ UTTARAKHANDA

Five individuals were taken into custody on Tuesday in connection with a case involving the gruesome beheading of a pregnant cow, mutilation of its calf, and the removal of its legs, police said.



The perpetrators reportedly took away the cow's body, leaving behind its head, legs, and calf, according to police. The incident occurred in Kondakuli, Salkodu village, Honnavara Taluk, Uttara Kannada district. Superintendent of Police M Narayana told PTI, "We have identified 10 suspects and taken five of them into custody for questioning. Six special teams have been formed, and we have gathered clues to apprehend the main culprits who are currently absconding."

'Political parties should have code of conduct for lawmakers'

PNS ■ PATNA

Amid disruptions in Parliament and state legislatures, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday urged political parties to devise a code of conduct for their lawmakers to uphold the dignity of their respective Houses.

The two-day 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference also adopted a five-point resolution that included a collective resolve to take steps to ensure "disruption-free" debate and discussion in their respective legislatures.

The presiding officers agreed to deploy technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to bring legislative bodies closer to the people by making available debates in the local and two additional languages, Birla said.

The presiding officers voiced concern over the decline in the number of sittings of state legislatures and agreed to implement the resolutions of previous meetings.

"In an earlier meeting of the presiding officers, we had resolved that the state legislatures would hold at least 60 sittings in a calendar year. We have agreed to make efforts to implement the resolution,"



"In an earlier meeting of the presiding officers, we had resolved that the state legislatures would hold at least 60 sittings in a calendar year. We have agreed to make efforts to implement the resolution,"

Birla told PTI in an interview.

Making a strong pitch for an internal code of conduct by political parties for their elected representatives, Birla said such an approach could lead to fewer disruptions in legislative bodies.

The Lok Sabha speaker said some parties had an unwritten code of conduct for Parliament and state legislatures and their

members refrained from entering the well of the House and disrupting proceedings.

Birla also urged the media not to glorify lawmakers for disrupting House proceedings and write more frequently against unruly conduct during sessions of Parliament and state legislatures. "Don't make heroes out of those who disrupt proceedings," the Lok

Sabha speaker said.

The two-day conference was attended by 41 presiding officers who expressed their views on "75th Anniversary of Constitution: Contribution of Parliament and State Legislative Bodies in Strengthening Constitutional Values". Speakers of various state assemblies, including Satish Mahana (Uttar Pradesh), Rahul Narvekar (Maharashtra), M Appavu (Tamil Nadu) and Abdul Rahim Rather (Jammu and Kashmir), participated in the deliberations. Ram Shinde and Neelam Gorhe, the chairperson and the deputy chairperson of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, respectively, also spoke on the deliberations.

Addressing the valedictory session, Birla said the presiding officers had resolved to make legislative bodies the focal point of debate and discussion. "All political parties should cooperate in upholding the dignity of the legislative bodies. This will be possible only when political parties have a code of conduct for their lawmakers," he said.

His remarks came in the backdrop of repeated disruptions witnessed in many legislative bodies.

Priyanka is 'Stree Shakti', Rahul 'Yuva Shakti': Kharage

PNS ■ BELAGAVI



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage on Tuesday said that Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra represented 'Stree Shakti' and likened her to icons who fought against the British -- Kittur Rani Chennamma and 'Jhansi Ki Rani' Lakshmi Bai-- and hailed Rahul Gandhi as a symbol of 'Yuva Shakti'.

Addressing the 'Gandhi Bharat' event here, Kharage said the Congress has organised the event to commemorate the centenary of lone Congress session held in Belagavi, which Mahatma Gandhi had chaired as the grand old party's president way back in 1924. "If there is Kittur Chennamma it's Priyanka Gandhi. If there is 'Jhansi Ki Rani', it's Priyanka Gandhi. She is very strong. She stabilised the family after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

"We have Stree Shakti (in Priyanka Gandhi) and Yuva Shakti, which is Rahul Gandhi," he said. Themed as 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan', the event targeted Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" the Indian Constitution and its architect B R Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha recently.

The Union Minister has dismissed the allegation as a "lie". Kharage also recalled Gandhi's famous statement

delivered in Belagavi, 'Main Jinda Rahna chahta hoon Bharat ke liye, Marna chahta hoon Bharat ke liye (I want to live for India and die for India)'. He claimed that Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Gandhi, was the disciple of Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah show respect for Gandhi, they actually worship Godse, he added.

The Congress veteran also accused the BJP of "playing a game" by alleging differences between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Gandhi and Ambedkar.

Countering the BJP's claim that Congress insulted Ambedkar by ensuring his defeat, Kharage showed a letter to the public, which he claimed was written by Ambedkar to his friend Kamalakar where he mentioned that Savarkar and S A Dange were responsible for his defeat.

INDUS WATER TREATY

Neutral expert backs New Delhi's stand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A World Bank-appointed neutral expert has backed New Delhi's position on the framework to resolve certain disputes between India and Pakistan on Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects.

While India has been pressing for resolution of the issues by the neutral expert as mandated under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between the two countries, Pakistan has been backing the Permanent Court of

Arbitration in The Hague to resolve them.

India and Pakistan signed IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of negotiations with a sole aim to manage issues relating to cross-border rivers. India welcomed the ruling by the neutral expert, International Commission of Large Dams president Michel Lino. On Monday, Lino ruled that he is competent to render a decision on the "merits of the Points of Difference" between India and Pakistan on the two hydropow-

er projects. "India welcomes the decision given by the Neutral Expert under Paragraph 7 of Annexure F to the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"The decision upholds and vindicates India's stand that all seven questions that were referred to the neutral expert, in relation to the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects, are differences falling within his competence under the treaty," it said on Tuesday.

In 2015, Pakistan sought the

appointment of the neutral expert to deal with its objections to the two projects. However, a year later, Islamabad demanded that the objections be handled by the court of arbitration. India has been cooperating with the neutral expert but stayed away from proceedings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. New Delhi considers the start of the two concurrent processes to resolve the dispute a violation of the provision of the graded mechanism prescribed in the IWT.

Five days after knife attack, Saif back home from hospital

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan returned home on Tuesday, a little wan but smiling broadly as he left a Mumbai hospital five days after an intruder stabbed him inside his apartment with a knife in the neck and spine.

The 54-year-old actor underwent a neurosurgery to treat a spinal injury and a plastic surgery to repair wounds on his neck and hands at Lilavati Hospital after he was stabbed by an intruder in the early hours of Thursday last week in his 12th floor flat in 'Satguru Sharan' building in upscale in Bandra.

As he exited the hospital, Khan, wearing a white shirt and a pair of blue jeans,



he was discharged. The Mumbai police have arrested the intruder who allegedly stabbed the Bollywood actor. The accused, identified as Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir (30), a Bangladeshi national, is at present in police custody.

Over 100 devotees saved after heart attacks at Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Over 100 devotees who suffered heart attacks at Maha Kumbh have been saved while 183 critical patients have received ICU care and 580 minor surgeries have been successfully performed, officials said. Additionally, 1,70,727 blood tests have been conducted and 1,00,998 people have availed OPD services so far, they said.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the Central Hospital at the Maha Kumbh is providing world-class medical care to ensure the safety and well-being of millions of devotees, they said. Dr. Gaurav Dubey, Nodal Officer of the Maha Kumbh Medical Establishment, said devotees from across India and abroad are receiving exceptional healthcare in Mahakumbh Nagar.

Highlighting recent cases, he said, "Two devotees from Madhya Pradesh experienced chest pain and were successfully treated at Central Hospital. Both were admitted to the ICU, underwent examinations and received prompt treatment. Now they are fully healthy."

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO

Govt plans 10th anniv with nationwide events

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will organise weeks-long celebrations to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, the Union women and child development ministry said on Tuesday.

Beginning on Wednesday, the celebrations will continue till March 8, observed as International Women's Day. The inaugural event in Delhi on Wednesday will feature Union ministers JP Nadda, Annapurna Devi and Savitri Thakur, alongside senior women officers from the armed forces, paramilitary forces and the Delhi Police. Officials from central ministries, Anganwadi workers, student volunteers and representatives from international organisations such as UNICEF, UN Women and the World Bank will also participate.

The occasion marks the beginning of nationwide celebrations reflecting the scheme's transfor-



mative impact over the past decade, according to a ministry statement. The celebrations will include events at the state and the district levels.

Special programmes will be held on Wednesday, Sunday (January 26), and March 8, engaging communities through rallies, cultural performances, and felicitation ceremonies for women achievers. The ministry has also announced sustainability initiatives, including a nationwide plan-

nation drive, and will run awareness campaigns across print, digital and social media to further amplify the message of gender equality and empowerment. Launched on January 22, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Haryana's Panipat, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative was created to address the critical issues of gender imbalance and declining child sex ratio. Over the years, the initiative has driven significant progress.

The national sex ratio at birth improved from 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24, and the gross enrolment ratio of girls at the secondary level rose from 75.51 per cent to 78 per cent during the same period. Institutional deliveries rose from 61 per cent to 97.3 per cent, and first-trimester antenatal care registrations surged from 61 per cent to 80.5 per cent, reflecting the programme's far-reaching impact. The scheme has gone beyond numbers to drive cultural and social change.

Initiatives such as the Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav returned more than a lakh out-of-school girls to education while programmes like the Yashaswini Bike Expedition showcased the empowerment of women in action. The scheme has also utilised creative campaigns, including collaborations with television shows, to address societal issues such as girl child abandonment and to spread awareness about the value of daughters.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Revenue (Land Acquisition) Department FORM - VII DECLARATION

Under Section 19 (1) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act 30/2013) and as per the state rule 25 (1) Collector's File No. G1/252/2023 Date: 20-01-2025 Special Deputy Collector's File No. B/58/2022 Date: 18-01-2025 Gazette No. 4/2025 Date: 20-01-2025

As per the directions of the Government of Telangana/District Collector, Siddipet, the below mentioned **Acree 1.05 guntas** of land is needed in Nagarajupalle village of Nanganur mandal of Siddipet district for public purpose i.e. for excavation of LD10 - RM3 minor of RMC of Sri Ranganayaka Sagar reservoir under Kaleshwaram Project.

Therefore, the declaration has been issued under Section 19 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013.

Therefore, **Acree 1.05 guntas** of land in Nagarajupalle village of Nanganur mandal of Siddipet district is needed as mentioned in the following schedule. Therefore, the declaration has been issued.

SCHEDULE

Village: Nagarajupalle; Mandal: Nanganur; District: Siddipet		Boundaries		Cont. Dist. (sq. m)	
Sl. No.	Area (Guntas)	East	West	North	South
1	60	8	9	10	11
Name of the Paddar		Name of the Enjoyer			
1) A. Karika reddy S/o Narsareddy 2) Yerravalli Venkatarreddy S/o Narsiah 3) Yerravalli Venkateswara S/o Laxmi Narsiah 4) Ghanapuram Rajiah S/o Lachiah 5) Ghanapuram Ramakrishna S/o Laxmi Narsiah 6) Yerravalli Sandeep Kumar S/o Venkatarreddy 7) Ghanapuram Rajesh S/o Laxminarsiah 8) Yerravalli Sandeep Kumar S/o Venkatarreddy 9) Ghanapuram Laxmah S/o Malahiah		Ghanapuram Lachavva W/o Yelliahiah		59 62 65 61, 345	
2) 60 Patta Dry 0.17%		Govt. Land		59 62 65 61, 345	
3) 55 Lavuru Dry 0.02%		Govt. Land		118 55 59 54 52	
Total Extent		1.05			
Total Extent		1.05			

The declaration has been issued for the acquisition of the land as no objections to the acquisition of land under Section 15 of the Central Act 30/2013 were received.

Since the land acquisition is for the purpose of excavation of RMC's LD10-RM3 minor canal, it is limited to a very small portion of the lands in Nagarajupalle village of Nanganur mandal of the Siddipet district, since the excavation of the canal improves the farmers' livelihood because of the increased irrigation facility to their lands and since no villager is getting displaced by the project the question of rehabilitation and resettlement does not arise.

Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land may be used or discarded as the case may be.

The plan of the above said land to be acquired may be inspected in the office of the Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition Unit-1, Siddipet, during working hours on any working day.

Sd/- Tahsil, Sd/- Collector (LA), Sd/- Addl. Collector Dist. Collector Nanganur Kaleshwaram Project, Unit-1 Siddipet Dist. Siddipet Dist. Mandal

DIPR No.61/3/LA/PP-Pub/2024-25



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Pak army calls the shots

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan gets 14-year jail sentence but it won't fix Pakistan politics

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent conviction and 14-year prison sentence mark a critical juncture in the country's turbulent political history. Accused of corruption in a high-profile case involving illegal acquisition of land through a deal with property tycoon Malik Riaz, Khan's sentencing further diminishes his political standing. This development not only underscores the enduring influence of Pakistan's military establishment but also raises concerns about the country's democratic trajectory. The accountability court verdict found Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, guilty of illegally obtaining plots of land worth billions of rupees in exchange for facilitating Riaz's laundering of \$239 million. While Khan received a 14-year sentence and a fine of 1 million Pakistani rupees, his wife was handed a seven-year sentence. The Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has condemned the sentence, labeling it a politically motivated attack. Khan has consistently dismissed the charges as a "witch hunt" orchestrated by his rivals, particularly Pakistan's powerful military, which he accuses of engineering his ouster and imprisonment. Khan remains one of Pakistan's most popular leaders, with a dedicated following that views him as a symbol of resistance against entrenched corruption and military dominance. His imprisonment, however, presents significant challenges for his party and supporters. PTI's ability to mobilise mass protests and maintain its political momentum is constrained by the increasing crackdown on its members and leaders. For Pakistan's political system, Khan's conviction deep crisis. It highlights the judiciary's perceived partiality and its use as a tool to settle political scores. Moreover, the case illustrates the broader struggle between civilian leaders and the military establishment that has long dominated Pakistan's political landscape. Despite Khan's claims of standing against dictatorship, his tenure as prime minister (2018-2022) was marked by a close alliance with the military, which eventually soured. His falling out with the military's top brass, particularly after accusing them of plotting his assassination, set the stage for his political downfall. The military's role in orchestrating Khan's ouster and subsequent legal troubles underscores its continued dominance. For decades, the military has acted as Pakistan's ultimate power broker, influencing elections, judicial proceedings, and policy decisions. This has impeded the growth of democratic institutions in the country. Khan's case reaffirms that no civilian leader can challenge the military's authority without facing severe consequences thus subverting the democracy. The implications of Khan's conviction extend beyond his personal political future. It sets a precedent for the use of legal mechanisms to neutralise opposition and raises concerns about the erosion of democratic institutions. Pakistan, indeed has a long way to go on the road to democracy!



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PICTALK



Devotees celebrate 'Komuravelli Mallanna Jathara' festival, at Komuravelli in Siddipet

ISRO's space docking: A new era for India's space exploration

This pioneering feat showcases India's growing expertise in advanced space technologies and paves the way for ambitious space odysseys

The Indian space research landscape has consistently been characterised by a combination of resilience, ingenuity, and ambition. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which has consistently advanced the frontiers of science and technology, recently accomplished another significant milestone with the successful completion of its docking experiment. This accomplishment represents a pivotal moment in India's space exploration endeavours, emphasising the nation's expanding capabilities in sophisticated space technologies. The process of docking, which is an essential and difficult manoeuvre in space operations, entails two spacecraft coming together in orbit and securing their attachment to one another. This technology serves as the basis for several advanced space missions, such as the construction of space stations, the exploration of space with crews, and interplanetary missions. ISRO's successful docking experiment demonstrates its capability to manage precise manoeuvring and



synchronisation of spacecraft in space—a complex technological feat. India has joined the select group of spacefaring nations that possess docking skills because of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) successful demonstration of this capacity. To establish permanent human settlements beyond Earth, space colonisation necessitates the development of sophisticated capabilities, including the ability to construct space habitats, transfer resources between spacecraft or from Earth, and manage maintenance and logistics in space. Docking technology is essential for these activities as it facilitates the construction of large modular structures, such as space stations or habitats. This capability guarantees that multiple components can be launched inde-

pendently and assembled in orbit, thereby reducing the complexity and cost of the mission. Additionally, docking enables the exchange of resources and the transfer of crew members, which are both critical for maintaining long-term missions and developing self-sufficient systems in space. ISRO is establishing the foundation for India's involvement in humanity's endeavours to become a multi-planetary species by mastering docking technology. ISRO's success in docking technology positions India as a significant player in global space exploration and enhances its strategic importance in the space sector. By demonstrating its capability to execute complex space manoeuvres, India strengthens its ability to develop Indigenous space infrastructure, including modular space habitats and stations. The Gaganyaan mission, India's inaugural human spaceflight program, is one of the immediate beneficiaries of this accomplishment. Critical functionalities, including the assembly of modular space habitats and the execution of

in-orbit refuelling, will be facilitated by docking technology. These capabilities will guarantee mission flexibility and efficiency, which are essential for the long-term preservation of human existence in space. Furthermore, the success of docking technology will expedite the fulfilment of India's vision of having its space station, "Bharatiya Antriksh Station," by 2035. Docking proficiency augments ISRO's potential for intensified engagement with international space agencies. As the International Space Station (ISS) approaches the end of its operational lifespan, there is a worldwide initiative for next-generation orbital platforms. India's proven docking capabilities position it as a significant partner for collaborative missions, potentially enhancing its influence in global space governance and diplomacy. This scientific achievement enhances India's standing in the burgeoning space economy. (The writer is the Dean-Academic Affairs, at Garden City University, Bangalore. Views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

(The writer is the Dean-Academic Affairs, at Garden City University, Bangalore. Views are personal)

Why new generation may force change in Thai politics

The nation grapples with economic challenges, political turbulence and the enduring influence of its old guard monarchy-military alliance



ASHOK K MEHTA

The tourist-undiscovered jewel is Siracha in the Gulf of Thailand, 90 km southeast of Bangkok and 30 km north of Pattaya. Ascott Group's Oakwood Hotel is your strategic compass to assimilate Siracha as I am doing. Blissfully quiet alongside a park caressing the sea, it caters to all: Koreans who come in droves to play golf even while their president was being arrested; Japanese with corporate interests are also in plenty; soon Chinese will descend for the Year of Snake but hardly any Indians though 200 of them are building an oil refinery close by. Koh Sichang island 40 minutes in a steamer is worth getting lost in as King Rama V loved to do 200 years ago. Ripe Sirachans belt their favourite melodies in the park as joggers and wanderers freeze to a halt when the national anthem plays in the mornings. Unlike in fading monarchies elsewhere, the Royals are ubiquitous: pictures of the present King Maha Vajiralongkorn, the Queen, the highly respected late king and the King's sister are familiar sights in the Kingdom of Thailand which escaped being colonised. But lately political parties like now in its third avatar, the People's Party led by the Harvard-educated Pita Limjaroenrat and the past nemesis of the old guard, Pheu Thai party led by old fox Thaksin Shinawatra, have tried to unseat the old guard consisting of the monarchy-military alliance. In the 2023 elections, these parties sought a review of the crime of lese majeste (Royal Defamation) which is a seditious law to repress dissent and reforms in the military but the coalition could not unite. The old guard maintains its authoritarian indirect rule through the unelected constitutional court and a 250-member Senate (Upper House) formed by the Army after the 2014 coup. Incidentally, Thailand holds the dubious record for the maximum number of attempted and successful coups (30). A military-backed government of former Army Chief Gen Prayut Chan O'Shea became Prime Minister- from khaki to Savile Row suit -from 2014 to 2023 when his Palang Pracharath Party (PPP) was overwhelmed by the



democratic tsunami. The old guard employed the constitutional court to ban Pita from politics for ten years which prevented the formation of a democratic coalition government despite 284 members in a House of 500 lawmakers; instead, Shinawatra's Pheu Thai formed a fractured coalition government of six parties which initially included another former Army Chief, Gen Prawit Wongsuwan-led PPP. In the present government Shinawatra's daughter, Paetongtarn is PM (it was Shinawatra's sister, Yingluck once earlier) and is backed by six parties. Shinawatra's return from exile in August 2023 and rehabilitation in politics was the result of a royal pardon as part of a deal to maintain the status quo with the old guard calling the shots. Unlike in Nepal where two adversarial political parties have formed a coalition government (after nearly two decades of musical chairs) for political stability, Thailand is subjected to a wobbly government led by an inexperienced Shinawatra scion remotely controlled by the patriarch. Peoples Party and Pheu Thai will not be allowed to form a coalition by vested interests. The big challenge for the government is the economy which has declined from a growth rate of 4.5 per cent in 2000 to 1.6 per cent between 2014 and



THE OLD GUARD MAINTAINS ITS AUTHORITARIAN INDIRECT RULE THROUGH THE UNELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL COURT AND A 250-MEMBER SENATE (UPPER HOUSE) FORMED BY THE ARMY AFTER THE 2014 COUP

2023. The government has not been able to fulfil its promise of giving Thaibahat 10,000 (around Rs 25,000) for all 45 mn Thais to boost consumption, though, in September 2024, it did provide some of the dole in Phase I. On January 27, 2025, four elderly will receive Thaibahat 10,000 to trigger the economy. Other steps proposed to revive the economy are negotiating additional Free Trade Agreements and implementing infrastructure projects. Thailand's most ambitious project is the land bridge connecting the Andaman Sea in the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea in the Pacific Ocean across the Isthmus of Kra costing USD 35 bn which will be a shorter alternative route through the Malacca Strait - China's historic dilemma for its sea trade. China will be the leading investor in the strategic project that will alter the economic dynamics for Thailand and the region, especially China. Thailand holds the magic wand for tourism. As targeted, foreign travellers in 2024 crossed 35 mn increasing the country's revenue by 34 per cent over the previous year. Integrated entertainment is the new slogan and includes gambling in casinos while visa-free long-term entry has been extended. Chinese are by far the largest number of vis-

itors followed by Malaysians and Indians. Saarc countries especially Nepal have much to learn about international tourism. India and Thailand have enjoyed fruitful relations, especially the religious connection with Hinduism and Buddhism. Thailand is part of Bimstec and as part of ASEAN closely involved with Track I and Track II meetings on locating a political resolution of Myanmar's civil war in which India as a neighbour is a key stakeholder. Myanmar's Generals envy the old guard's hold over power but they have no King to invoke divinity. Thailand relies heavily on China (14 per cent population is of Chinese origin) while having good relations with the West, especially the US. Thaksin Shinawatra is again under the scanner booked for an old case of lese majeste. The old guard has perfected all tricks of the trade to check the growing aspirations of the new generation represented by Pita's reincarnated People's Party (and other parties) whose slogan for the 2027 elections is "government of change". That should worry the old guard, not Siracha. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UPROAR OVER JUDGEMENT

Madam — It is with reference to the news "Justice for murderers most foul" - January 21. The Sealdah Court in Kolkata has ordered Sanjay Roy, the convict in the rape and murder case of a trainee doctor at the state-run RG Kar medical college and hospital, to life imprisonment until death and noted that it was not in the rarest of rare categories. Also, the court has ordered Sanjay Roy to pay a 50,000-rupee fine and directed the West Bengal government to pay 17 lakh rupees as compensation to the victim's family. Though the Court convicted Sanjay Roy, the convict, on different sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, it refrained from imposing the death penalty for raping and murdering a young doctor on a hospital campus itself. It is unfortunate. As per the Indian legal system, the CBI, which investigated the case, has the right to challenge the sentencing order and seek enhancement of the sentence to death before the High Court. Many people, including the CM of West Bengal, are not satisfied with the sentence awarded to the convict Sanjay Roy. The incident led to nationwide outrage and prolonged protests by junior doctors in West Bengal demanding justice for and stronger security measures in government hospitals. At the same time, a court in Kerala has awarded a 24-year-old woman the death penalty for the sensational murder of her boyfriend in 2022 by administering him with a concoction laced with lethal herbicide, a planned murder.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

ISRO'S MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Madam — Apropos to "A Giant Leap in Space", published on January 21. Former President of India, late Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, would have been the happiest person had he been alive today as ISRO scripted another history in space. India has entered into the niche club along with the US, China, and Russia. It is a huge

Trump begins his second term



Donald Trump is all set to write the new world order with his second term as the 47th President of America. The inauguration ceremony of Mr. Donald Trump is jam-packed with the tech titan guest list from all around the world; interestingly, Indian industry tycoon Mukesh Ambani is also part of the delegation. The reign of Donald Trump is already a matter of

deep discussion, speculation and sensitivity for the whole world. After his 'America First' commitment, he is making a comeback with MAGA, i.e., Make America Great Again.

His inauguration speech will act as the ultimate trailer as for the whole world, he highlight his commitment and plans for the upcoming four years, and the way he want to shape the future world order. Now that Mr. Trump has officially begun his presidency 2.0, we all have to wait and watch what churning will come out for the rest of the countries of the world from the presidency of Donald Trump. India also has to closely test the new avatar of Mr. Trump, wishing for more strategic cooperation and proximities in the years to come.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

technological milestone that underscores our ambitions to expand our share, which is just 2 per cent now, in the 400 billion USD global space market. Space docking is a stepping stone in our desire to build a space station or other various complex missions like Chandrayaan-4 and Gaganyaan. Along with other payloads, eight cowpea seeds were sent to space, which germinated within four days of the mission launch, which demonstrates that food can be grown in long space missions. China-our hostile neighbour-whose ambitions of becoming a space power are not hidden from anyone-so India must continue to develop cutting-edge capabilities to safeguard its space assets. Further, the GoI has approved the setting up of a third launch pad at Sriharikota, which will further boost ISRO's space ambitions and future projects.

Bal Govind | Noida

HOSTAGES RELEASED IN GAZA

Madam — Apropos "Gaza ceasefire begins, handover of hostages started,"

published on January 20. The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas raises hopes for a possible end to a devastating 15-month conflict.

The ceasefire, agreed upon after a year of intensive mediation by the United States, Qatar and Egypt, is the first step in a long and fragile process aimed at winding down the war. Interestingly, Qatar, punching above its weight, has set itself up as the world's leading mediator, which is probably because the West Asian nation wants to establish its own security in an unstable region, analysts say. Global relationships are key, and Qatar is known for its wide and varied network of contacts. Meanwhile, the ceasefire does mark the start of a new chapter for Palestinians, particularly those in Gaza, and Israelis. While ceasefires are not legally binding, they can perhaps best be thought of as a type of contract between warring parties.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN THE MATERIALISM DILEMMA

How Gen Z can break free from consumer-driven values and have a life of their own



SHAINY SHARMA

In a world that is increasingly driven by consumerism, the rise of materialistic values among Generation Z, or Gen Z as it is often abbreviated has become a topic of growing concern. Gen Z as defined as the age group between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in an era that is undoubtedly dominated by social media, influencer culture, and hyper-connectivity.

While technological advancements have brought undeniable benefits, they have also fostered a culture that often equates self-worth with possessions and appearances. Gen Z must reassess these values and prioritise more meaningful aspects of life. The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and many more have created an environment where materialism thrives. The relentless exposure to idealised lifestyles and extravagant displays of wealth has fostered feelings of inadequacy and pressure to conform or compete.

Today, social media influencers, often incentivised by brands showcase expensive products as symbols of success and happiness which has reinforced a cycle where material possessions are viewed



as essential for validation and social status. The pressure to abide by these standards is so overpowering, especially for young individuals who are still forming their identities resulting in profound psychological effects. Recent studies have examined the spending behaviours of Gen Z, highlighting a complex relationship with materialism. Various studies have also shown that individuals who prioritise material wealth and possessions often experience increased anxiety, reduced life contentment, and higher rates of depression.

Gen Z which is already grappling with a mental health crisis, the fixation on materialism exacerbates the problem as it shifts focus away from intrinsic values such as personal growth, relationships, and community involvement, which are far more fulfilling and enduring sources of happiness. There is no denying that materialism has significant environmental repercussions.

The fast fashion industry, a key driver of consumerism, is notorious for its unsustainable practices, contributing to pollution, waste, and the exploitation of labour. Gen Z, which is often touted as the most environmentally conscious generation, faces a paradox and their inclination toward materialistic consumption undermines their efforts to combat climate change.

While materialism has been ingrained in modern society, it is not an inevitable path for Gen Z. By recognising the pitfalls of this mindset and striving for a more balanced and intentional approach to life, they can pave the way for a healthier, more sustainable future. It is time for Gen Z to redefine success, not as the accumulation of material possessions but as the cultivation of meaningful relationships, personal growth, and contributions to the greater good. In conclusion, Gen Z has the opportunity to break free from the traps of materialism and redefine success by prioritising intrinsic values such as personal growth, meaningful relationships, and sustainability. By embracing a more intentional and balanced approach to life, they can shape a healthier, more fulfilling and environmentally conscious future.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Dangers of China's mega-dam plans on the Yarlung Tsangpo



B K SINGH

With the Tibetan region's seismic vulnerability due to tectonic plate activity, such mega-dam projects could exacerbate risks to life, biodiversity and regional stability

Earthquake of 7.1 magnitude on the Richter scale on January 7 in Tibet killed 126 people and injured 188 making rescue and relief difficult as the temperature dropped to -60 Celsius. Tremors were also felt in Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian states of Bihar and West Bengal. The epicentre of the quake was Tibet's Tingri County, 75 km north of Mount Everest, the World's highest mountain. The quake brings focus on China's latest plan to build the World's biggest dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, very close to the Indian territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Tibetan region and its fringe areas in China are seismically quite active.

This is the area where the Indian and Eurasia plates clash and the force generated can be strong enough to cause uplifts and increase the height of the Himalayan peaks. In Sichuan province alone earthquake of 7.9 magnitude was struck in May 2008 killing 90,000 people, another of 7.1 magnitude in April 2013 killing 196 people, and the third one of 6.8 magnitude in September 2022 killing 93 people has been recorded. Qinghai province has also seen two major earthquakes of 7.1 magnitude in April 2010 and 6.2 magnitude in December 2023 killing 2698 and 126 people respectively.

Two earthquakes have also struck Gansu province in July 2013 and December 2023. A report released after the 7th January earthquake in Tingri, Tibet, NASA has brought out that the speed of earth rotation has slowed down after the water was impounded in three gorges dam (607 meters in height and 2 km long) on the River Yangtze in China. The report further says that the earth takes .06 microseconds more to complete a rotation about its axis, post-construction of the dams. Earth rotation is linked to interplanetary activities, and can influence activities from Sun as well as the atmosphere.

The dams make the region seismic prone increasing the vulnerability of the population. More such dams in the region would increase the vulnerability further. Seismic activities have the potential to damage large dams too. If any such dam bursts in an earth quake, a large quantity of water would outflow through human areas washing away lives and properties.

This can be catastrophic in the region. The world's mightiest river Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, which becomes Brahmaputra as it flows in Arunachal Pradesh has several gigawatts of energy stored as it runs down the steep mountains. China has projected 60 gigawatts of power by damming this river in Tibet at the cost of \$137 billion. The power output of this project is two and half times the output of the Four Gorges Dam, along the river's upper and middle reaches. These are Dagu dam (640 megawatts), Zangmu Dam (510 megawatts), Jiacha Dam (320 megawatts) and Jiexu Dam (300 megawatts). The Zangmu dam project is the only one among these that has been operational so far. The other three projects are still in the construction stage and are marred by logistical and technical challenges posed by steep



WITH THE LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS THE COUNTRY POSSESSES, THE REMAINING DAM PROJECTS WILL ALSO BE A REALITY AND EVENTUALLY VERY LITTLE WATER WILL BE ALLOWED TO FLOW IN THE BRAHMAPUTRA IN THE LEAN PERIOD

mountains and deep gorges. China being an upper riparian state should not work on such projects in secrecy and put lower riparian states like India and Bangladesh to a disadvantage. It is irresponsible and aggressive posturing of China that it plans to change the flow of water in the Brahmaputra River during lean as well as peak seasons. Data suggest that the total annual outflow of Yarlung Tsangpo in China is significantly lower than the Brahmaputra in India. Brahmaputra, therefore enjoys a much bigger catchment in steep mountains than Yarlung. This is when the Zangmu dam project is operational. The challenges encountered by China in completing other projects in the middle reaches are not unsurmountable.

With the level of technological advancements, the country possesses, the remaining dam projects will also be a reality and eventually, very little water will be allowed to flow in the Brahmaputra in the lean period. This is likely to hurt biodiversity conservation and agricultural production in India and Bangladesh.

For more than a decade China has been dumping the maximum amount of greenhouse gases nearly 14 gigatons annually into the atmosphere. The US is the distant second with 8 gigatons annually.

With the warming Sea surface huge amount of moisture is dumped in the atmosphere having the potential to bring heavy downpours for one or two days.

In such circumstances, 400 mm of rain in 48 hours is not uncommon these days. It would result in unprecedented flooding and the authorities would be forced to release water from the dams, to save the lives and livelihood of the population.

The Brahmaputra in India during the rainy season always swells. It has more disadvantages than advantages. While the floodplains of Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam become fertile when the water recedes and leaves silt behind, the flooding brings misery to people and biodiversity. Kaziranga National Park, a UNESCO hotspot, is world world-famous site for biodiversity conservation. It is one of the best conservation sites for endangered single-horn rhinoceros. Though Kaziranga is a tiger reserve, but state of Assam gives first preference to rhinoceros conservation. Poachers kill this huge animal for a single horn. Forest personnel sacrifice their life to protect it. During the flood, many species of even big mammals get washed away with the flow of water.

The Forest department of the Assam government has made several arrangements including the construction of high-rise embankments using earth, to ensure that wild animals take shelter on these embankments during peak flooding.

The release of any additional quantity of water from the Chinese dams will cross the threshold and wash away wild animals in even bigger numbers. Though there is no formal water

treaty between the two countries, the Chinese plan for the dam without consulting riparian states and UNESCO is morally inappropriate. Since China won't listen to anyone on earth, India must take certain actions in its interest.

We should enhance our monitoring system and record the volume of flow of water in different seasons in rivers flowing from China. Satellite imagery should also be used in mapping and forecasting flood risk. More storage facilities should also be created so that the flood water can be diverted into them, whenever the river crosses the high flood level mark. While selecting sites for flood storage structures, local and ecological factors must be taken into consideration. Further seismic activities must also receive proper consideration. State governments and the centre must boost navigation activities in the Brahmaputra basin. The central government has already prioritized investments in inland waterways. Brahmaputra Waterway 2 has direct access to Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and Haldia in West Bengal.

It can be a very good economic corridor for trade with south-east Asian countries. In the absence of a water treaty, we should flag the issues relating to climate change, wetland conservation, and biodiversity conservation on all forums where both India and China are signatories.

(The writer is retired principal chief conservator of forests, head of Forest Force, Karnataka. Views are personal)

Maha Kumbh 2025: A timeless 'sangam' of faith, mythology and modernity

the event reaffirms its status as an intangible cultural heritage, blending ancient mythology and lived religious practices to embody the unity in diversity of Indian spirituality

Mark Tully, the well-known former BBC correspondent depicted the 1989 Maha Kumbh at Parayag as an enigmatic and enchanting interplay of time and timelessness. Navigating the kaleidoscopic unfolding of saints from Akhadās, pilgrims called Kaplvasis, stakeholder communities such as Prayagwals and Ghatiya priests, Kewals and Khatiks, and overall householders and renouncers, Tully reported on the mythology and history aimed at a greater common goal, the spiritual uplift of the participating humanity. The religion of the Hindus at Maha Kumbh wrote Tully, is a 'religion beyond the reality of history, a religion of the imagination which goes beyond reason'.



DEV NATH PATHAK

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur is engaged in reviewing the Prayag Maha Kumbh of 2025, enabling a fresh perspective on the interplay of time and timelessness surrounding the intangible heritage. At various levels, the intangible heritage seems to have found tangible manifesta-

tion. The enormity of Mahakumbh is not merely in the formidable statistics on the whopping number of participants or even the scale of the organisation. The numbers have increased over the decades and the organisation has entered an art of state level. In the past Mahakumbh was spotted by the Indian Space Research Organisation space satellite as one of the most jaw-dropping visuals. The 2025 version has ensured that more elaborate facilities for the pilgrims and sadhus, diverse categories of accommodations on three sides of Sangam, and the latest technology for the upkeep of hygiene are in place. The administrators of the Kumbh district have seemingly left no stone unturned to ensure highly

efficient, technologically supported services. Yet the most significant is the power of mythology, history and social embeddedness of the Hindu religion, the Sanatan dharma. No wonder UNESCO had to declare Kumbh as an intangible heritage of India in 2017. But the intangible and abstract have very tangible and concrete expressions in the Kumbh, the latest addition being an up-marketed Akshaya Vat, a mythical tree adjoining the precincts of the fort of emperor Akbar. Even though Maha Kumbh is conceived and communicated through abundant textual references, it is a manifestation of lived religious tradition and collective memory of India. The ancient texts of the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharva



Veda, Matsya Purana, Skanda Purana, Vishnu Purana, and the epics such as Valmiki's Ramayana and Ved Vyas's Mahabharata provide ample references to the religious congregation, premised on the origin myth of Hindu mythology. Gods in collaboration with demons conducted a churning of the ocean, the sagar-manthan. The boatmen tell us that the sagarmanthan shall contin-

ue in our minds. Of the four-treasure priceless outcomes of the churning one was a Kumbh of Amrit, a pitcher filled with immortality nectar. Many versions of the myth and tales inform that some drops of nectar fell in the confluence of rivers, Ganga, Jamuna and mythical Sarasvati. On certain celestial occasions, the nectar in the confluence becomes available for the pilgrims, who stay by the confluence and observe a daily life of austerity, piety, and spiritual practices, called Kalpwaas, aimed at transforming the body and mind. Unlike the modern historians' dispute about the origin of Mahakumbh, many travellers, chroniclers and intellectuals from ancient to modern times have found it mystical. The

Chinese Buddhist scholar Hsüan Tsang attended a Kumbh in the 7th century CE in which the emperor of Kannauj Harshavardhan participated and gave away his wealth. In the 9th century CE, the Hindu reformer saint and scholar Adi Shankar transformed the Mahakumbh into a more pan-Hindu event. Much later Mughal emperor Akbar constructed ghats and fortifications by the Sangam contributing to the infrastructure of the Kumbh Mela, as described by Abu Fazal in Akbarnama. In modern India Mahatma Gandhi had more critical comprehension of the Mahakumbh. He mentioned in his biography that self-realisation was not a hostage to the pilgrimage in the Kumbh, yet in 1915 he

attended the Kumbh at Haridwar. Jawaharlal Nehru, however, fondly remembered in The Discovery of India, "What was the tremendous faith, I wondered, that had drawn our people for untold generations to this famous river of India?" A microcosm of India, Maha Kumbh represents unity in diversity and lived religion described in Dhananjay Chopra's book published in 2024 by the National Book Trust of India. Perhaps that ensures an interplay of time and timelessness and thus a long future of the Maha Kumbh. (The author is Associate Professor of Sociology at South Asian University and is a member of the Maha Kumbh review team of IIT Kanpur; views are personal)

Shilpa Shirodkar targeted me because she needed something new to latch on to: Kashish

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The 18th season of Bigg Boss was nothing short of a storm - a perfect blend of chaos, conflict and captivating personalities that kept viewers on the edge of their seats. At the heart of this fiery season was Kashish Kapoor, a contestant who redefined what it means to be savage. Fearless, outspoken and unapologetically real, Kashish was a force to be reckoned with from the moment she stepped into the house. Whether she was dismantling alliances, calling out hypocrisy, or proving her mettle in grueling tasks, Kashish's raw energy and fiery spirit made her a standout in a house filled with bold contenders. Season 18 was more than a game; it was a battleground - and Kashish was one of those, who ruled it with her unapologetic dominance.

Having created ripples in Splitsvilla, she returned to reality TV as a contestant in Bigg Boss, where her journey unfolded with raw emotions, unfiltered thoughts and fiery confrontations. In this candid conversation, Kashish reflects on her time in the Bigg Boss house, her relationships and the challenges that defined her tumultuous yet unforgettable experience.

"I think I would describe my journey in Bigg Boss as very real," Kashish begins. "Every moment, every emotion - I felt it deeply, in a way I hadn't in a very, very long time. I believe things happen for a reason and while the journey had its ups and downs, I can't complain because being part of Bigg Boss was something I had never expected. I'm forever grateful and thankful for that opportunity."

However, she believes that had she entered the Bigg Boss house from the very beginning, her experience would have been drastically different. "I do think that things would have been much better for me. I would have dominated heavily. There's no doubt about that," she asserts.

Kashish's public persona has undergone a remarkable transformation. Reflecting on the backlash she faced during Splitsvilla and how it compares to the love she received after Bigg Boss, she shares: "The hate I received after Splitsvilla has turned into nothing but love after Bigg Boss. People didn't see the real me during Splitsvilla. My decisions hurt them, and I was misinterpreted and misunderstood. But in Bigg Boss, they finally saw who I truly am, and that's why I believe the love came pouring in."

Despite the affection she now enjoys from fans, she admits that her time in the Bigg Boss house often felt lonely. "Most of the time, I felt alone, not just physically but emotionally. I don't believe in faking relationships or friendships. For me, connections need to be organic. Unfortunately, in the house, most friendships were superficial. I'd rather be alone in my own company than be surrounded by people who don't resonate with me."

Eventually, Kapoor found a few genuine bonds in the house, but she maintains that the early days were challenging. "After some time, I connected with a few people, and that made things better. But the journey to get there wasn't easy."

One of the recurring themes of her experience was feeling targeted by her fellow contestants. "Yes, I definitely felt targeted, especially by Shilpa," she shares. "At first, it seemed like there was no reason for it, but when I thought more about it, I realized there was. I mean, how long can you cling to a narrative that no longer works for you? (Karan,

As one of the most fearless and unfiltered contestants in the Bigg Boss house, Kashish Kapoor cemented her reputation as a savage yet authentic force in the house. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Kashish Kapoor opens up about her transformative journey in Bigg Boss Season 18, a season that set new benchmarks for drama, strategy and emotional intensity

Shilpa, Vivian and the 'Maa-bete' angle). I gave Shilpa something new to focus on, and she jumped at the opportunity." Kashish also highlights the biases within the house, which she believes worked against her. "There's a lot of bias in the house. Unfortunately, for most contestants, Raja ka beta hi raja hota hai. But I wasn't about to let that stop me. From the moment I entered, I made it clear that I was a threat. That's why they tried to corner me - to avoid giving me any attention or footage. They thought they could sideline me, but I don't depend on others for my moments. I take what I deserve."

She doesn't hold back when it comes to her opinions about her fellow housemates. Her relationship with Chahat, for example, was fraught with ups and downs. "I was angry with Chahat for something she did to me, and I retaliated. But deep down, there was no hatred. We had our differences, but when I needed her the most, she was there for me. We rekindle our bond, and I'm grateful for that."

Her feelings about Karan, however, are far more negative. "Karan is not someone I would ever expect anything good from. When I entered the house, I thought he was a nice guy, but I was wrong. He's absolutely a bad, bad person."

Kashish also addresses the dynamics between Avinash and Vivian, two contestants whose relationship stirred controversy. "I've said this so many times - Avinash and Eisha are not Vivian's friends. She was always trying to sideline him, and eventually, she did. Even his wife felt that way. Eisha and Avinash are both cut from the same cloth - they're snakes, and they'll do whatever it takes to get ahead. That's exactly what they did."

Despite the challenges, betrayals, and isolation, Kashish Kapoor has emerged stronger and more self-assured than ever. Her journey in Bigg Boss wasn't about winning friendships or alliances - it was about staying true to herself. "I'm proud of the person I was in the house. Whether people loved me or hated me, I was always real. That's what matters the most."

Through her honesty, resilience, and unapologetic attitude, Kashish has proven that she's entrenched in the world of reality TV. Whether you love her or hate her, there's no denying that Kashish Kapoor leaves a lasting impression - and she's not going anywhere anytime soon.



“

There's a lot of bias in the house. Unfortunately, for most contestants, Raja ka beta hi raja hota hai. But I wasn't about to let that stop me. From the moment I entered, I made it clear that I was a threat

KASHISH, AT THE END OF THIS CHAT GETS ONBOARD FOR A RAPID FIRE ROUND FROM HER EXPERIENCE IN THE BIGG BOSS HOUSE:

Who should have left the house before: Eisha and Shilpa

Most irritating: Shrutiika

Sweetest: Chahat and Ebin

Backstabber: Shilpa Shirodkar

The one who fake to Top 10: Shilpa Shirodkar

Gamer: Rajat, because he only focused on playing games and of course his 'Samikaran'

'IT'S NOT EVERYDAY YOU GET TO COMBINE YOUR PERSONAL INTERESTS WITH MEATY ROLE'



Tinaa Dattaa on playing a grey character in Personal Trainer

Crime thriller series, "Personal Trainer" is all set to release on 23rd January on Hungama OTT platform. The series is set against the backdrop of Mumbai's elite gym culture, and the dangerous pursuit of physical perfection. At the heart of the story is Neha Dharamrajan, a married woman, played by Tinaa Dattaa, whose illicit affair with her personal trainer, Anish, essayed by Gulshan Nain, sets off a chilling chain of events that culminates in Anish's mysterious murder. As secrets unravel and the gym community's hidden motives surface, the search for Anish's killer intensifies, leaving everyone under suspicion. Tinaa's commanding portrayal of Neha, who navigates betrayal and turmoil with resilience and strength, drives the show's emotional core.

Renowned for her dedication to fitness, Tinaa reveals how her disciplined lifestyle helped her deliver a compelling performance in the series. She shares, "There's a scene

where I perform a headstand, and I was proud to pull it off on my own. My passion for health and wellness allowed me to bring authenticity to Neha's character. It's not every day that you get to combine your personal interests with such a meaty role."

Talking about her experience working on the show and sharing insights about her character, she adds, "Neha is a grey character, and it was exciting to portray someone complex with both strengths and flaws. Besides bringing a promising character to life, it was fantastic to work with such a talented cast. Each one of them brought something unique to the table, motivating me to push my limits as an actor. We also formed a great bond on set, and the camaraderie was evident in every scene. I can't wait for viewers to witness this thrilling drama unfold on Hungama."

With stellar performances by Tinaa Dattaa, Gulshan Nain, and Sahib Tagra, among other actors, along with a pulse-pounding premise, Personal Trainer promises suspense, drama, and a whole lot of unexpected twists that will keep viewers guessing until the very end.

The dual lessons of independence and interdependence in boarding schools

The Association of Boarding Schools recently found that 78 percent of boarders are motivated by their peers in comparison to 49 per cent of public school students. "The surging popularity of boarding schools can be attributed to this synergistic learning environment along with a sharp focus on the holistic development of students. Today parents choose boarding schools not just because of the academic excellence they offer but to also ensure that their children grow into fulfilled, multifaceted individuals," says Dominic Tomalin, Founding Headmaster of Shrewsbury International School.

On International Education Day (January 24), he outlines some of the salient factors that make boarding schools the preferred choice for future-forward education:

A well-established boarding school usually offers not just exemplary academic performance data but also a list of inspiring alumni it has produced. It is likely to have a unique core philosophy that offers each child exactly what they need in order to reach their full potential. Boarding schools also offer well-resourced amenities conducive to holistic development including smart classrooms, thoughtfully designed boarding houses, excellent



academic infrastructure and facilities accommodating extracurricular and sporting activities.

International institutions that align with the larger goals of your child offer a curriculum that is tai-

lored to enable access to top global universities. Shrewsbury for instance offers English National Curriculum, empowering pupils to undertake Cambridge International IGCSE Examinations in Years 10 and 11.

These examinations then qualify the pupils for entry into A-Level courses. Parents and students today, prefer a world-class education and an interactive learning environment as opposed to modules that encourage

passive, rote learning.

To be a global citizen today, a young person must gain exposure to multiculturalism, as it expands their perspective, fosters respect for diverse viewpoints and ethnicities,

and cultivates mutual respect between individuals hailing from different backgrounds. An international institution is a perfect space to learn the value of inclusivity, collaboration and multilingualism. An

integrated learning culture encourages active listening and teamwork, and emphasizes the importance of both independence and interdependence to achieve shared goals. It goes a long way in preparing students for leadership roles in the future.

A boarding school is also the perfect place to learn the value of peer support. The warmth, trust and fellowship between older students and their younger peers create a safe, nurturing home away from home. Mentorship opportunities kindle leadership qualities and empathy. They also polish interpersonal and communication skills that last a lifetime. Guided sessions where students discuss their experiences and learn more about each other offer a safe space for clearing doubts and establishing lasting understanding.

Boarding schools do not just help students bridge classroom learning with practical learning experiences but also imbue them with value-based education that connects them to the world beyond the campus. A pedagogy rooted in ethics and social responsibility encourages students to address real-world problems, contribute to society in a positive way, and extend themselves to make a real difference to the world outside.

what's brewing?





Dr. Usha Yanamandra

Poonam Kaur

Katalyst launched the world's first AI-Powered Personal Styling and Image Development Service at a premier event in Hyderabad's Hitec Administrative Block. The groundbreaking collaboration between Dr. Usha Yanamandra, Founder of Katalyst, and Master Bibo, a renowned Global Art Director and Model Coach, aims to merge technology with creativity in personal image consulting. The launch event featured notable guests including Poonam Kaur, an acclaimed actress and Nawab Syed Algazi, Srinivas Kollipara, empowering individuals to project confidence and authenticity.

PARTY












Kanak and Sakshi

Garima Bajaj

Sirisha Gattineni

Pratima and Purabi

Vandana Gupta

Vikram and Poonam Daga

Pooja Naredi

Priyanka Rath

Pooja and Monika

Swati Malpani

Hyderabad's social calendar had a glittering highlight as Poonam Daga celebrated her birthday in grand style at the prestigious Hyderabad Polo Riding Club. The evening was a delightful blend of elegance, entertainment, and exquisite hospitality.

Photos by - SV Chary



Artists performing kathakali during a Kerala tourism Media session in Taj Deccan Hyderabad on Tuesday




NEPCPC 2025 Calendar launched at Somajiguda Press Club, Dr Balaswamy, President, Shekar Reddy, Zonal Chairman, Sanjeev Reddy, Vice President, Mohan Reddy, President, Telangana Poultry Federation, Tara Subramanyam, Chakradhar Rao and Uday Singh Bayas attended the event.

FUN

ARCHIE



PAPPY, THAT COAT I LOVE IS ON SALE! STILL F A WHOLE HOUR AFTER YOU MENTIONED IT LAST!

VERONICA, I SAID NO, AND I MEAN NO! I KNOW YOU DO, DADDY!

BUT HOW SERIOUSLY DO YOU MEAN IT?

CALVIN AND HOBBS



LOOK, HOBBS, THE LATEST PERFECTION IN TECHNOLOGY. A WATER PISTOL?

HECK, NO! THIS IS THE NEW, IMPROVED VERSION OF THE TRANSMORGRIFIER.

NOW YOU CAN TRANSMORGRIFY THINGS JUST BY POINTING AT THEM! SAY YOU DON'T LIKE THE COLOR OF YOUR BEDSPREAD. WELL, YOU JUST ZAP IT, AND PRESTO, IT'S AN IGUANA!

ONE CAN CERTAINLY IMAGINE THE MYRIAD OF USES FOR A HAND-HELD IGUANA MAKER.

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AN IGUANA. IT CAN BE ANYTHING. SURPRISE MOM'S GETTING ON OUR NERVES, FOR INSTANCE.

GARFIELD



24 HOURS IN A DAY

OR, AS I LIKE TO THINK OF IT...

5 MEALS, 4 NAPS, 11 SNACKS AND A COUPLE OF TV SHOWS

REALITY CHECK



LOOK AT HIM- DOES HE HONESTLY THINK WE DON'T KNOW HE'S WEARING A RUBBER GLOVE?

SPEED BUMP



HE'S MAD THAT THE NEIGHBORS GOT A BIGGER CLOUD.

THAT'S A CLOUD, PEOPLE- DON'T!

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

NANCY



SLUGGO'S TRUCKER UNCLES, LES & MORE, ARE BACK IN TOWN--

YEP! NONE OF US ARE GETTING ANY YOUNGER!

HI, D BOYS! (KEPT HER.)

YEP! PHIL'S GOT HIMSELF BEAUTY!

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A large extinct animal
- Do this in water
- Me
- A friendly word for a cat
- Feathered creatures
- The same in value
- This animal has no legs
- Turned over and over on the ground
- A group of players on one side in a game
- All the bones in your body
- Houses for horses
- Wide awake and watchful
- Doing nothing, lazy
- A bird that hunts at night

DOWN

- Vanish
- Hit these in with a hammer
- A large number of soldiers
- A person from Moscow
- Unwell
- Someone who catches fish

SOLUTION

L	O	G	O	T	I	V	E
D	O	Y	M	A	P	O	
H	I	G	E	B	A	T	O
G	R	E	N	H	O	U	S
H	E	R	O	S	E		
Y	O	N	E	K	E	N	E
L	O	N	E	V			
S	U	N	D	O	N	O	
Y	H	O	O	D			





Sai Ram Shankar is back with a thriller this time

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Director Puri Jagannath's younger brother Sai Ram Shankar is back with a film after a gap. The actor made his debut with the film '143' in 2004. Though he acted in a few films till now, he has not been successful as an actor. He is taking long gaps between his films and now, he is coming up with a film titled 'Oka Pathakam Prakarum'. He is playing a lawyer in this film directed by national award-winning director Vinod Vijayan. Interestingly, the director made half a dozen Malayalam films till now and also won a national award for his film 'Ottal'. He directed the Telugu film 'Oka Pathakam Prakarum' with Sai Ram as the lead.

added that he liked the project and completed it. "I play Siddharth Neelakanta, public prosecutor and criminal lawyer in this film," said the actor. "My character revolves around the story. It is very intense and one can't predict whether I am a criminal, and the relation to me with the crime that happened in the story is unpredictable," said the actor.

The actor said that after three days of shooting, director Vijayan called his friend from the National School of Drama to train him for a month. "That tells how intense my role in the film is. Maybe I have been waiting for this film all these days and I am sure that this film will definitely fill the gap," said Sai Ram. He added that the technicians who worked for this film are winners of national awards. "I am blessed for working with them for this film," said the actor.

Sai Ram said his friend and director Vijayan won the national award for his film 'Ottal'. "It also won many international awards. Because of Vijayan, many top tech-

nicians worked for this Telugu film. 'Oka Pathakam Prakarum' is releasing on February 7.

"I don't think that in recent times a suspense thriller like this one came out. That's why we are also putting a contest for it. If anyone predicts the villain after the first half, we are going to give him/her a prize money of Rs 10,000," said the actor. He said that the team has confidence in the film, so they are putting on this contest. "In 50 theatres, they will give a coupon and once the first half is completed, the viewers should write the villain's name and once the movie is over, whoever writes the correct name will get the money," said Sai Ram about the contest. He praised the director for his screenplay and the story. "I am sure this film gives me the much needed break and I will be back with regular films without any gap," said Sai Ram.

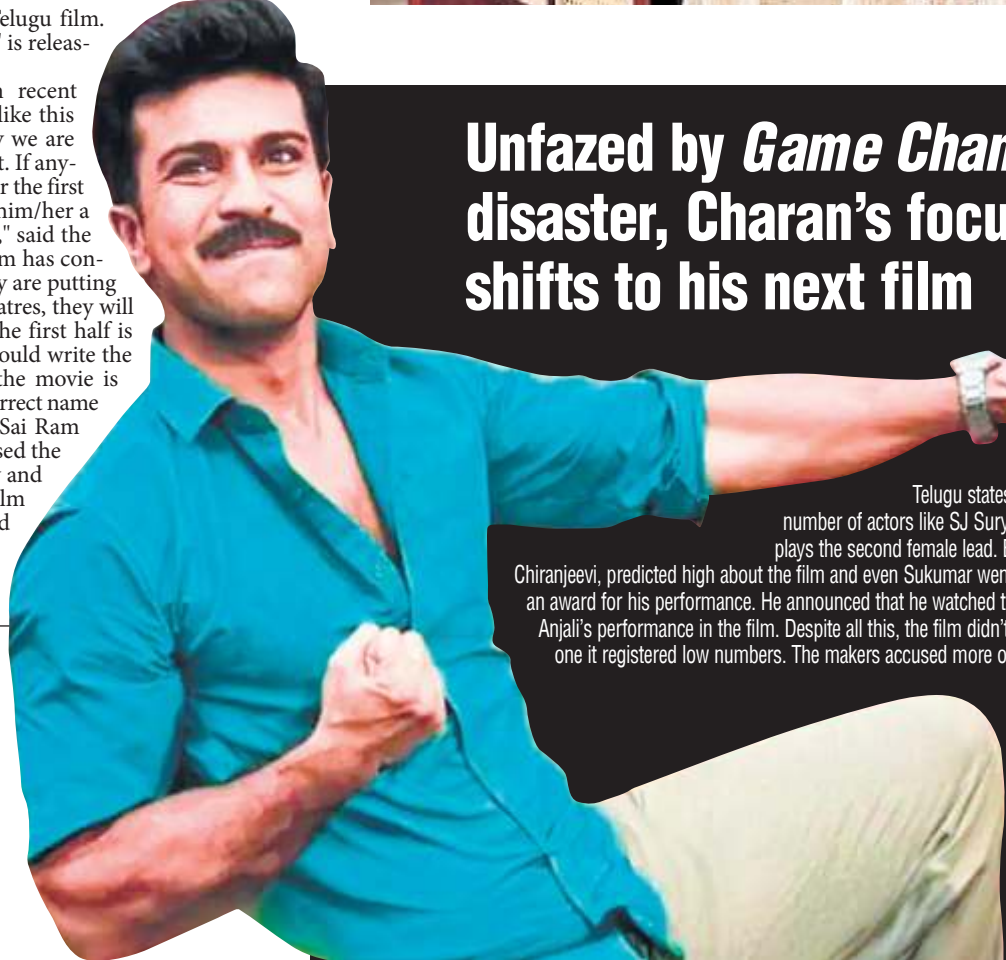
KIRAN ABBAVARAM EXPECTING HIS FIRST CHILD

Actor Kiran Abbavaram and his wife Rahasya Gorak are going to be proud parents soon. This news was announced by Kiran himself on his social media, sharing a picture of him and his wife and saying "our love is growing by 2 feet". Actor Kiran married his co-star and actress Rahasya on August 22, 2024. They met on the sets of their debut film 'Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru', fell in love and dated for a few years. They got engaged last year in March and married in August. After her debut film, Rahasya said goodbye to acting. Now, the couple announced the pregnancy on their social media. On the professional front, Kiran delivered a much-needed hit film 'KA' which was released last year. He is now busy with multiple projects and one of the films ready to hit the screens is 'Dilruba'.



Unfazed by Game Changer disaster, Charan's focus shifts to his next film

This year, one of the high-budget films 'Game Changer' was released on January 10 and it became a huge disaster. Ram Charan played the lead actor with Shankar Shanmugham as director. There were high expectations for this film, but it disappointed everyone, especially Mega fans. Ram Charan promoted this film in Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow and then in the Telugu states. Kiara Advani is the female lead and there are a number of actors like SJ Suryah, Jayaram, Srikanth and Samuthirakani. Anjali plays the second female lead. Before the film, director Sukumar and Mega Star Chiranjeevi, predicted high about the film and even Sukumar went on and said that Ram Charan will definitely get an award for his performance. He announced that he watched the film along with Chiranjeevi. They also praised Anjali's performance in the film. Despite all this, the film didn't have any impact at the box-office and from day one it registered low numbers. The makers accused more on piracy and deliberate negative publicity on this film. Now, the film turned out to be a huge box-office failure, but Ram Charan has now moved to his next film. "Ram Charan is now focusing on his upcoming film directed by Buchi Babu Sana and they have already completed two schedules. Ram Charan is unfazed by the flop and he moves on to another project," said a source. Janhvi Kapoor is the female lead in this period drama, while AR Rahman is providing the music.



VENKATESH STUNS WITH HIS FILM COLLECTIONS, BEATS CHIRU AND ALLU ARJUN

Venkatesh and Anil Ravipudi film 'Sankranthiki Vasthunnam' released on January 14, during the Sankranthi festival. There were no big expectations on this film, but because of the promotions and the comedy content, one expected that the film will do reasonably well. But to everyone's surprise, this Venkatesh film stunned the entire Telugu Film Industry by creating records all over the Telugu states, after its release.

This is the first time that Venkatesh's film collected more than Rs 100 crore and now after one week, the collections have surpassed Rajamouli's 'Baahubali'. Another interesting thing is that actors like Venkatesh, whose age is 60 plus, collecting such huge collections is definitely a landmark in TFI. Only Chiranjeevi's comeback and his 150th film 'Khaidi No.150' showed good numbers in the first weekend and also his other film 'Waltair Veerayya' also collected nearly Rs 130 crore shares in the overall collections.

But now, Venkatesh is going to easily surpass Chiranjeevi's collections in the coming days and set a new benchmark in the senior actor's category. Audiences are watching 'Sankranthiki Vasthunnam' like never before and it seems, this film is definitely creating history in the collections, say trade pundits. The film already surpassed first week collections of Allu Arjun's 'Ala Vaikuntapuramlo' and now stands in the 7th in the top ten Telugu film collections in Telugu states. If the trend continues like this, the 64-year-old Venkatesh is all set to create history in the coming days. This film is released only in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



Satyaraj's interesting portrayal in Barbarik

In recent times, the content-driven and small films are successful at the box-office. Many new directors are entering into the film industry and showing their talent with their first films. Another director Mohan Srivatsa is also making his debut with the film 'Barbarik'. Produced by Vijaypal Reddy Adidhala, the film is presented by popular director Maruthi. The movie's cast is interesting with senior actor Sathyaraj playing the main protagonist with Satyam Rajesh, Vasishtha N Simha, Sanchi Rai, Udaya Bhanu and Kranthi Kiran in key roles.

Each character, particularly those played by Sathyaraj, Satyam Rajesh and Vasishtha N Simha, is set to play a pivotal role in the storyline. Sathyaraj's striking appearance and dynamic performance are sure to be one of the main attractions. The teaser promised stunning visuals, a powerful background score and exceptional production values that elevate the film to a whole new level.

The music is composed by the Infusion Band. The movie is now in its post-production and the makers will announce the release date in the coming days.

Released after 12 years, Vishal's film a surprise hit

Actor Vishal was in the news when he attended the pre-release function of his film 'Madha Gaja Raja'. When he was holding the mike to speak, his hand shivered and there were tears in his eyes. Many showed concern about Vishal's health at that time. The actor said he attended the film's function because the film is releasing after 12 years of its completion. The film was supposed to be released in 2013, but due to some financial problems, it was released on January 12, this year. Sundar C is the director with Vishal as the lead actor, while Anjali and Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar played the female leads.

Though Vishal is not well and running high temperature, he came to this film's function to promote it. A few days later, Vishal attended another event and looked healthy and normal. The interesting thing is that though the film was released after 12 years, it became a hit. The Tamil audience liked the film and it collected a good amount at the box-office. The film soon reached the Rs 50 crore mark, say the trade analysts. The film already got the breakeven and is now into profits. Another interesting point about this 'Madha Gaja Raja' is, it is the first Tamil hit film in this New Year.

Shami in focus as India eye fresh start against England

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Fit-again pacer Mohammed Shami's comeback would be keenly watched when the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 team takes on an evenly-matched England in a five-match series starting here on Wednesday, aiming to make up for the recent Test disasters that have caused considerable turmoil and heartbreak.

The white-ball rubber, comprising five T20s and three ODIs after that, presents an ideal platform for both the teams to experiment with combinations and assess form before next month's Champions Trophy.

Shami, despite missing four matches, emerged as India's leading wicket-taker in the ODI World Cup 2023 with 24 scalps, including a sensational 7/57 in the semifinal against New Zealand at the Wankhede.

Interestingly, the pacer has claimed the same number of wickets - 24 at an average of 29.62 - in his limited T20I career and will aim to improve on that while proving his fitness.

Shami was sidelined after the last final against Australia on November 19, 2023 due to an ankle injury that

required surgery. The recovery from that was followed by swelling on his left knee during the domestic comeback some weeks back.

Following his inclusion in India's Champions Trophy squad, Shami's return will garner national attention.

With pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah nursing a back injury and his Champions Trophy participation doubtful, Shami's comeback assumes greater significance.

The 34-year-old made his competitive return in the Ranji Trophy for Bengal, guiding them to their first win of the season with a seven-wicket haul.

He followed it up with impressive performances in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (11 wickets) and the Vijay Hazare Trophy (five wickets). Shami's T20I career has been sporadic, with just 23 appearances since his debut in 2014. His last outing in the format was against England in the 2022 T20 World Cup semifinal.

With the Rohit Sharma-led Indian Test set-up still reeling from a horror tour of Australia, a good performance from the T20 side has become imperative especially after the Board had to step in to reinforce



dictats on team discipline.

Axar's new beginning
All-rounder Axar Patel will debut as India's vice-captain in the T20I format.

He has been rewarded for his stellar all-round contributions in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign in the Caribbean last

year.

Axar played a crucial knock of 47 off 31 balls in the final against South Africa and took nine wickets at an average of 19.22 across eight matches.

The Gujarat player has already outlined his vision for India's middle order, emphasising a flexible

approach with players floating between No. 3 to 7 depending on match situations.

Curious case of Sanju Samson
All eyes will also be on Kerala's Sanju Samson, who faces another critical juncture in his career after being omitted from India's Champions Trophy squad.

He was subsequently ignored by Kerala selectors for their Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh.

The wicketkeeper-batter has proven his mettle several times, becoming the first Indian to score successive T20I centuries in the recent series against South Africa being a case in point.

Promising all-rounder Nitish Reddy, who scored his maiden Test century against Australia in December at Melbourne, has also earned a spot in the squad, giving the team another option pace-bowling all-rounder along with the redoubtable Hardik Pandya.

England's fresh start
For the Jos Buttler-led England, the series marks a new chapter under head coach Brendon McCullum, who signed a three-year contract following Matthew Mott's resignation following their T20 World Cup exit.

Known for revolutionising Test cricket with his aggressive 'Bazball' approach, McCullum will now seek to replicate that success in the limited-overs format.

It would not be a new territory for the New Zealand great, who was also at the helm of Kolkata Knight Riders after playing for the

franchise in the inaugural IPL. England will miss key players Reece Topley, Sam Curran, and Will Jacks, but promising 21-year-old Jacob Bethell, who impressed in the ODI series against the West Indies last year, will look to shine.

Bethell has averaged 57.66 and struck at 167.96 in his seven T20I appearances. Test opener Ben Duckett has been given the position in the shortest format for the first time in six years.

Like Shami, England's fiery pacer Jofra Archer will be under the spotlight as he returns from injury to lead their pace attack ahead of the Champions Trophy.

The playing XI finalised for Wednesday also includes pace bowler Mark Wood, who has recently recovered from a right elbow injury.

But conditions in India, with the possibility of heavy evening dew, could pose a challenge for bowlers. After Wednesday's game, the series would move to Chennai for the second T20I (January 25), followed by matches Rajkot (Jan 28), Pune (Jan 31) and Mumbai (February 2). The ODI leg will start in Nagpur on February 6, followed by Cuttack (February 9) and Ahmedabad (February 12).



T20s won't affect England's CT preparation: Jos Buttler

PTI ■ KOLKATA

England skipper Jos Buttler is confident that the T20I series against India will not hamper their preparation for the upcoming Champions Trophy, and he also hopes to build a working relation with new head coach Brendon McCullum on this tour.

The ODI-format Champions Trophy will start from February 19, and England will play just three 50-over matches against India in the run-up to the marquee tournament.

"It's going to be a great series against a really top side in their own conditions. There's loads to look forward to. I'm not worried about schedules at the moment. I'm just looking forward to playing some games," Buttler said on the eve of the first T20I here at the Eden Gardens.

"I think it's going to be a really exciting T20 series. Obviously, there's some ODIs to follow, so yeah, I'm just looking forward to the games," he added.

McCullum, the red-ball coach, had succeeded Matthew Mott as England's limited over formats coach, and Buttler wanted to build the bond with the Kiwi.

"Obviously, it's not a new setup because Baz (McCullum) has been around for a while," Buttler said.

"There are a lot of players in this squad who have worked with him in the Test team over the years. So, yeah, I'm just looking forward to building that relationship in the white-ball setup."

England have arrived in India with a full-strength squad with Jofra Archer and Mark Wood leading the pace department.

"Sometimes there's so much cricket that certain players have to be rested or managed, but that's certainly not the case for us at all in this series. So we're a full complement of players, which is really exciting. Obviously, Baz is coming into the white-ball setup for the first time, and there's plenty to look forward to here and now."

He further mentioned that bowlers like Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carson, and Adil Rashid, who has multiple first-class centuries, provide depth to the line-up.

"I think we're really blessed, actually, in terms of the bowlers that we have here on this tour. They're all very, very capable batsmen. I think if you look at guys like Gus Atkinson with a Test hundred, Brydon Carson is an excellent hitter, and even Adil Rashid sometimes is down at 11 who's got multiple first-class 100s."

"I think we're very fortunate in that sense it gives a lot of confidence to the guys at the

top. There's plenty to come, so we can be really aggressive and not worry too much about our wicket, because we've got guys behind who can do exactly the same job," he added.

Bethell special
Buttler also praised young talent Jacob Bethell, who has been making waves in English cricket.

"He's done brilliantly well coming into international cricket. He's got a good head on his shoulders and obviously he's got the game for it, as you've seen in the white-ball stuff."

"Moving into Test cricket, it was fantastic to watch him in New Zealand. This is again a new challenge for him, playing in India, and one I know he's excited for," Buttler said.

Salt to keep wickets
As for England's playing XI, Buttler indicated that the team is almost settled, with some final decisions pending on the bowling front.

"Yeah, pretty much. Just waiting on a couple of the bowlers to see how they pull up through training. Phil Salt will keep wickets. He's obviously been playing brilliantly in T20 cricket for a while now."

"Ben Duckett will be with him at the top of the order. Jofra will play, Woody will play, and then we're just waiting on a couple of bowlers," he said.

Australian Open: Bopanna-Zhang pair lose mixed doubles quarterfinal

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Rohan Bopanna and Shuai Zhang had a match point in the Super Tie-break but could not close out the mixed doubles quarterfinals in their favour as local wild cards John Peers and Olivia Gadecki emerged winners in an exciting contest at the Australian Open here on Tuesday.

Bopanna and Zhang lost 6-2 4-6 9-11 in one hour and eight minutes at Kia Arena, bringing curtains on India's campaign at the first Grand Slam of the season.

Bopanna had earlier made exit from the men's doubles. India's other contenders, including singles exponent Sumit Nagal, and doubles specialists Yuki Bhambhani and N Sriram Balaji, had also lost at various stages of the hard-court Major.

Bopanna and Zhang ran away with the opening set but the Australian wild-card pair



bounced back strongly.

The Chinese player lost her serve in the third game of the second set and that gave Peers and Gadecki an opening to force a Super Tie-break.

There was no surprise, and that break remained with the wild cards, who wrapped up the second set.

The windy conditions also occasionally made the returns a bit tough.

Serving to stay in the set, Bopanna came out with his booming serves even as Peers tried to put pressure on him with an aggressive approach from the baseline, targeting Zhang on the net.

Peers gifted a free point with his double fault while serving for the set but came back strong with Gadecki hitting a volley winner on the next point.

Solid serving handed the local favourites two set points. They converted when Zhang's service return sailed over the baseline.

Bopanna lost his serve on the first point of the Super Tie-break with Peers finding a volley winner following a quick duel with Zhang. The Chinese also lost a point on her serve with super-fast returns being fired from across the net. Bopanna's on-the-jump forehand winner made it 3-3 but Peers found a stunning service return winner on the Indian's serve to earn another mini break.

A Peers return on Zhang's second serve gave the Aussies a 7-5 lead. Gadecki lost both points on her serve and it was 7-11.

At 8-8, Gadecki's feeble return went wide giving Bopanna and Zhang their first match point. Peers saved the chance with a strong serve.

Mandhana climbs to second position in ICC women's ODI rankings



PTI ■ DUBAI

India opener Smriti Mandhana inched closer to the top position, climbing to the second spot in the latest ICC women's ODI batting rankings following a stellar series against Ireland.

Mandhana, the only Indian in the top 10, had blasted 135 in the third ODI, besides scoring 41 and 73 in the opening and second game.

The 28-year-old currently has 738 points to her name, while South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt (773 points) is at the top, followed by Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (733) in the third place.

Jemimah Rodrigues, who scored her maiden hundred in the second ODI against Ireland, jumped two places at the 17th spot, while skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who missed the series, is at the 15th spot.

Deepti Sharma, with 344 points, is placed at the sixth spot in the allrounders' list which is headed by Australia's Ashleigh Gardner, who claimed four wickets and scored 146 runs in the Ashes to claim the top spot from South Africa veteran Marizanne Kapp.

In the bowling rankings, headed by Sophie Ecclestone, Deepti also improved a spot to fourth with 680 rating points.

Gardner was productive with both bat and ball, as the Aussies claimed all three ODIs against England down under.

India defeats Malaysia in U19 Women's T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Debutant left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma recorded astonishing figures of 5/5, including a hat-trick, as India demolished Malaysia by 10 wickets in an utterly one-sided U19 Women's T20 World Cup match that was done and dusted in less than 18 overs here on Tuesday.

Vaishnavi's figures are the best ever in the tournament's history as Malaysia were bundled out for a paltry 31 in 14.3 overs. Fellow left-arm spinner Ayushi Shukla (3/8) also chipped in as India bowlers ran through Malaysia's batting line-up without much ado.

India barley batted an eyelid while chasing down the target in 2.5 overs, reaching 32 for no loss. G Trisha made an unbeaten 27 off 12 balls with five fours.



The lowest total in a women's T20I, however, is 6 -- shared by Maldives and Mali.

In the men's game, Ivory Coast has held the record since being bowled out for just seven runs in a 264-run defeat by Nigeria in Lagos last year.

Now, India are on top of their group with four points, same as Sri Lanka but the former

has better Net Run Rate — +9.1 to Lanka's +5.5.

But that easy chase was the fruit borne out of Vaishnavi's impeccable spell.

There was appreciable turn and bounce on offer in the pitch here, and she used it to the hilt as the home side batters had no answers to her guile.

Nur Ain Binti Roslan, Nur

Isma Dania and Siti Nazwah were her hat-trick victims, and she achieved the feat in the 14th over, that saw Malaysia further stumbling from 24 for six to 30 for nine.

"This was a dream debut to get a hat-trick and five-wicket haul. My journey has had its ups and downs. I look up to Radha Yadav (India senior left-arm spinner) and Ravindra Jadeja. I had visualised how to get wickets here last night," said Vaishnavi after the match.

Earlier, she had the wickets of Malaysia skipper Nur Syuhada and Nuriman as none of the home side batters were able to reach double digits.

In fact, India had bowled 10 wides and Malaysia's scoreboard would have been even more anaemic if those runs were not there.

Shubman Gill as vice-captain is a forward-thinking move: Ashwin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ravichandran Ashwin has backed the Indian team management's decision to appoint Shubman Gill as vice-captain for the Champions Trophy as a "forward-thinking move", saying the top-order batter's place in the side is more or less settled and he can be groomed as a future leader.

Off-spinner Ashwin, who retired during the recent Australia tour, seemed to suggest that there were no plenty of options available for the job.

"Think about who else in the current squad could be considered for the vice-captain role. I'm not saying whether the decision to make Shubman Gill vice-captain was right or wrong, but the point raised is valid, especially since he was the vice-captain in the last series as well," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel on Sunday.

"I could be mistaken, but I believe he's also had some vice-captaincy experience in Test cricket. This could be a forward-

thinking move, as the management might be considering who could take on the leadership role in the future."

While Gill is the ODI vice-captain, Axar Patel has been handed the role in T20Is.

"While both (Rishabh) Pant and (KL) Rahul could play together, they've handed the vice-captaincy to the player whose spot in the XI is already secure. If Shubman Gill is groomed to lead in the future, he can rely on the guidance of senior players like Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah," he said.

The prestigious ICC event is scheduled to start from February 19 in Pakistan and the UAE, and Ashwin raised concerns about the paucity of left-handers in the top seven apart from the absence of a reliable No. 8 in India's batting order.

"This squad mirrors the 2023 ODI World Cup," Ashwin said.

"Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill open, both right-handed. Then there's Virat Kohli. Shreyas Iyer likely bats at 4, given his strong performance in the World Cup.



KL Rahul follows.

"At No. 6, it's a choice between Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel. Hardik occupies No. 7. We lack

left-handed batters in the top seven. Outside the XI, we have Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant."

Left-handed batter Yashasvi Jaiswal, who was one of the bright spots in the Australia Test series, was also included in the

squad.

Weighing the permutations and combinations in which Jaiswal may get his ODI debut, Ashwin said: "Jaiswal might only play if someone gets injured. He could have a chance against England. But what if he scores consecutive centuries?"

"One option is to open with Jaiswal and Rohit, pushing Shubman to 3, followed by Virat at 4. This would place either Rishabh Pant or KL Rahul at 5. If Jaiswal plays, Shreyas Iyer would likely be dropped. While unlikely, India must capitalise on Jaiswal's current form," he said.

All-rounder Washington Sundar is another player who could have an impact if he finds a place in the playing XI.

Reflecting on the scenario, Ashwin said: "Another scenario involves Washington Sundar. Gautam Gambhir highly values Washington due to his batting. He can also be used as a floater."

"If you follow the World Cup format, you play either Jaddu or Axar at No. 6, Hardik at 7, and Washington at 8. This allows for

three fast bowlers or Kuldeep and two pacers, maintaining balance with Hardik's all-round skills," he added.

India will play all their matches in Dubai, and Ashwin feels dew could be a factor there, affecting the team combination.

"Ideally, Washington should bat at 8. Does it make sense to have a player like Nitish Reddy in the scheme of things? If Kuldeep plays at 9, it's two pacers and three spinners."

"With Nitish, he could bat at 8, allowing Kuldeep at 9 and two fast bowlers. This would provide the luxury of four fast bowlers and two spinners. I don't know if he was considered."

"Washington Sundar at 8 might not be feasible if dew is a major factor. In that case, Kuldeep Yadav would bat at 8, and the team would likely go with all seamers — Arshdeep, Bumrah, and Shami."

"In the 2023 World Cup, we lacked batting depth from No. 8 onwards. These are the crucial questions that need to be addressed."