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'India working with a new vision'

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PARDE KE PEECHHEY IS A TRIBUTE TO 'VELVET CURTAINS'



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There is no point talking about Vishal's health

VARALAKSHMI



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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Sanjay is speaking due to frustration as Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender is becoming the Telangana BJP President. We would like Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy to reveal whether Sanjay's comments on the Gaddar-Padma Awards issue were his own or is it the party line? The Centre gave Padma Awards to persons who shot Karsevaks



- B Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC chief

DON'T MISS...

GHMC focuses on infra development

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi reaffirmed GHMC's commitment to improving infrastructure in Greater Hyderabad, stating that the corporation is focused on enhancing civic amenities for residents. On Tuesday, she laid the foundation stone for a model graveyard in Chilukanagar, Uppal Circle, which is being developed at an estimated cost of Rs 2 crore. The event was attended by Deputy Mayor Sriatha Shobhan Reddy and Zonal Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patil. Following the ceremony, the Mayor reviewed several civic issues ...

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Cong left alone in Delhi election

With several INDIA bloc parties backing the Aam Aadmi Party for the February 5 Assembly elections in Delhi, Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders are set to campaign for the Arvind Kejriwal-led outfit, leaving aside the Congress, the largest constituent of the opposition bloc. Formed ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to challenge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the INDIA bloc includes the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Samajwadi Party (SP) as its key constituents...

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Growth in housing prices to moderate

Housing prices are likely to rise 3-4 per cent next fiscal on high base effect and better supply, according to India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra). The rating agency expects the housing price rise to taper in the 2025-26 financial year. Ind-Ra expects property prices to increase 5-6 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in 2024-25 fiscal, then moderate to 3-4 per cent YoY for 2025-26, due to base effects and new launches. Prices surged 21 per cent YoY in 2023-24 with old stock cleared and existing inventory largely ...

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Trisha scores first ever century in U19

Opener Trisha Gogadi etched her name in the record books by scoring the first ever century in women's U-19 T20 World Cup that powered India into the semifinals with a 150-run victory over Scotland here on Tuesday. Trisha, who was deservedly adjudged player of the match, slammed 110 not out off just 59 balls with the help of 13 boundaries and four maximums after India were sent in to bat by Scotland at toss. The Indians will next face England in the first semifinal ...

-SPORTS

Davos deals TG's biggest success: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that the investments bagged during the recent World Economic Forum meeting at Davos is the biggest achievement of his government in the last 14 months.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, he said the government had signed MoUs with various companies, which will bring in an investment of Rs 1.8 lakh crore (Rs 1.78 lakh crore from Davos and Rs 4,000 crore from Zurich)

He said the investment will not only result in the launch or expansion of businesses of the companies concerned but will also create jobs.

The Chief Minister said that the conspiracy hatched by some people against Telangana by creating doubts has been foiled as globally renowned companies and investors have reinforced their trust in the government. Without naming anyone, he said some people carried out false propaganda with ill-gotten money to strike at the roots of the Telangana economy.

The Chief Minister said that bagging investments for Telangana and Hyderabad is a continuous process.

The government had signed MoUs with various companies, which will bring in an investment of Rs 1.8 lakh crore (Rs 1.78 lakh crore from Davos and Rs 4,000 crore from Zurich)



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on Tuesday

Despite political differences, there should be no disputes when it comes to the state's development, he said. Revanth said his government

continued the good policies of previous governments and had given incentives to attract investments. He assured the companies which signed the MoUs that the government would allot them the required land and provide all necessary support. He said the

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Slamming critics, the Chief Minister said that some political leaders were celebrating his government's failure but were now frustrated by the record inflow of investments into TG. Responding to a question on the Formula E complaint registered against him by the BRS, Revanth said, "We tried to bag foreign investments while some transferred public funds abroad and later showcased it as foreign investment."

Cong conspiring to stall Rythu Bandhu payments: KTR

Holds massive Rythu Mahadharna in Nalgonda



BRS MLA KTR waving to the public at a massive rally held in Nalgonda on Tuesday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rythu Mahadharna organised by the BRS in Nalgonda witnessed an overwhelming response, with thousands of farmers gathering to protest against the Congress Government's failures in implementing farm-related schemes.

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, along with former ministers Jagadish Reddy and Niranjan Reddy, MLCs Kotireddy and Madhusudhana Chari, and many former MLAs and MPs, participated in the protest.

KTR received a grand welcome at the NGG College before leading a rally to the Clock Tower, where the town's roads were packed with supporters, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Hailing Nalgonda's legacy of struggles, KTR called for the district to once again lead the farmers' movement.

"Nalgonda is the land of revolutions. This district has inspired movements before, and it must now become the battleground for farmers' fight against Congress's deception," he declared.

Comparing the current administration to the BRS government, he said, "When KCR was in power, farmers never had to worry about funds. But today, under Revanth Reddy, they are being deceived at every step." He accused the Chief Minister of betraying farmers with false promises of financial support. "Revanth claimed that the Rythu Bharosa money would be credited by January 26 midnight. It's now the 28th, and not a single Rupee has reached farmers," KTR said, drawing loud cheers from the crowd.

He alleged that the Congress is blocking farmer welfare schemes. "Under KCR, farmers received financial aid for

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Harish blasts CM for prioritising Davos over farmers' woes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao lashed out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, questioning whether farmers' debts were less important than the tall claims made about investment deals at Davos.

He ridiculed the government's claims of securing Rs 1.82 lakh crore worth investments and called them exaggerated and disconnected from reality.

Mocking the Chief Minister's press conference, Harish said, "Your press releases, media coverage and promotional stories are not convincing anyone. That is why you had to hold this press meet. But why this sudden hype about Davos now when the summit ended long ago?"

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Ex-jawan confession to wife's relative cracks murder case

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

The Congress's own conditions are troubling the party in Telangana in finding BC leaders to give party posts and MLC tickets, it is learnt.

As per the party's rules, the party would not give tickets to leaders who have contested in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. However, there are eight MLC seats and the party has to find at least two BC leaders to give them MLC tickets.

Hyd to get 2 new IT parks

Special land allocation policy likely: Min Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT and Industries Minister, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, has unveiled plans to establish two new IT parks on Hyderabad's suburbs, to expand the state's growing tech ecosystem.

Announcing the plan at a high-level meeting held at the Secretariat on Tuesday, Sridhar emphasized the government's commitment to sustaining Hyderabad's IT momentum and facilitating investments.

"Hyderabad is a rapidly growing IT hub, attracting global companies. We are developing two new IT parks on the lines ofHITEC City to maintain this pace," he stated.

He revealed that a study is underway to finalise locations and land requirements ensuring the parks are strategically placed for seamless connectivity and accessibility.

The proposed IT parks will feature world-class infrastructure, complete with robust transport systems and essential facilities for professionals. "We are committed to providing an efficient working environment that will enable professionals to thrive," Sridhar added.

Addressing concerns about land allocation for industries, he announced a dedicated land allocation policy. "The lack of a structured policy has been a challenge for entrepreneurs. The new framework will ensure land is allocated based on investment size and job creation potential," he explained.

The announcement coincides with a major investment from 'Dew' Software Company, which has committed Rs 100 crore to Hyderabad's IT sector.

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Minister Sridhar Babu and others at a meeting held at Secretariat on Tuesday

PARTY POSTS, MLC TICKETS

Congress rules making it difficult to find eligible BC leaders

Meanwhile, the party is also facing problems in finding suitable BC leaders for party posts, particularly for the post of AICC official spokesperson, four AICC secretaries and TPCC Working Presidents. There are many suitable people but many of them have got posts or they have already held those posts, it is learnt.

For example, there are BC leaders like V. Hanumantha Rao to give party posts or MLC seats. However, VH wants only the party's all India OBC Chairman post and others

have no eligibility as per the party's rules because they have already contested in either the Assembly or the Lok Sabha election.

One party leader said that there are many young BC leaders. However, they may not be suitable for posts like AICC Secretaries or the AICC official spokesperson and TPCC Working President posts due to various other equations. Another problem the party is facing is that the party has to maintain caste equations within BCs.

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'New eco-tourism policy soon'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inaugurated the Experium Park on Tuesday, emphasising the government's commitment to developing eco-tourism, temple tourism and medical tourism in Telangana.

He highlighted the state's natural and cultural heritage and announced plans to introduce a comprehensive tourism policy soon.

Expressing his delight at the launch of the eco-tourism park, Revanth said, "This park is a step towards promoting sustainable tourism. The government is not only



CM Revanth Reddy, Ministers and actor Chiranjeevi during the inauguration of Experium Park in Hyderabad on Tuesday

focusing on IT and Pharma development but also on tourism, which has immense potential."

He stressed the need to promote temple tourism along with eco-

tourism, stating that Telangana is home to architectural marvels like the Ramappa Temple and the Thousand Pillar Temple as well as natural wonders

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PHONE-TAPPING CASE HC bars Harish's arrest till Feb 5

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court has ordered that BRS MLA Harish Rao should not be arrested until February 5 in connection with the phone tapping case registered against him.

The court issued the directive after hearing a petition filed by Harish seeking to quash the FIR registered against him at the Panjagutta Police Station.

The case was filed based on a complaint by businessman Chakradhar, who alleged that his phone was tapped during the BRS Government's tenure. After the complaint, the Panjagutta Police registered a case and initiated proceedings.

Harish, in response, moved the High Court, seeking protection from arrest. During the hearing, the Public Prosecutor informed the court that arguments would be heard on February 5, leading to the court granting interim relief to the Siddipet MLA.

Meanwhile, in a related development, Additional SP Thirupathanna, who was arrested in the same case, was released from Chanchalguda Jail after securing bail from the Supreme Court.

Thirupathanna had been accused of tapping the phones of several individuals, including political leaders and High Court judges. He had been in jail for 10 months, with multiple bail requests being rejected by the TG HC before he finally secured relief from SC.

'Sanjay criticising Gaddar due to frustration'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress said that the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, is speaking out of frustration as Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender is becoming the president of the Telangana BJP.

The Congress demanded Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy to reveal whether Sanjay's comments on the Gaddar-Padma awards issue were his personal ones or it was the party line.

TPCC Chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said the Centre gave Padma awards to persons who shot several Karsevaks. It is not proper for Sanjay to speak stooping so low and to give political colour

to Padma awards, he said.

The Congress's Gadwal in-charge Saritha Tirupathiah said that Eatala is going to be the new president of Telangana BJP and so Sanjay is frustrated as his importance will decline.

Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Sai Kumar said that Sanjay has no right to speak about Naxalites.

"Isn't Eatala Rajender having ideological links with Naxalites? As long as Kishan is there, Sanjay will not have a chair in the BJP office. DK Aruna, who came from the Congress, has a chair, Maheshwar Reddy has a chair but Sanjay doesn't. Sanjay is talking like this because of his pain and anger."

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Govt to study sand supply for Indiramma houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy ordered a study on the supply of sand to Indiramma houses.

A four-member committee comprising Special Chief Secretary for Finance, Ramakrishna Rao, Mining Secretary N. Sridhar, Flagship Programmes Commissioner Shashanka and TGMDC Managing Director Sushil Kumar has been constituted to conduct the study.

The committee will submit its report with detailed procedures and modalities in a week.

The CM reviewed the Mines Department's functioning at the Secretariat on Tuesday and asked officials to conduct a comprehensive study on how to supply sand to beneficiaries in the context of the commencement of construction

- CM appoints four-member official committee
- Committee will submit report in a week



CM Revanth addressing a review meeting held at Secretariat on Tuesday. Ministers are also seen in the picture

of a large number of Indiramma houses across the state.

The CM observed that construction has been increasing every year.

However, the government could not earn revenues from the sale of sand. On the other hand, the consumers also bore the brunt of esca-

Desertions leave Jagan with limited options

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is facing a crisis when preparing to launch a mass contact programme after his defeat in the 2024 general elections. The resignation of Rajya Sabha Member Vijayasai Reddy from the party was a shocker as he had played a key role in shaping the political career of Jagan. As most YSRP cadres knew the role of Vijayasai Reddy in the party his unexpected decision has got its own importance. Why did he suddenly decide to quit as he was a member of Jagan's inner circle? Vijayasai is believed to have been the mastermind behind Jagan's political career since the days of Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy. His task included setting up paper companies to ensure a steady flow of money labelled as investments. This was done



during YSR's rule when Jagan had not yet entered active politics. Vijayasai became the YSR family's most trusted person after he extended his services to the family in the mid-1970s as an auditor. He became a full-fledged politician after Jagan's emergence as the head of a party floated by himself. Vijayasai became Jagan's choice when he had to select a candidate for a Rajya Sabha seat. Another RS membership term was granted for Vijayasai by Jagan by denying a chance to senior leader Dr MV Mysura Reddy who had joined the YSRCP from the Congress. Political observers thought that Mysura might get Jagan's nod due to his seniority. But Jagan preferred to give an extension to Vijayasai as his presence in New Delhi was important for him due to his DA cases filed by the CBI and the ED.

The anti-incumbency factor started gaining ground in the second half of Jagan's tenure (2019-24) and that led to many changes in the party, particularly in the close circle of Jagan. Eventually, Vijayasai's hold in the YSRCP touched its lowest point at the behest of Jagan. He is believed to have felt suffocated in the YSRCP due to the change in the attitude of the party leadership

As a YSRCP parliamentary party leader, Vijayasai preferred to be close to New Delhi's corridors of power. He was behind all decisions taken by Jagan regarding the support extended to the NDA government for passing crucial Bills in Parliament. Jagan had to support the Modi government as it was necessary to slow down the cases charged against Jagan by Central agencies. Vijayasai continued as No. 2 in the YSRCP and became

popular for his criticism of TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu. He earned fame with his criticism of political bigwigs like CBN and Jana Sena Party (JSP) president Pawan Kalyan. Moreover, he is a co-accused (A2) in several cases faced by Jagan and was at the Hyderabad Chanchalguda Prison for around a year. The anti-incumbency factor started gaining ground in the second half of Jagan's tenure (2019-24) and that led to many



changes in the party, particularly in the close circle of Jagan. Eventually, Vijayasai's hold in the YSRCP touched its lowest point at the behest of Jagan. He is believed to have felt suffocated in the YSRCP due to the change in the attitude of the party leadership. After the TDP led by CBN joined hands with the JSP and

the BJP and became part of the NDA, the NDA's attitude towards the YSRCP changed. The cordial relations that the Modi government had with the YSRCP couldn't continue due to the TDP's presence in the NDA. The situation became so precarious for the YSRCP that it extended support to the Modi government unconditionally. Now coming to the point of how the resignation of Vijayasai is likely to affect the YSRCP and its leadership. Despite being a trusted lieutenant of Jagan, Vijayasai faced suffocation in the party due to Jagan's inner circle. Vijayasai's resignation would be a loss for the YSRCP. The RS seat given up by Vijayasai would go to the NDA if by-polls are held now. If anybody (among RS members) follows Vijayasai due to personal reasons, the result will be the same. This means that Vijayasai was intending to

damage the YSRCP. He has embarrassed Jagan by stating that he is not against CBN and Pawan Kalyan. The need of suspicion points at Vijayasai himself on why he remained silent when Jagan dragged Pawan into the public domain on the issue of polygamy. He also remained silent when CBN faced humiliation in the hands of YSRCP legislators in the AP Assembly when they raised suspicions about the fidelity of his wife, the daughter of TDP founder NT Rama Rao. Despite saying that he has said goodbye to politics, Vijayasai might join the BJP or the JSP. Both Jagan and Vijayasai have to face trial inevitably and they need the help of the Centre. So Vijayasai might be forced to join the NDA. Earlier, the TDP's RS members, YS Chowdary and CM Ramesh, had joined the BJP and became MLA and MP

respectively. Political observers say that both leaders joined the BJP only to protect the TDP's interests at CBN's behest. Why can't Vijayasai's case be similar? The move by a trusted lieutenant is believed to have delivered a big blow to the YSRCP leadership. The party's strength in the RS would give Jagan some hold over the Centre. But desertions may hit Jagan's position. As the YSRCP has been decimated in the AP Assembly with just 11 seats in hand, it could manage things with its strength in the RS. But desertions would leave the party with no role in national politics. If the YSRCP wants to have a role at the Centre, it should join the NDA which may not be possible now. Parties which are arch-rivals at the State level can't be allies at the national level. In these circumstances, the YSRCP has no other choice but to depend on its cadres.

Chandrababu doesn't want to disturb Hyd: Sridhar Babu

Says AP bagged many deals in Davos but didn't reveal it

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

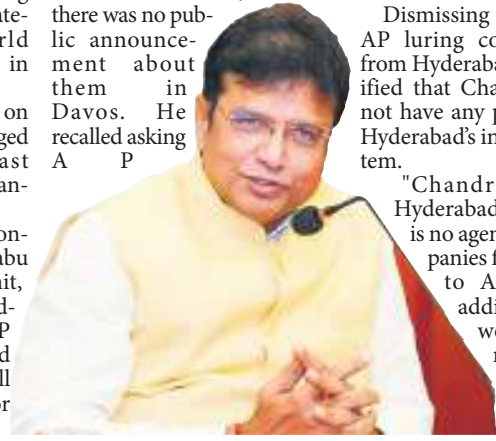
IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu made striking remarks about Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, praising his broad mindset and strategic vision at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, Sridhar acknowledged Andhra Pradesh's vast resources and coastal advantage.

Revealing that he had conversations with Chandrababu during the Davos summit, Sridhar said, "He has a broad-thinking leadership style. AP has enormous potential and with its coastal belt it is well positioned to attract major industries."

He said that many MoUs had already been signed with companies for investment in Andhra Pradesh.

However, Sridhar pointed out that while AP secured investment deals, there was no public announcement about them in Davos. He recalled asking A P



Minister Nara Lokesh on why the state did not make a formal declaration at the summit, to which Lokesh reportedly replied that they would announce it in Andhra Pradesh itself.

Dismissing concerns about AP luring companies away from Hyderabad, Sridhar clarified that Chandrababu does not have any plans to disrupt Hyderabad's industrial ecosystem.

"Chandrababu wants Hyderabad to grow. There is no agenda to shift companies from Hyderabad to AP," he stated, adding that Naidu's words carried a mature, statesmanlike tone. Sridhar also made an

unusual yet notable observation about Naidu's physical fitness during the Davos visit.

"The temperature there was between minus 8 and 11 degrees. We were all wearing sweaters, but Chandrababu was in his regular dress. He is incredibly fit for his age and remains very active," he said, calling it "great" to witness such energy in the AP CM.

With Telangana and Andhra Pradesh actively pursuing investments, Sridhar hinted that AP's investment success could later be used as a benchmark, possibly leading to comparisons between both states.

"If Naidu succeeds in bagging big investments, comparisons will naturally follow. We have to be ready for that," he said.

Ex-jawan confession to wife's relative cracks murder case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Police have cracked a murder case involving ex-serviceman Putta Guru Murthy (39), who premeditatedly killed his wife, Putta Venkata Madhavi (35), at their residence in Meerpet. The accused, who served as a Jawan for 15 years, confessed to the crime after 11 days of intense investigation.

He was arrested and under remand by the Meerpet Police. Rachakonda Commissioner of Police G Sudheer Babu described the case as "one of the rarest of rare crimes," calling the nature of the murder

inhuman and horrifying. "The accused initially misled investigators, but crucial evidence, including CCTV footage and his confession to his wife's relative confirmed his involvement," he stated.

The Rachakonda Police have also taken opinion of another State Clues Team for forensic analysis of the crime. The crime was discovered when Madhavi's mother along with Guru Murthy filed a missing person's complaint on January 18, reporting that her daughter had left home after a quarrel.

Investigators later analyzed CCTV footage showing

Madhavi entering the house on January 15 but never leaving. During investigation it was found that on January 16, Guru Murthy pushed his wife in an attempt to kill her and as she fell down, strangled her to death and dismembered her body to dispose of the evidence. He used a knife to cut the body into smaller parts, which he then boiled and burned on a gas stove. The bone fragments were crushed into powder with a roller and disposed of in a toilet and trash bins. The remaining pieces were thrown into Jillelaguda lake, said CP Sudheer Babu.



John Wesley elected CPM's TG State Secretary

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior leader John Wesley has been appointed the CPM's Telangana State Secretary. The party announced that it had elected John Wesley as the State Secretary in place of Thammineni Veerabhadram at the CPM State Mahasabhalu held in Sangareddy.

John Wesley hails from the Amarchinta village in Wanaparthy district and has functioned as the state president of DYFI and KVPS.

Meanwhile, G. Nagaiah, S. Veeraiiah, Pothinemi Sudarshan, Julakanti Ranga Reddy, T. Jyothi, Chukka Ramulu, Paladugu Bhaskar, T. Sagar, Mallu Laxmi, MD Abbas, P. Prabhakar, Nunna Nageswara Rao, Bandaru Ravi Kumar and MD Jahangir were elected as the State Executive Committee members.

Maha Harathi fete on Hussain Sagar: Two dead

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The death toll has risen to two following the fire that broke out on a boat and jetty at Hussain Sagar lake during the Bharat Mata Maha Harathi event.

On Tuesday evening, the body of Ajay, a 20-year-old resident of ECIL Hanuman Temple Line, was recovered from Hussain Sagar by Disaster Response Force (DRF) teams around 6 pm. Ajay, son of Janakiramudu, had gone missing on Sunday night, January 26,

at approximately 9 pm during the incident at Necklace Road. According to DRF officials, Ajay fell into the lake while



attempting to escape the fire caused by fireworks on a boat. Rescue teams, including DRF; fire department personnel and

NDRF conducted an extensive search operation beginning Monday morning. His body was eventually found near the fire site.

Earlier on Tuesday morning, a 22-year-old man, Ganapathi, succumbed to severe burn injuries sustained during the same fire incident. Officials of the private hospital confirmed that the cause of death was extensive burns.

Two other victims, 20-year-old Sai Chand K and 47-year-old Chintala Krishna, are currently receiving treatment.

EC ASKS KEJRIWAL Prove 'poison in Yamuna' allegation or face action

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Tuesday sought factual evidence from AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal to substantiate his allegation that neighbouring Haryana is poisoning the Yamuna river, and reminded him of legal provisions that can lead to up to three years' imprisonment for making "mischievous" statements against national integration and public harmony.

In a letter to Kejriwal, the Election Commission (EC) sought by 8 pm on Wednesday the nature and extent of the chemicals used for "poisoning" the Yamuna which could have killed people in large numbers, as claimed by the AAP chief.

EC also asked Kejriwal to share details of his claim that engineers of Delhi Jal Board had actually detected and prevented it on time.

Both the BJP and Congress had complained to the poll panel against Kejriwal for levelling allegations of poisoning of Yamuna river.

"...as regards the allegations of poisoning, it is expected that there must be a factual foundation to the allegations, especially when the veracity of the statements made by you is contested, you must be able to back your statements on a factual basis," EC told the AAP leader.

The matter, EC pointed out, is being examined in the light of provisions of the model code and relevant provisions of law.

"Therefore, you are called upon to furnish your response on the complaints, especially on the factual and legal matrix along with evidentiary support thereof by 20.00 hours on January 29, 2025, so as to enable the commission to examine the matter and take action as appropriate," the poll body told the former Delhi chief minister.

It said the electors tend to believe whatever is being said in public by their leaders and in that sense the statements, if not true, affect the campaign discourse, thereby vitiating the purity of elections and eroding the trust of the voters, the poll panel told the AAP convenor.

Assembly elections are due in Delhi on February 5, and

the results will be out on February 8.

The EC noted that the allegations raised regarding poisoning of Yamuna river with an intention to kill the residents of Delhi and the fact that the same was timely detected by the engineers of Delhi Jal Board before it could reach the waters of Yamuna in Delhi and equating the act of poisoning by a neighbouring government with nuclear and biological war were extremely serious in nature.

"If true, this also has serious ramifications of creating enmity between regional groups, residents of the neighbouring states, threat of law-and-order situation due to actual or perceived shortage or non-availability of water..." the letter said.

Davos deals ...

Continued from page 1 government would continue its attempts to make Telangana a one trillion USD economy.

Slamming critics, the Chief Minister said that some political leaders were celebrating his government's failure but were now frustrated by the record inflow of investments into TG. Responding to a question on the Formula E complaint registered against him by the BRS, Revanth said, "We tried to bag foreign investments while some transferred public funds abroad and later showcased it as foreign investment. Some people wanted us to fail, but we outperformed other states in securing investments. Instead of acknowledging our success, they are envious. An opposition leader seems to be suffering from attention deficit disorder because of our achievements. We will give treatment for that using CMRF if needed," he said.

Revanth said that investor confidence in TG remains strong, with multiple business delegations visiting the

state's pavilion at Davos and signing major agreements.

He pointed out that energy policies played a crucial role in attracting companies and that the state had now emerged as the preferred destination for international corporations.

"Telangana continues to top in per capita income, and our deal with the Singapore government for a Skill Development University is a significant milestone. This will revolutionize skill training and employment opportunities," he added.

Referring to the MoU between Telangana Young India Skill University and Singapore's ITE, he said this would go a long way in improving the skills of Telangana youth.

The Minister for Information Technology and Industry D. Sridhar Babu, who accompanied the Chief Minister to Singapore and Davos said last year the government had bagged investments of Rs 40,000 crore during the WEF annual meeting.

He claimed that the government's pro-business policies resulted in a four-fold jump in investments this year. He said this investment would create 49,500 jobs in Telangana.

Harish blasts ...

Continued from page 1

Referring to Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka's recent clarification that MoUs signed at Davos were merely "expressions of interest" and that companies must still participate in open tenders, Harish pointed out the contradiction.

"Bhatti himself admits that MoUs do not guarantee investments. Yet Revanth is boasting about bringing in Rs 1.82 lakh crore. Which one is true? The Finance Minister's statement or the Chief Minister's claims?" he said.

Harish also criticized the delay in implementing the Rythu Bharosa scheme and accused the government of belittling farmers' expectations. "Farmers have been waiting anxiously, hoping for relief, but the CM dismisses their plight as a 'small issue'. Earlier, he called Rythu Bandhu a 'begging scheme' and now he calls Rythu Bharosa a 'petty affair'."

Cong conspiring ...

Continued from page 1

two crops. Revanth promised support for a third crop but has failed to deliver on even the first two." He called the Congress-led government's promises of loan waivers, Rythu Bandhu payments and bonuses "bogus." Highlighting pending dues, KTR revealed that Congress is yet to clear the Rs 2,500 per acre aid for the 2023 Yasangi crop and Rs 7,500 per acre for the Vanakalam crop, amounting to Rs. 17,500 per farmer.

He said that Revanth was conspiring to stall Rythu Bandhu payments and questioned the ambiguity surrounding the loan waiver deadline. "They say Rythu Bharosa will be implemented by March 31 but refuse to specify which year," he said.

KTR urged the people of Nalgonda to spearhead the fight against the Congress Government's failures. "Congress leaders will come begging for votes again. Ask them!" he thundered.

He thanked the High Court for allowing the dharna, saying it reaffirmed the legitimacy of their protest. "Justice is still alive, and our struggle will continue lawfully," he asserted.

The Rythu Mahadharna displayed BRS's growing momentum in Nalgonda, with farmers responding enthusiastically to KTR's speech. The massive turnout revealed the rising dissatisfaction among farmers, setting the stage for an intensified political battle in the coming months.

'Sanjay criticising ...

Continued from page 1

Mettu Sai Kumar said. He said that with Assembly Martyrs' Statue as a witness, Sanjay should rub his nose on the ground and unconditionally apologise to Gaddar and to Telangana. He said the BJP has no role in the Telangana Movement, that's why Sanjay doesn't know the value of Gaddar.

TPCC General Secretary Ravali Reddy criticised Sanjay for describing Gaddar as a person with naxal ideas. He asked Sanjay how he had induced Bodige Shobha, Eatala Rajender, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and some others into the BJP when he was the President of Telangana BJP. He criticised Sanjay for saying that Eatala Rajender, who had slapped a realtor did the right thing.

"Gaddar is the person who united all sections of society. Sanjay is speaking as he liked as Gaddar belongs to the Congress. However, Eatala's ideology is Gaddar's ideology. Where has Eatala Rajender gone when Sanjay is speaking ill of Gaddar? Are the awards given by the Centre Padma awards or lotus party awards?" she said.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 29, 2025

03



CITY EVENTS

Cultural Programmes

By Panchamaveda Natyanilayam

Venue
Ravindra Bharathi (1.1 km)
January 29, (6 pm to 10 pm)

Shyam Benegal Tribute Festival

Well Done Abba: Hindi Movie With English Subtitles

Venue
Lamakaan
January 29, (7 pm)

Live Telugu Musical Orchestra

By Kinnera Art Theatres

Venue
Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha
January 29, (4:30 pm)

Wednesday Night

With DJ HAK

Venue
Sounds & Spirits
January 29, (8 pm)

Job fraud racket busted, four arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force, North Zone, in coordination with Marredpally Police, arrested four individuals involved in a job fraud racket that duped 13 aspirants of Rs 26.25 lakh by promising employment in reputed software companies and issuing fake offer letters.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Gaddapolla Pavan Kumar (34), Boga Revanth (39), Bapatu Rajiv Reddy (32), and Sakkinala Sudheer (39). The police seized Rs 5.67 lakh in cash, fake job offer letters, and mobile phones used in the fraud.

Investigations revealed that Revanth, a real estate sales executive, was lured into the scheme by Pavan Kumar, who convinced him to pose as an HR manager and contact job seekers. Sudheer, with prior experience in job consultancy, collected resumes and shared them with Pavan Kumar for a commission. Pavan Kumar, the key mastermind, created fake job letters and emails, while Rajiv Reddy used a website to send fraudulent mails impersonating multinational companies.

Job seekers were tricked into believing they had secured employment after completing phone interviews conducted by Revanth. Upon payment, they received fabricated offer letters, only to later realize they had been scammed.

The accused shared profits, with each receiving Rs 10,000 per candidate. The scam ran through coordinated efforts.

SI, constable in ACB net for Rs 1.4 lakh bribery

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major crackdown on corruption, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested a Sub-Inspector and a constable of Thirumalagiri police station, Suryapet district, for demanding and accepting a total bribe of Rs 1.4 lakh.

Sub-Inspector Vukkurthy Suresh and constable Nagaraju were caught red-handed after they allegedly sought bribes in exchange for issuing a notice under Section 35 of the BNSS Act to prevent the arrest of a complainant in a case registered under Crime No. 12/2025 at Thirumalagiri police station. According to ACB officials, SI Suresh initially demanded Rs 3 lakh but accepted Rs 30,000 through an online transfer to a petrol pump account on January 25. Another Rs 70,000 was routed to Constable Nagaraju's account on January 28, along with an additional Rs 30,000.

GHMC focuses on infrastructure development in Greater Hyd: Mayor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi reaffirmed GHMC's commitment to improving infrastructure in Greater Hyderabad, stating that the corporation is focused on enhancing civic amenities for residents. On Tuesday, she laid the foundation stone for a model graveyard in Chilukanagar, Uppal Circle, which is being developed at an estimated cost of Rs 2 crore. The event was attended by Deputy Mayor Srilatha Shobhan Reddy and Zonal Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patil.

Following the ceremony, the Mayor reviewed several civic issues in Chilukanagar along with Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj and GHMC officials. She instructed authorities to prepare necessary proposals to resolve key grievances raised by local residents.

She directed officials to take steps for the development of a park at the vacant land near Pista



Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi inspecting the civic amenities in Uppal Circle on Tuesday

House and the construction of a foot overbridge for pedestrian safety. In Bank Colony, she reviewed the open drainage system, noting that funds were not sanctioned for the previously proposed box drain project. She

instructed the Zonal SE to send a revised report for necessary approvals.

At Pochamma temple junction in Chilukanagar, residents complained about stormwater overflow from Boduppal

Municipality's industrial drain, causing severe inconvenience. The Mayor assured them that the GHMC would coordinate with the Water Board's MD to find a permanent solution. Similarly, at Mallikarjun Nagar, residents raised concerns about overflow from Nacharam lake, prompting the Mayor to instruct officials to take flood mitigation measures.

She also reviewed park development proposals for Azzampur Alkapuri North Colony, directing authorities to set up an open gym and walking track. Additionally, she assured residents of Misty Enclave that a new elevated bridge would be built to replace the existing stormwater crossing, which was damaged due to water stagnation.

In Indira Nagar, the Mayor announced plans to replace the existing community hall with a multi-purpose function hall, addressing a long-pending demand from residents.



Hyd student bags Cambridge Outstanding Learners Award

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hansini, a high school student from Manthan School, Hyderabad, has been awarded the prestigious Cambridge Outstanding Learners Award in the World Topper category for Economics at the AS Level. This recognition, presented by Cambridge International, celebrates students worldwide who demonstrate exceptional academic performance.

Hansini attributed her success to her hard work and the academic environment at her school. She said, "The opportunities and resources I had access to were instrumental in helping me excel. I am especially thankful to my teacher, Ruchika Ma'am, for her exceptional guidance and encouragement. Her passion for Economics inspired me to push my boundaries and strive for excellence."

Ruchika Upadhyay, Vice-Principal of Manthan School and Hansini's Economics teacher, expressed pride in the achievement. She remarked, "Hansini's dedication and intellectual curiosity have been remarkable. Her achievement reflects her consistent efforts and determination to excel. It's a proud moment for all of us at Manthan."

Surjeet Singh, Principal of Manthan School, also praised Hansini's accomplishment. He stated, "This recognition reflects the high standards of academic excellence that Manthan School aspires to maintain. Hansini's success showcases not just her talent but also the unwavering support provided by our teachers and staff. We are incredibly proud of her achievement and wish her continued success."

This award highlights Hansini's commitment to academic excellence and places her among a select group of students globally recognised for their outstanding achievements by Cambridge International.

TG Prisons department hosts Retreat 2025

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Prisons department organised its annual State-level retreat, a tradition since 2002, to innovate and advance correctional administration. This year's event brought senior prison officials, including Jailors and Deputy Jailors, together to deliberate on modern challenges and strategies for reform.

The event commenced with a warm acknowledgement of K Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary to the government, Finance and Planning, Telangana, for his unwavering support in modernising the prison system.

His role in enabling funds for electronic gadgets, de-addiction centres and the construction of new barracks was highlighted as a critical step towards institutional transformation.

Adding to the discussions, Dr Soumya Mishra, Director



K Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary to the government, Finance and Planning, Soumya Mishra, Director General of Prisons and Corrections Services at the State-level retreat of the prisons department

General of Prisons and Corrections Services, emphasised the importance of integrating humane practices into correctional systems. She urged the attendees to prioritise rehabilitation over punishment, particularly by focusing on mental health initiatives and vocational training programmes for inmates.

The retreat's discussions were on technology in prison administration: Leveraging

advanced tools for security, reformation and skill development. Combating drug addiction: Establishing de-addiction centres and implementing special remission schemes under updated regulations like the Model Prison Manual 2016 and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act 2023. Futuristic prisons: Addressing issues such as overcrowding, resource shortages and recidivism.

TG contingent shines at 38th National Games

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 38th National Games, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 28 in Uttarakhand, witnessed enthusiastic participation from the Telangana. The Telangana contingent, comprising 212 players across 23 sports disciplines, is all set to make the State proud with their skills and determination. The contingent is being led by Chef De Mission A Sonibala, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, was accompanied by two Deputy Chef de Mission A Maheshwar and D Sanjeeva Reddy and other supporting staff.

"Our Telangana flag-bearers are T

Chikitha, international archer and Master Dhanush Srikanth, International ace shooter in Deaflympics. Our Telangana international players from sports disciplines like Athletics, Shooting, Archery, Badminton, Lawn tennis, Gymnastics and table tennis will be participating in this National Games."

Jithender Reddy, Special Representative of Telangana at Delhi and Advisor, Sports Affairs and Shivsena Reddy have also witnessed the spectacular opening ceremony and encouraged the players to perform their best and bring laurels to the State.



Arjuna Awardee Deepti felicitated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Para Athletic Association of Telangana, in association with the Telangana Disabled Cooperative Corporation, felicitated Arjuna Awardee and Paralympic bronze medalist Jeevan G Deepti in a grand ceremony. The event was led by the Corporation's Chairman and Honorary President of the Para Sports Association of Telangana, Muthineni Veerayya.

The felicitation took place at Gachibowli Stadium during the 7th State Para Athletic Meet, which serves as a qualifier for the 23rd National Para Athletic Championship to be held in Chennai's

Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium from February 17-20. The event was inaugurated by Jeevan G Deepti and Dronacharya Awardee coach Ramesh.

Addressing the gathering, Veerayya lauded Deepti's journey of perseverance and achievement, stating, "With sheer determination and unwavering spirit, Jeevan G Deepti has not only won a bronze medal in the Paralympics but has also brought immense pride to Telangana by securing the prestigious Arjuna Award."

He encouraged aspiring para-athletes to draw inspiration from Deepti's success and aim for greater international



recognition.

He further called upon corporate and social organisations to support para-athletes, emphasizing that genuine recognition lies in sustained encouragement. "Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

has set an example by announcing Rs 1 crore cash reward, 500 square yards of land, and a Group 2 job for Deepti. His gesture reaffirms his commitment to the welfare of persons with disabilities," he added.

Veerayya highlighted the growing recognition of para-sports at the national level, citing that 27 out of the 41 Arjuna Awards announced by the central government this year went to para-athletes, a testament to their resilience and accomplishments.

At the event, para-athletes who secured top positions in various competitions were awarded medals and certificates.

Accused gets 20 years RI for sexual assault

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a landmark judgment, the Special Court in Hyderabad sentenced Lingala Deepak, a 32-year-old resident of Secunderabad, to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 20,000 for committing aggravated sexual assault on a five-year-old girl. The case was registered under Cr.No.195/2024 at Mahankali

police station under Sections 376 AB of IPC and 5(m) read with 6 of the POCSO Act, 2012.

The accused was arrested within 24 hours of the incident, and a swift investigation followed. Inspector K Parsuram, the Investigating Officer, filed a chargesheet under SCPC No. 14/2024. After a detailed trial, Special Sessions Judge for POCSO Act cases, B

Pushpalatha, found the accused guilty and pronounced the conviction on January 28. The court also announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the victim. The prosecution was led by Additional Public Prosecutor K Prathap Reddy, assisted by Legal Support Officer T Kalpana, Liaising Officer Uma, ASI of Bharosa Unit, and CDOs J Sai Kumar and Vamshi Krishna.

Health Minister reviews redesign sketches of new OGH

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha has reviewed redesign sketches of the new Osmania General Hospital on Tuesday.

He asked about the preparations for the upcoming foundation stone ceremony scheduled for January 31. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will lay the foundation stone for the new Osmania General Hospital at Goshmahal Police Academy grounds.

The Minister directed officials to ensure that all necessary arrangements for the event are completed without any lapses. Earlier, on January 25, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reviewed the proposed designs for the hospital and suggested significant changes. Architects incorporated these revisions, which were later presented to Minister Damodar



Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha reviewing redesign sketches of the new Osmania General Hospital

Rajanarasimha through a Power-oint presentation. During the review meeting, the Minister emphasised the historical significance of Osmania Hospital, calling it a symbol of pride for Telangana. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to restoring its past glory.

"We are determined to ensure that the new buildings meet the highest standards of quality, leaving no room for

errors," said the Minister. He also stressed the importance of providing seamless arrangements for attendees at the foundation ceremony.

The new Osmania General Hospital will feature comprehensive super-specialty medical services.

It will cater to the needs of patients, doctors, medical students and staff by incorporating all necessary modern amenities.

Schools recognised for Clean India Mission

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reinforcing its commitment to environmental stewardship and resource conservation through sustainable waste management and recycling practices, ITC Limited hosted the Wellbeing Out of Waste (WOW) Interschool Recycling Championship Awards presentation event on Tuesday at Ravindra Bharathi Auditorium, Hyderabad. The event was held to recognise and celebrate the exceptional contributions made by students and schools in advancing the cause of the Clean India Mission or Swachh Bharat, through effective waste management.

The award ceremony was attended by chief guest Dr TK Sreedevi, Commissioner & Director, Municipal Administration, Government of Telangana and guests of honour EV Narasimha Reddy, Commissioner and Director, School Education, Government of Telangana and Rajesh Ponnuru, Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Limited - Paperboards & Specialty Papers Division. The dignitaries presented awards and medals to the deserving students and schools.

Speaking at the event, Rajesh Ponnuru, said, "I would like to convey our heartfelt congratulations to the compe-



dition winners of the ITC WOW Interschool Recycling Championship and express our gratitude to all participants for their encouraging contribution towards Swachh Bharat. It

is heartening to see that our future generation is well aware of this important aspect of our lives and is actively taking the initiative to manage and recycle waste."

The 2024-25 edition of the championship witnessed an overwhelming response with over 1 lakh students actively participating and collectively contributing approximately 933 metric tons of dry waste for recycling.

The championship also saw 2,482 schools from across southern India take part, involving 9.31 lakh students in raising awareness about waste segregation.

The programme brought together government and private schools from various boards, including ICSE, CBSE and SSC, fostering a culture of sustainability among young changemakers.



An aghori, accompanied by followers, entering Komuravelli Mallikarjuna Swamy temple in Siddipet on Tuesday

Aghori goes on rampage, inflicts knife injuries on people

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Aghori Naga Sadhu once again created a scene at the Komuravelli Mallikarjuna Swamy temple in Siddipet on Tuesday. She whipped out a knife and went on the rampage, inflicting injuries on several people.

At first, after her arrival at the temple, she insisted on being allowed to enter through the main gate of the temple for darshan.

The naked Aghori insisted on being allowed to enter the temple from the main gate for darshan.

However, temple authorities suggested that she would be allowed only if she wore clothes.

Later, she wore clothes and proceeded to darshan. While heading towards Darshan, she destroyed a journalist's mobile phone when he was filming her, and then, unexpectedly, attacked

the people present with a knife. Several people were injured in the attack.

From the beginning, this Aghori has been creating disturbances in Telugu states due to her controversial behaviour.

She also caused trouble during her visits to several temples, including the Mutyalamma temple in Secunderabad. Devotees expressed dissatisfaction with her behavior.

The hermit was cool and ready to answer any question but would become angry if anyone asked her to put on her robes.

The temple authorities are worried about her conduct as multitudes of devotees have been thronging the temple on the occasion of the Brahmotsavam celebrations.

She caused a similar disturbance in the first week of September last year.

Counterfeit currency racket busted, eight arrested

PNS ■ WARANGAL



Warangal Police Commissioner Amber Kishore Jha inspecting the counterfeit currency note seized from a gang in Warangal on Tuesday

The rise in fake note circulation in several districts has been posing a challenge to the police. The Warangal Police Commissioner, who is on alert, busted a fake currency racket and arrested eight individuals on Sunday.

The arrested individuals, the police said, had been printing and circulating fake currency notes at the Kakatiya University campus. Along with fake currency, printing paper was also seized.

Apart from counterfeit currency, the police seized Rs 38.84 lakh cash from the suspects. The fake currency seized from the arrested individuals has a face value of Rs 21 lakh. Nine mobile phones and a car were seized from them, the police said.

The gang reportedly lured gullible people by offering fake currency notes worth four times the value of the genuine currency. The main accused, identified as Manikala Krishna (57) from Bhadradi Kothagudem district, had planned to circulate fake cur-

rency to make quick money. He teamed up with Errogolla Srinivas from Hanmakonda for this purpose.

Krishna, accompanied by four others, arrived at Pegadapall crossroads and handed over the bundle of fake currency notes as planned to Srinivas. The police, who laid the trap, caught the gang member red-handed. Upon questioning, the accused admitted to

their crime, according to the Police Commissioner. Krishna, the main accused, was previously involved in circulating fake currency in Sattupalli, VM Banjara, and Lakshmi Devi Pet police station limits.

The fake note racket is not limited to Warangal district but has been reported in northern Telangana from Nizamabad to Khammam.

Recently, police received information that a trader in Bichkunda in the Kamareddy district was circulating fake currency. The police kept him under surveillance and gathered details about who he was meeting with and how he was acquiring the fake notes.

After gathering complete information, they uncovered that he was bringing fake currency from Hyderabad to Banswada and then to Bichkunda, the police said.

Now the Warangal police are on the lookout for more suspects. A dragnet has been spread to nab the suspects.

It may be recalled that villagers in Chadmal Thanda under Gandhari mandal in Kamareddy district discovered counterfeit Rs 500 notes among the offerings at Lashamma temple after the annual Sankranti festival.

The fake currency was found in bundles of notes collected from the temple hundi, with reports estimating its total face value at Rs 1 crore.

DC warns against creating artificial scarcity of fertilizers

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector Ila Tripathi has warned that strict action will be taken against fertilizer shop owners if they create an artificial shortage of urea. She emphasised that there is no shortage of urea in the district and assured that it is readily available in sufficient quantities.

She made these statements during a surprise inspection of fertilizer shops in the Kanagal mandal centre on Tuesday.

The Collector clearly stated that if any fertilizer shop owner is found selling urea in the black market, their licenses would be revoked. She directed the dealers to supply urea based on the details of the land farmers are cultivating and the amount of urea needed for specific crops. She further instructed agricultural officials to maintain strict surveillance on urea supplies and to regularly inspect fertilizer shops.

District Collector Tripathi also ordered that fertilizer shop owners should display the urea stock.

'Make sure welfare scheme benefits reach poor'

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Rangareddy District Additional Collector Pratima Singh emphasised the crucial role of government employees in delivering welfare schemes. She said that employees act as a bridge between the government and the people.

She made these remarks on Tuesday at the launch of the 2025 annual diary of the District Gazetted Employees Association, held at the conference hall of the Ranga Reddy District Collectorate building. The event was attended by TGOs State President Eluru Srinivasa Rao and other key officials.

Speaking at the event, the Additional Collector highlighted the importance of ensuring that the government schemes effectively reach the poor. She stressed that employees should work with dedication to implement welfare initiatives, thereby bringing a good name to the government.



Rangareddy Additional Collector Pratima Singh unveiling District Gazetted Employees annual diary at the District Collectorate in Rangareddy on Tuesday

Gazetted Employees Association State President Eluru Srinivasa Rao echoed her sentiments, urging employees to fulfill their responsibilities with sincerity.

He assured that all gazetted employees in the state are committed to serving the people and

assisting the government in the successful execution of welfare programs. Additionally, he made several requests, including restoring the 24 per cent House Rent Allowance (HRA) for Collectorate employees, exempting government officials from toll tax when using the Outer Ring Road (ORR)

for work-related travel, and allocating land for the construction of a TGO building in the district along with a dedicated room in the Collectorate for the association.

Ranga Reddy District TGOs president K Rama Rao acknowledged the dedication of district officials in implementing welfare schemes.

He assured that, under the guidance and encouragement of the District Collector, employees would work with even greater enthusiasm to make Ranga Reddy district a model for the state.

The event was attended by several prominent officials, including TGOs Central Association General Secretary Satyanarayana, B. Shyam, Narahari, Gampa Srinivas, Parameshwar Reddy, Sirisha, Sujatha, Ranga Reddy Secretary Suresh Kumar Nori, Associate President PC Venkatesh, Treasurer Srinivasulu, and Vice Presidents Nutan Kanti Venkat, Alivelu, Revathi, and Balaraju.

TG State third police games & sports begin in Karimnagar

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The third Telangana State-Level Police Sports Meet was grandly inaugurated by Intelligence Director General of Police B Shivadhar Reddy at the Karimnagar Police Commissionerate Parade Ground on Tuesday.

During the event, 20 teams participated in a march-past, presenting a guard of honour to the chief guest. Shivadhar Reddy unveiled the new logo and flag of the event, lit the sports torch, and officially declared the games open.

Speaking on the occasion, Shivadhar Reddy said, "It is an honour to address you all at the Telangana state-level Police Sports and Games Meet being held in Karimnagar, a city known for its rich culture and vibrant spirit."

He emphasised that the event was not merely a showcase of athletic talent but also a celebration of unity, discipline, and camaraderie, which are fundamental to the ethos of policing. He noted that sports and games promote teamwork, resilience, and a healthy competitive spirit, which are crucial for police personnel facing daily chal-

lenges. He acknowledged the immense challenges faced by police personnel in their day-to-day duties and highlighted the importance of such events in rejuvenating the force, strengthening bonds, and inspiring a sense of achievement. He commended the organisers, particularly Karimnagar Police Commissioner Abhishek Mohanty, for their efforts in making this event a reality.

Addressing the participants, he said: "Compete with integrity and sportsmanship. Whether you win or not, your dedication and participation are what truly matter."

Inspector General of Police M Ramesh stated that this sports meet is being conducted in Karimnagar after an eight-year hiatus. He announced that the event, spanning three days, will witness approximately 2,400 participants from 20 zones competing in 28 sports categories.

Multi-Zone-I IGP S Chandrasekar Reddy IPS highlighted that sports play a crucial role in overcoming both physical and mental challenges inherent in police work.



Telangana State Intelligence DGP B Shivadhar Reddy at third Telangana state-level police games and sports in Karimnagar on Tuesday

BID TO CHECK ROAD ACCIDENTS MLA calls for strict adherence to traffic rules

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a bid to promote road safety and prevent tragic accidents, Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar flagged off a massive helmet bike rally organised by the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) in Shadnagar town. The event, held under the auspices of the RTA Unit Office, saw the participation of several key officials, including Deputy Transport Commissioner Sadanand, Assistant Commissioner of Police Rangaswamy, Circle Inspector Vijay Kumar, Traffic Sub-Inspector Ravinder Naik, and MVI Vasu.

Addressing the gathering, MLA

Shankar expressed deep concern over the rising number of road accidents, which have left families devastated.

He particularly recalled the tragic deaths of cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin's son and Minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy's son in road accidents, emphasising the need for strict adherence to road safety measures. He urged commuters to reduce speed while traveling and to wear helmets at all times.

The bike rally, which commenced from the government stadium and proceeded to the RTA office, was organised as part of National Road Safety Month to



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar flagging off helmet bike rally in Shadnagar on Tuesday

raise awareness about traffic regulations. The Transport Department officials presented a helmet to the MLA before he addressed the media, reinforcing the importance of following safety protocols.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Transport Commissioner Sadanand highlighted that National Road Safety Week serves as a platform to educate people about traffic rules and the consequences of negligence on the road. He urged the public to be vigilant and follow the prescribed safety norms.

ACP Rangaswamy echoed similar sentiments, stating that awareness campaigns play a vital role in reducing road accidents. MVI Vasu reiterated that numerous families suffer irreparable losses due to reckless driving, underscoring the need to follow government regulations and wear helmets.

Congress' targeting over ORR toll tender only strengthens KTR

After a series of failed attempts to frame former minister K T Rama Rao, the Congress government appears to be scripting a new plot around the Outer Ring Road (ORR) toll operator transfer contract. In the 13 months since A Revanth Reddy assumed the role of Chief Minister, his administration seems fixated on hurling baseless allegations and misusing law enforcement agencies to drag KTR's name into various controversies. Despite relentless efforts by the police, SOT, ACB, and other bodies, these attempts to transform propaganda into criminal charges have faltered due to the absence of any evidence implicating the BRS Working President.

The government's actions appear driven by insecurity and a desire to silence KTR, who has consistently raised his voice for farmers under Rythu Bharosa, criticized the failure of loan

waivers, condemned the demolition of houses by HYDRA's bulldozers, supported victims of the Musi project, and nationally championed the cause of Kodangal youth. KTR has also been a key figure for the state's youth, who feel let down by the Congress' unfulfilled promises of employment. Allegations around phone tapping, family functions, Kodangal atrocities, Formula E, and numerous other instances have failed to stick, as the public increasingly recognizes these moves as attempts to target KTR personally.

The TOT model, introduced by the Government of India in 2016 and approved by the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs, was adopted by Telangana for asset monetization. This model is not exclusive to Telangana. Compared to similar projects undertaken by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the asset moneti-

zation exercise in Telangana generation of houses by HYDRA's bulldozers, supported victims of the Musi project, and nationally championed the cause of Kodangal youth. KTR has also been a key figure for the state's youth, who feel let down by the Congress' unfulfilled promises of employment. Allegations around phone tapping, family functions, Kodangal atrocities, Formula E, and numerous other instances have failed to stick, as the public increasingly recognizes these moves as attempts to target KTR personally.

In 2009, the Congress government began toll collection on the ORR through private agencies. The project, financed through loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) amounting to Rs. 3,558 crores and other banks at Rs. 6,696 crores, required HMDA to pay approximately Rs. 500 crore annually to financial institutions. Before bifurcation, PK Hospitality Services Pvt. Ltd managed the toll, imposing increasing rates that burdened



commuters. Eagle Infra, a previous contractor for ORR tolls, also participated in the 2022 bidding but quoted 23.66% less than IRB Infrastructure Developers. Despite Revanth's long-standing criticisms of the contract, he has failed to present factual figures since taking office. The narrative of a scam lacks any scientific analysis or expert review. The

rules governing Telangana's TOT project are not different from those applied nationally. For instance, the Rs. 7,380 crore awarded to IRB would yield Rs. 1,45,219 crore over 30 years if fixed in a bank deposit. Additionally, future expansions of the ORR, such as increasing from eight to ten or twelve lanes, would require IRB to pay the government additional revenue. The contract also includes a review every ten years to evaluate revenue realization. If traffic increases exponentially, shortening the concession period is a possibility.

While the Congress government is keen on implicating KTR, who was the municipal minister during the ORR TOT auction, it is noteworthy that NHAI recently awarded the 251 km Hyderabad-Nagpur Corridor for Rs. 6,661 crore under the same TOT model. The state government had no role in the

NHAI auction. If Revanth opposes TOT, why has he remained silent on BJP's asset monetization policies? Both Revanth and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, the current minister for roads, were frequent visitors to Union Minister Nitin Gadkari when the bidding was underway. Allegations regarding electoral bonds also lack merit, as both Congress and BJP received significant donations from IRB Infrastructure and its subsidiaries.

Ultimately, these attempts to create legal hurdles for KTR appear to be a political vendetta. While they may generate temporary noise, they are unlikely to derail KTR's political career. To the masses, this selective targeting will only highlight his resilience as a fierce and outspoken opposition leader.

(Dr. Krishank Mamme BRS Spokesperson)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT DECLARATION FORM - VII (See sub-rule (1) of rule - 25 and section - 19(1) of the Act 30/2013)						
G11541/2024 No.D1777/2024	Date: 17-01-2025 Date: 06-01-2025		Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana District Collector, Nalgonda that a total of 3305 Sq.yds of land is required in the Charapally Village of Nalgonda Municipality of Nalgonda Mandal Nalgonda district for public purpose, namely Construction of Flyover Bridge at Manguda-Charapally Junction on NAM Road in Charapally Village of Nalgonda Municipality.			
Therefore declaration is made that a piece of land measuring more or less 3305 Sq.yds of standard measurement under acquisition for the above said project in the village Charapally, Mandal Nalgonda, District Nalgonda whose description is as following:						
SCHEDULE						
Village:	Charapally, Mandal:	Nalgonda, District:	Nalgonda	Structures fallen under LA		
Sr. No.	Sq. No.	Type of land	Area in Sq.ft.	Name of the land loser		
1	4730	Patta Dry	745	Chinapala Kamaamma W/o Messiah Aies Pappiah		
2	4730	Patta Dry	222	Danda Amrendar Reddy S/o Lingayadri		
3	4730	Patta Dry	215	Pawan Motors Pvt Ltd Rep by K Mohan Reddy S/o Papi Reddy	Basement	
4	4730	Patta Dry	36	Konduru Sridhar W/o Nagesh		
5	4730	Patta Dry	36	Sheela Rajashakar S/o Krishniah		
6	4730	Patta Dry	36	Achari Ravi Kumar S/o Ramamurthy		
7	4730	Patta Dry	36	Achari Uday Shaker S/o Ramamurthy		
8	4730	Patta Dry	151	Devarshetti Srinivasa Rao S/o Venkat Narayana		
9	4730	Patta Dry	96	Road		
10	4730	Patta Dry	334	Jilla Boman S/o Raghunadham		
Sub-total				999		
11	50103	Patta Dry	62	Road		
12	50103	Patta Dry	251	Gundgani Shankaramma W/o Saidu		
13	50103	Patta Dry	69	Shekhana Anzum W/o Mohd Mulsuran Quazzafi	Basement	
14	50103	Patta Dry	60	Gudipati Laxminarayana S/o Sri Ramakrishnaiah		
15	50103	Patta Dry	91	Un-Known		
16	50103	Patta Dry	136	Kolelu Ramesh S/o Ramalingam		
17	50103	Patta Dry	64	A.Boman S/o Pappiah		
18	50103	Patta Dry	137	Mela Ramulamma W/o Ranga Reddy		
19	50103	Patta Dry	169	M/o Venkataranama Motors Rep by Gattu Venkanna S/o Yadagiri	RCGI Sheet roof	
20	50103	Patta Dry	42	Nandyala Swathi S/o Shankar Reddy		
21	50103	Patta Dry	42	Aagavaram Lalitha W/o Prabhakar Reddy		
22	50103	Patta Dry	34	Cilekar Balaramu S/o Burchaji		
23	50103	Patta Dry	32	Cilekar Perajoti S/o Burchaji		
24	50103	Patta Dry	58	Nalgonda Praveen Kumar S/o Ramalingam		
25	50103	Patta Dry	36	Navari Rajeshwari		
26	50103	Patta Dry	29	Vangan Gopinath S/o Ramesh		
27	50103	Patta Dry	50	Vangan Ramesh S/o Sathiah	Septic Tank	
Sub-total				1396		
Grand Total				3305		
This Declaration is made after hearing of objections of person interested and due enquiry as provided in 15 of the Act No. 30/2013. The area for acquisition would have no displacement of people and no disturbance to the infrastructure in the vicinity, ecology and minimum adverse impact is foreseen on the effected individual's livelihood. Hence, there is no need to pass a separate R&R award in terms of Section 31 and second schedule of the RPCT LA RR Act, 2013 (Act 30 of 2013). The Government of Telangana has exempted the project i.e. "Construction of Flyover Bridge at Manguda-Charapally Junction from the applications of the provisions of Chapter-II and III of the RPCT in LA R&R Act, 2013 vide GO Ms No. 12, Transport, Roads & Building (R/L) Department Dated: 15.03.2024.						
Mines of coal, iron stone, slate or other materials lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.						
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the land acquisition officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Nalgonda on any working day.						
Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer Nalgonda		Sd/- Add. Collector (Revenue) Nalgonda		Sd/- District Collector Nalgonda		
DPR No.637/LA/PP-Pub/2024-25						

ACROSS THE STATES

'India working with a new vision'

Can't accept export of raw materials, asserts PM Modi

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he cannot accept raw materials getting exported and finished products being shipped into the country, asserting that value additions must happen in India.

Inaugurating the 'Utkarsh Odisha, Make in Odisha Conclave' in Bhubaneswar's Janata Maidan, Modi said he considers eastern India as the growth engine of the country, and the state plays an important role in it.

"The country's development is not possible only by exporting raw materials. Therefore, we are changing the entire ecosystem and working with a new vision," he said.

"The minerals are extracted here and exported to some other country where value addition is done and finished products are then sent back to India. This trend is not acceptable to Modi," he added, citing the example of the export of marine products for processing



in other countries.

Urging all to recognise the challenges of the global supply chain in a changing world, the PM said India cannot rely on fragmented and import-based supply chains.

"Instead, a robust supply and value chain must be built within India to minimise the impact of global fluctuations. This responsibility lies with both the government and the

industry," he said. The PM said the milestone of a USD 5 trillion economy was not far away for India.

He said India's economy rests on two major pillars -- the innovative service sector and quality products.

"The potential for green jobs is also growing significantly. There is a need to adapt to the demands and requirements of the times. India is focusing on

green technology and a green future, including solar, wind, hydro, and green hydrogen, which will power the energy security of a developed India," he said. The PM said the aspirations of crores of people were driving India's movement on the path of development. "Today, India is moving on a path of development driven by the aspirations of crores of people. This is an era of AI.

The country's development is not possible only by exporting raw materials. Therefore, we are changing the entire ecosystem and working with a new vision," he said. "The minerals are extracted here and exported to some other country where value addition is done and finished products are then sent back to India

tion," he said. Modi said the 21st century is about connected infrastructure and multi-modal connectivity.

"India is building specialised infrastructure at unprecedented speed and scale. It will make India a great destination for investment," he said.

The PM said ASEAN countries have shown interest in strengthening trade ties with Odisha. "I consider eastern India as the growth engine of the country, with Odisha playing a crucial role in this. History shows that during times when India significantly contributed to global growth, eastern India also made important contributions," he said.

Modi said measures were being taken to expand the petrochemical sector in the state, and dedicated industrial parks and investment regions were being developed in Paradip and Gopalpur. "I am confident that Odisha will soon reach heights of development that no one has ever imagined," he said.

However, the aspiration of India, not just AI, is the power of our country. Aspiration grows when the needs of the people are fulfilled. In the last decade, the country has witnessed the benefit of empowering crores of people. Odisha represents the same aspira-



'Vigilant against infiltration attempts from Bangla'

Assam is extremely vigilant when it comes to attempts of infiltration from Bangladesh, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here on Tuesday. He also said the situation in Bangladesh is not good now and it is heard that ISI along with a section of Bangladeshi militants is trying to re-group. "Assam is very very vigilant when it comes to attempt of infiltration from Bangladesh," he said while interacting with a group of visiting journalists on the sidelines of an event held here to mark five years of the Bodo Peace Accord of 2020. He said there was no local support for insurgency in Assam. On a question on ULFA chief Paresh Baruah, Sarma said the rebel leader "also wants peace and does not want to derail peace and stability in the state". On asked if Assam was proposing to invite industrialists for investment in the Bodoland Territorial Region, the cm said tribal people are 'very sensitive' about land and hence they have to be talked with, taken into confidence before land is allotted for industries and businesses.



Maha to organise intl-level Marathi film festival

The Maharashtra government will organise an international-level Marathi film festival from this year, Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shekar said on Tuesday. The objective was to promote the regional film industry and provide a platform for films that do not reach the audiences, he said at a press conference here. He also announced nominations for the preliminary round of the 60th State Marathi Film Awards besides winners in the technical and child artist categories. "The State Marathi Film Awards have been held regularly for the last 60 years. But there is no official, government-organised film festival. While various institutions in the state hold international film festivals with the government providing assistance ranging from Rs 10 lakh to Rs four crore, we do not have an official state-level event," the minister said. The inaugural, three-day festival will be organised in Mumbai.



Women assaulted over land dispute between two families

A case has been registered at Manor police station in the district against six men for allegedly beating up five women of a family over land dispute, an official said on Tuesday. No arrest has been made in the case yet. The incident took place at Nagjari village on Monday. An FIR was registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 118(1) (voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 351(2) (criminal intimidation) and other relevant provisions. As per the complaint, Niradav Pavde, Jayesh Pavde, Nitesh Pavde, Pradip Pavde, Mahesh Pavde and Nilesh Pavde -- all related to each other -- allegedly attacked the women with iron rods and sticks when the latter were digging up land to build a compound wall on a disputed piece of land. The women claimed they had a court order allowing the construction. The victims were undergoing treatment at hospital, police said, adding that probe was underway.

Middle East 'crucial passage to world beyond': EAM

PNS ■ ABU DHABI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Tuesday highlighted the significant expansion of India-Middle East engagement driven by strong trade, connectivity, and people-to-people linkages, saying India sees the Middle East as a crucial passage to the world beyond.

Addressing the inaugural session of Raisina Middle East here, Jaishankar said the Middle East region, which India calls West Asia, is crucial to India's strategic interests. The country's trade in the Gulf region amounts to about USD 160 to USD 180 billion.

"Our presence in the Gulf is both pervasive and crucial. More than 9 million Indians live and work here, but the Gulf also serves as a gateway to the MENA region and the Mediterranean," Jaishankar said, adding this larger geography is a very critical connection between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic. "And as our history underlines, there is a



symbiotic relationship between us. We certainly have stakes that are continually rising; but increasingly, India also has contributions to make that would influence the direction of events," a Ministry of External Affairs statement quoted Jaishankar as saying.

"Our annual trade with the Mediterranean, incidentally, is another USD 80 billion, and the Indian diaspora there is close to half a million," the minister said, adding that India's projects in the region include airports, ports, railways, phosphates, green hydro-

gen, steel and submarine cables. Jaishankar said the endeavours of India and the Middle East can be projected further into Africa, Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

"Perhaps there is no domain that has a stronger case for such plurilateral cooperation than that of connectivity... Maritime security and safety is another issue where understandings and mechanisms will have to step in to fill global deficits. Jaishankar said the two regions, long connected by the flow of people, have a common interest in the emergence of a global workplace.

75 YEARS OF SC

Embodies aspirations of 1.4 billion, says CJJ

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On a ceremonial benchmarking 75 years of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna said it was a "true people's court" that evolved into the world's most vibrant apex court, embodying the aspirations of 1.4 billion people. "What began in 1950 as a successor to the federal court, has evolved into perhaps the world's most vibrant and dynamic apex court, one that truly embodies the aspirations and diversity of 1.4 billion Indians. What sets our Supreme Court apart on the global stage is its unique character as a true people's court," he said. The apex court came into existence on January 26, 1950 when the Constitution came into force and was inaugurated on January 28, 1950.

It initially functioned from the old Parliament House and moved its functioning to the present building on Tilak Marg in 1958.

Justice Khanna said 75 years after the constitutional journey



began, the Supreme Court stood transformed, yet anchored in its foundational mission. "This transformation reflects a deeper recognition - that justice must be both principled and practical. In doing so, it makes the constitutional promise of justice - social, economic, and political - a living reality for millions of Indians," he said.

While the apex court's journey reflected remarkable evolution in rights and reach, three challenges demanded attention, said the CJJ.

"Firstly, the weight of arrears which continues to delay justice. Secondly, mounting costs of litigation threatens true accessibility. Thirdly, and perhaps most fundamentally - justice cannot thrive where and when falsehood is practised," shared CJJ Khanna.

The challenges marked the next frontier in the pursuit for justice, he said.

The CJJ was a part of the ceremonial bench assembled to mark the diamond jubilee year of the Supreme Court.

CJJ Khanna said the apex court remained accessible to the public and in its diversity of the judges in these court-rooms, the multitude of voices found representation at the highest level of our judiciary. Referring to the journey of 75 years, he said each decade of the court's jurisprudence served as a mirror to our nation's challenges with several landmark judgements.

"What emerges is not an unmovable structure carved from sandstone, but a living, breathing institution.

DELHI POLLS

TMC, SP to campaign for AAP; Cong left alone

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With several INDIA bloc parties backing the Aam Aadmi Party for the February 5 Assembly elections in Delhi, Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders are set to campaign for the Arvind Kejriwal-led outfit, leaving aside the Congress, the largest constituent of the opposition bloc.

Formed ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to challenge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the INDIA bloc includes the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Samajwadi Party (SP) as its key constituents, among others. Some other member of the bloc, including the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT), have also extended their support to AAP for the Delhi polls.

A source told PTI that actor-politician and TMC MP from Asansol, Shatrughan Sinha, will canvass for AAP in at least three constituencies on February 1-2.

These include former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's constituency New Delhi, Chief Minister Atishi's Kalkaji, and Jangpura, where the party has fielded its senior leader Manish Sisodia. Sinha, who hails from Bihar, could mobilise Delhi's

Purvanchali voters, a term that refers to primarily Bhojpuri-speaking migrants from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Purvanchalis form an influential vote-bank in the capital.

The source added that "one or two more" TMC leaders may join

the AAP campaign in Delhi. The Samajwadi Party, which played a major role in pushing the BJP back in Uttar Pradesh in last year's general elections, will also campaign for AAP. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, along with his party MPs, will campaign for the

ruling party candidates ahead of the elections, AAP said on Tuesday. While Yadav will join Kejriwal for a roadshow in Rithala on January 30, several other SP MPs, including Iqra Hasan from Kairana, will join AAP in its campaign trail.

Biggest liquor scam took place under Kejriwal: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched a blistering attack on AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday, saying the former chief minister came talking about bringing in clean politics but the biggest "liquor scam" took place in Delhi under his watch.

Addressing a public rally in Patparganj here for the

upcoming assembly polls, Gandhi also took a swipe at former deputy chief minister and AAP leader Manish Sisodia, calling him, along with Kejriwal, the "architect of the liquor scam". Gandhi urged people to vote for the Congress' candidate Anil Chaudhary as Sisodia had "run away" from the Patparganj constituency after indulging in corruption.

He said Kejriwal stared off with a promise of bringing in

a new kind of politics but he now lives in a "sheesh mahal". Gandhi said the AAP chief was nowhere to be found when the poor needed him the most and when there was violence in Delhi, an apparent reference to the February 2020 riots. The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha also launched a stinging attack on the BJP, saying they talked about '400 paar' with the intention of changing the Constitution.



Will continue our journey on social justice path, says Stalin

PNS ■ VILLUPURAM

The Dravidian movement emerged to establish social justice, and the DMK would continue its journey on the social justice path, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M K Stalin said here on Tuesday.

It was only during the DMK rule that the reservation for BC was enhanced to 31 percent from 28, 18 percent quota was provided to the SCs, one percent reservation was provided to ST, while a separate reservation was announced for MBC, the government ensured 3.5 percent quota for Muslims, besides 3 percent internal reservation for Arundathiyaars, he said.

55 pc truck drivers in India have compromised vision



ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, ABOUT 33.9 PER CENT OF DRIVERS REPORTED MODERATE STRESS, WHILE 2.9 PER CENT WERE FOUND TO HAVE HIGH-STRESS LEVELS, EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About 55.1 per cent of truck drivers in India have compromised vision, while 53.3 per cent require distance vision correction and 46.7 per cent need near-vision treatment, a new report released on Tuesday revealed.

The report prepared by IIT Delhi further said that about 44.3 per cent of drivers exhib-

ited borderline or above body mass index (BMI), 57.4 per cent had elevated blood pressure levels, and 18.4 per cent showed borderline or high blood sugar levels.

A total of 50,000 truck drivers in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were screened by IIT Delhi in collaboration with the

Foresight Foundation.

According to the report, about 33.9 per cent of drivers reported moderate stress, while 2.9 per cent were found to have high-stress levels, emphasising the need for mental health support. Trucks are the backbone of India's logistic sector, connecting regions across the country and bridging many modes of transport to complete the logistics cycle.

Truck drivers in India endure many challenges and a difficult lifestyle. Key issues include long working hours, irregular shifts, extended periods away from family and various health concerns.

7 killed as wooden structure collapses in UP

PNS ■ BAGHPAT (UP)

Seven people died and about 60 were injured after a temporary wooden structure collapsed at a religious event in Baraut city of this district on Tuesday, officials said.

The incident occurred at around 8 am during a programme organised for the 'Abhishek' of Lord Adinath on Shri Digambar Jain Degree College ground on Gandhi Road in Baraut, they said. The event was part of the Moksha Kalya nak Nirvana Mahotsav of the Jain community under the aegis of Shri 1008 Adinath

Bhaktaambar Prachar.

Of the injured, 20 were discharged after they were administered first aid while 39 are undergoing treatment at a hospital, the officials said, adding that about 100 people were present at the event. The wooden stairs of the 65-foot temporary stage built in the Maanastambh Complex broke due to which the devotees on the stage and standing near it fell down, police said. A case has been registered against a contractor in connection with the incident, the officials said, adding a magisterial inquiry has been ordered.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Recalibrating US-India ties

India-US relations face a shift as India tackles trade, immigration, amid Trump's 'America First' policy

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump engage in dialogue to strengthen bilateral relations, the future of US-India ties appears poised at a critical juncture. Modi's commitment to global peace, prosperity and security, paired with Trump's vision of 'America First,' highlights a partnership that must balance shared strategic goals with diverging domestic priorities. India and the US have cultivated a robust Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership over the years, encompassing key areas like defence, technology, energy and counterterrorism. President Trump's emphasis on India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment underscores Washington's aim to deepen defence collaboration. With Modi's planned visit to the White House and continued diplomatic exchanges, both nations are set to expand their cooperation in these critical domains. However, this partnership extends beyond bilateral gains. Modi and Trump's discussions on global challenges, including tensions in West Asia and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, highlight their shared interest in playing pivotal roles on the global stage.



Trade remains a contentious issue, with Trump's protectionist policies, including potential tariff hikes, posing a challenge to India. The US President's focus on achieving a 'fair bilateral trading relationship' reflects his administration's concerns about trade imbalances. India, on the other hand, seeks to protect its economic interests while fostering a mutually beneficial partnership. Negotiating these trade tensions will require careful diplomacy, as both nations aim to preserve the benefits of their economic ties. The potential for increased investment, innovation and job creation through collaboration in sectors like renewable energy and space exploration offers a promising path forward. Immigration has emerged as yet another critical point of discussion. Trump's crackdown on illegal migrants and emphasis on tighter border controls have direct implications for India, one of the largest sources of irregular immigration outside Latin America. The US has identified approximately 18,000 Indian nationals for deportation, a figure India has cautiously addressed while advocating for a systematic verification process. Moreover, visa delays for Indian nationals have raised concerns, particularly as India is a significant contributor to the US tech workforce. Balancing Trump's domestic priorities with the need for a skilled global workforce will be essential to sustaining the mutually beneficial flow of talent and innovation. The relationship between India and the US is at once ripe with potential and fraught with challenges. While Trump's 'Make America Great Again' agenda and Modi's vision for a self-reliant India may occasionally clash, their shared goals of security, economic growth, and technological advancement offer ample ground for collaboration. As the world's largest democracies, India and the U.S. have a unique opportunity to lead by example in addressing global challenges.

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PICTALK



Folk artistes take part in a procession on the eve of the unveiling of 'Bhuvaneshwari Devi' statue, in Bengaluru PTI

Trump's America: A reality check for the Desis



BHOPINDER SINGH

In Trump's transactional world no group, not even the perceived 'model minority,' is immune from the fallout of his unpredictable policies

It's not Elon Musk's early frustrations with President Donald Trump handing over the crucial project to build America's AI (Artificial Intelligence) infrastructure to rival Sam Altman-led 'StarGate,' that ought to worry us, but the fate of fellow Trumpeteer, Vivek Ramaswamy, that rings closer home. During the campaign trail, the racist Trump was busy mocking minority ethnicities and religions, the Indian-American Desis, seemed smug in assuming that somehow, they were a cut above the other minorities. The purported personal equation between Trump and the Indian Prime Minister was bandied as proof of the special treatment, that awaited India and Indians.

Names of a few Indian-Americans in the new Trump administration (especially of Vivek Ramaswamy in the Department of Government Efficiency or DOGE) were showcased as proofs of Trump's affection for the world's largest democracy. The lazy and simplistic assumption was that he'd be tough on the likes of China and Pakistan, hence pro-India. But the cold reality of dealing with the unpredictable politics of Trump hit much earlier than even anticipated by commentators who had been warning of Trump's ascendancy, despite many shortcomings of the Democrats under Joe Biden. For starters, Chinese President Xi Jinping got an invite to attend the swearing-in of President Trump, but the Indian Prime Minister didn't.

Soon thereafter Trump kept peppering his Make-America-Great-Again (MAGA) spiel with threats of tariff spikes against traditional allies like Canada, Denmark, Mexico etc., (including naming India) but recently suggested that he'd 'rather not' impose tariffs against China - this after promising up to 60% tariffs against China during the campaign! He flipped. Soon thereafter, the Indian-American community was hit the hardest of all immigrant communities by the direct implications of the executive order ending birthright citizenship. Chances for many Indians working under H-1B (work), H-4



(dependent), L (intra-company transfer) and F (student) got jeopardized, as amongst the largest and fastest-growing immigrant groups in the US. With all assumed equations besetting Washington DC and Delhi, it seems fait accompli with little scope for Delhi to counter-influence a policy measure, that impacts it, more than anyone else. Such radical disruptions were certainly not the norm in the Biden era. The supposed leverage of a voluble Vivek Ramaswamy with a Trump also seems to have come a cropper, given the mystery surrounding Vivek's sudden decision to leave DOGE. Having invested a lot of personal stake, content and pride, in supporting the Trump ascendancy to power (clearly prematurely?), Vivek is at pains to deny that his ouster has anything to do with him having defended the immigration position after calling some, 'lazy Americans.' To add insult to injury of being forced into grandstanding, a journalist has just released a video of Vivek's text confirming his departure from Trump, due to the same. The ostensible bid for Ohio Governorship (if true?) is an afterthought and wasn't the intention, even a week earlier. That for a Trump, anyone is completely dispensable once a purpose has been served, be it



IT IS A LESSON THAT VIVEK RAMASWAMY OR EVEN ELON MUSK WILL WAKE UP TO, AS IN THE INDIFFERENT AND TRANSACTIONAL WORLDVIEW OF A TRUMP, TOPICAL RELEVANCE IS ALL THAT MATTERS TO THE AUTHOR OF THE 'ART OF DEAL'

an individual, cause, country, or even a supportive Indian-American like Vivek, seems true. Anyone can be thrown under the bus, irrespective of their ethnicity or personal chemistry. A telling tweet by Vivek on 26th Dec 2024 captures his nuanced position on the contentious immigration issue (as wishfully believed by many Indian-Americans to be the first amongst the equals within minorities, owing to our unique culture and work ethics). He had commented, "The reason top tech companies often hire foreign-born & first-generation engineers over 'native' Americans isn't because of an innate American IQ deficit (a lazy & wrong explanation). A key part of it comes down to the c-word: culture". The underlying suggestion is that Indians do not suffer from the supposed 'Wokeism' of the Democrats as Indians do not have 'a culture that celebrates the prom queen over the math olympiad champ, or the jock over the valedictorian', hence would escape the prying eyes of a Trump targeting immigrants. While it is true that Trump has spoken about the logic of 'meritocracy' in extending citizenship - it is equally true that in applying his power of potential misuse, he hasn't spared or protected the interests of the Indian-

American community which did tick most of the qualifying boxes defined by Trump. The hard truth is that Trump has no special affinity or even intention of any preferential treatment to Indian Americans or India if his conduct in the initial few days of his Presidency is anything to go by. The fact is, the one-time star of the TV series 'Apprentice' is more famous for his heartless line "You're fired" than for any historical demonstration of empathetic leadership. Ultimately, it is a lesson that Vivek Ramaswamy or even Elon Musk will wake up to, as in the indifferent and transactional worldview of a Trump, topical relevance is all that matters to the author of the 'Art of Deal' (that too, ghostwritten). Those eagerly waiting for a decisive and assertive POTUSA in Trump who would do wonders for India, need to brace for some discomforting reality check. Biden had limitations and undeniable failings, but he wasn't a bull in a China shop or necessarily anti-India, ever. With Trump, you never know, as Indians or India don't seem anything special, at least for now. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CHINA TAKES ON AI

Madam — Less than a week after his swearing-in ceremony, US President Trump said that the private sector would invest \$500 billion in AI technology, making the US the most advanced country in the world and creating jobs for millions. Just a week after this statement, the US stock market crashed on Monday, January 27. The reason behind this was the DeepSeek app launched by China last week, which became the most downloaded free app in the US, beating rivals including ChatGPT. DeepSeek was reportedly developed at a fraction of the cost of its competitors, raising questions about the future of America's AI dominance and the scale of investment planned by US firms. AI leader Nvidia's share price sank 17 per cent, and it lost about \$593 billion in stock market value, according to market experts, the biggest one-day loss ever for a company on Wall Street. I was wondering if Mr. Trump, who has just given a 75-day extension to China's app TikTok, will be able to show his displeasure with China and announce a 100 percent import duty on it instead of 60 percent. But it doesn't seem that Trump will be able to deal with China the way he deals with Mexico and Colombia. That's why he has refrained from imposing the previously announced 60 percent import duty. On the contrary, he is advising his American tech companies that 'this is a wake-up call for you guys.' Despite limited access to advanced hardware, DeepSeek's ability to compete with American models shows that software simplicity and data efficiency can compensate for hardware constraints, and underestimating China in any field can be a cause of embarrassment for anyone.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

CRACKDOWN ON FRAUD CALLS

Madam — The Indian government's steps to curb fraudulent international calls are a significant and commendable effort in

India-China border talks



The visit to Beijing by the foreign secretary, Vikram Misri and a series of high-level meetings between the officials of India and China meant to bring some normalcy back to their ties after years of heightened tensions. While these hectic parleys demonstrate intent on both sides to try to build on the momentum from the border pullback, the recent crises in their relationship have deepened mutu-

al distrust that will not go away with a few meetings. The past few months have seen India raise concerns about a new Chinese plan to build the world's largest dam in Tibet on the upstream part of what India calls the Brahmaputra. New Delhi fears that the dam could allow Beijing to weaponize water, either by denying India adequate water or by unleashing floods. The Quad grouping, which met in Washington on the margins of the swearing-in ceremony of Donald Trump, issued a statement that was more overtly critical of China and its territorial ambitions in the Indo-Pacific than has been the norm. No one expects New Delhi and Beijing to be best friends. But they do not need to be enemies either.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

the field of digital security. The Department of Telecommunications has developed an innovative and indigenous system that identifies and blocks the misuse of Indian mobile numbers. The primary aim of this initiative is to free users from cyber fraud and safeguard their financial interests. This new system has achieved the remarkable feat of reducing fraudulent international calls by 90 per cent within just 24 hours. Additionally, by blocking more than 20 foreign service providers, the government has sent a clear message that there is no place for such activities. This effort is not only a stringent step toward preventing fraudsters but also a symbol of securing the digital lives of Indian citizens. It is a critical move toward realising the vision of Digital India. The initiative not only curbs cybercrimes but also enhances the sense of trust and security among citizens. It brings greater transparency to the telecom sector and helps users feel safer in their digital activities. This initiative truly marks a new chapter in the

realm of digital security.

R K Jain | Barwani

SMRITI MANDHANA WINS ICC AWARD

Madam — India's star batter Smriti Mandhana was adjudged as the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year 2024, the global body announcement. Mandhana had a memorable outing with the bat in 2024. She smashed 747 runs this year with the help of four centuries and three fifties in 13 games. She set new batting standards in ODIs, scoring more runs than she ever had before in a calendar year. She also tested herself with the ball in hand and ended up taking a wicket as well. The 28-year-old now has equalled New Zealand batter Suzie Bates' record of winning the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year on multiple occasions. Mandhana won her ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award in 2018.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

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Simulation-based learning: Transforming emergency medical training

By replicating real-world medical emergencies, this innovative training method bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical expertise

Simulation refers to the imitation of real-world processes or systems for training, education, or evaluation purposes. In emergency medical learning, simulation creates realistic scenarios that replicate medical emergencies, allowing healthcare providers to practice and refine their skills in a safe, controlled environment. The implementation of Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) by the National Medical Council (NMC) has shown that simulation significantly enhances clinical competence for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical students. One of the most significant advantages of simulation is that it enables learners to practice handling critical and high-stakes situations without risking patient safety. This is particularly important in emergencies, where errors can have severe consequences. By engaging in simulated scenarios, participants can repeatedly practice emergency protocols, improve technical skills such as intubation and defibrillation, and gain confidence in their abilities.



Simulations replicate the high-pressure environment of real emergencies, helping individuals develop the ability to make rapid, informed decisions under stress. They also provide a risk-free setting to identify and correct mistakes, enabling participants to learn how to prevent such errors in real-life situations. Additionally, exposure to diverse scenarios prepares learners to adapt to unexpected complications effectively. Teamwork plays a critical role in emergency medical training, and simulation emphasises the importance of collaboration and communication. Learners develop skills in articulating observations, providing updates, and conveying instructions clearly, which are essential in high-pressure situations. Simulation allows team members to define roles, such as team leader or airway manager and practice seamless coordination. Through repeated practice, team-based simulations foster trust, cohesion, and an understanding of each member's strengths, weaknesses and working styles. Structured debriefing sessions after simulations promote a culture of continuous learning by encouraging open discussions about successes and areas for improvement. These sessions help build leadership and followership skills, enabling team

leaders to hone their abilities while fostering supportive and adaptive team dynamics. The benefits of simulation extend to faster and more efficient responses in real emergencies, reduced stress and burnout for healthcare providers and improved patient care outcomes. Familiarity with high-stakes scenarios enables teams to act cohesively and manage stress more effectively, ensuring better results in critical situations. Simulation learning is an essential tool for building individual competence and strengthening medical teams. In a field where zero-error tolerance is crucial, particularly in emergency departments, simulation-based learning equips medical students with both confidence and competence. The future of medical education lies in recognising the importance of practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge, making simulation a cornerstone of training programmes. (The writer is professor & HOD, Dr. D Y Patil Medical College, Hospital & Research Centre, Pimpri, Pune; views are personal)



SARBARI SWAIKA





FIRST COLUMN THE PATH TO BEING TRULY SPECIAL

We all want to feel special, but often our desires and decisions lead us astray



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We all want to be special. There is nothing wrong with such thinking, but most of us do not desire properly or decide sensibly. In this article, I will shed some light on how to do both of these wisely. What should we desire? This must be in sync with our circumstances and capabilities. Imagine desiring to become very rich while doing a small business. Similarly, desiring to become famous anytime soon while being a club-level sports person is not wise.

We will be disappointed only. Persons not blessed with good looks should accept their limitations and focus on what capabilities they have been blessed with. There was a dark and not-so-good-looking actress in the USA; she only got small roles. But she acted so well that she became a household name. A social worker in India decided to help tribals. He moved in with them. He became very famous and very special. However, something awaits all of us; which is not so difficult either. This is simply to become a devotee of God, and He will make us special.

I will write more about it in this article. The same wisdom should



be used in decision-making. When there is a choice between being good and not so good, what should we choose? The same logic applies to following dharma and staying within 'maryada' (limits). We know what these are, but are very causal about controlling ourselves. Succumbing to negative emotions like anger, lust, greed, hate, etc. is so easy. What it does is to make us very ordinary. We have been taught to be disciplined in eating, sleeping, entertainment and what we do and how much. Are we prepared to do that? If we are keen on becoming special, we have to.

A similar yardstick is required in choosing goals. Are they good in the long term? Or, the short-term is easy? What will you choose? Regarding usefulness to others, we should be very sincere. If we wish to be special in the eyes of others, this is the 'mantra'. Lastly, if we really and truly wish to be special, be dutiful; do all duties as best as possible. This will be the starting point in pleasing God, who is everything. After the efforts of many births, a yogi in the end becomes wise and he takes My shelter. A great soul, who considers Lord Vasudeva thus as everything is very rare. (The Bhagavad-Geeta verse #7.19) What will happen then? You will be rewarded like you cannot imagine. Because God is the controller of what happens to us. Begin doing some easy spiritual practices, which suit your nature.

I have a large photo of Lord Krishna, which I have hung on the right side of my bed. I spend a lot of time looking at the Lord, while I gently chant Krishna, Krishna, Krishna....What has happened? I have become special. God guides me when I pray for His guidance and help. Isn't God omniscient? He knows what will work. God helps us as only He can, being the controller. I am beginning to feel secure. Fears and anxieties are reducing.

There is more peace. I can tolerate better what I must. Physical health is improving. There is steady progress, which is very satisfying. I feel that I have become special. This is possible for one and all. Nothing mentioned in this article is very difficult. One just has to be determined. Then, one can enjoy the status of being special.

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

Budget 2025: Prioritise health education for a stronger India



RAHUL MEHRA

With over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, empowering youth with physical and mental is a vital investment in the nation's future



As the Union Budget for 2025 approaches, expectations run high across various sectors. Among these, education - specifically health education - deserves special attention. To ensure the holistic development of our youth, the government must consider allocating funds for the integration of health education into school curricula. Such an initiative will not only address immediate concerns but also align with the aspirational vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, where a healthy population becomes the cornerstone of a developed nation. With the Union Budget 2025 at the stage of finalisation, it is time to prioritise health education.

Allocating funds to this cause is not merely an educational reform; it is an investment in India's future. It is stated time and again, including in the National Education Policy, that it is critical to allocate public investment in education from the current over 4.5 per cent to about 6 per cent of total budgetary allocation. Besides this, the Government must consider designing schemes that ensure health education is imparted to children at an early stage to be able to build a healthy society. Development is not merely economic or technological - it is also social, cultural and, above all, human.

A nation's progress depends on the health of its people, and with over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, ensuring the health and wellbeing of its youth is critical. This cannot be achieved without systematically integrating health education into our school curricula. Our goal is to improve student's health knowledge and more importantly, their health behavior. The urgency for such an intervention is rooted in troubling realities. Studies indicate that 30-40 per cent of Indian students face serious mental health challenges. A Global School



A NATION'S PROGRESS DEPENDS ON THE HEALTH OF ITS PEOPLE, AND WITH OVER 40 PER CENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION UNDER 25, ENSURING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ITS YOUTH IS CRITICAL.

Health Survey (GSHS) conducted as far back as 2007 revealed that more than 25 per cent of students aged 13-17 experienced periods of deep sadness or hopelessness, often disrupting their daily activities. These numbers have only worsened in the years since, as highlighted by small-scale studies and the alarming rise in student suicides. Ignoring the mental and physical health of students today will lead to grave consequences for the nation tomorrow.

The contrast between India and nations that give primacy to health education is stark. In the United States, the Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) collects data every two years on the health behaviours of high school students. This data informs evidence-based interventions and policies that address mental health, substance abuse, nutrition, and other critical issues. Many US states mandate health education, covering mental, physical, and social health literacy. Similarly, countries like the United Kingdom and Canada have integrated health education into their school curricula, starting at the primary level.

India, however, lacks a comprehensive approach. While physical education is emphasised in schools, the broader concept of health education, encompassing mental and social wellbeing, is largely absent. The much-lauded National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 only touches upon physical health, failing to address the critical need for a holistic health education framework. Why does this matter? Because healthy individuals contribute to a healthier economy. Poor health not only

reduces productivity but also pushes families into financial crises due to high medical expenses.

India's average life expectancy in 'full health' is a mere 60 years, significantly lower than that of many Asian countries, including Japan (74 years) and China (69 years). A healthy lifestyle, ingrained early, can change this trajectory. Countries like Japan provide valuable lessons. Their emphasis on hygiene, nutrition and physical activity is embedded in their cultural fabric. Children grow up practising these habits, resulting in a population that enjoys a higher quality of life and longer years of productive health.

India, with its rich traditions of yoga and Ayurveda, has the cultural foundations to promote such a shift. However, without institutionalising health education, these remain underutilised. Introducing health education as a mandatory subject in schools can address this gap.

A comprehensive curriculum must include modules on physical fitness, mental health resilience, nutrition, social interaction and technology use. For instance, students could learn the importance of balanced diets, strategies to cope with academic pressure, and the benefits of physical activities and mindfulness practices.

The curriculum should also emphasise practical life skills, such as decision-making, interpersonal communication, and self-advocacy, to prepare students for real-world challenges. A structured approach is essential. First, the government must design a standardised health education curriculum with clear performance

benchmarks. Students' progress should be evaluated at key stages, such as the end of classes 6, 8, and 10. Second, teachers need specialised training to effectively deliver this curriculum. Public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in addressing resource gaps and providing innovative solutions.

Importantly, this initiative aligns seamlessly with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat 2047. A healthy India is a productive India. By equipping the younger generation with the knowledge and skills to prioritise their wellbeing, we are not only improving individual lives but also strengthening the nation's human capital, driving economic growth, and enhancing societal happiness.

Beyond the classroom, the ripple effects of mandatory health education can be transformative. A population that understands the value of preventive care will reduce the burden on India's healthcare system. Families will adopt healthier lifestyles, and communities will benefit from reduced rates of lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart ailments.

The road to Viksit Bharat 2047 is paved with initiatives that prioritise people over policies, and action over aspirations. Health education is not just a subject; it is a foundation for a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous India.

(The writer is UNESCO Chair for Global Health & Education and Chairman of Tarang Health Alliance. Views expressed are personal)

How restoring forests can combat climate change and empower communities

Reforestation stands as both a climate action imperative and a cornerstone for building sustainable future

Amid escalating climate changes, reforestation has come to be one of the most effective, nature-driven methods to combat environmental degradation and enhance climate resilience. Beyond absorbing carbon dioxide, forests support livelihoods, stabilise ecosystems, and foster sustainable communities. Forests have a great role in countering global warming and providing essential resources that not only support communities but also manufacturing and trade. However, as research indicates, India in the past two decades has lost nearly 414-kilo hectares of humid primary forest which made up 18 per cent of its total tree loss. This highlights an urgent need to prioritise reforestation, not



SHWETA RAWAT

just as a climate action tool but also as a cornerstone for community development. **Reforestation's Dual Role:** Climate Action and Community Resilience Forests have an immense capacity to capture and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus reducing the greenhouse effect.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established in 1988 estimates that reforestation and afforestation could account for up to 30 per cent of the carbon reduction required to limit global warming. Additionally, forests regulate microclimates, mitigating the urban heat island effect and stabilising local weather patterns crucial for agriculture. Reforestation plays a crucial role in combating desertification, which poses a significant threat to food security, water availability and livelihoods. Forests help anchor the soil, replenish organic matter, and improve water retention, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity and water access, particularly in ecologically fragile regions. According to

the India State of Forest Report 2021 (ISFR), tribal and rural communities living in these areas face high vulnerability but also exhibit remarkable climate resilience. For these communities, reforestation is a game-changer as it can help prevent and even undo desertification by stabilising the soil using tree roots, which reduces wind and water erosion. Furthermore, forests help replenish organic material in the soil, leading to improved water retention and increased fertility which can lead to environmental regeneration and socio-economic stability. **Community-driven Reforestation:** A Proven Model Even with rapid urbanisation, India's conservation ethos has a rich legacy of pro-



tecting nature. Be it the collective Chipko movement of the 1970s or the inspirational restoration of more than 1300 acres of Brahmaputra's Forest by Jadav Payeng, the Forest Man of India, the success of any reforestation effort hinges on community and local participation. With the input of individuals and stakeholders from communities, any conservation project remains culturally relevant, ecologically sound and

economically beneficial. Take Aravalli Hills Afforestation Project as an example for instance. By involving Village Forest Protection Committees, the project rejuvenated over 151,390 hectares of degraded land and built nearly 200 water storage dams to support wildlife, boosting biodiversity and tiger populations in Sariska Sanctuary. With an impressive 87 per cent tree survival rate, the initiative balanced environmental restoration with tangible social benefits such as job creation and improved livelihoods. This model demonstrates that sustainable reforestation thrives on collaboration, community empowerment, and measurable impact. Partnerships for a Greener Future To scale reforestation

efforts, collaboration is key. Governments, philanthropies, non-profits and businesses must unite to amplify impact. For instance, non-profits can mobilise grassroots participation and bring cultural insights. Corporations can leverage resources for large-scale projects while fulfilling sustainability commitments. Local governments can ensure policy alignment and provide regulatory support. Together, these stakeholders can create integrated strategies that combine ecological restoration with community upliftment. Initiatives like the National Afforestation Programme and the Green India Mission lay a solid foundation, but partnerships can catalyse progress. Reforestation for Generations to Come

Reforestation offers a rare synergy—mitigating climate change while addressing critical challenges like water scarcity, food insecurity and rural poverty. It is not merely an environmental solution but a pathway to holistic development. By fostering meaningful partnerships with non-profits, businesses, and communities, and aligning efforts with governmental initiatives. The time to act is now. With a shared vision and commitment, we can restore forests not just as carbon sinks but as vibrant ecosystems that sustain life and empower generations. A greener, more resilient future is within our reach—if we plant the seeds today. (The writer is chairperson and founder, The Hans Foundation; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



BSNL announces launch of IFTV platform

State-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has announced the country-wide launch of the IFTV platform in partnership with Skypro and OTT partner PlayboxTV. The platform will offer more than 550 Live TV channels and premium OTT apps in India, a statement said. Under the partnership, BSNL with its network enables access to content for customers across India. Skypro, as the technology backbone of IFTV, ensures content delivery while PlayboxTV brings a curated selection of premium content, catering to diverse entertainment preferences, it explained. With over 4 million FTTH customers across diverse terrains of India, from urban to rural areas, BSNL now enables all its customers to access premium TV and OTT apps at no additional cost, the statement said. BSNL had earlier launched the platform on pilot basis in some parts of the country. "This collaboration with Skypro and PlayboxTV to launch IFTV is a game changer for our customers, particularly in rural India," BSNL CGM Maharashtra HK Makkar said at the launch event in Pune on Monday evening.



Skoda looks to turn profitable : Official

Czech carmaker Skoda is looking to turn profitable in India this year as it expects sales to double with its foraying into the high volume sub-compact SUV segment with its new offering Kylaq, according to a top company executive. Bullish on its growth aspects, the automaker expects the Indian market to break into its top five markets globally with enhanced sales volume growth. In an interaction with PTI, Skoda Auto Board Member for Sales and Marketing Martin Jahn said the company plans to enhance its model lineup, including electric cars, and bolster localisation to ramp up the scale of operations in India. He said the company also plans to utilise India to export to various markets globally. "We want to more than double our sales this year. We believe that India will make it to the top five of the global markets of Skoda. We also plan to use India to export more to the Middle East, North Africa, to Australia," Jahn said.



Bajaj Auto net up at Rs 2,196 crore

Bajaj Auto on Tuesday said its consolidated net profit increased by 8 per cent to Rs 2,196 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, on the back of robust exports. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 2,033 crore in the October-December quarter of last fiscal. Total revenue from operations was at Rs 13,169 crore for the third quarter compared with Rs 12,165 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing. The company said it sold a total of 12,24,472 units in the third quarter, a 2 per cent increase over 12,00,997 units in the same period of last fiscal. Sales in the domestic market declined 9 per cent year on year to Rs 7.07,105 units as against 7,78,281 units in the year-ago period. Exports, however, rose 22 per cent year on year to 5,17,367 units from 4,22,716 units in the December quarter of last fiscal. The company said it has a robust balance sheet with surplus funds of over Rs 15,001 crore after having infused capital of nearly Rs 1,600 crore in the financing subsidiary and executing a capex of Rs 450 crore in the year to date.

FICCI: Review of tax structure to spur demand, boost growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Budget, a majority of the members surveyed by FICCI favoured review of the direct tax structure with a view to spur demand and boost growth. A re-look at the slabs and the tax rates is warranted as this could leave more money in the hands of people and spur consumption demand in the economy, FICCI said.

The current round of FICCI's Pre-budget 2025-26 survey was conducted between late December 2024 and mid-January 2025. The survey drew responses from over 150 companies spanning across diverse sectors, offering a comprehensive insight into India Inc's sentiments amid moderating economic growth.

The surveyed members expect that the country's GDP growth will be 6.5-6.9 per cent in 2025-26 financial year beginning March.

Respondents also called for a strong policy push on simplifying the tax regime, incentivizing the development of green technologies/renewables and EVs, and easing compliance through digitization.

On the taxation front, providing tax certainty, addressing custom duty inversion, and

rationalization of TDS provisions were highlighted as important themes by the participants.

The participants also showed support for an amnesty scheme under customs, with 54 per cent favouring its introduction to enable swift resolution of disputes.

According to the survey, the government's commitment to fiscal consolidation has put the



country in good stead as the participants expect the government to remain on that course.

About 47 per cent of participants expected the government to meet the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent for FY 2024-25 and another 24 per cent reporting that the government could improve and report a lower fiscal deficit number for the current year.

Besides, a majority of respondents highlighted the need for sustaining public capital expenditure, with 68 per cent calling for a thrust on capex to sustain the growth momentum.

Budget: Automakers want support for green tech, EV ecosystem

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automakers want the government to provide merit-based policies to support a full range of green technologies and alternative fuels besides allocations to facilitate electric vehicle ecosystem like charging infrastructure to further accelerate sustainable mobility in the upcoming Union Budget.

With the automobile industry showing early signs of growth slowing down, they said budgetary initiatives to boost the disposable income of consumers are necessary to support robust growth.

"We request the government for appropriate merit-based policies that support and help in popularising full range of greener technologies and alternative fuels thereby helping in faster and greater adoption of multiple sustainable mobility solutions," Toyota Kirloskar Motor Country Head and Executive Vice President - Corporate Affairs and Governance - Vikram Gulati said.

Further, he said measures to encourage the scrapping of old vehicles through the budget will also boost demand for newer generation vehicles and eliminate the polluting ones.

Stating that the upcoming Union Budget presents an opportunity to address some pressing needs of the automotive sector, Skoda Auto Volkswagen India MD & CEO



With the automobile industry showing early signs of growth slowing down, they said budgetary initiatives to boost the disposable income of consumers are necessary to support robust growth

Piyush Arora said, "A long-term vision for favourable tax structure catering to different automotive technologies would certainly benefit the industry."

The product development cycles are quite lengthy and require substantial investment which needs to be considered, he said, adding, "simplifying the GST structure for the different classes of vehicles and components is another ask".

Arora said, "Budget allocation on facilitating the EV ecosystem like charging infrastructure will give further lift to sustainable mobility. Allocating a budget for better

and safe road infrastructure will facilitate the growth of the auto industry."

Noting that there are early signs of auto industry growth slowing down, he said, "therefore, budgetary initiatives to boost disposable income of consumers is necessary to support robust growth."

Expressing similar views, Volvo Car India Managing Director Jyoti Malhotra said, "We hope the budget will prioritise measures to boost consumer spending, accelerate EV (electric vehicle) adoption through incentives and infrastructure development and invest in skill development

programmes to address the evolving needs of the sector."

Furthermore, continued policy stability and a focus on sustainable growth will be crucial for the Indian automobile sector to navigate the current economic landscape and contribute significantly to the nation's economic progress, he added.

Malhotra noted that the Union Budget 2025-26 arrives at a critical juncture for the Indian economy, grappling with global uncertainties and a slowdown in consumer demand.

Mercedes-Benz India MD and CEO Santosh Iyer said the company hopes for forward looking measures from the budget that fosters sustainable economic growth and enhances India's global competitiveness.

"Continued push for BEV adoption by pursuing the existing incentives, infrastructure development and R&D initiatives will be crucial in accelerating India's transition to green mobility, positioning us as a key player in the global BEV value chain," he added.

"Reducing trade barriers and simplifying regulatory frameworks can further integrate India into global supply chain, while any additional measures that lower the cost of doing business, can result in attracting new investments and boost advent of new technologies and innovation," Iyer said.

Stock markets snap 2-day decline

Banking shares shine on RBI liquidity move

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Snapping the two-day decline, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Tuesday following intense buying in banking and rate-sensitive stocks as the RBI decided to inject liquidity into the financial system.

The 30-share Sensex climbed 535.24 points or 0.71 per cent to settle at 75,901.41. During the day, the benchmark surged 1,146.79 points or 1.52 per cent to hit a high of 76,512.96.

The broader 50-share NSE Nifty appreciated by 128.10 points or 0.56 per cent to close at 22,957.25. In the intraday session, the 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 308.8 points or 1.35 per cent to 23,137.95.

"The national benchmark indices demonstrated optimism today, primarily driven by gains in the banking sector following the RBI's announcement of open market interventions to address liquidity concerns.

Among the Sensex shares, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Tata



Motors, Tata Steel, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Zomato, IndusInd Bank, Maruti Suzuki India and Bharti Airtel were the major gainers.

Sun Pharmaceutical, Larsen & Toubro, ITC, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Power Grid, Nestle India, Tata Consultancy Services, and Asian Paints were among the laggards. Investors remain cautious due to growing global uncertainty and disappointing domestic economic indicators. However, optimism in banking, auto and realty aided sentiment even as worries over Trump's trade policies and fading chances of any rate cut in next month's cred-

it policy weighed, Tapsee added.

Among the sectoral indices, Bankex climbed the most by 1.49 per cent, Financial Services by 1.45 per cent, Realty by 1.27 per cent, Auto by 1.16 per cent, and Consumer Discretionary rose by 0.23 per cent.

Healthcare, Industrials, Utilities, Capital Goods, Power, Oil & Gas, Energy, IT and Focused IT were among the laggards.

In the broader market, Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC shares declined 4.82 per cent to close at Rs 612.30 apiece on BSE after the company's December quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

Shares of Anant Raj depreciated by 20 per cent to close at Rs 534.45 apiece -- also its lower circuit level -- on the bourse.

The scrip plunged after China's disruptive low-cost AI-startup DeepSeek threatened the dominance of US artificial intelligence (AI) companies such as Nvidia and triggered a rout among global tech stocks.

India, Oman to amend tax treaty for greater cooperation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Oman have agreed to amend the DTAA to align it with international standards on cross-border taxation, simplifying procedures, and promoting greater cooperation in tax matters, an official statement said on Tuesday.

A protocol to amend the India-Oman Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was signed during the visit of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to Muscat.

The treaty was implemented in 1997. "Both sides signed the protocol to amend the India-Oman DTAA, aligning it with international standards on cross-border taxation, simplifying tax procedures, and promoting greater cooperation in tax matters," the commerce and industry ministry said.

The two countries have also agreed to expedite the discussions for an early signing of the proposed free trade agreement, which is under negoti-

ations. Goyal was in Muscat for the India-Oman Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) with Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef.



"The two ministers exchanged views on a bilateral India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which is under advanced stages of negotiations," it said.

The pact is aimed at boosting two-way trade and investments.

The negotiations for the agreement, officially dubbed as Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, formally began in November 2023.

Tata Steel expects stable realisations

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Tata Steel management projected flat realisations for the Indian market in the fourth quarter with potential upside contingent on significant changes in the upcoming Union budget or government safeguards.

However, coking coal costs in India are expected to reduce by USD10 per tonne quarter-on-quarter, providing some relief to the company, the management told analysts in a con-call.

The steel industry was seeking safeguard duty against cheap imports.

The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), has also started an investigation into imports of 'Non-Alloy and Alloy Steel Flat Products', used in various industries, including fabrication, pipe making, construction, capital goods, auto, tractors, bicycles, and electrical panels.

Tata Steel, on the European front, anticipates lower realisations in both the UK and Netherlands due to annual contract renewals at the calendar year-end.

Growth in housing prices to moderate: India Ratings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing prices are likely to rise 3-4 per cent next fiscal on high base effect and better supply, according to India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

The rating agency expects the housing price rise to taper in the 2025-26 financial year. Ind-Ra expects property prices to increase 5-6 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in 2024-25 fiscal, then moderate to 3-4 per cent YoY for 2025-26, due to base effects and new launches.

Prices surged 21 per cent YoY in 2023-24 with old stock cleared and existing inventory largely liquidated, the agency said.

Ind-Ra has maintained a neutral outlook for the residential real estate sector for the next fiscal.

"Growth in bookings is likely to reduce significantly due to the high base, high prices and a likely slowdown in the luxury segment," it said.

The residential real estate market is expected to register a strong performance in 2024-25, where the sales growth will be around 17 per cent YoY in terms of area sold (square feet



of area sold) and around 15 per cent in terms of units sold for the top eight real estate clusters. This growth will be largely driven by the premium and luxury segment sales.

"FY26 is likely to see contin-

ued positive growth in bookings, although at a slower pace due to the base effect and moderation in affordability. Among the top eight cities, the National Capital Region, Bengaluru, and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region are likely to remain relatively resilient in bookings, except for the luxury segment," said Mahaveer Shankarlal Jain, Director, Corporate Ratings, Ind-Ra.

Developers might continue to experience positive growth in collections and operating cash flows, leading to a sustained strong balance sheet,

78 pc employees aim for prioritising family: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Amid debate over striking a work-life balance and L&T chairman SN Subrahmanyam recommending a 90-hour work week, a report has revealed that 78 per cent of employees interviewed said their aim is to prioritise family.

According to global job site Indeed's 'Future Career Resolution' report there is a significant shift in the priorities of Indian employees, with nearly four in five (78 per cent) stating they aim to prioritise family time with spouses, children

and parents over career advancement in 2025.

Employees want less stress and more focus on mental well-being while being in well-paid jobs that they enjoy and offer flexibility for family and personal interests, it added.

"We're definitely seeing a shift in what matters to Indian workers. More and more people are telling us they want to find a better balance between work and home life. While earning more is important, the dream career for most isn't about moving up the ladder - it's about feeling secure, being paid

fairly, and having benefits that actually make a difference," Indeed Marketing Director (Australia, India and Singapore) Rachael Townsley said.

The report is based on a survey by predictive analytics system Valuvox on behalf of Indeed between December 2024 and January 2025, reaching 6,126 employees and job seekers across Singapore, India, Japan, and Australia. The sample size included 2,507 respondents from India.

It further found that alongside the evolving priorities, Indian employees remain opti-



mistic about the job market as well. Over half (55 per cent) of respondents express confidence in the expansion of opportunities in emerging sectors and

industries, said the report.

In preparation, employees are actively working to build diverse skill sets and are staying flexible and are open to new job opportunities or relocations, it added.

This optimism extends to the adoption of advanced technologies, with 55 per cent of respondents expressing confidence in the growing potential of AI and tech-driven fields.

Key skills identified for career advancement in 2025 include emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, data literacy and analytical abilities

and advanced technology competencies such as AI, machine learning, and coding, it stated.

Over 59 per cent of Indian employees also expect to see a shift in hiring practices, with a stronger focus on skills-based recruitment over traditional degree-based qualifications. This trend reflects the growing demand for job roles in emerging industries such as technology and AI, where practical expertise and hands-on skills often outweigh formal educational credentials, said the report.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G LIMITED
Tender Notice No. 05/24-25 of DEE/OP/HUZURNAGAR
Tenders are invited from eligible vendors for various electrical works in Huzurnagar Operation Division. Details are available at www.tgsouthernpower.com, Ph. No.: 9491056402.
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Sd/- DIVISIONAL ENGINEER, OPERATION, HUZURNAGAR.

hmda Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority
4th Floor, Swarnajayanti Commercial Complex, Ameerpet, Hyderabad
PUBLIC NOTICE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
File No. 011754/HMDA/0111/SNP/2024
Sr. Keshavprasad Subhan Reddy previously applied for approval of Residential Building permission for consisting of S8+5 Upper floors of Plot no. C15/1, C15/2, C15/3, C15/4, C15/5 & C15/6 in Sy.No. 180 situated at Indreshwar Village, Palancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District to an extent of 1565.1 Sq.Mtrs and same was approved by the office vide File No. 059/02/SNP/R1/US/HMDA/0112023, dt. 01.06.2024.
*Note application dt. 29.09.2024. Sr. Keshavprasad Subhan Reddy applied for Approval of Revised Residential Building Permission consisting of S8+5 Upper floors of Plot nos. C15/1, C15/2, C15/3, C15/4, C15/5 & C15/6 in Sy.No. 180 situated at Indreshwar Village, Palancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District to an extent of 1262.64 Sq.Mtrs.
Therefore, the Flat owners / Purchasers / Agreement Holders of said Building of Plot nos. C15/1, C15/2, C15/3, C15/4, C15/5 & C15/6 in Sy.No. 180 situated at Indreshwar Village, Palancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District may file their objections, suggestions in writing if any within (15) days to this office from the date of publication of this notice. If no objections / suggestions are received within the above period the request of the applicant for approval of Revised Residential Building of Plot nos. C15/1, C15/2, C15/3, C15/4, C15/5 & C15/6 in Sy.No. 180 situated at Indreshwar Village, Palancheru Mandal, Sangareddy District to an extent of 1262.64 Sq.Mtrs will be considered based on the material papers available with this office.
Sd/- For Metropolitan Commissioner, Director, Planning II, HMDA.
R.O. No. : 345/PNCL-ADM/C15/011/2024-25

SIRCILLA MUNICIPALITY
Dist.: Rajanna Sircilla, T.G.
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM PLANNING/ENGINEERING DESIGN CONSULTANTS
R. No. E11MCSPP/201/2025. Date: 28-01-2025
Sircilla Municipality invites an "Expressing of Interest" (EOI). From reputed Engineering and Planning Consultants for preparation of comprehensive design and detailed project Reports for Comprehensive, storm water drains, markets, slaughter house, Parks, street furniture, Grave yards, markets, stadiums, Conservation of water bodies, road corridors, road junctions and other developmental works, duly integrating already implemented schemes. The interested consultants may contact commissioners, Sircilla Municipality during office hours for details.
Eligibility: 1) Should be employed with Government of Telangana or Minister of Urban Development, Government of India as DPR preparing consultants. 2) Should have worked not less than Rs.20.00 crores project in single URB in Telangana State. 3) Team leader of project should have not less than 20 years of experience in preparation of Detailed Project Report. 4) The firm should have Rs.5.00 Crores of average as financial turnover in last five years. 5) The firm fulfilling/Agreeing above conditions only need to apply. 6) Commissioner, Sircilla Municipality has all powers to accept or reject the sealed E.O.I. 7) Schedule will be issued by submission of DD drawn in favour of Commissioner, Sircilla Municipality for Rs.5000.
The interested experienced consultants are requested to submit the expression of interest in the form of technical bid and required documents to this office by 31-01-2025 up to 2.00 pm. Bids will be opened on 31-01-2025 at 4.00 pm. Any other details contact on engineering section, Sircilla Municipality in Working hours.
Sd/- Commissioner Sircilla Municipality
R.O. No. : 875/PNCL-ADM/C15/011/2024-25. Dt. 28-01-2025

Parde Ke Peechhey is a tribute to 'velvet curtains'

Spanning five decades, Ila Arun's career in theatre, film and music has been marked by her ability to break stereotypes and amplify women's voices. As she launched her autobiography *Parde Ke Peechhey* here in Hyderabad, *The Pioneer* got in touch with her as she speaks of the emotional moment of launching it at the 'Razia Baig Series' and more insights on the book

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

An actor, singer and what not! Ila Arun's illustrious career, spanning over five decades, has made her one of the most iconic figures in India's cultural landscape. With a commanding presence on stage, a distinctive voice that resonates across genres, and an unwavering determination to challenge norms, Ila has redefined the boundaries of theater and music. In her deeply personal and reflective autobiography, *Parde Ke Peechhey*, she invites readers into the heart of her extraordinary journey. From



the struggles she faced to the triumphs she celebrated, Ila's story is a testament to her relentless passion for the arts and her dedication to breaking barriers along the way.

The book launch, held as part of the Remembering Razia Baig series, was a deeply emotional event for Ila. Razia Baig, a figure known for her dedication to education and cultural empowerment, held a special place in Ila's heart. Reflecting on the significance of the occasion, Ila shared, "This series is such a heartfelt tribute to Razia Baig Sahiba. She was a self-made woman, a homemaker, yet a pillar of support for teachers and education. Launching my autobiography as the first event in her memory was deeply touching. She had always supported my plays, and I'm certain she would have been proud of this book." Ila added, "Razia Baig was a great supporter of theatre and a backbone for her husband's initiatives. 'Parde Ke Peechhey' is my book about my journey around the theatres, and getting it launched here couldn't have been a better opportunity to remember her. From watching my plays to my book being launched in her memory, it's such an honor."

The decision to write *Parde Ke Peechhey* was not one that Ila took lightly. Over the years, she had been approached multiple times to share her story, as publishers often seek motivational tales of overcoming adversity and building a legacy. Ila reflected on the offer: "Publishers are always looking for stories that resonate with people - whether from cricketers, writers, or entertainers. They want to know how someone pursued their dreams, overcame challenges, and built a legacy. For years, I hesitated, unsure if I wanted to take this on, but eventually, I realised my journey could inspire a wide audience."

For Ila, the

book is not just a recounting of her life but a message for dreamers of all ages. "Whether it's young girls just starting out, teenagers looking for guidance, or older generations who've followed my career, this book is for everyone. It's a reminder that no matter where you come from, dreams are achievable if pursued with dedication and honesty."

The book also sheds light on the societal hurdles Ila faced as a young woman in theater. "When I started, theater wasn't a respectable career, especially for women," she recalled. "My family didn't fully support it, and financial constraints were always a challenge. But I refused to give up. My love for the stage and my passion for storytelling kept me going." She added that her mother had been her biggest support throughout this journey. Ila also shared the significance behind the title 'Parde Ke Peechhey', revealing that while some suggested a more commercially appealing title like 'Choli Ke Peechhey', her intention was far more symbolic. Ila chose 'Parde Ke Peechhey' as a tribute to the iconic velvet curtains that have defined her theatrical journey. For the unaware, 'Choli Ke Peechhey' is the renowned song Ila Arun sings for the film *Khalnayak*. She explained that the title was meant as a tribute to the "velvet curtains" of the theater, which have always been an integral part of her journey in the world of performing arts.

A key theme of 'Parde Ke Peechhey' is the role of teachers and mentors in shaping Ila's life. She speaks fondly of those who have guided her along the way. "From the beginning, my path has been closely

linked with teachers. Whether they were mentors in music, theater, or life itself, they helped me become who I am today. Teachers have the power to transform lives, and I wanted to honour them in my story."

Ila's collaboration with Anjula Bedi, who co-wrote the book, was also an important part of this process. "I write in Hindi, but the autobiography is in English. Anjali has been a long-time collaborator, and she ensured that the language captured my voice authentically. She's been a part of my theater family and understands me deeply, which made her the perfect choice to help bring my story to life."

Reflecting on her career, Ila shared that her work in theater, television, and film has been transformative. "I started with plays like *Mandi in Boondi* and *Sushman* in Pochampalli. Later, I moved to films and television, working with directors like Rajkumar Santoshi on *The Legend of Bhagat Singh*. Each experience enriched me as an artist," she said. Her collaborations with legends like Shabana Azmi and Sunny Deol have been particularly special to her.

"Working with Shabana has been a joy. We share a close bond, and I've always admired her craft," Ila shared. She also recalled the deep emotional impact of the recent loss of her teacher and guide. "My last meeting with him, where I wished him on his anniversary, is one of the golden moments of my life."

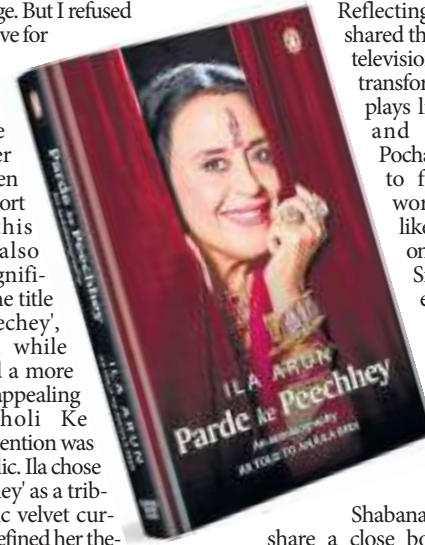
A consistent thread in Ila's work has been her focus on amplifying women's voices. "All my plays center on women's stories because they resonate deeply with me. Women play so many roles—mother, daughter, wife, friend—and I've tried to bring those complexities to life on stage. Through

my work, I've always sought to give a voice to their struggles and triumphs," she explained.

Writing 'Parde Ke Peechhey' was not without its challenges, and Ila was determined to be honest and unfiltered in her storytelling. "I didn't want to romanticize my struggles or manipulate the narrative. Life is a mix of joy, sorrow, failure, and success, and I wanted to show all of it. Some people advised me to present only the glamorous aspects of my life, but I felt that would be dishonest," she said. "My readers deserve the truth, even if it shows my flaws or vulnerabilities." This commitment to honesty has resonated deeply with readers, who have praised the transparency and approachability of the book. "One of the biggest compliments I've received is that the book feels transparent and approachable. People have told me they can hear my voice as they read it, and that's exactly what I wanted. It's not just about my achievements; it's about the journey, the mistakes, and the lessons I've learned along the way."

When asked if there was a specific moment from her book that she would like to relive, Ila found it difficult to choose. "There are so many—teasing my mother about not remembering my birthdate, my last meeting with Sombhu Mitra, or even the early days of my career when everything was new and exciting," she shared. However, she also emphasized the importance of embracing the present. "People often say they want to relive their golden moments, but I believe in living in the moment. Life is full of opportunities, and every moment is a chance to create something meaningful."

In conclusion, 'Parde Ke Peechhey' is much more than an autobiography. It is a celebration of resilience, passion, and authenticity. Through her words, Ila Arun reminds readers of the power of dreams and the importance of staying true to oneself. As she continues to captivate audiences with her art, her book stands as a timeless testament to her remarkable journey—a journey that proves the stage of life is as transformative as any performance.



Hisaab Barabar is a call to action: Kirti Kulhari on fighting financial scams

PNS| HYDERABAD

The much-anticipated *Hisaab Barabar*, starring Kirti Kulhari, is set to premiere on ZEE5, offering audiences an engaging narrative that delves deep into the world of financial scams. The film takes a close look at how deceitful practices within financial institutions impact ordinary people while weaving an entertaining and thought-provoking story. At the heart of *Hisaab Barabar* lies a powerful message about empowerment and awareness. Speaking about the film's intent, Kirti Kulhari shared, "I hope we all become more conscious of how the systems we are part of might be misleading us and preventing us from seeing the bigger picture. Beyond that, I hope the film provides the common man with an understanding of how financial scams work. That said, it's not just an informative film—it's also packed with fun, memorable characters and performances. My wish is for viewers to enjoy watching it while also walking away with something meaningful."

While the subject of financial scams has been explored in films before, *Hisaab Barabar* offers a fresh perspective through its unique tone and narrative approach. According to Kirti, what sets the film apart is its accessibility and simplicity in storytelling. "The way everything is explained in the film makes it relatable and easy to understand," she explained. "It also shows how one person's courage can challenge corruption and inspire others to stand against wrongdoing. The collective power of people united for a cause is remarkable, and the film emphasizes this beautifully."

For Kirti, the empowering message of the film resonates strongly. "Being a common man doesn't mean being powerless. When you stand for what's right, others will join you. Intentions rooted in goodness can lead to meaningful change. The film is both a call to action and an entertaining experience, showing how these scams operate while ensuring viewers remain engaged throughout."

With its gripping storyline, compelling performances, and impactful themes, *Hisaab Barabar* promises to be both an eye-opening and entertaining watch. The film balances the complexities of financial deception with a narrative that inspires resilience and collective action.

By shedding light on financial fraud while maintaining a light-hearted and engaging tone, *Hisaab Barabar* strikes a chord with audiences, encouraging them to question, learn, and take a stand against unethical practices. As *Hisaab Barabar* gears up for its premiere, viewers can expect not just a cinematic experience but also a lesson in empowerment and vigilance. Don't miss this riveting drama, streaming exclusively on ZEE5.



SUPERFOODS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WINTER IMMUNITY

Winter has arrived and so has the common colds, coughs, and seasonal flu. While it's a good idea to wrap yourself in warm clothes and sip soup sitting in blankets, your immune system still needs to be fortified by the right kind of superfoods to let you stay ahead of the season's ailments. Superfoods possess nutritional density, which can sail you right by the hard times of the season by building your immunity and overall well-being.



THE POWER OF SUPERFOODS

Superfoods are nature's pot of gold as far as health is concerned. They are nutrient-rich and built with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that fight off infections. Some superfoods that are suitable for winter:

• Citrus Fruits

Citrus fruits are champions in vitamin C. Oranges, lemons, and grapefruits enhance the production of white blood cells, your body's main defense against infections.

• Ginger and Turmeric

Both ginger and turmeric are anti-inflammatory and are antioxidant-rich. Gingerol in ginger acts against harmful pathogens, assisting curcumin in turmeric to balance immune responses. Include these two in soups or teas to provide simultaneous warmth and immunity.

• Nuts and Seeds

Almonds, walnuts, and chia seeds are filled with the right minerals needed by your body for immune cells and anti-inflammatory phenomena like vitamin E, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids. A handful of nuts keeps the common cold and flu away.

• Green Leafy Vegetables

Spinach and kale contain a lot of vitamins A, iron, and folate, which are not only good immunity boosters, but also maintain the skin's first line of defense against germs by providing proper blood circulation.

• Probiotic-rich foods

Yogurt and fermented foods like kimchi, dosa, idli, and kanji, improve gut health, the home to 70% immunity of the human body. Probiotics strengthen the composition of the gut microbiome, thereby reducing the chances of infection.

• Stay Hydrated and Balanced

Winter usually dampens thirst, but it is also necessary to ensure adequate hydration as it helps in transport of essential nutrients and removal of toxin from the body. Warm herbal teas and soups also help to stay balanced in terms of fluid levels.

• Conclusion

Incorporating these superfoods into your daily diet can significantly bolster your immune system. Remember, good nutrition is a consistent effort, not a quick fix. This winter, put first these natural immunity boosters to keep your health shining through the cold days.

(The author, Dr Ridhima Khamsera, is a Clinical Dietician.)

what's brewing?



● Chandrasekhar and Vani

● Anupama Parameswaran

Viyara Fine Silver Jewellery showroom was inaugurated by Actress Anupama Parameswaran at Jubilee Hills Checkpost Hyderabad. The event was attended by SV Krishna Reddy, Justice Dr VRKK Sagar, along with Managing Director V Lalith Kumar.



● Joshitha



● SV Krishna Reddy



Spaceadhyaan hosted Planetary Parade Observation event under the directorship of Padmasri Naidu, successfully hosted a rare celestial event, where four planets aligned in a stunning configuration. The event, which drew enthusiastic participation from students and the public, will be extended for three more weeks, providing a unique opportunity for astronomy enthusiasts to witness the beauty of our solar system.



The Osmania University Inter-Collegiate Handball Championship 2024-25 concluded successfully at the LB Stadium. The two-day tournament, organised by Villa Marie College for Women, witnessed intense competition among 11 participating teams. First place was secured by Villa Marie College for Women, 2nd place St Francis College for Women, 3rd place St Ann's College for Women and 4th place went to Government College of Physical Education



Celebrating 10 years of excellence, innovation, and trust, Vernon Skin Clinic marks a milestone in transforming lives through world-class skincare and aesthetic solutions. Attended by actor Suma Kanakala, the grand launch of the expanded facility reflects the clinic's unwavering commitment to empowering clients with confidence and self-love. As we step into the future, Vernon Skin Clinic continues to set new benchmarks in skincare and trichology, offering personalised care and advanced technology to everyone."



● Suma



The reception ceremony of Syed Ashwaq Ali held at a Star hotel was a grand affair. City famous personality Syed Babar and famous businessman Mehboob Valiullah attended and blessed the couple.



PARTY

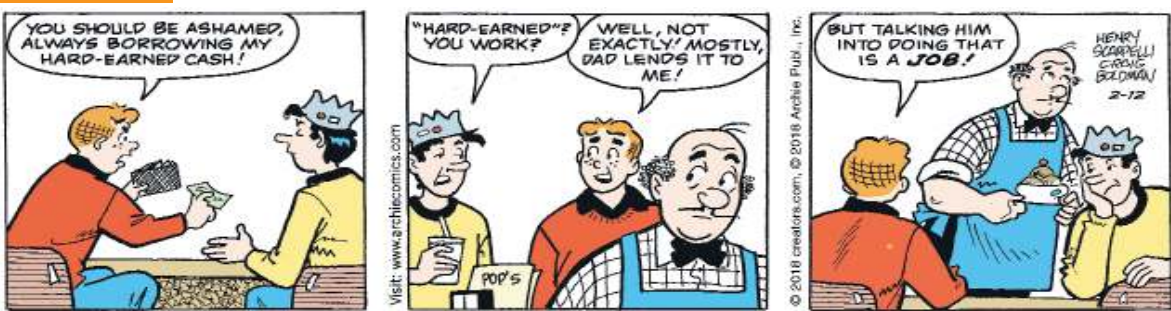
Photos by - SV Chary



ASBL Springs hosted the Run For Unity marathon in Pocharam, attracting over 800 participants. This event underscored ASBL's commitment to promoting an active and healthy lifestyle while bringing together residents and local communities. The marathon's timely scheduling on Republic Day reflected the brand's dedication to fostering unity and wellness within the community.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



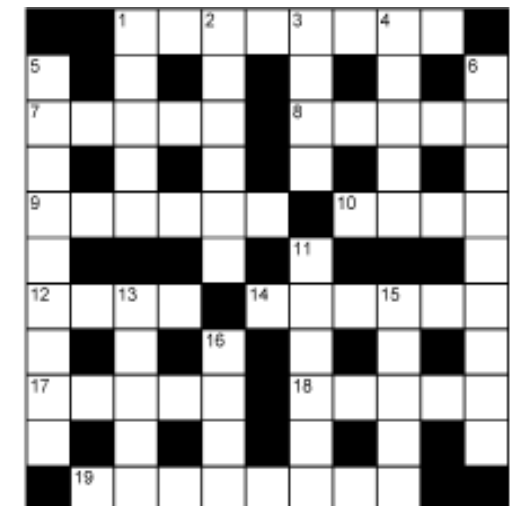
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



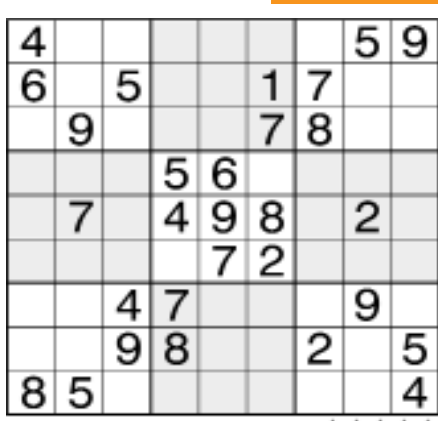
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Very good indeed
- A leader of a tribe
- Chefs
- A religious holiday every year
- A large continent
- A ship's tall pole
- The country just north of the USA
- A female relation
- A wild dog from Australia
- Opposite of strength
- Worshipped statues
- Yelling loudly and shrilly
- A moving staircase
- A rider's seat on a horse
- Part of a stage play
- Opposite of uncles
- A pointed top of a mountain

DOWN

- Journeys
- A roof beam
- An ancient South American



GINGER MEGGS



Pawan Kalyan is always a Power Star: Vishnu Vardhan

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Senior Tamil actor Karthik's son Akash Murali made his debut with the Tamil film 'Nesippaya' directed by Vishnu Vardhan. Popular director Shankar's daughter Aditi Shankar played the lead in this romantic action drama, which was released in Tamil on January 14. Now, the makers are releasing the film in Telugu with the title 'Premistava' and the big production house Mythri Movie Makers is distributing it in Telugu.

Interestingly, Vishnu Vardhan directed a Telugu film 'Panjaa' with Pawan Kalyan as the lead actor. Though the film was not a commercial hit, the action episodes were made in very stylishly and became talk of the industry at that time. It was released in 2011, and after many years Vishnu Vardhan is promoting his film 'Premistava' in Telugu.

Vishnu Vardhan said that he is very happy to be here in the city. Talking about the film, he said it is a love story with drama. "After seeing today's generation of love stories, do they respect their relationships, are they taking it seriously? Even though they are breaking up their relationships so easily, I was surprised after seeing it. My film deals mostly with these issues and both Akash and Aditi performed very well," said Vishnu Vardhan. He added that after seeing them doing some scenes in the shoot he got emotional. "That means both did really well," he said. The director first attempts a love story with a lot of drama with this 'Premistava'.

Talking about the other artistes, he



Director Vishnu Vardhan is in the city to promote his film *Premistava*, but earlier he directed Pawan Kalyan with *Panjaa*. He talks about Pawan and his film

said he really begged Hindi actress Kalki to do a role in this film. "I need an Indian-based foreigner. So, I requested Kalki to do the role. She was born and brought up in Pondicherry. She speaks Tamil very well. So glad that she was part of my film," he said about her.

Talking about the music, he said Yuwan Shankar Raja is providing music for all his films. "He was my classmate from seventh class. Actually, he was junior to me and I told him that if I became a director, I want to put him as music director. He turned music director at the age of 16 and after eight years I became a director. From then he is giving music for all my films," said Vishnu Vardhan.

He said generally the producer may reject this script as it needs to shoot in some European countries. But producer Sneha Britto accepted the script. "I roped in a few technicians from Europe, like the cameraman from Canada and also the action director from Spain. This film has come out with good quality, because it is the combination of all the technicians and other people who worked for it," said Vishnu Vardhan.

Talking about his Telugu film 'Panjaa' and working with Pawan Kalyan, he spoke highly about Pawan Kalyan. "He is always a Power Star. You have to be straight and very direct and he likes people with those qualities, because he is like them. He is powerful and at the same time he is like a child. If he needs anything, or belief, excitement, he is very strong and adamant. He is very correct. It's very long and I am in touch with him > I am very happy that he became a Deputy CM," said Vishnu Vardhan about Pawan Kalyan.



There is no point talking about Vishal's health: Varalakshmi

Tamil film 'Madha Gaja Raja' was released after 12 years and it was a surprise hit. Vishal played the lead actor, while Anjali and Varalakshmi are the female leads. The film was supposed to be released in 2013, but because of some financial problems, it was delayed for a long time and released during Sankranti festival. Now, the makers are planning to release the Telugu version of the film and both the leading ladies Varalakshmi and Anjali are promoting it in Hyderabad. The Telugu version is hitting the screens on January 31.

Talking about the film, Anjali says that she was surprised to see the film released finally after many years. "Vishal is a very dear friend to me and he worked very hard in this film. He is a fun person. I hope that the Telugu version is also a good success," said Anjali.

For Varalakshmi this is her second film, but released now. "I was new at that time and now I have grown up as an actress, so there is a difference in acting. Though the film was delayed in the release I did very well and I am happy about it," said Varalakshmi.

When one person asked her about Vishal's

health and when he came to this film function he was literally shivering and the pictures are viral. When asked about that, did she meet him after getting to know about his health? "He is now in good health and you are stuck with when he gets a fever. After that he participated in the success meet and he is very good now. Your question is irrelevant," said Varalakshmi. She added that she learnt a lot from Anjali. "Anjali is a fantastic actor and I learnt a lot from her. This is my first commercial break as a lead actress and I played a western girl in it," said Varalakshmi.

The film completed nearly 13 years back and if the same story comes to them, will they accept it now? "It depends on the director, if Sundar sir approaches us then we will definitely do it. It's a complete entertainer and one can enjoy every scene," said Anjali. The actress is disappointed as her 'Game Changer' did not do well, but her Tamil film is a hit. "Result is not in my hands. When a good character comes to me, I do and I promote it well. Though 'Game Changer' has not done well commercially, people appreciated it as a 'good cinema'," said Anjali.



Ram Charan has not committed any film for the losses

There are many reports that actor Ram Charan is committed to do a film for producer Dil Raju. Charan's latest film 'Game Changer' directed by Shankar and produced by Dil Raju is a disaster and the producer incurred huge losses with this failure. So, some reports say that a kind-hearted Ram Charan told Dil Raju that he will do a film for him to recover the losses from 'Game Changer'.

But the Ram Charan team completely denied these reports and said that it is false. The team said he didn't commit any new film to anyone. "He is now working with director Buchi Babu Sana for a film in which the shooting is going on. After this,

he signed a film with director Sukumar and he didn't commit to any other film," said the team.

The team also gave updates on Buchi Babu and Ram Charan film. The next schedule will take place from Wednesday onwards. The title is not announced yet as they tentatively called it RC16. The team also clarified that AR Rahaman is working for this film. "There are reports that Rahaman has come out of this project, which is not true," said the team.

Janhvi Kapoor is playing the female lead in this Buchi Babu film, while Kannada actor Shivaraj Kumar and Jagapathi Babu are playing important roles.

Naga Vamsi is trolling after *Daaku Maharaja* flops in Hindi



Nandamuri Balakrishna and director Bobby Kolli combination 'Daaku Maharaja' released in Telugu on January 12, received good response. Naga Vamsi is the producer, while Urvashi Rautela, Shraddha Srinath and Pragya Jaiswal are the female leads. The film was released in Hindi on January 26, and there were no takers for it. The film is a big flop in Hindi. Usually, Telugu films with action backdrop do well in Hindi, but 'Daaku Maharaja', an action drama, is a disaster in Hindi. Bollywood actor Bobby Deol is also there in a key role, but still the film collected only a few lakhs of rupees in the first two days, according to trade analysts.

Though there are a few actresses who did Hindi films along with big actors like Bobby Deol, the makers expected some good openings. But the film is a total disaster in Hindi. Now, many people are trolling the producer Naga Vamsi on the social media. Remember, producer Naga Vamsi, in a discussion, he very badly commented about Hindi films, business and also few producers. Now, many take this 'Daaku Maharaja' flop and trolling Naga Vamsi, added to his earlier remarks. They are trolling that 'your film didn't collect even Rs 25 lakh after its release'.



Small artistes not working without vanity van: Brahmajji

Senior actor Brahmajji is playing a major role in the upcoming film 'Baapu'. Daya is the director and the film is releasing on February 21. The teaser was unveiled by actor Vishwak Sen at a function in Hyderabad. On this occasion, Brahmajji thanked Vishwak for attending the event. "For many films, Chiranjeevi used to come to give his blessing. Now, for small films Vishwak Sen is supported very well. Though he is busy with his upcoming film 'Laila', he came to this function to support our film," said Brahmajji about Vishwak Sen. He added that because of actors like Vishwak, the industry is doing well.

Talking about the film 'Baapu', Brahmajji said that director Daya narrated the story to him and he liked it very much. "Though there are some budget constraints, we wanted to complete it and we did it. These days, a small actor

is also not coming to shoot if there is no vanity van. But we are all working for this film in a village near Karimnagar without any vanity van," said Brahmajji. He added that everyone in this film worked hard to do a good film.

"This is not a regular film; it's a different story and I know Telugu audiences encourage good films and I hope this film also does well," said the actor. He also thanked Rashmika for releasing the teaser on her social media. "She didn't ask the film details. When we asked her, she immediately said 'yes' and released the teaser. She is very talented and at the same time very down-to-earth person," said Brahmajji about Rashmika.

Aamani, Dhanya Balakrishna, Balagam Sudhakar, Avasara and Mani Egurla also played important roles in it. Dhruvan provided the music, while it is produced by Raju and Ch Bhanuprasad Reddy.

Thala locks the release date

Amma Rajasekhara started as choreographer and then turned into a film director. He made a few films as a director and the popular one is 'Ranam' with Gopichand. The director is now introducing his son Amma Ragin Raj as the lead actor with the film 'Thala'. He is also introducing Ankita as the female lead. The film is all set to hit the screens on February 14. Actors Sohail and Ashwin Babu attended as guests and supported this film.

"Many in the industry thought that I was completely out and finished. But I am here promoting my film. Actually, my mother is not well, so there is this big gap and now I am free," said Amma Rajasekhara. He said that he wanted to make a movie when his son was a kid. "Since then I didn't sleep and I was thinking of a story related to a boy. I want a good story, so I thought about it and it has mass elements," said Rajasekhara.

He added that in his real life he told his wife Radha 'I love you' and the next day he married. "I don't want this kind of story. So, I thought of it differently planned with mass elements and whoever wants something new, they will definitely enjoy my film 'Thala' with my son as lead actor," said Rajasekhara. He added that he worked for nearly two years on this story. The trailer was released on Tuesday and it shows that the film has a lot of action, but it is different.

Rajasekhara thanked producer Srinivas Goud for producing this film. "My entire family is indebted to him. He is releasing the film in Telugu and Tamil in a grand way, which is really a great thing. Later, his son Ragin Raj spoke about his parents and said that they worked hard for this film."



Bumrah named ICC men's Cricketer of the Year

PTI ■ DUBAI

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Tuesday won the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC men's Cricketer of the Year after delivering "a master-class in skill, precision, and relentless consistency" across formats in a record-shattering 2024.

The 31-year-old was adjudged the ICC's Test Cricketer of the Year on Monday and was also named in the Test Team of the Year last week.

"Jasprit Bumrah has been honoured with the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year at the ICC Awards, recognising his extraordinary 2024, in which he dominated opponents in the longest as well as the shortest format of the game," the ICC said.

Bumrah played a key role across formats for India as he became the fifth winner of the award from the country after Rahul Dravid (2004), Sachin Tendulkar (2010), Ravichandran Ashwin (2016) and Virat Kohli (2017, 2018).

"The pacer's brilliance was reflected in his ICC Test Bowling Rankings, where he crossed the elusive 900-point mark, ending the year with a record-breaking 907 points — the highest for



any Indian bowler in history," the governing body stated in its tribute.

"Across formats, Bumrah's 2024 exploits were a masterclass in skill, precision, and relentless consistency,

as he shattered record after record and cemented his place as the world's premier fast bowler," it added.

Bumrah had a stellar year 2024 in which he played a decisive role for

India with 15 wickets in their title-winning campaign in the T20 World Cup in the Americas and also became the fastest Indian pacer to reach 200 Test wickets with a bowling average of

sub-20, which is also the best in history.

"I'm very happy with the honour, but I don't let myself get too high. My feet are on the ground and I'm really happy with the accolades that I get," the amiable bowler from Gujarat said in a video statement.

At the T20 World Cup, his 15 wickets came at an astonishing average of 8.26 and an economy of just 4.17, making him the Player of the Tournament.

He also garnered 900 points in ICC Test bowling rankings and ended the year with 907 points, which is the highest for any Indian bowler in history.

In Tests, Bumrah finished the year with 71 wickets in only 13 matches at an average of 14.92, which was also the second best among fast bowlers to former India captain Kapil Dev's 100 wickets in 1983.

The right-arm pacer was at the peak of his performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under towards the end of 2024, snaffling 32 wickets in five Tests.

Overall, Bumrah claimed 77 wickets in the World Test Championship points table for India but the two-time finalists failed to make a third appearance in the summit clash for the 2023-25 cycle.



Paarl Royals defeats Durban's Super Giants

PTI ■ PAARL

Paarl Royals registered a thrilling six-wicket victory over Durban's Super Giants to complete a historic five-game 100 per cent home record at Boland Park in the SA20 here. It is the first time any team has gone unbeaten at home throughout the league phase of the competition with the previous best being Joburg Super Kings' four victories and one washout at the Wanderers in the maiden season.

Durban's Super Giants have now been eliminated as last season's runners-up can now no longer qualify for the playoffs.

The cream of South Africa's young talent Luan-dre Pretorius and Kwenza Maphaka played a major role in the Royals maintaining their stranglehold on top of the Betway SA20 table. The Royals moved to 28 points.

The teenage duo did the double act with Maphaka delivering his best performance of the competition thus far with fine figures of 2/22 to restrict DSG to 143/7 before Pretorius clubbed 43 off 29 balls (5x4s, 1x6) in the successful run-chase.

Pretorius reclaimed the top run-scorer position from his opening partner Joe Root, who was trapped LBW off the first ball of the innings on Monday evening, by becoming the first batter to pass the 300-run mark in the ongoing season.

Royals have certainly unearthed new young batters this season and Rubin

Hermann also continued his dream debut SA20 season with a superb 59 off 51 balls (4x4s, 2x6s) to set up the chase. Hermann showed great innovation, particularly against the spinners as he swept and reverse-swept with confidence.

But it was left to all-rounder Dayyaan Galim to smash the winning six with just two balls remaining to take the Royals over the line. Maphaka delivered his best performance of the competition thus far with the teenager striking upfront and at the death.

He sent down a peach that burst through Brandon King's defence upfront before flummoxing Heinrich Klaasen with a slower ball. Super Giants will be ruing a season where luck has deserted them with Keshav Maharaj's team not finding form when they needed it most.

Australian T20 World Cup winner Marcus Stoinis tried his best to make an impact with his maiden SA20 half-century off just 35 balls (4x4s, 2x6s).

He finished unbeaten on 55 and partnered with Kane Williamson (45 off 36 balls) in a 53-run partnership to lift DSG to 143/7. Stoinis was particularly severe on Root taking 24 runs off 11 deliveries sent down by the off spinner, including two maximums in the 18th over. Royals' only concern will be the fitness of captain David Miller, who left the field during DSG's innings and did not come out to bat in the run chase.



Trisha scores first ever century in women's U19 T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Opener Trisha Gongadi etched her name in the record books by scoring the first ever century in women's U-19 T20 World Cup that powered India into the semifinals with a 150-run victory over Scotland here on Tuesday.

Trisha, who was deservedly adjudged player of the match, slammed 110 not out off just 59 balls with the help of 13 boundaries and four maximums after India were sent in to bat by Scotland at toss.

The Indians will next face England in the first semifinal on January 31.

She was ably supported by fellow opener and wicketkeeper Kamalini G (51 off 42 balls) and Sanika Chalke, who remained unbeaten on 29 off 20 balls as India scored 208 for 1 in 20 overs.

In reply, Scotland cut a sorry figure as they were bowled out for 58 in 14 overs.

For Scotland, openers Pippa Kelly (12) and Emma Walsingham (12) were joint top-scorers.

Left-arm orthodox spinner Ayushi Shukla was the star for India with the ball returning with figures of 4 for 8, while left-arter Vaishnavi Sharma (3/5) and Trisha (3/6), after her exploits with the bat, also performed with the ball in hand.

The 19-year-old Trisha, who hails from Telangana, has been in tremendous form in the tournament and notched up two 40-plus scores before the big knock on Tuesday. Meanwhile in other matches of the day, Bangladesh finished their campaign in style with an easy 10-wicket victory over the West Indies.

The Asian side performed well with the ball to restrict the West Indies to just 54 for 6 from their 13 overs and cruised past the victory target inside nine overs on the back of an unbeaten 25 not out from opener Juairiya Ferdous.

Bangladesh won the toss and elected to bowl at Bayuemas Oval after tireless effort from ground staff in the nation's capital, with spinner Nishita Akter Nishi collecting three wickets.

Anisa Akter Soba claimed a pair of wickets as the West Indies struggled in the conditions and Bangladesh eased home to move up to third place on the Group 1 standings.

In another Group 2 match, no play was possible in Sarawak, with heavy rain leaving the Super Six contest between South Africa and the USA abandoned without a ball being bowled.

South Africa had already qualified for the semi-finals of the event, while USA picked up a point to move to third in Group 2.

Hobart Hurricanes wins Big Bash

PTI ■ HOBART

Mitchell Owen hit the co-fastest century in Big Bash League history as he rushed the Hobart Hurricanes to their first Australian Twenty20 domestic title.

Owen's 39-ball ton on Monday tied Craig Simmons' century on balls from 2014. He had a chance to break it but a boundary fell just short of the rope.

After a shift up the order to opener, the 23-year-old Owen has become one of the brightest Australian prospects in short-form cricket. He raised his bat for a half-century in just the fourth over, powering on with 11 sixes — a BBL final record — and six fours.

"That was next-level hitting that made it pretty easy for us at the end," teammate Matthew Wade said. The sellout crowd of 15,706 at Bellerive Oval chanted Owen's name as the run-rate required ticked down.



"That was super special," Owen said. "The most special thing is hearing everyone in the crowd enjoying it. And I'm so grateful, I'm so proud that we could bring this trophy to Tassie (Tasmania)."

Midway through his innings, Owen became the BBL's leading run-scorer for the season, overtaking David Warner.

Owen was out for 108 off 44 balls in the 11th over at 139-3. Chasing 183 to win against

the Sydney Thunder, Hobart reached 185-3 with 35 balls to spare and won by seven wickets.

Hobart's success in the 14th BBL left the Melbourne Stars as the only side yet to win the title.

French club Lyon to hire Paulo Fonseca as its new coach

PTI ■ LYON (FRANCE)

Lyon will hire Paulo Fonseca as its new coach, a person with direct knowledge of the deal has told The Associated Press. The person requested anonymity because the deal has yet to be announced officially.

Fonseca will replace Pierre Sage, who was fired despite leading the French league club out of a crisis last season and having the team within reach of a Champions League place in this campaign.

Sage's dismissal on Tuesday followed a 1-1 draw with Nantes in Ligue 1 over the weekend and left many observers baffled. Sage had rapidly become a fans' favorite after guiding Lyon from the bottom of the standings to a sixth-place finish last season.

And after 19 matches this season, Lyon is sixth in the



league — just four points off a Champions League spot — and in a good position to qualify for the knockout stage of the Europa League.

Lyon, however, said the decision to part ways with Sage was a "sporting choice." Lyon is owned by American businessman John Textor, who visited the club in person this week.

Textor, a 59-year-old digital media and entertainment

entrepreneur, owns several teams, including in Belgium (RWD Molenbeek), and Brazil (Botafogo) as part of his multi-club model that is becoming more common in soccer.

Textor had been in regular contact with Fonseca in recent years and previously tried to hire him. The former Lille coach has been out of a job since he was fired by AC Milan on December 30.

Mumbai announce 16-member squad for clash against Meghalaya

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Defending champions Mumbai announced their 16-member squad sans India stars Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shreyas Iyer to take on Meghalaya in their must-win Ranji Trophy Elite Group A clash starting here on Thursday.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Suryansh Shedge and Atharva Ankoekar have been called back.

Mumbai, who are coming off a five-wicket defeat against Jammu and Kashmir last week, will be without the India stars Jaiswal, Iyer and Rohit, who all have joined the Indian team for the upcoming ODI series against England starting on February 6.

These three players had featured in the sixth round game here at the BKC Ground, with Rohit and Jaiswal following the BCCI diktat to play domestic cricket regularly.



Iyer, on the other hand, has been a vital cog in Mumbai side for domestic competitions across formats this year.

The trio is also a part of the Indian squad for the Champions Trophy next month. Karsh Kothari, who also featured in Mumbai's playing XI against Jammu and Kashmir, was not picked.

The defeat against Jammu and Kashmir has dented Mumbai's title defence as the Ajinkya Rahane-led side will now be required to record a big victory

— with a bonus point — against Meghalaya and hope that Baroda beat the table-toppers Jammu and Kashmir in their backyard.

Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Ayush Mhatre, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Amogh Bhatkal, Siddhesh Lad, Akash Anand (wk), Hardik Tamore (wk), Suryansh Shedge, Shardul Thakur, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester D'Souza, Royston Dias, Shreyas Gurav, Atharva Ankoekar.

Virat Kohli checks in at Kotla for training with Delhi team

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At exactly 9am when his jet black Porsche zoomed in through the Feroz Shah Kotla ground's 'Virender Sehwag Gate', it was homecoming for Delhi's very own Virat Kohli, who checked in for a training stint with his first-class team after more than 12 years. Save for pacer Navdeep Saini, all other 18 members of Delhi's squad had only seen him on TV and grown up listening to the tales of how 'Cheeku', the cherubic talent, became the 'King' of Indian cricket.

In the last 15 years, Delhi's 'Cheeku' became a hazy memory as he turned into the most commercially viable brand in global cricket, the face that ICC sold in its Olympic bid presentation.

On Monday, he was at his home ground for around three hours and had everyone in his vicinity hypnotised. Whether the young impressionable players, or seasoned head coach Sarandeep Singh or batting coach Bantu Singh

— all of them evidently wanted to be close to him.

Though courteous with all, the former India skipper seemed more comfortable with his former U-19 coach Mahesh Bhati, who is also the administrative manager of this team.

"Woh badlaa nahi hain. Usko chhole-poori pasand the aur humne mangaake rakhha tha. Usne bola chole puri nahi khawonga (He loves chhole poori, but he said he didn't want it)," a senior DDCA (Delhi and Districts Cricket Association) official told PTI.

What he did seek out after practice ahead of his first Ranji appearance in 12 years from January 30 was also an old favourite.

"Practice ke baad purane time ki tarah kadhhi chawal khaya sabke saath (He had kadhhi chawal with everyone)," revealed the official. Everyone shadowed the icon like it was an event. Ranji Trophy matches are covered by a select bunch of domestic cricket faithfuls but on Monday, the numbers



trebled. Every move by the 'King' was followed. The two coaches -- Sarandeep and Bantu -- were by his side throughout and it would be difficult for photographers or videographers to edit them from the frame. "I remember it was Ajit

Chaudhary, the erstwhile manager of the Delhi Ranji team, who nicknamed him 'Cheeku' back in 2006-07," DDCA secretary Ashok Sharma, fondly called 'Mama', recollected as if it was yesterday. He has seen Kohli since he first came here for U-15 trials. **The Training**

It was an occasion to remember for the Sanat Sangwans, Arpit Ranas and Siddhant Sharmas that Kohli it was business as usual. It seemed he had left the star outside the ground and had turned up as their very own 'Virat Bhaiya'.

The 35 minute warm-up before an inconsequential final game against the Railways was the longest that the senior team has spent to loosen up prior to net session.

There was a 15-minute game of football and he had some sprints down the wide right, also enjoying a laugh or two.

But once the net session started, the game face was on.

He quietly walked to the nets where skipper Ayush Badoni was batting.

Seeing Kohli walk towards the nets, Badoni was visibly conscious before Kohli told him: 'Ayush tu batting karle, phir dono switch karke karenge (Ayush you keep batting. After sometime, we will take turns to bat).' He spent close to an hour at the nets. At first, he took throw-downs where he kept playing the pull shot.

Once he had done enough knocking, Kohli entered the spinners' nets where he faced left-arm spinners Harsh Tyagi and Sumit Mathur. A few balls did grip and stop but there wasn't much bite in their bowling.

Ditto for pacers Navdeep Saini, Money Grewal, Rahul Gehlot and Siddhant Sharma.

Unlike India nets, Kohli hardly looked troubled although he did practice leaving a lot of deliveries. With the Champions Trophy round the corner, Kohli was seen trying to play a lot beside the line of deliveries.

Of late, he is concentrating on back-foot play and trying to increase his range of shots square of wicket. Obviously, before trying out in Champions Trophy, domestic cricket is good ground for a 'Pilot Episode'.

"He was very happy with the surfaces. He said, practice wicket, centre strip everything is of top quality. I told him credit to our young curator Ankit Datta. He said, 'Bhaiyya mazaa aa gaya batting karke. Kal phir aaonga

batting karne,' Bhati said. Advice for little Kabir and his teammates

A chubby fourth standard student Kabir had come with a sketch of 'Uncle Virat', who once played Delhi U-17 and U-19 cricket with his father Shavez back in the day.

"We had a bat contract with BDM and would go together to pick bats. We have been friends for long," Shavez said.

When Kabir was asked about his conversation with Kohli, he said: "I asked him how can I play for India? He said, 'You have to practice hard. And it shouldn't be your Papa telling you to go to practice. You should tell Papa, I have to go to practice.'"

And for his young Delhi colleagues, the advice was vintage Kohli.

"Delhiwaale ho, dum dikhao. Shuruat accha kiya phir thande padh gaye. Positive khelo jaise Delhiwaale khetle hain," he said referring to Delhi's inconsistent season. In Form or out-of-form, 'King' will remain a 'King'.