

# the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY  
The pioneer

"Bhakti Vikramarka, Uttam Kumar Reddy and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy eyed the CM seat and these ministers are not allowing the CM to work. Uttam is putting checks on CM Revanth Reddy everywhere. Uttam informing everything to Delhi high command. Uttam is the reason for the appointment of Meenakshi Natarajan as AICC incharge of Telangana. I know very well about Uttam and about his master plans. Earlier, CM only used to pay tax to Delhi; however, now four are paying tax to Delhi"



- Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJP leader P2

**J&K resolution on special status not rejected: CM Abdullah**



**CRAFTING SONIC WORLDS ACROSS GENRES**



**Kingston will transport audiences into a magical world, says GVPRAKASH**



**DON'T MISS...**

**14 Maoist surrender in Kothagudem dist**

As many as 14 members of the banned Communist Party of India-Maoists (CPI-M) party surrendered to the police on Monday. The surrender took place at the Bhadradi Kothagudem police headquarters in the presence of officers from the 81 BN and 141 BN CRPF. The surrendered Maoists stated that they had decided to surrender to the police to lead a peaceful life, after learning about the development and welfare activities carried out by the police in tribal areas and the facilities offered by the ...

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**India, Belgium for defence ties**

India and Belgium on Monday discussed the possibility of bilateral maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and looked at ways to enhance defence industrial ties. Ways to bolster India-Belgium defence engagement figured prominently at a meeting between Belgium's Princess Astrid and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The two sides also agreed to explore the setting up of an institutionalised defence cooperation mechanism between the two nations. Belgian Defence Minister...

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**'Sufficient wheat stock to meet PDS'**

Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra on Monday said the government has sufficient wheat stock to meet the requirement of welfare schemes and for market interventions to keep prices under check. He said the Centre has offloaded 30 lakh tonnes of wheat to flour millers and processors this fiscal year under the open market sale scheme (OMSS) and stressed that benefits should be passed on to consumers. In a written message read at a conference organised by Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India...

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**New Zealand to face SA in semifinal**

Senior batter Tom Latham said New Zealand will take confidence from their recent win over South Africa in the tri-series when they face the same opponents in the semifinal of the Champions Trophy (CT) in Lahore on Wednesday. New Zealand lost to India by 44 runs in their final Group A match here on Sunday but Latham said it would have no bearing on the semifinal. Recently, New Zealand successfully chased 305 against South Africa in Lahore and then went on to win the tri-series, beating Pakistan...

-SPORTS



Union Minister Bandi Sanjay offers sweets to Karimnagar-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak Teachers constituency MLC election winner Malka Komuraiah after results were declared at Karimnagar

**BJP wins one MLC seat, PRTU wins other**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP won one MLC seat while PRTU won second. In the Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam Teachers' MLC constituency, PRTU candidate Sripal Reddy emerged victorious. The election process saw a dramatic turn when UTF candidate Alugubelli Narsireddy was eliminated, altering the expected outcome. Sripal Reddy secured the required quota of votes and won with 13,969 votes. The returning officer officially declared him the winner.

Medak-Nizamabad-Karimnagar-Adilabad Teachers' MLC constituency, BJP candidate Malka Komuraiah secured victory. The total number of votes polled stood at 25,041, out of which 24,144 were valid and 897 were invalid. The winning quota was determined at 12,073 votes, which Komuraiah surpassed by securing 12,959 votes. His nearest rival, Vanga Mahender Reddy, trailed with 7,182 votes, while other candidates, Ashok Kumar and Kura Raghotham Reddy, secured 2,621 and 428 votes, respectively.

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Reacting to the victory, BJP MP Bandi Sanjay said, "With deepest gratitude, we dedicate this victory in the Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar Teacher MLC election to the incredible teachers who stood by us and Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi. To every BJP Telangana karyakarta who braved lathis, who fought for 317 GO with unwavering resolve—this win is yours too. Many congratulations to Malka Komuraiah for this win.

We need strict monitoring to prevent violations, he asserted. He urged the Centre to install teleme-

# CM seeks fair share of Krishna waters to TG

Meets Union Jal Shakti Minister Patil, objects to Godavari Bankacharla Project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy urged Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil to allocate a fair share of Krishna waters to Telangana.

During a meeting in Delhi, Revanth pointed out that while 70% of the Krishna River basin lies in Telangana, the state gets only 34% of the water, while Andhra Pradesh, which has only 30% of the basin, gets 66%. He emphasised the need for justice in water allocation and pointed out that the existing formula is unfair. He also requested that the NDSA report on the Medigadda Barrage should be given to the state soon.

The Chief Minister demanded that the Centre should determine Telangana's net water share in the Godavari River before deciding on Andhra Pradesh's irrigation projects. He accused the Krishna River Management Board (KRM) of bias, stating that Andhra Pradesh has been illegally drawing more water than allocated to it. This year too, Andhra Pradesh has taken more than its share, causing losses to Telangana, the CM said.

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Chief Minister Revanth Reddy meeting Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil in New Delhi on Monday

**He accused the Krishna River Management Board (KRM) of bias, stating that Andhra Pradesh has been illegally drawing more water than allocated to it. This year too, Andhra Pradesh has taken more than its share, causing losses to Telangana, the CM said**

try systems at all major Krishna River irrigation projects and offered

Telangana's willingness to bear the cost if necessary.

Revanth also raised concerns about the delay in approving Telangana irrigation projects. He pointed out that despite submitting the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme in 2022, the Centre has been stalling approvals while clearing the Upper Bhadra project in Karnataka, which is still under judicial review.

Similarly, the Sitarama and Sannakka Sagar projects have not been granted permission. He requested the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to speed up approvals for these projects.

Highlighting violations by Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister told Patil that AP had unilaterally designed the Godavari-Bankacharla Project without approval from the CWC, Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), or the KRM.

He demanded that Telangana's share in the Godavari's net water flow should be determined and approvals for

Continued on Page 2

**Revanth criticising only Kishan, not Modi: BRS**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leaders lashed out at the Revanth Reddy-led Congress Government, accusing it of deliberately stalling irrigation projects in Palamuru.

"He went to New Delhi, met Modi, and came back only to attack BJP leaders like Kishan Reddy while never criticising Modi," the BRS pointed out.

Former minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, along with former MLAs Anjaiah Yadav and Jaipal Yadav, addressed the media at the Telangana Bhavan, asserting that Palamuru owes

Continued on Page 2

**SLBC tunnel rescue ops speeded up**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Attempts to clear the debris at the SLBC tunnel accident site have been intensified with the speeding up of conveyor belt repairs to facilitate the removal of accumulated soil.

The Special Chief Secretary for Disaster Management, Arvind Kumar, along with Nagar Kurnool District Collector Badavath Santosh, reviewed rescue operations at the tunnel inlet office on Monday.

During the review, officials overseeing the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) Project rescue mission like TSSPDCL CMD Musharraf Ali, Nagar Kurnool SP Vaibhav Gaikwad Raghunath, Colonel Parikshit



Mehra, NDRF officer Prasanna, Mines Rescue team, SDRF, Fire HYDRAA representatives, SCCL Services, Continued on Page 2

**LRS applications to be processed within 10 days after payment**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has issued an amendment allowing the registration of unregistered plots in unauthorised layouts, provided at least 10% of the plots in such layouts were sold through a registered sale deed before August 26, 2020.

This amendment applies irrespective of whether the owners applied under the Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS) 2020 or not. The HMDA said that LRS applications with completed payments will be processed within 10 days, ensuring

swift resolution for applicants.

As a major relief to applicants, the government has announced a 25% rebate on regularisation and pro-rata open space charges for those who complete the payment before March 31, 2025. This move is expected to encourage quicker compliance and legal recognition of unauthorised plots.

In cases where an LRS 2020 application has been rejected, the government has assured that 90% of the amount paid will be refunded, with only 10% deducted as processing charges.

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TPCC Chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud addressing the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud asked BRS leaders to first write about the scams of BRS leaders in BRS MLC Kavitha's pink book.

**'Kavitha must first write about BRS leaders' scams in her pink book'**

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Mahesh asked Kavitha to reveal whether she was protesting as the government is strengthening women's self-employment.

"Doesn't Kavitha see that sewing kits are being distributed to women from Muslim and Christian communities? Is Kavitha protesting because of allocating petrol bunks to women so that they can stand on their own feet? Is Kavitha protesting because the job of sewing uniforms for children in schools and hostels is being given to women? Is Kavitha protesting because Indiramma is giving

houses to 4.50 lakh poor people? Is Kavitha protesting because Indiramma Raj is providing self-employment to women through women's canteens?" he said.

Targeting Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy, Mahesh said that Kishan has been playing the role 'Saindhan' and 'blocking' the development of Telangana. Kishan has been spewing venom on Telangana regularly as part of the secret deal between the BJP and the BRS, he said. Mahesh said the state's development will move forward if the Centre extends cooperation.

**PROMISES MADE TO WOMEN**

**Kavitha launches postcard protest against Cong**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kavitha launched a postcard protest against the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government, demanding immediate implementation of the promises made to women. She warned that if the government fails to announce a plan by March 8, women all over Telangana will intensify their protest.

Kavitha accused the Congress of 'betraying' women with false promises and vowed that the BRS would

bury the party if it continued to mislead them.

Kavitha, along with Telangana Jagruthi, sent 10,000 postcards to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy demanding action.

She declared that if the government fails to make an announcement by March 8, the movement will escalate. She warned that women in 10,000 villages would mobilise and send lakhs of postcards to Sonia Gandhi, reminding her that Congress had used her name to



secure the votes of women.

"The Congress sought votes in Sonia Gandhi's name, and if they fail to deliver, we will flood her with lakhs of

Continued on Page 2

**White-collar job market sees 4% growth in Feb: Report**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian white-collar job market maintained its growth momentum in February this year, recording a 4 per cent year-on-year increase, mainly led by recruitments in the Artificial Intelligence (AI-ML) and hospitality sectors, a report said on Monday.

The job market has begun the new year on a positive note, reporting positive growth in both January and February.

"Moreover, considering that February last year saw an 8 per cent de-growth, it looks even more promising this year around. While AI/ML hiring continues its buoyant trend, it is also encouraging to see sectors like Hospitality driving growth," Naukri Chief Business

Officer Pawan Goyal said, quoting the Naukri JobSpeak Index report.

The Naukri JobSpeak is a monthly Index that tracks Indian job market trends and hiring activity based



on new job listings and recruiter searches on Naukri.com's resume database.

Further, the report revealed that the other sectors which demonstrat-

ed positive performance in February include real estate (9 per cent), with FMCG (8 per cent), pharma (5 per cent), and GCC (2 per cent), while banking continued to decline at 6 per cent. While IT hiring remained flat at an overall level, the sector showed signs of improvement considering the steep decline it witnessed throughout 2024, the report noted.

Emerging IT cities like Jaipur (19 per cent) and Coimbatore (10 per cent) posted strong growth in IT hiring and bucked the trends.

Meanwhile, the report found that overall, fresher hiring remained flatfish in February 2025.

However, the hospitality and telecom sectors witnessed a 23 per cent and 11 per cent growth in fresher recruitment, respectively, it added.

**Overcome hearing loss with tech: Min Surekha**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Forests, Environment, and Endowments Konda Surekha emphasised the need to overcome hearing impairments through technological advancements while stressing the importance of supporting individuals with hearing loss. Speaking at an event on World Hearing Day, she stated that hearing is a divine gift, but some individuals suffer from impairments due to various factors, making it society's responsibility to extend support and awareness.

Addressing the gathering at Maa ENT Hospital in Jubilee Hills, where she attended as the chief guest, the minister unveiled a special awareness poster, watched cultural performances by children who had successfully undergone cochlear implant surgeries, and felicitated doctors for their contributions in



Minister for Forests, Environment, and Endowments Konda Surekha at meeting in Hyderabad on Monday

treating hearing-related conditions. Konda Surekha highlighted the growing concern of hearing disabilities worldwide, citing WHO estimates that over 5% of the global pop-

ulation (approximately 430 million people) suffer from hearing impairment, a number projected to rise to 700 million by 2050. She stressed that early detection and timely treatment

can prevent at least 60% of childhood hearing impairments.

Referring to the successful completion of over 700 cochlear implant surgeries at Maa ENT Hospital, the minister lauded the medical team for their humanitarian service. She assured government support for initiatives benefiting the hearing-impaired, emphasizing the need for collaborations between public, private, and voluntary sectors to enhance awareness and accessibility of treatments.

Konda Surekha also credited former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy for initiating Arogyasri, which ensured affordable healthcare for all. She revealed plans to propose the inclusion of ENT surgeries under Arogyasri, discussing the matter with the state cabinet and the Chief Minister to make advanced hearing treatments more accessible.



# 'Small contractors' bills of Rs 100 cr pending'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography, Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy, assured representatives of the Builders' Association that he would take up the issues faced by small contractors with the Chief Minister.

A delegation from the Builders' Association met the minister on Monday, stressing that bills worth nearly Rs 100 crore for works executed by small contractors remained unpaid. They urged the government to release payments, emphasising that projects could be completed faster if funds were cleared.

The delegation also pointed out that bills for roads constructed under Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, CRIF, and non-plan allocations were still pending. They requested the minister to ensure timely payments for these



projects as well.

Responding to their concern, Venkat assured that he would discuss the matter with the Chief Minister and lobby for clearance of the bills by March last week. However, he also asked the contractors to ensure there were no delays in the execution of ongoing projects, stressing that roads are a necessity and that poor roads cause problems for the public.

Builders' Association representatives welcomed the Minister's prompt response and expressed appreciation for his assurance.

Those present at the meeting are former State Chairman of the Builders' Association DVN Reddy, former Chairman Devender Reddy, Vice Chairman Ravinder Reddy, Treasurer Santosh Reddy, Sampath Rao, and Krishna Rao, among others.

# CPI demands Cong to give one MLA quota MLC seat as per pact

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CPI Telangana State secretary Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao demanded the Congress party to give one MLA quota MLC seat to their party candidate.

Sambasiva Rao said that the Congress assured CPI that it will give one MLA and two MLC posts. As per the assurance, Congress gave one MLA post and now the Congress party has to give two MLC seats to CPI, Sambasiva Rao said. He said that the Congress party has to give one MLA quota MLC seat now and the

second MLC seat later.

On Monday, CPI leaders-Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, Chada Venkat Reddy and others had a meeting with the TPCC Chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud at Gandhi Bhavan.

They discussed the allocation of MLC seats. Later, speaking to the media, Sambasiva Rao said that they will meet Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to discuss it.

Kunamneni said that the CPI will field their candidates where their party is strong. He made it clear that they will move forward with the Congress if it is ready for it.



# Malka's victory is historic verdict given by the teachers: Bandi

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

BJP candidate Malka Komaraiah's victory in the Karimnagar-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak Teacher MLC election is a historic verdict given by the teachers, said Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar. He stated that this verdict was possible due to the trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He dedicated the victory to the teachers and Modi.

At Ambedkar Stadium in Karimnagar, Bandi Sanjay congratulated Malka Komaraiah, who won a massive victory as the Teacher MLC from the Karimnagar-Nizamabad-

Adilabad-Medak constituency. He was accompanied by MLA Payal Shankar, former MLA NVSS Prabhakar, former Mayor Sunil Rao, BJP Karimnagar district president Krishna Reddy, State spokesperson J Sangappa, and TAPAS State president Hanumantha Rao. Speaking to the media, he said,

"Salutations to all the teachers who delivered this historic verdict. This is not an ordinary victory. Malka Komaraiah secured a massive win with a margin of 5,900 votes. There is faith and confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Across the country, the intellectual community stands with Modi. The recent budget,

which provided tax exemptions up to ₹12.75 lakh for employees, played a role in this verdict. This verdict has boosted the morale of BJP workers.

Earlier, teachers elected AVN Reddy as an MLC against KCR's reckless governance. The struggles and protests against G.O. 317, where BJP workers even faced police lathi charges, have now resulted in Malka Komaraiah's victory. Those who belittled TAPAS have received a fitting reply through this verdict. Today, the hard work of BJP workers and leaders has paid off. They dedicated all their time and effort to Komaraiah's success.

# BC Commission visits injured student, extends financial aid

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The BC Commission visited the residence of Kumari Gadd Lavanya, a 10th-grade student from the Telangana Mahatma Jyotiba Phule BC Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society, who attempted suicide on November 9, 2024, after allegedly being belittled by a teacher. The visit took place at Lakshmguda Village, Bombay Colony, Rajendranagar Mandal, Rangareddy District, where Lavanya is currently recovering from a spinal fracture that has left her unable to walk.

Commission Chairman G. Niranjan, along with members Rapolu Jayaprakash, Tirumalagiri Surender, and Rangu Balalakshmi, met Lavanya and her parents to assess her condition. Lavanya, who was undergoing emotional distress at school, shared that she felt unable to

confide in her parents, leading to the extreme step of jumping from the hostel terrace.

Her parents informed the Commission that she is undergoing physiotherapy and her recovery may take six months to a year. On behalf of the Gurukul Residential School, Principal K. Sriatha handed over financial aid of Rs. 1 lakh to support her treatment.

The Commission instructed the District Medical & Health Officer (DMHO) and Deputy DMHOs to ensure Lavanya receives continuous physiotherapy, an ambulance service for hospital visits, and necessary medications. Officials present during the visit included DMHO Venkateswarlu, Deputy DMHO Vijayalakshmi, RCO Madileti, and BC Welfare Officer Keshav Ram. Security arrangements were provided by Mailardevpally Police.

# 'Change of AICC incharge means change of CM only'

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

Bharatiya Janata Legislative Party leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy commented that the change of AICC incharge means change of Chief Minister only. The Congress high command has handed over the mission of change of Chief Minister of Telangana to newly appointed AICC incharge of Telangana Congress Affairs Meenakshi Natarajan.

Maheshwar Reddy said, "Meenakshi Natarajan is preparing ground to change the CM of Telangana. Change of CM is certain in the month of December. CM Revanth Reddy stated in the Wanaparthy public meeting that he will be CM for 10 years if women's blessings are on him. However, Revanth Reddy needs the blessings of a woman who came from Delhi instead of Telangana women if he wants to contin-

ue as the CM'.

In a chat with the scribes on Monday, Maheshwar Reddy alleged that CM Revanth Reddy and his Ministry has completely lost its way. The Ministers'

CM. Revanth Reddy himself stated that some are eyeing on his CM seat and that means-- it is clear that Rahul Gandhi hinted Revanth Reddy, he said. Maheshwar Reddy said,

**"Meenakshi Natarajn is preparing ground to change the CM of Telangana. Change of CM is certain in the month of December. CM Revanth Reddy stated in the Wanaparthy public meeting that he will be CM for 10 years if women's blessings are on him"**

behavior is as if they are on the shores of the Yamuna. Discussion is going on in the Congress party on U-Tax and B-Tax.

Maheshwar Reddy wondered at the behavior of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who scolded Prime Minister Narendra Modi all these days, and is praising PM Modi now. Maheshwar Reddy said that no minister is caring for the

Telangana. I know very well about Uttam and about his master plans. Earlier, CM only used to pay tax to Delhi; however, now four are paying tax to Delhi". Maheshwar Reddy alleged that Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy is collecting highest tax in the state. Srinivas Reddy has been saying 50-50 whatever land issue has been taken to him. The Congress MLAs were only talking about Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's activities. Jacharla MLA Anirudh Reddy changed his target from CM Revanth Reddy to Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, he said. Maheshwar Reddy questioned the CM to tell why he is not probing the allegations made in Mahabubnagar. He also questioned why Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, who used to be seen with CM Revanth Reddy, is not seen with the CM these days. There is no coordination between the Congress leaders, Ministers because of misbelief among them.

# Driver rams car into crowd in Germany's Mannheim, leaving 2 dead

PNS ■ BERLIN

Berlin, Mar 3 (AP) A driver rammed a car into a crowd Monday in the southwestern German city of Mannheim, and authorities said two people were killed and several others injured.

A 40-year-old German from the nearby state of Rhineland-Palatinate was detained and in a hospital after being injured, State Interior Minister Thomas Strobl of Baden-Württemberg, where Mannheim is based, told German news agency dpa.

Police would not immediately characterize the incident as an attack. Cars have been used as deadly weapons in several acts of violence in recent months in Germany. "indications of a second perpetrator cannot be confirmed at this

stage of the investigation." They said there was no more danger to the public.

Police spokesperson Stefan Wilhelm said a driver drove into people on Paradeplatz, a pedestrian street downtown, around noon, when workers come for lunch breaks. Local media reported a carnival market was taking place, meaning more visitors than usual in Mannheim, with a population of 326,000.

Mannheim University Hospital said they were treating three people, two adults and a child, dpa reported. It was not immediately clear whether other hospitals received patients.

Images from the scene showed parts of the downtown area cordoned off, with a heavy police presence. Officers gathered round a badly damaged black car.

# SLBC tunnel...

Continued from page 1

and South Central Railway discussed the rescue ops and challenges at the site. Officials said the dewatering process is progressing rapidly, ensuring that the flow of water into the tunnel from all directions is controlled. Specialised machinery is being deployed to drain the water and facilitate rescue operations. Advanced technology is being used under expert supervision to remove the mud, silt and concrete debris inside the tunnel.

The review meeting also focused on overcoming operational hurdles in the rescue mission. Authorities are closely coordinating with 12 rescue teams and are taking steps based on expert recommendations.

Officials said that all possible steps are being taken to speed up relief operations, with advanced machinery working round the clock to clear the tunnel.

# 'BJLP leader Maheshwar making up stories'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Legislative Party (BJLP) leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy is making up stories during his chat-chats with the media, Government Whip Adi Srinivas said.

Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said on Monday that the CM will be changed next December and that Meenakshi Natarajan came to Telangana only for that.

In a video statement issued on Monday, Adi said that Maheshwar is not in a position to see the dissent among his own party MLAs and MPs.

Raja Singh, who is one of the eight MLAs the BJP has, is not coming to the BJP office. Moreover, Raja Singh has been saying that party leaders are conspiring against him and that he is ready to quit if the party wants him to do so. Three BJP MLAs are not interested in even meeting Maheshwar, he said. He

said that BJP MPs have opened their own shops. In fact, BJP leaders are fighting with each other to become the next Telangana BJP president, he said.

"Eatala Rajender's path is one and Raghunandan Rao's path is another and nobody knows what path Dharmapuri Arvind follows and nobody knows what Sanjay speaks. With all these loopholes in your party, how can you talk about our Chief Minister and ministers? Maheshwar, if you don't stop your parrot predictions, we will have to tell you about your future," Adi said.

He said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is working 18 hours a day and trying to solve the problems of the state. Even though the BRS looted the state, the Centre did not care. How can you criticise the state for not getting funds from the Centre? BJP leaders are talking ill about the government due to envy, he said.

# PM Modi to participate in three post-budget webinars today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Tuesday participate in three post-budget webinars, including on MSMEs and ease of doing business, via videoconferencing.

These webinars, scheduled for around 12:30 pm, are being held on MSME as an Engine of Growth; Manufacturing, Exports and Nuclear Energy Missions; Regulatory, Investment and Ease of Doing Business Reforms, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

The webinars will provide a

collaborative platform for government officials, industry leaders and trade experts to deliberate on India's industrial, trade and energy strategies, it said.

The discussions will focus on policy execution, investment facilitation and technology adoption, ensuring seamless implementation of the budget's transformative measures.

The webinars will engage private sector experts, industry representatives and subject matter specialists to align efforts and drive impactful implementation of the budget announcements, it said.

# BJP wins ...

Continued from page 1

This victory is a testament to the faith educators have in BJP and in Modi ji's vision for the future. Thank you, teachers! This is just the beginning. BRS and Congress, take note—the people have spoken!"

Counting for another seat where Congress and BJP fielded candidates in the Graduates MLC

Medak-Nizamabad-Karimnagar-Adilabad is awaited.

# Congress govt is working only to benefit Revanth & family : BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS senior leader and former minister G. Jagadish Reddy launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing him of failing to govern effectively over the past 15 months. Addressing the media at Telangana Bhavan, Jagadish

Reddy stated that the state administration has collapsed, with governance running in reverse gear and development indicators plummeting. He alleged that Revanth Reddy lacks sincerity in governance, has no commitment to the people, and that ministers themselves are clueless about their departments. "The

entire administration is functioning in a way that benefits Revanth Reddy and his family's assets, rather than solving people's problems," he remarked. Jagadish Reddy held the Congress government responsible for the SLBC tunnel tragedy, stating that despite ten days passing since

the accident, no substantial rescue work had been carried out. "The CM speaks without understanding the gravity of the situation, and instead of taking responsibility, he is resorting to abuse," he said. He dismissed Revanth's claim that BRS did not visit the site of the Srisaailam hydel project fire, pointing out

that he rushed to the spot within minutes of hearing the news. "Within 24 hours, we recovered dead bodies, provided Rs. 1 crore compensation, and offered government jobs to the families of the deceased. All records are with the government, and Revanth can verify them," he added.

# Kavitha launches ...

Continued from page 1

postcards demanding answers," she asserted. She accused Revanth of lacking concern for women's welfare and politicking instead of fulfilling promises.

Kavitha asked why the Congress which now claims to support women's empowerment failed to back the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill. She said that Telangana Jagruthi had staged protests in New Delhi for the Bill long before Sonia or Priyanka Gandhi spoke about it.

Kavitha demanded to know why the eight Congress MPs from Telangana remained silent on women's issues in Parliament. "Why is the Congress not pressuring the Centre to implement women's reservation?" she asked.

Kavitha ridiculed Revanth's claim that his government would make one crore women millionaires, comparing it to the government's underwhelming petrol pump scheme.

She argued that setting up one petrol pump per district would not benefit thousands of women and insisted that the government should prioritize making a direct monthly payment of Rs 2,500 to women

instead. She also reminded the Congress of its promise to provide scooters to all women aged above 18 and demanded that the scheme be launched on March 8.

Accusing the Congress of deceiving women on interest-free loans, Kavitha pointed out that a former Congress government had failed to implement them in undivided Andhra Pradesh. She insisted that the farm loan waiver limit should be increased to Rs 20 lakh, with immediate clearance of pending "Abhaya Hastham" funds.

She also criticised the government for halting the KCR Kit scheme, calling it a shameful act against maternal care.

Raising concerns about women's safety, Kavitha cited police reports stating that crimes against women have increased by 20%. She demanded a government review and an action plan to address women's security.

Kavitha urged the Congress government to increase the salaries for Anganwadi workers as promised. "Fill vacant Anganwadi posts created during KCR's tenure. Reimburse the fees of BCS, SCs, STs, and minority girl students as many parents have been forced to end their daughters' education due to the government's failure to reimburse fees," she said.

# CM seeks fair ...

Continued from page 1

Telangana's projects be granted without delay. He reminded the Centre that Telangana has already suffered due to Krishna delta ayacut adjustments and would not accept more injustice in the name of ayacut stabilisation.

Revanth stressed that Andhra Pradesh's Godavari-Bankacharla Project was never discussed in the Apex Council, where both state Chief Ministers are members. "We will not compromise on Telangana's water rights," he said.

He said the Union Minister said that the DPR of the Godavari Bankacharla Project was not submitted to them.

He urged the Centre to provide financial assistance under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) and PMRP-2024 for key projects, including the Palamuru-Rangareddy, Sitarama Lift

Irrigation Scheme, Modi Kunta Vagu, Chanaka-Korata Barrage Distribution System and the Chinna Kaleshwaram (Mukteshwara) Lift Irrigation Project.

He also sought interest-free loans for 50 years under the infrastructure development scheme to support irrigation projects in Telangana.

Regarding the Pranahita-Chevella project, Revanth told Patil that Telangana plans to construct a barrage at Tummidihetti and requested assistance in securing approvals from the Maharashtra Government for submergence-related matters.

The meeting was attended by Nalgonda MP Raghveer Reddy, Chief Minister's Secretary Manik Raj, Irrigation Department Secretary Rahul Bojja, Special Secretary Prashant Jeevan Patil, Engineer-in-Chief (O&M) Vijay Bhaskar Reddy and Telangana Bhavan Resident Commissioner Gaurav Uppal.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Panchami: Mar 03 06:02 PM to Mar 04 03:16 PM  
Shashthi: Mar 04 03:16 PM to Mar 05 12:51 PM

**Nakshatram:**  
Bharani: Mar 04 04:29 AM to Mar 05 02:37 AM  
Krithika: Mar 05 02:37 AM to Mar 06 01:08 AM

**Rahukalam:** 3:23 PM to 4:51 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 9:31 AM to 10:59 AM  
**Varjyam:** 01:53 PM to 03:23 PM  
**Gulika:** 12:27 PM to 1:55 PM  
**Amritkalam:** 10:12 PM to 11:40 PM  
**Ahhijit Muhurtham:** 12:04 PM to 12:51 PM

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 35°  
Humidity: 40%  
Sunrise: 6:32 AM  
Sunset: 6:23 PM

Updated: March 4, 2025 5:00 PM

# LRS applications ...

Continued from page 1

The procedural updates for LRS Applications say that applications involving plots within 200 meters of water bodies or lakes will be processed through the Revenue and Irrigation Department.

For plots that do not fall under restricted zones, the provisional LRS fee notice will be automatically generated, allowing applicants to benefit from the 25% rebate if paid by March 31, 2025. Applicants who choose to pay pro-rata open space charges at the time of building permission

will not be eligible for the rebate.

The LRS 2020 website has been upgraded to provide easy access for applicants to check their application status, approval proceedings, fee details, shortfall details and rejection letters. All these details can be accessed without logging in. A dedicated call centre has been set up at the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) office to assist applicants. It can be reached on phone 1800 599 8838.

The government has urged all eligible plot owners to complete their payments before March 31, 2025, to avail the rebate.

**Municipal Corporation Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar**

Phone No. (02492)233534-42,2348601-48 (P&N), Fax No.02492335233

**CORRIDGEM**

Reference No.:CSMC/2025/57 dated: 03/02/2025

Tender notice for Development of Project for Sports Complex and Commercial Shops under P&N at TV Centre NID in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar Municipal Corporation on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Basis. Situated at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar. Tender ID: 2025\_AMCA\_1145331\_1. Dated: 03/02/2025. Published in daily news papers and also on [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in). As per the above reference. Schedule of bid opening process of last date of submission 28/02/2025 is changed and extended to 10/03/2025 upto 16:00 hrs is considered. Schedule of Opening of Technical Bid, and for further details will be published on [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in) portal. Rest of the conditions remains unchanged.

Sd/-  
Municipal Commissioner & Administrator  
Municipal Corporation, CSMC



# City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | MARCH 4, 2025

03



## National Safety Day

By National Safety Council, Telangana  
Venue  
Ravindra Bharathi  
4-Mar-25 (9 am)

## Cultural Programmes

By Vamsee Arts Theatres  
Venue  
Ravindra Bharathi  
4-Mar-25 (1:30 pm)

## Tuesday Open Mic Comedy

Venue  
Trailing Ivy Cafe  
4-Mar-25 (8 pm)

## Tuesday Night With DJ Vivaan

Venue  
Insomnia  
4-Mar-25 (8 pm)

## Ladies Night With DJ Captain X

Venue  
Frat House Hyderabad  
4-Mar-25 (8 pm)

## Life sciences Pact between India, UK expected

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major boost to trade and investment, a pact between the UK and India in the fields of life sciences and technology is expected to make a significant contribution to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, according to Gareth Wynn Owen, Deputy High Commissioner to the Telugu-speaking states. As part of the broader Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions, which resumed on February 24, the UK and India are working towards a modern economic deal aimed at strengthening economic ties, creating jobs, and enhancing bilateral trade. With the UK and India ranked as the sixth and fifth largest global economies, respectively, their trading relationship is currently valued at over 41 billion, supporting more than 600,000 jobs.

"We want to take our trading relationship with India to the next level, and this trade deal will form the bedrock of this commitment. Tech and life sciences are two huge growth sectors for the UK, and with Andhra's and Telangana strengths in these areas, I'm

confident the Telugu-speaking states will significantly contribute to taking the commercial relationship to new heights," said Owen.

The UK government's industrial strategy, announced in October 2024, prioritises eight high-growth sectors, including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, digital technologies, and life sciences—areas that align closely with the expertise found in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

During a recent visit to India, UK Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds and Investment Minister Poppy Gustafsson announced 17 new export and investment deals across various sectors, including AI, professional services, and textiles. These agreements are expected to generate hundreds of jobs in the UK over the next three years.

With both countries deepening economic and technological cooperation, the Telugu states are poised to play a vital role in advancing the UK-India trade relationship, driving innovation and investment in AI and healthcare sectors.



A metro station with a skywalk

## Skywalks will be encouraged at Metro stations in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) Managing Director NVS Reddy announced that skywalks from metro stations to nearby commercial and residential complexes will be encouraged for safer pedestrian movement.

He noted that the state government aims to strengthen public transport to reduce private vehicle use and air pollution.

As part of this, the Comprehensive Mobility Planning meeting, led by HMDA Metropolitan Commissioner

Sarfraz Ahmed, decided to promote skywalk construction.

L&T has already built skywalks at Punjagutta, Hitech City, and Errum Manzil stations, connecting them to malls.

Similar structures link JBS and Parade Ground stations. Raheja has also built a modern skywalk at Rayadurg Metro Station, providing easy access to corporate offices.

HMDA's circular skywalk at Uppal Metro Station has proven useful, encouraging large-scale skywalk construction.

Reddy said private developers have shown interest, with projects

like a skywalk from Dr Ambedkar Balanagar Metro Station to Phoenix/Landmark Mall and another from LB Nagar Station to Vasavi Anandanilayam.

NVS Reddy noted that talks are ongoing for skywalks at Nagole, Stadium, Durgam Cheruvu, and Kukatpally stations. Interested companies can contact L&T Metro Rail's Station Retail Head, K V Nagendra Prasad, at 9900093820.

NVS Reddy also highlighted that all 57 Phase 1 metro stations have pedestrian-friendly facilities for road crossings and urged the public to use them for safe transit.



Patients waiting in queue at ENT Government Hospital of Koti in Hyderabad on Monday.

## Long queues: Patients face daily ordeal at ENT Government Hospital

DEEPIKA PASHAM  
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Patients at the ENT Government Hospital in Koti are struggling with long waits for essential medicines due to a shortage of pharmacists. With the recent transfer of the hospital's permanent pharmacist, only two contract pharmacists are managing the dispensary, resulting in patients waiting for nearly three hours to collect medications.

On Monday, as the world observed World Hearing Day, hundreds of patients, many suffering from severe ear pain, stood in long queues at the hospital. The facility sees nearly 1,500 patients daily, with a significant number of children suffering from pus formation in the ears due to untreated cold infections.

Krishnaveni, a patient's mother, described the ordeal, saying, "Since both my daughter and I are sick, my husband is standing in the queue for medicines. We usually arrive by 9 am, get an outpatient slip, see the doctor, and then wait in line for medicines. Since medicines to treat ear infections are expensive outside, we endure the long wait to get them here for free."

With summer temperatures rising, patients are struggling to find shaded areas while waiting. The hospital has separate queues for men and women, and an additional window is opened only if the rush continues.

Following the pharmacist's transfer, the hospital has submitted a proposal requesting either a replacement or a pharmacist to be deputed from district hospitals. "We have sufficient medicines in storage, but we lack pharmacists to distribute them."

We have requested the government to appoint more pharmacists and are also seeking support from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to fund essential medical equipment," hospital authorities said.

Despite operational challenges, the ENT Government Hospital in Koti has taken a significant step towards supporting children with hearing impairments. Dr Anand Acharya, Superintendent of the hospital, announced that the facility has received approval to perform three to four free cochlear implant surgeries for children from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.

"To mark World Hearing Day, we successfully conducted one surgery on Monday and have scheduled another soon," Dr. Acharya said.

Hearing development begins as early as the fifth week of pregnancy, and infants typically respond to sounds from birth. If a child shows no response to sounds by six months, it could indicate hearing impairment, which can be detected through newborn screening tests.

Government hospitals offer free cochlear implant surgeries for children below three years, while those above three can receive treatment under the CM Relief Fund. However, post-surgery speech therapy (Auditory-Verbal Therapy - AVT) is crucial for successful rehabilitation, as speech development depends 80 percent on therapy and 20 percent on surgery.

If therapy is followed correctly, children can develop speech abilities similar to those of their peers.

While the hospital continues its critical healthcare services, the shortage of pharmacists remains a pressing issue, causing inconvenience to thousands of patients.

## AIDSA launches campaign to end menace of quackery

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dental quacks often fail to sterilise instruments properly, leading to the transmission of serious infections such as Hepatitis B, C, and HIV, said All India Dental Students Association (AIDSA) and All India Dental Surgeons Association while observing Anti-Quackery Awareness Week.

This move aligns with the ongoing Anti-Quackery Awareness Week organised by AIDSA, aimed at raising awareness about the risks associated with quackery and promoting ethical dental practices across India. The All India Dental Students Association (AIDSA) and the All India Dental Surgeons Association (AIDSA - Surgeons Wing) have submitted formal letters to all state Dental Council of India (DCI) offices. These letters urge immediate and strict action against individuals practicing dental quackery



All India Dental Students Association and All India Dental Surgeons Association seeking action against quacks, in Hyderabad on Monday

across the country.

Dr MD Manzur, National President of AIDSA, said that the urgent need to eradicate dental quackery in India. He stated that unqualified practitioners pose severe risks to public health and tarnish the credibility of the dental profession. Dental quacks often fail to sterilise instruments properly, leading to the transmission of serious infections such as Hepatitis B, C, and HIV.

Incorrect treatments and the use of substandard materials have resulted in several patients developing oral cancers and other severe complications.

AIDSA urged every state government to follow the example set by the Telangana State Medical Council in combating quackery. The letters demand that state DCI offices enforce existing regulations more rigorously, initiate legal proceedings against offenders.

## Spinal health awareness campaign launched

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With 75 per cent of women suffering from spine-related problems, Her Healthy Spine, a long-term initiative to raise awareness and empower women to take care of their spinal health was launched on the eve of International Women's Day 2025. This alarming statistic highlights the urgent need for preventive spine care and early intervention for women.

Through Her Healthy Spine, the Centre for Spine and Sports Health (CSSH) aims to educate and encourage women to take proactive steps for a healthier spine.

The initiative will bring together medical professionals, fitness experts, and real-life champions to discuss preventive care, lifestyle changes, and innovative treatments for a pain-free life.

A special panel discussion will be

held on Wednesday at Kotak Pallela Gopichand Badminton Academy, featuring leading experts from Hyderabad.

Women juggle careers, households, and daily tasks, making them more prone to back pain and postural issues. The awareness about preventive spine care remains low. At CSSH, among 3,000+ clients treated, data shows a growing need for early intervention.

To address this, CSSH, a unit of nSure Healthy Spine Pvt Ltd, is driving Her Healthy Spine.

CEO and Co-Founder, Naresh Kumar Pagidimarry said that at CSSH, we focus on proactive, personalized, and preventive spine care. He noted by using AI-powered 'PhyGital' technology, we provide accessible Musculoskeletal (MSK) care for all.

## Medical clinic for transgenders closed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A medical clinic, running on a USAID fund providing dedicated services to transgender persons here, was closed allegedly in view of US President Donald Trump issuing an executive order for a funding freeze on foreign assis-

tance. Rachana Mudraboina, a transgender health expert at the Mitr clinic at Narayanguda here, said the health facility, run by NGO YRGcare, was dependent on USAID funding.

The clinic was closed about a month ago as USAID funding stopped after the executive

order was issued in January, Mudraboina claimed.

The clinic, established in 2021, is used to provide dedicated health services to transgenders, including HIV care and general health issues. The clinic used to receive funds to the tune of Rs 2.5 lakh per month, Mudraboina added.

## Man arrested for sexual exploitation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Jubilee Hills Police have arrested Pittu Srinivas Rao (39), an electrician from Madhapur, for alleged sexual exploitation under false promise of marriage and caste discrimination. The case, registered under Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 3(2)(v) of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

The complaint was filed by a Scheduled Caste woman, who alleged that the accused engaged in a physical relationship with her on the pretext of marriage but later refused to marry her, citing caste-based discrimination. The incident occurred in Venkatagiri, Yousufguda, and the FIR was registered on February 4.

Upon investigation, police established prima facie evidence against the accused. He was arrested on Monday, and his mobile phone was seized as material evidence. He was produced before the Court, which remanded him in judicial custody, following which he was lodged in Chanchalguda Central Prison. The Hyderabad Police have urged citizens to report such crimes without hesitation, assuring swift action to ensure justice.

## All set for Intermediate exams from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total number of 9,96,971 intermediate first and second-year students are set to appear for the Telangana Intermediate Public Examination scheduled to be conducted from March 5 to March 25. Of which, 4,88,448 are intermediate first year students. The second-year regular and private students are 4,40,788 and 67,735 respectively. The examinations will be conducted in 532 examination centres which include 400 Government colleges, Government sector Junior Colleges, Private Junior college Centres, and schools.

The timings are from 9 am to 12 pm, however as it is mentioned on the hall tickets that students must be inside the examination centers by 8:45 am, Telangana Board of Intermediate Education Secretary Krishna Aditya has clarified that students will be given grace time of five minutes to enter the examination centers until 9:05am and the rule of 8:45am is been for last seven years and it is only to relieve the students and prepare them to fill up the OMR sheet.

At a press conference organised on Monday on the arrangements of Intermediate



Board of Intermediate Education Secretary Krishna Aditya addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on Monday

Public Examination, The Board of Intermediate Education [BIE] Secretary Krishna Aditya added that the hall tickets are placed in the college logins and TGBIE's website which can be downloaded via the link sent to the registered mobile numbers.

Aditya advised the candidates to check out their allotted Examination Centres by scanning the QR code on the Hall-ticket.

Five to six CCTV cameras have been installed in each examination centre and they will be monitored in the command control room set up at the BIE office. This time, every answer sheet will

contain serial numbers. Smartwatches and other electronic devices are not allowed in the examination centres to prevent malpractice activities, said Aditya. For the smooth Conduct of examinations, a total of 72 flying squads and 124 sitting squads are arranged, added BIE.

All the question papers were sent to the respective police stations with armed escort.

Like previous years, even this time there will not be an online evaluation of the examination papers. The Secretary further said that Marathi and Kannada translators are also appointed to translate the questions.

## Sridhar Babu advocates inclusion of AI in curriculum

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Artificial Intelligence should be included in the education curriculum, and major changes will be made to the education system within the next 2-3 years, said Information Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu during a review meeting on education reforms at the State Secretariat on Monday. Principal Secretary of Education Yogita Rana, along with other senior officials participated.

Speaking at the meeting, Sridhar Babu said government schools, once known for producing talented students, are now in poor condition. He suggested studying the reasons behind this decline and making changes to compete with private schools. He also emphasised early exposure to artificial intelligence (AI),



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, along with Principal Secretary of Education Yogita Rana at a review meeting in Hyderabad on Monday

using it at the high school level to boost intelligence. Sridhar Babu recommended hiring consultants for practical suggestions. He criticised officials for neglecting school inspections and urged efforts to revive educational activities like excursions and competi-

tions. The Minister stated that the government is committed to improving school infrastructure and announced that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has decided to establish integrated schools to provide quality education for poor students.

Sridhar Babu also emphasised that the education department must create favorable conditions for these reforms. He noted that 30-40 government teachers from Gujarat go to Singapore yearly for training, and similar programmes should be introduced. He suggested studying education models from Finland, France, and the UK to improve standards.

He announced that the Singapore government has agreed to set up world-class institutions, and the government is ready to send teachers abroad for training.

Sridhar Babu instructed officials to develop necessary procedures, stressing that radical changes are needed. Despite high spending, results are lacking. He ordered a review of Delhi's government schools to implement better policies.



# Telangana

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | MARCH 4, 2025

04

## Youth slips from water tank, dies

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

A young man, under the influence of alcohol, climbed a water tank to protest against the alleged ill-treatment meted out to him, slipped and died at Godavarikhani in Peddapalli district on Monday. The youth, identified as Yathiraj Chandrashekar from Hanuman Nagar, created a scene by climbing the water tank near the local Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. He was reportedly protesting against some people who were allegedly rude to him near a liquor shop. Despite efforts by the local people and the police to convince him, he ignored them and eventually fell from the water tank, suffering severe injuries.

## GWMC cracking down on tax defaulters

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) is stepping up its efforts to meet fiscal targets through accelerated tax collections. However, there is a disappointment as the current tax collection stands at only 44 per cent of the annual target, prompting warnings to officials for failing to meet the set goals.

The GWMC covers a population of approximately 11 lakh people across 2.25 lakh houses, with over 30,000 assessments in the city, including residential complexes, apartments, commercial complexes and hospitals, besides theatres. This financial year, the city is tasked with collecting Rs. 117.26 crore in taxes from the Warangal Tri-Cities area, but so far, only Rs. 51.91 crore has been collected.

In response, GWMC officials have ramped up efforts to meet the tax collection goals. As less than



half of the target has been achieved, the field staff has been urged to increase their collection efforts. In some areas, properties have been seized, and significant defaulters have been targeted with special

action plans, including issuing red notices and seizing properties of those with longstanding dues. In line with directives from higher authorities, the staff is now going door to door to collect taxes.

GWMC Commissioner Ashwini Tanaji Wakade has set daily targets for the field staff, with each required to collect from at least 100 properties per day. The staff is working swiftly to meet these quotas, knowing that there will be serious consequences if the targets are not met. To further push the efforts, the Revenue Inspectors (RIs) and bill collectors have been specifically focused on tax collection. Additionally, campaigns are being conducted using jeeps, red notices are being issued, defaulters are being contacted through messages, and tax collection teams are visiting companies and industries with substantial outstanding dues.

Despite these efforts, there has been criticism that large defaulters are still being overlooked, and some allege negligence in the collection process by field staff. As the strategies and actions taken by the officers unfold, it remains to be seen whether these intensified measures will prove successful in achieving the tax collection targets.



Police officers with surrendered members of the banned Maoists party in Kothagudem on Monday

## 14 members of banned Maoist party surrender

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

As many as 14 members of the banned Communist Party of India-Maoists (CPI-M) party surrendered to the police on Monday. The surrender took place at the Bhadradi Kothagudem police headquarters in the presence of officers from the 81 BN and 141 BN CRPF.

The surrendered Maoists stated that they had decided to surrender to the police to lead a peaceful life, after learning about the development and welfare activities carried out by the police in tribal areas and the facilities offered by the government to surrendered Maoists through "Operation Cheyutha."

In the last two months, a total of 44 Maoists had surrendered to the police in the district. Police mentioned that the Maoist party has lost support among the tribal people and is now

resorting to instilling fear among innocent residents. The government would provide rehabilitation for those who surrendered, said District Superintendent of Police Rohit Raj. He urged those seeking a peaceful life to approach the police.

The surrendered Maoists including Errapalli, Revolutionary People's Committee (RPC) militia commander, Madivi Bhima, Errapalli RPC Chaitanya Natya Mandal (CNM) president Sodi Unga, and Kistaram area CNM commander Kovasi Nanda alias Srinu, surrendered to the police. Rohit Raj explained that during an Athmeeya Sammelanam event organised by the district police in January, where the family members of underground Maoist cadres and surrendered Maoists were invited, police officials highlighted the benefits of surrendering. This initiative resulted in 44 Maoists surrendering to the district police in the past two months.

## Panchayat Secretary helps return lost money to owner

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Srinivas, Panchayat Secretary of Gundi village under Ramadugu mandal in the district, was on his way to work from Karimnagar to Gundi village in Ramadugu mandal on Monday when he found a sum of Rs 50,000 near the newly constructed bridge on the outskirts of Gundi village. He immediately informed the local MLA, Medipalli Sathya, about the incident. The MLA then reported the matter to the police via phone, requesting them to locate the rightful owner and return the money. Upon receiving the information, the police quickly responded and identified the



Panchayat secretary Srinivas handing over the money he found on the road to the police in Ramadugu village in Karimnagar district on Monday

rightful owner of the money. The victim was found to be Gangu Ellayya (55) from Cheerlavanch village in Tangallapalli mandal, Siricilla district. The victim told the

police that he had lost the money while travelling to Ramadugu to purchase idols for the construction of a temple dedicated to Peddamma in his village.

## Sub-Registrar in ACB net in Nizamabad

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials conducted raids on the Registration Office in Nizamabad district on Monday.

A Sub-Registrar was caught red-handed allegedly accepting a bribe from a person. Here are the details of the incident:

The raid was conducted on the District Registrar's office located on the second floor of Kavitha Complex in the Nizamabad Railway Station area on Monday morning, under the leadership of ACB Deputy Superintendent of Police Shekhar Goud.

## 2 police officers awarded cash prize for solving murder mystery of woman

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The police officers who demonstrated exceptional skill in solving a murder case that had remained a mystery for the past two years were felicitated with cash rewards by Warangal Commissioner Amber Kishor Jha. The officers recognised for their efforts include Parakala Assistant Commissioner of Police Satish Babu and Shayampet Circle Inspector Ranjith.

It may be recalled that two years ago, a murder case involving an elderly woman occurred on the outskirts of Dharmaram village under the Parakala Police Station limits.



Warangal Police Commissioner Amber Kishor Jha awarding cash prize to two police in Warangal on Monday

However, the Parakala police were unable to gather any clues, and with multiple transfers of inspectors at the station,

the case remained unsolved, becoming a mystery.

On the direction of the Warangal Police Commissioner, the investigation of the case was handed over to Shayampet Circle Inspector Ranjith. Under the supervision of Parakala Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ranjith and his team quickly identified the victim as a woman from the Arrepalli village under Shayampet Mandal. They also discovered that the woman had been murdered by Rajireddy, a resident of the same village, who had taken her to Dharmaram village for the purpose of robbing her gold jewelry.

## TG Statehood movement activists demand pension, financial assistance

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

In response to the call by the Telangana Movement Forum State Committee, a postcard campaign was organised at the martyrs memorial near Mayuri Centre. The activists sent postcards to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, demanding immediate implementation of the promises made to activists who participated in the Telangana movement. The Congress party made many promises to the activists during the election campaign.



Telangana statehood movement activists participating in the postcard campaign at martyrs' memorial near Mayuri centre in Khammam on Monday

across 33 districts of the state are participating in this campaign and sending postcards to CM Revanth Reddy from their respective regions. As the Congress Party

included these promises in their manifesto under the 6 Guarantee Scheme, the activists are demanding the immediate fulfilment of these promises through the postcard cam-

aign. The event was attended by KV Krishna Rao, Chairman of the Telangana Movement Forum State Steering Committee, Pasupuleti Nasarayya, Chairman of United Khammam District, and activists Gunteti Veerabhadra, Pelliuri Vijay Kumar, Ravichandra Chauhan, Sheikh Nagul Meera, Sheikh Abbas Ali, Buran, Asif, Srinivas Nayak, Balini Bhaskar Reddy, Devireddy Vijay, Bhattu Rajender Nayak, Bellankonda Nageshwar Rao, Ramu Goud, Vallepu Somaraju, Yakub, Gali Ramu Goud, Ankalu, Srinivas Vijay, Gadda Venkataramayya, Reddiboyina Varalakshmi, Korivi Dhanalakshmi, Kamini Anantalakshmi, Swaroop, Dhanalakshmi, Jaya, and others.

## 'Harassed' by vice-principal, girl student attempts suicide

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A Class 10 student from Kothagadi Social Welfare Department School attempted suicide by jumping from the first floor of the hostel on February 26. The incident, which took place 3 km from the Vikarabad, came to light on Monday after students protested in front of the District Collector's office.

The girl, identified as Tabitha, suffered a serious injury, including a fractured left leg, and was admitted to a private hospital in the city for treatment. Her friends alleged that she took the extreme step due to harassment by the school's vice-principal. However, the accused vice principal has not come forward to provide any explanation regarding the incident.

Members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), along with the girl's



Girl student with her mother in hospital

friends, demanded that the government provide financial assistance for her treatment, which is estimated to cost around Rs 1 lakh.

Meanwhile, the student's parents expressed outrage, demanding justice for their daughter and strict action against the vice principal. It is to be seen whether the district administration will take steps to mitigate the sufferings of the girl. The students demanded that the government meet the medical expenses.

## 57 complaints received at Prajavani in Rangareddy district

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A total of 57 complaints were received during the Prajavani programme held at the Integrated District Offices Complex Conference Hall on Monday. Citizens from various parts of the district submitted their grievances to District Collector C Narayana Reddy, who personally received the petitions. Speaking at the event, the Collector directed officials from the departments concerned to ensure immediate resolution of the complaints. He emphasised the need for officials to regularly review and address the petitions submitted during the programme, which is aimed



Rangareddy Collector C Narayana Reddy receiving petitions from people at Prajavani programme in Rangareddy district on Monday

at providing a prompt resolution to public grievances.

## Kishan blocking funds from Centre to TG: Ponnam

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has indicated that he possesses information suggesting that BJP state president G Kishan Reddy is obstructing the flow of funds and projects from the Central government to the state.

Speaking at a media conference held at the Husnabad MLA camp office in Siddipet district, the Minister launched a tirade against Kishan Reddy. He alleged that Kishan Reddy became the BJP state president by sidelining Bandi Sanjay and claimed that he is acting as former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao's proxy. He questioned why Kishan Reddy had not written a single letter to the Centre regarding an airport in the state.

The Minister emphasised that if Kishan Reddy hailed from Telangana, he should



Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar speaking to reporters in Husnabad on Monday

work towards bringing necessary funds and projects for the state's development.

He accused Kishan Reddy of failing to secure funds for Telangana from the Centre

and said that he had no courage and was boasting about bringing an airport by holding a press conference along with the Union Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu who

hailed from neighbouring State.

Ponnam Prabhakar clarified that they are willing to work together with Kishan Reddy for the development of

Telangana but criticised him for obstructing the state's progress.

Regarding the caste census, he mentioned that the opportunity to provide information was given from February 16 to 28. He stated that BRS leaders like K Chandrashekar Rao, KT Rama Rao, and T Harish Rao did not provide any information, and therefore, they have no moral right to speak on the matter.

He also stated that they would pass a resolution in the Assembly on BC reservations and send it to the Centre, adding that the responsibility to get it included in the Schedule, like in Tamil Nadu, lies with the state BJP leaders. He mentioned that they had submitted a request to the Centre for an 8-lane road from Hyderabad to Karimnagar and Nizamabad, but there has been no response so far.

## Rats bite 10 students at Kasturba Gandhi hostel

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a shocking incident, 10 students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Nawabpet mandal center were bitten by rats while staying in the hostel. The affected students were immediately taken to the Nawabpet government hospital, where they received treatment. The incident has raised concerns about hygiene and hostel maintenance, with parents and locals demanding immediate action from authorities to ensure the safety of students. This is not the first time that rats bit the students in schools. In the past also several incidents were reported. The district administration took the incident seriously.

Indian Bank					
Narayana Branch G-2, 3-6-78412, legend Venkatesa, beside Tajmahal Hotel, Hyderabad					
VEHICLE AUCTION SALE NOTICE					
Sl No.	Borrower Name & Address	Vehicle Type	Registration No & Year	Reserve Price (Rs.)	EMD Price (Rs.)
1	M/s. Yashwanth Enter Prices	Model: Eicher Pro 5035 Type of Body: Tanker Type of Fuel: Diesel Colour: NP Colour	TS-08-UE-8961, Engine No., EG24CDJ02 03078 Chassis No. MC2TSDRC0JC 038711	4.75 Lakhs	0.48 Lakh
2	M/s. Yashwanth Enter Prices	Model: Eicher Pro 5035 Type of Body: Tanker Type of Fuel: Diesel Colour: NP Colour	TS-08-UE-8960, Engine No., EG24CDJ02 03065 Chassis No. MC2TSDRC0JC 038710	5.25 Lakhs	0.53 Lakh
3	M/s. Sri Sai Logistics	Model: Eicher Pro 5030 Type of Body: Tanker Type of Fuel: Diesel Colour: NP Colour	TS-08-UE-8950, Engine No., EG24CDJ02 03771 Chassis No. MC2TSDRC0JC 038729	3.75 Lakhs	0.38 Lakh
4	M/s. Sri Sai Logistics	Model: Eicher Pro 5035 Type of Body: Tanker Type of Fuel: Diesel Colour: NP Colour	TS-08-UE-8965, Engine No., EG24CDJ02 03982 Chassis No. MC2TSDRC0JC 038730	3.75 Lakhs	0.38 Lakh
5	M/s. MDP Transport	Model: Eicher Pro 5030 Type of Body: Tanker Type of Fuel: Diesel Colour: NP Colour	TS-08-UE-8940, Engine No., EG24CDJ02 013886 Chassis No. MC2TSDRC0JM 013886	5.00 Lakhs	0.50 Lakh

Open Auction will be conducted for participants who deposits above mentioned EMD on or before 18.03.2025, 2.00 PM by DD/Pay order to Indian Bank, Narayana Branch, Hyderabad Date & Time of Auction: 18.03.2025 between 4.00 PM to 5.00 PM  
For further details, Terms & Conditions, contact: B Subash Chandra, Chief Manager E-mail: narayana@indianbank.com. Successful bidder should NEFT/RTGS/ Bank Trf on the same day. This vehicle shall be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" condition. For further details, terms and conditions, the interested bidders can contact Indian Bank, Narayana Branch, Hyderabad. This Auctioned Officer may accept/cancel the auction without assigning any Reason thereof.  
Place: Hyderabad, Date: 03-03-2025. Sd/- Chief Manager Indian Bank.



ACROSS THE STATES



One injured in firing at Pak - Afghan border

An exchange of firing between Pakistani and Afghan security forces at the Torkham border overnight left one civilian from Pakistan injured after the two sides failed to reach an agreement on reopening the crossing, which has been closed for more than a week. According to security sources, the exchange of firing left a civilian injured on the Pakistani side of the border. The security situation caused panic amongst people who have been waiting for the reopening of the border, which remained closed for the 11th day on Monday. The truckers association also asked all vehicle owners to vacate the border after heavy artillery firing from both sides. Witnesses said a driver also suffered a cardiac arrest amidst the mayhem and died on the spot. They said several ambulances were rushed after a fire engulfed a checkpoint on the Afghan side of the border. There was no immediate confirmation of the casualties due to the fire. Pakistan and Afghan security forces on Sunday failed to reach an agreement on reopening the Torkham border even as both sides showed optimism about resolving the issue this week.

J&K resolution on special status not rejected: CM Abdullah

PNS ■ JAMMU

The resolution on special status passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in its first sitting last year has not been rejected by the Central government which is a big thing, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Monday and asserted that there was no need to bring any other resolution on Article 370, which was abrogated in August 2019.

The chief minister said all legislators need to work together to help the government to fulfill its priorities for public welfare.

"What we have to do was done in the first (assembly) session (in November, 2024). The resolution is still holding after passed by the House. The PDP and others helped us in passing the resolution and it is still holding is a big thing," Abdullah told reporters outside the assembly here while responding to a question that some members are planning to



bring a fresh resolution to condemn abrogation of Article 370.

The 40-day Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, having a total of 22 sittings, began on Monday with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's address.

The chief minister said some people were thinking that any resolution on special status

will get outrightly rejected by the Central government.

"The resolution was not rejected and the fact of the matter is that it is still holding so there is no need to talk further on this," he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Centre to work out a constitutional mechanism for restoring

special status of the erstwhile state. Abdullah said the National Conference will not repeat what it had already done. "It is not like that we will repeat this thing. What we have to do was done in the first session. If we had not brought that resolution, then there was a possibility of holding discussions on it. We brought a resolution and the House passed it with majority so what is there to talk further on it," he said.

The chief minister said the House will meet on Tuesday to discuss the lieutenant governor's address and the members are free to raise their issues in the House.

"There will be talk inside the House and not outside it. This is not the way," he said when asked about the protest by independent MLA Khurshid Ahmed, demanding justice for the families of two persons killed in Sopore and Kathua recently as well as restoration of Article 370 and statehood.



Only economic failure, inflation made in bulk under Modi govt: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday took a dig at the Centre over its handling of the economy, saying only "economic failure, unemployment, inflation and lies" were "manufactured" in bulk under the Narendra Modi government. The former Congress president called for the removal of "unjust" taxes, eliminating monopoly, opening the doors of banks and giving rights to the talented.

"If anything has been 'manufactured' in bulk under the

Modi government, it is economic failure, unemployment, inflation and lies!" Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on Facebook. "Remove unjust taxes, eliminate monopoly, open the doors of banks, give rights to talent ... Only then will the building of the economy, employment and a strong India begin!" he said.

The Congress has been attacking the government over its handling of the economy, claiming the issues of rising prices, decreasing private investment, and stagnating wages were hitting the common people hard.



Indian woman on death row in Abu Dhabi executed

An Indian woman on death row in Abu Dhabi for the alleged murder of a four-month-old child has already been executed on February 15, the Delhi High Court hearing her father's plea about her well-being was informed on Monday. On being informed about the development, Justice Sachin Datta termed it "very unfortunate". "It is over. She was executed on February 15. Her last rites will be held on March 5," Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma told the court. The submission was made in a hearing on a petition by the 33-year-old woman's father seeking to know her well-being. Shahzadi Khan was handed over to the Abu Dhabi police on February 10, 2023 and she was sentenced to death on July 31, 2023. She was lodged in the Al Wathba jail. Shabbir Khan, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Banda, said there was "profound uncertainty" regarding his daughter Shahzadi's situation and his repeated applications to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for clarification were fruitless.



Motorcyclist charred to death after crashing into trailer

A 30-year-old man was charred to death after his motorcycle rammed into a trailer parked on the road and caught fire in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Monday. The accident occurred on the Khoni-Usatne road in Ambenath in the wee hours of Sunday, an official said. The victim, Rajesh Dinesh Ram, was riding with his friend when he crashed into a trailer parked on the roadside without any indicators, the official from Hill Line police station said. He said the two-wheeler caught fire in the impact, charring the victim to death and injuring his friend, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital. The official said a case was registered under sections 106 (causing death by negligence), 125 (act endangering life or personal safety of others), 281 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita and Motor Vehicles (MV) Act against the trailer driver.

38 injured as ST bus overturns

PNS ■ LATUR

At least 38 people were injured when a state transport bus overturned while trying to avoid a motorcycle on a highway in Maharashtra's Latur district on Monday, police said. The accident occurred on the Nagpur-Ratnagiri Highway near Nandgaon Pati in Chakur tehsil around 2 pm.

Divisional traffic officer Sandip Padwal said that at least 38 passengers on the bus sustained injuries, and six of them are in critical condition.

An official said the bus was heading to Latur from Ahmedpur when it swerved to avoid hitting a motorcycle. The bus driver lost control of the wheel, causing the vehicle to overturn. According to eyewitnesses, the bus was being driven at a high speed, and it skidded some distance before coming to a halt.

Several passengers sustained critical injuries to their limbs and were rushed to hospitals in ambulances and private vehicles, Padwal said.

ED identifies assets worth thousand of crores

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Monday said it has identified assets worth thousands of crores of rupees following searches in Delhi-NCR against realty firm WTC Group and Bhutani Group.

The raids were conducted on February 27 at a dozen locations in Delhi, Noida (Uttar Pradesh) and Faridabad and Gurugram (both in Haryana) against WTC Group and its promoter Ashish Bhalla, and Bhutani Group and its promoter Ashish Bhutani under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the federal agency said in a statement.

The ED said the case stems from dozens of FIRs filed by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police and the Faridabad Police against WTC Group and its promoters Ashish Bhalla, Suparna Bhalla, Abhijeet Bhalla, and Bhutani Infra and others for alleged cheating, criminal breach of trust and committing fraud on hundreds of homebuyers.

These police cases were registered on the basis of com-



plaints from "hundreds" of homebuyers and investors.

The Bhutani Infra said in a statement last week that it severed all ties with the WTC Group recently and "is now fully cooperating with the ED in its investigation." No comment was immediately available from the WTC Group.

The ED said the police FIRs allege that WTC Faridabad Infrastructure Private Limited and its promoters "lured" the general public to invest in their project at Sector 111-114 of the city for residential plots.

The promoters/directors hatched a "criminal conspiracy" and "siphoned off" the plot buyers' hardearned money by not completing the project within the stipulated time and "non-delivery" of the plots for more than 10 years, it said.

India, Belgium exploring defence ties in Indo-Pacific

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Belgium on Monday discussed the possibility of bilateral maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and looked at ways to enhance defence industrial ties.

Ways to bolster India-Belgium defence engagement figured prominently at a meeting between Belgium's Princess Astrid and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The two sides also agreed to explore the setting up of an institutionalised defence cooperation mechanism between the two nations.

Belgian Defence Minister Theo Francken was also part of the Belgian delegation.

Princess Astrid is leading an Economic Mission to India that comprises top ministers and business leaders.

"Both sides discussed the possibility of defence engagements in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in maritime domain," the defence ministry said.

It said there were discussions on ways and means to enhance bilateral defence industrial cooperation and that Singh welcomed Belgian investments in the defence sector.



"Both sides discussed the possibility of defence engagements in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in maritime domain," the defence ministry said.

"He suggested that the Belgian companies could play an important role by expanding their footprint in India and integrating the Indian vendors in their supply chains," the ministry said in a statement.

Further, both countries agreed to explore an institutionalised defence cooperation mechanism," it said.

The overall trajectory of India-Belgium ties has wit-

nessed steady expansion in the last few years. The focus of the relations has traditionally been on trade and investment.

India is Belgium's 14th largest export destination and the 16th largest importer to Belgium.

India is Belgium's seventh largest export destination outside the EU and the sixth largest trade partner outside the EU.

Jaishankar to visit UK, Ireland on six day tour

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a six-day visit to the UK and Ireland beginning Tuesday to explore ways to further boost bilateral cooperation.

Jaishankar will first travel to London to hold talks with his British counterpart David Lammy on a range of bilateral, regional and global issues.

It will be interesting to see whether Jaishankar and Lammy discuss the Ukraine conflict as their meeting comes against the backdrop of the heated exchanges between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that drew global attention.



Two days after the rare clash between Trump and Zelenskyy, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosted a summit with European leaders in London and vowed to work towards a peace deal to end the war in Ukraine.

Jaishankar and Lammy are also expected to touch upon the ambitious India-UK free trade deal, people familiar with the matter said.

UP CM rejects pollution claims at Sangam during Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday dismissed reports of pollution at the Sangam during the Maha Kumbh, asserting that extensive water quality monitoring showed the river remained clean throughout the event.

Speaking at a gathering of Indian Institute of Management officials and Indian Postal Service officers in Lucknow, Adityanath said, "Despite baseless claims, our state pollution control board and independent labs consistently found water quality at the Sangam to be within safe limits."

He pointed out that con-

Fake reporting



cerns about the environmental impact of the Maha Kumbh had been raised, including by UNESCO, given the massive scale of the event.

"In 2013, when the Prime Minister of Mauritius visited, he refrained from taking a dip after seeing pollution in the

Ganga. We ensured that such an incident did not happen this time," Adityanath said.

The chief minister claimed his government took preventive measures from day one to ensure no sewage or industrial waste entered the Ganga or Yamuna.



Mayawati expels nephew from party

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after removing her nephew Akash Anand from all key posts, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Monday said she has expelled him from the party "in the interest and movement" of the party. Mayawati said that Akash's response to her action against him on Sunday was "selfish and arrogant". In a BSP meeting on Sunday, Akash was relieved from all responsibilities as he was under the continuous influence of his father-in-law Ashok Siddharth, more than the interest of the party, for which he should "repent and show his maturity", she said.

"But on the contrary, the lengthy response given by Shri Akash is not a sign of his remorse and political maturity, but is mostly selfish, arrogant and non-missionary under the influence of his father-in-law," Mayawati said in a post on X in Hindi. "Therefore, in the interest of the self-respect and self-esteem of the movement of the most revered Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and following the tradition of discipline of Manaywar Shri Kanshiram ji, Shri Akash Anand, like his father-in-law, is expelled from the party in the interest of the party and the movement," Mayawati said.

Women borrowers grow 22% since 2019

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Women borrowers in India have grown at a compounded growth rate of 22 per cent over the last 5 years with majority of them from semi-urban and rural areas, who are also actively monitoring their credit scores, a report said on Monday.

The report titled 'From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story', released by NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam also showed bulk of their loan was for meeting consumption demand and comparatively less for businesses.

Non-metro regions lead in credit monitoring



The report has been published by TransUnion CIBIL, Women Entrepreneurship

Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog and MicroSave Consulting (MSC).

"The number of women availing credit in India has increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22 per cent between CY 2019 and 2024. While consumption loans continue to be the preferred products held by women borrowers, the report's insights show that more women are also availing business loans," a statement said. As per the report, credit avialment for financing businesses constituted only 3 per cent of the overall borrowings by women in 2024, as against 42 per cent for personal finance products like person-

al loans, consumer durable loans, home ownership and 38 per cent against gold.

The report said the number of accounts opened for business purpose has grown 4.6 times since 2019, but these loans constitute only 3 per cent of overall loans availed by women in 2024.

Government think tank NITI Aayog in a statement said that more women in India are seeking credit and actively monitoring their credit scores.

As of December 2024, 27 million women were monitoring their credit, marking a 42 per cent increase from the previous year, signalling growing financial awareness.

4 Bangladeshis held in Tripura for 'illegally' entering India

PNS ■ AGARTALA

Four Bangladesh nationals have been arrested by the BSF in Tripura for allegedly entering India illegally, officials said on Monday.

Five Indians who reportedly facilitated their infiltration have also been apprehended in two separate incidents in the northeastern state, they said.

Acting on a tip-off, a patrolling party raided Dhaniabari, a remote tribal hamlet near the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) at Nutanbazar area of Gomati district on Sunday evening, and detected four persons trying to cross

the international border. When they crossed the border, BSF personnel managed to apprehend the four.

Two of them are residents of Nutan Bazar in Gomati district, while the other two are from Khagracheri district in Bangladesh, a BSF official said.

In another operation in Dyke VIII area in Nutanbazar, BSF personnel observed unusual movement of five persons and apprehended them while crossing the international border.

Later, two of them were identified as Bangladesh nationals.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A fresh start or fleeting relief?

With N Biren Singh's exit and AT's surrender of arms, Manipur shows signs of normalcy—but is the peace lasting?

The conflict in Manipur, marked by ethnic tensions between the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities has shown some positive development in the recent weeks. The surrender of arms by Arambai Tenggol (AT), Home Minister Amit Shah's firm stance on opening all roads and the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh have created new possibilities for peace in the violence-stricken state. However, the underlying tensions and the continued presence of weapons in the region mean that true reconciliation remains a complex challenge. One of the most notable recent events was the voluntary surrender of 246 weapons by the AT group on February 27, following the appeal made by Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla. This move is being seen as a crucial step towards de-escalation, as it marks the largest voluntary surrender of arms in the state since the ethnic conflict began in May 2023. However, security officials and observers caution that the surrender may not indicate a complete loss of AT's firepower.



Reports suggest that only a fraction of the looted sophisticated weapons has been returned, with country-made firearms making up a large portion of surrendered arms. Furthermore, AT's insistence on conditions such as full security guarantees and amnesty for its members indicates that the group still holds significant leverage.

The Union Home Minister's directive to ensure free movement on Manipur's highways from March 8 represents a decisive move to restore normalcy. Road blockades have been a persistent problem in the state, significantly affecting trade, movement of essential goods and the overall economic stability of the region.

The government's resolve to dismantle illegal bunkers and target drug trafficking further aligns with the broader goal of restoring law and order. However, concerns remain over the implementation of these directives. Ensuring that all roads remain open requires a sustained security presence, as groups with vested interests may attempt to impose fresh blockades. Additionally, the crackdown on drugs—while crucial—must be executed without further alienating communities that already feel marginalised. The resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh and the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur have led to a shifting power dynamic. Singh was widely seen as a key backer of AT and other Meitei groups, which played a role in the ethnic conflict. The major issue has been the divide between the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities, which remains unaddressed. Both sides continue to view each other with suspicion, and without a long-term reconciliation plan, tensions may resurface. Despite the surrender of arms, thousands of sophisticated weapons remain unaccounted for, posing a major security risk. The demand for a separate administration by the Kuki-Zomi groups remains a contentious issue. Without addressing the political aspirations of all communities, peace efforts may prove temporary.

### PICTALK

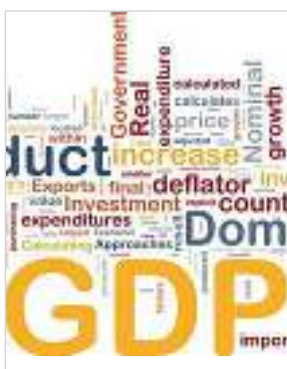


Painted storks at Keoladeo National Park, in Bharatpur

## MIGA: Can India overcome economic challenges

Despite its economic size, India's developing status reveals challenges like inequality, youth unemployment and a vast informal sector

Prime Minister Modi recently visited the US to strengthen bilateral ties and committed to Making India Great Again (MIGA), in consonance with Donald Trump's dream of making America greater again (MAGA). Although India is the world's fifth-largest economy with a GDP of approximately US\$ 4.27 trillion, it is still classified as a developing nation. A developing country is technically a country where the Gross National Income per capita is \$1,905 or less, with India's per capita being nearly half of it at \$6,951. We rank 134 out of 193 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), below our neighbouring countries China at 75, Sri Lanka at 78, and even Bhutan and Bangladesh at 125 and 128 respectively (UN Development Report 2022-23). With an HDI score of 0.644, India is categorised as 'medium human development'. However, there has been improvement across all HDI indicators—life expectancy, education, and Gross National Income (GNI) per



capita from last year. Nevertheless, we cannot conceit the improvement in the HDI alone, as Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024, places India at the top of the 5 countries with the most people in poverty with 234 million people in the bracket. In sharp contrast to this, it ranks 3rd in the number of billionaires (Forbes, 2023), indicating glaring disparities in income inequalities. Another morbid aspect is high youth unemployment which accounts for almost 83 per cent of the total unemployment in India. Even worrisome is the share of youngsters with secondary or higher education

in the total unemployed, which has almost doubled from 35.2 per cent in 2000 to 65.7 per cent in 2022 (Indian Employment Report, 2024). The unemployment problem is further aggravated as about 90 per cent of the labour force works in the unorganised sector grappling with the issues of irregular work, income, social security benefits and working conditions. The policymakers are profoundly designing policies to boost the economy. Recently the monetary policy was eased, the repo rate dropped to push investment, and the government announced tax concessions to encourage consumption, both expected to accelerate output and income with a multiplier effect. This will probably counter the Blume Venture report, that nearly 100 crore Indians, 90 per cent of the country's population, lack discretionary spending power to purchase goods or services. With a desired GDP growth rate of at least 7 per cent, these measures will likely create a transitional optimistic mood for the econo-

my, but cannot sustain growth forever. The World Development Report, 2024, found the developing economies in the "middle-income trap", and emphasised the 3 I's, Investment, Infusion (of global technologies) and Innovation as three drivers of economic growth and expanding the production frontier. The government thereby needs to adopt a multifaceted approach to overcome challenges in covering potential gaps in production. It needs to work pragmatically towards education reforms, higher investment for skill development, human capital and creating regular employment opportunities. Moreover, efforts to promote medium and small enterprises, labour-intensive industries, start-ups, Make in India mission, need to be further strengthened to ensure an easy path to Make India Better (MIB) before MIGA.

(The writer is an assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, Delhi University. Views are personal)



KAJLEEN KAUR

# Mahakumbh 2025: Vikas bhi, virasat bhi

From the large-scale eco-friendly practices to the timeless wisdom of Bharatiya traditions, Mahakumbh offered a new model for development in harmony with nature



ANURAG SAXENA

The Valeriperis Circle is a fascinating concept. Imagine a circle on the world map. The circle is centered around the Beibu Gulf, off the east coast of Vietnam, has a radius of 4,000 kilometers, and includes Southern China, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Now this is where it gets stupefying. This circle covers just about 9 per cent of the world's land-mass, but over 50 per cent of the world's population. This simple reality, clubbed with colonial impoverishment, explains why many people in this circle lived in filth and squalor. Most "progressive" thoughts therefore, be it sustainability, development, environment, innovation, or education, came from the "developed west". We, the unwashed and the uncouth plebs, lapped these ideas up.

These imported ideas however, played out terribly. Not just for people, but for the planet. So much so, that escaping this planet seems to be the primary focus of the biggest billionaires from the west. Talk about a fence eating its own crop!

Kumbh on the other hand is a metaphor for the alternate model. A moksha, if you will, from the destruction-premised development models from the west. Prayagraj, a city with a population of 1.4 million saw over 50 million visiting it over a month. To put that in context, imagine a flat typical urban flat that houses a family of four, suddenly visited by 1,400 people. This is indeed Valeriperis Circle on steroids, and any other city would have crumbled a 1,400x overload. Not just did the city manage, but actually offered solutions for how humanity could manage an explosion of demand quite sustainably.

Those of us that experienced the Kumbh personally will tell you the level of cleanliness that has been maintained. We have noticed the extensive use of bamboo instead of plastic, of jute rugs instead of astroturf, of manual boats instead of diesel motors, of e-rickshaws instead of fossil-fuel vehicles, of free refillable RO purified water instead of disposable mineral water bottles. Half a bil-



lion people used donas (cups made of dried leaves) in contrast to small birthday parties in "developed" countries serving single-use plastic.

What you didn't see perhaps was India's largest plastic buy-back program aimed at recycling, or leftover prasad being shared with animals as fodder, or compactor trucks working round the clock, or solar-powered sewage treatment plants.

The invisible sustainability efforts of the Kumbh were perhaps the silent hero that emerged naturally from a culture that values interdependence with nature at its core. The recently concluded Kumbh Global Summit on Sustainability explained the phenomenon and drew lessons from our rich history and culture. Ministers from a dozen Girmitiya nations shared their learnings around sustainability, most of it rooted in ancient Bharatiya wisdom.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat brought in simple, rooted wisdom from something as intrinsic as sustainability inbuilt into language itself. The word "dohan" (to milk a cow) comes from



THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT BROUGHT IN SIMPLE, ROOTED WISDOM FROM SOMETHING AS INTRINSIC AS SUSTAINABILITY INBUILT INTO LANGUAGE ITSELF

"do+han" the norm to milk just two teats of a cow, leaving the rest for the calf. Contrast that to industrial-grade milk production from hormone-ridden cows that has been normalised in the "developed" west. Ram Madhav proposed a sangam (confluence) of ancient Indic wisdom with modern practices, without which the world's sustainability crisis can never be avoided.

He highlighted that environment and sustainability are challenges that cannot be solved at COP summits along, but actually need a convergence of the richest ideas globally. The urgency of the summit was encapsulated most eloquently by Suresh Prabhu who framed an enquiry - with thousands of years of history and knowledge across the world, can we even be sure that we will last another hundred years?

Gas-guzzling economies of the West will continue to posture around sustainability as a virtue-signaling badge. They will postulate, make loud visible pledges, and fly into sustainability summits on their private jets. The minerals-filching economies east of us will ignore calls to action and

give you the silent treatment. They will continue to live the delusion that they are communist nations, while going out their way to display toxic capitalism, much to the peril of their people and our earth.

As Bharat, we have to accept a simple reality - What broke it, can't fix it. Period! Bharat has the unique civilisational advantage of leveraging our ancient wisdom to actually demonstrate that you can actually develop infrastructure at scale (like at the Kumbh) without bludgeoning mother nature with a hammer. As we attain maturity on the world stage, we neither need to twirl our moustache, nor cover up our acne. We would rather focus on the purity of our soul as the thought model we export. We would rather focus on our civilisational value of attaining balance.

As PM Narendra Modi's statement for the summit said, the only way to achieve global sustainability is to follow a simple, yet powerful principle, "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi".

(The writer is a nominated Member of the National Tourism Advisory Council and the co-founder of India Pride Project; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### UKRAINE-US TENSIONS ESCALATE

Madam — The clash of diplomacy and dignity (March 3) in the case of Ukraine-US is taking an ugly turn. Trump is not losing any opportunity to project himself as the ultimate global authority. Ukraine had political issues with Russia, which gained serious turns after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia. This incident had instilled a sense of apprehension and made Ukraine seek membership in NATO. As Russia was against Ukraine joining NATO due to various crucial concerns, it had to act tough with Ukraine, leading to war. As everyone knows, Ukraine cannot even think of war against Russia but for the lavish help it could receive from the US and European nations in terms of funds, weapons, political and moral support. The change of guard in the US with Trump as its head took the entire issue in a different direction. The mediator Trump dictates and decides the course without offering even scope for the aggrieved Ukraine to spell out its terms. Instead of mediation, Trump is giving dictation to Ukraine. The President of Ukraine feels let down by the US. His open shouting at the US president makes it easy for everyone to understand the seriousness of the situation. In the melee, Russia is allowed to retain the territories it captured, and the US gets a favourable agreement to exploit the precious natural mineral resources of Ukraine. But Ukraine stands repenting for having ventured a big war against a big giant for nothing but a huge loss of men, material, peace and dignity. Who should be blamed?

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

### TAMIL NADU OPPOSES NEP

Madam — I refer to your editorial on "Simmering linguistic tension" (February 28). The Centre insists on implementing the NEP, whereas the state objects to it, fearing the imposition of the Hindi language leading to the destruction of Tamil. The state is committed to a two-language formula, says the incumbent state government. There is a total misconception in this regard. According to the new NEP, the first

## India beats New Zealand



The match against New Zealand is yet another thrilling game by the men in blue, Team India. The back to back success for Team India has made our team stand stronger in the ICC Champions Trophy. Despite New Zealand winning the toss and deciding to bowl first, India successfully managed to give a 250-run target to the opposing team. Although the short innings by Virat Kohli jerked everyone, our bowling order

managed it well. At 45.3, India made New Zealand all out, clinching victory by 44 runs. Varun Chakravarthy stole all attention as he took five crucial wickets for India, presenting spectacular bowling prowess, before he was crowned as the Player of the Match.

Our player deserves heartiest congratulations for their exuberant efforts, showcased in the match against New Zealand. Now that India moves ahead to the next round, where it will strike a semifinals clash against Australia in the ICC Champions Trophy, we hope that the enthusiasm of our players for knocking all opponents dead will continue ahead with full positivity. And India will surely bring the ICC Champions Trophy home this season.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

language will be a local language, the second one English, and a third one any language of the student's choice. It is not prescribed that the third language must be Hindi. It is also not compulsory to learn Hindi nor the language forced down the throats of non-Hindi-speaking people. It is left to the discretion of the wards. NEP is aimed at improving knowledge, skill and language learning. There is nothing wrong in learning an additional language.

It is an advantage for the students to seek better prospects. Playing politics for votes sake is highly reprehensible. Politicians should not play with the future of the students. In the name of imposition of Hindi, students are denied quality education. The establishment of Navodaya schools has not been permitted in the state for decades. This is highly a retrograde step. Tamil Nadu should adopt the new NEP in the welfare of the students, for the quality of education has come down heavily. All other states in India had adopted the NEP. The status of their mother language has not declined but rather improved. Also, the schools run by these politicians follow the CBSE syl-

labus. Their wards study Hindi. As such, victimising the poor government school students is unfair and unjust.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

### AVALANCHE WARNING IGNORED

Madam — It is a matter of crying shame that in spite of snowfall and avalanche alerts since February 24, labourers working on a stretch of the road to Badrinath Dham had not been evacuated in time. Four days went by, but no action was taken to bring those labourers to a safer place. They were kept in the danger zone till avalanches hit the area on February 28. As a result, some labourers were killed, and some went missing. This indicates a total apathy towards the safety of labourers. Now, who will be accountable for playing with the lives of so many labourers? India needs stringent labour laws and their strict implementation. Otherwise, such a tragedy will become a routine affair.

Sujit De | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

## DREAM BIG AND STAY HUMBLE

Success isn't a mere stroke of luck—it's the result of daring to dream, backed by discipline and humility



RAVI VALLURI

Success is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. What is the secret of the success of achievers? Dream the impossible, be extremely disciplined, remain dedicated and determined, take appropriate decisions all the time, even in adverse situations, and finally maintain humility while toasting success. To be successful, a human being necessarily dreams of the impossible. Dreams should be audacious. One has to think big and be bold in the actions taken. Ratan Tata emphasised leading from the front and not being a mere follower. Be a leader and not a follower. A quintessential leader takes up responsibility. The 'mind' of the leader needs to be confronted and challenged. The human mind loves challenges. Faced with challenging situations, it delivers the impossible. Mind is not motivated by rote, but is inspired to script something unusual. Maintaining mental and physical discipline are essential ingredients of successful leaders.

Physical fitness increases both our physical and mental stamina. Exercise releases endorphins in the human body which trigger positive thoughts. It helps immensely in smart decision-making. Along with exercise, an individual is also required to maintain a healthy and balanced diet which staves off disease and enhances alacrity and sharpness. Achievers may be from any field — sports, politics, administration or entrepreneurs. However, the cardinal principle is to maintain physical fitness, and punctuality and avoid procrastination by maintaining timely schedules. If a leader is lethargic, the organisation becomes flabby, sluggish and phlegmatic.

The mantra for attaining success is to be extremely disciplined. Such a trait inspires employees to increase their productivity levels too. In the spiritual path, a seeker needs to maintain a spirited tenacity and pursue his Sadhana relentlessly. Regular Sadhana inspires the mind to expand



its vistas and thereby attempt to embrace the ultimate reality. This, in the final analysis, is the underlying objective and the seeker unflinchingly needs to relentlessly practice the tenets laid down by the Guru. Smart, quick and efficient decision-making assists people in achieving success. This provides a person with the cushion and a cutting edge over others. There is no substitute for hard work. Working hard produces quick and efficient results. This is followed by the quality of determination. A Sadhak, a sportsperson, or an entrepreneur has necessarily to be determined. Determined minds are strong and developed minds. These are innovative minds and conjure a variety of ideas and positive thoughts. To achieve excellence in any field, such minds and individuals are determined at all points in time. The minds of such individuals are highly fertile and produce magic with regularity. An unbearable situation gets converted into an unbelievable one. This is their inherent strength.

They do not live in the past or future, they live in the Present Moment to confront all challenges. However, the ultimate hallmark of all successful individuals, teams, companies or organisations is HUMILITY. There is no or very little trace of arrogance. They are insulated by the feeling of doer ship and become hubristic. In a competitive and cutthroat environment, a huge helping of humility is essential for staying ahead of the game. Humility enhances curiosity and thus accelerates learning. Without humility, you can never be a good listener and understand the voices around you — of customers, colleagues and stakeholders. "Humility is the true key to success. Successful people lose their way at times. Humility halts their arrogance and self-indulging trap. Humble people share the credit and wealth, remaining focused and hungry to continue the journey of success," writes Rick Pitino.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

## Tripura innovates cityscapes for sustainability and tourism



V K BAHUGUNA

Tripura's innovative projects are revitalising city life by enhancing public spaces, managing waste and tackling challenges like air pollution



About 35 per cent of India's population lives in urban areas and is still growing rapidly. As the population of cities is ever increasing with a lot of garbage and waste found all around in most cities, the sustainable management of urban area landscapes is very crucial for better civic amenities, ambience and dealing with adapting to environmental issues like air pollution, heat waves and flooding, while also improving quality of life through green spaces, better public areas for entertainment and relaxation and promoting physical activity and mental wellbeing among residents; all while managing waste disposal and addressing the challenges of a densely populated urban environment; the situation is exacerbated during extreme temperatures in summer. Tourist attractions are essential elements of progress these days and the aesthetics of the urban environment plays a key role in attracting tourists on the one hand and improving the economic activities of the people. During 2023-24 more than 5,45,000 tourists including 75,000 from abroad visited Tripura compared to around 3 lakh tourists in the year 2015. Agartala is the only modern yet densely populated city in Tripura and is full of tourist attractions in and around its 50 to 60-kilometre radius. The flow of tourists has been steadily increasing in the state as the infrastructure of hotels, roads and transport has been picking up very fast thanks to the proactive initiation taken by the government during the last few years. I have recently visited Tripura in the second week of February 2025 to study a few innovative steps taken by the Tripura administration. A three-dimensional approach has been adopted in beautifying the urban architecture of Agartala and other cities.



THE FOREST DEPARTMENT ALONG WITH OTHER STATE DEPARTMENTS HAS CREATED PYRAMIDS OF FLOWERS, CROTONS AND INDIGENOUS TREE SPECIES ALONG WITH FOUNTAINS AND RASHI AND NAKSHATRA FORESTS

Tripura forest department has a rich tradition of embellishment of Tripura's natural beauty through a series of parks, gardens and beautification of pavements in different parts of the state. The state government had created an agency for this purpose to further beautify the state's already beautiful landscape to attract tourists as well as create employment opportunities for the people. For this purpose, the state government had created an entity in the forest department "Tripura Park and Garden Society". In this direction the government of India's 'Nagarvan- city forests' scheme is giving a big impetus to this project not only in Tripura but also in other parts of the country. However, the innovative ways the city's Capital Complex, state secretariat and airport roads have been aesthetically laid out is a rare example of urban landscape management.

Most of the pavements covered by cement and bricks during summer months create heat waves in most of the cities. The forest department along with other state departments has created pyramids of flowers, crotons and indigenous tree species along with fountains and Rashi and Nakshatra forests. Most of the empty side lands along buildings and pavements were cleared of debris and planted in a pyramid shape hierarchy giving the most beautiful look in between fountain gardens were created along with plantations of medicinal plants for ex-situ conservation of these valuable plants. The top level was occupied by the tree species and special tree

grooves were also created for public awareness. For the benefit of people biodiversity and butterfly parks were created on Airport Road giving the inciting look to the tourists visiting the state. Such projects if undertaken in all cities in the country will be an excellent attempt to combat climate change, especially the heat waves engulfing most of the urban cities and landscape in recent years.

Such a project of beautification cannot be completed by a single department therefore, in this scheme public work and urban development departments also fully participated. Such innovation needs the full support of senior government functionaries. The proposal of young officers of the forest department was chiefly supported by the state Chief Secretary and other senior officers. The scheme is implemented through the Nagarvan scheme outside Tripura and shows cases of the unique vegetation and other cultural trends of the state. The rich floral and other biodiversity of the state is one of the reasons for success as well as the favourable agro-climatic conditions. Similar attempts need to be made in other states of the country and focus should be on local species and with conservation value of other endangered plants. The Rashi and Nakshatra Van were created by planting species like Chandan, Neem, Akanda, Peepal, Haritiki, Ashwagandha, Khair, Palash and Orange for Nakshatra Van. For Rashi van Jackfruit, Peepal, Ber, Bel, Jamun, Amla, Nageswar, Arjun,

Mahogany, Mango, Bakul and Guava are all very useful Trees. For the long-term sustainability of landscape beautification, the constant supervision, maintenance and involvement of people is a must. These types of innovations though started in administration all over the country need to be nurtured beyond the shadow of officers involved in it once they are not in the saddle. For this, standard operating procedures must be developed along with creating a scope for public-private partnerships like in Zoos in many other states where the people adopt certain animals and fund their food and other needs so that such activities can become financially viable in the long term and also involve the public in their management.

The entry fee should be such that these endeavours become sustainable and people are willing to pay if quality service is offered as such things cannot be relied only on government funding. All such creations must be linked to environmental management for climate change as well as it is becoming a critical factor in large landscape management in the country. The need of the hour is the holistic and integrated management of urban areas of the country.

(The author is former director general, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, and former Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Resources and Forest Department, Government of Tripura; views are personal)

## Beyond social media regulation: The call for a national moral code

Amid debates over social media regulation sparked by Ranveer Allahbadia's remarks, a deeper question arises: should society adopt a clearly defined moral code?

While the nation discusses the desirability of regulating content on social media given the controversy that erupted from the statement made by YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, there is a larger issue of defining morality and enacting moral patterns of conduct for people that requires prior consideration.

While it remains open whether Allahbadia's statement violated any provision of law, however, it is obvious that his statement hurt the moral sentiments of a majority of the population. Notwithstanding, the undesirability of his statement, how advisable it is to expect people to behave in a way that is morally acceptable to society when no particular pattern of ethically correct



SIDDHARTHA MISHRA

behaviour is prescribed for them by the state. It implies that society expects or presumes everyone to know morally accurate conduct in all situations.

As morality is an abstract concept that varies from place to place and from person to person, it is necessary that, like law, morality is clearly defined as well. Usually, an act or statement acquires a righteous or

erroneous character on the personal sense of judgement of individuals, thus, people must know clearly what is permissible moral and what is proscribed immoral.

In such a situation, it requires consideration whether society needs a code that prescribes a pattern of morally upright conduct for its people. Ideally, each society must aim to be free from immoral conduct or behaviour and, for this, the state should establish a pattern or standard of behaviour that is expected of all the citizens and is followed by all alike whether individuals or organisations. Ironically, in India, the state has made little attempt to establish such a society where people follow a certain advised pattern of behaviour that is

acceptable to all. The impression that laws would serve this purpose is completely contrary to the practical realities. Laws as they exist in this country are mostly proscriptive which means they largely prohibit particular or specific behaviour(s) rather than laying down in detail the desirable pattern(s) of conduct. In India, laws are hardly prescriptive and they do not necessarily prescribe a particular pattern of behaviour for people. Generally, laws do not provide in brief or detail what manner, pattern of conduct or behaviour should people observe or practice. They mainly proscribe or prohibit particular conduct(s) and make doing such conduct culpable or punishable and the

doer of it liable for certain consequences. Given such a situation, does it not sound farcical to expect all the people, all over, to know, in every situation, in minute details, what is legally and morally permissible conduct and behaviour? The lack of efforts on the part of the society or the state to



formulate a code of morally desirable conduct in India may be ascribed to the thought that this work be better left to the educational, religious or cultural institutions. But if so, have such institutions fulfilled their responsibility in this regard? India, being a

multi-religious and multi-cultural country, a variety of factors seem to hamper this purpose. Diversity of faiths and religions results in a lack of a common behavioural pattern as well as a lack of a mechanism to ensure that the moral instructions being imparted are being uniformly learnt and practised. Even the educational institutions seem to flounder here, as not all educational institutions seem to insist on teaching moral or ethical values uniformly at all levels. They lay immense emphasis on scientific and technical education but not in the same way on imparting moral education, which is more or equally necessary. Most of the problems in society are caused by a lack of strong values, morals and

integrity of character in people, hence, a civilised state must work sincerely on developing a strong value system in its population. Though the Indian constitution prescribes fundamental duties for citizens that are non-enforceable, they remain, merely, empty slogans. Given the massive onslaught of undesirable content on social media and its penetration among, and influence on, vulnerable youth, it is highly incumbent on the state, simultaneously, to regulate social media as well as draft a moral/ethical code of conduct for building a nation of people with strong morals and character.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Faculty of Law University of Delhi; views are personal)



IN BRIEF



**Bisleri 'Bottles for Change' partners with tiger reserve**

In a significant step towards sustainable conservation, Bisleri, under its CSR initiative Bottles for Change, has partnered with Panna Tiger Reserve, Department of Forest, Madhya Pradesh, marking a milestone in responsible plastic waste management within ecologically sensitive areas. A Letter of Association was formally exchanged, reinforcing a shared commitment to environmental sustainability and wildlife conservation. Panna Tiger Reserve, spanning 542.67 km<sup>2</sup> across the Panna and Chhatarpur districts, is a renowned sanctuary recognized with the Award of Excellence in 2007 as India's best-maintained national park by the Ministry of Tourism. Now home to over 100 tigers, the reserve stands as a testament to India's dedicated conservation efforts. As part of the collaboration, the Bottles for Change project has been introduced in the reserve, incorporating multiple plastic waste management initiatives. Six display boards have been installed along forest roads to educate visitors on responsible plastic disposal. Additionally, ten used plastic collection banks have been provided to encourage tourists and locals to segregate plastic waste for proper recycling.



**Upgraded to be Global: New era of e-Business comes**

The 5th China Cross-Border E-commerce Trade Fair, acclaimed as the No. 1 cross-border e-commerce exhibition in China, will take place from March 18th to 20th in Fuzhou, a southeastern coastal city in China. Overseas guests of online sellers, service providers, associations, influencers and content creators are all welcome to visit for e-business exploration. As a national-level professional exhibition, the 5th China Cross-Border E-commerce Trade Fair is characterized by its high-level organization, large-scale size, various range of exhibitors, extensive buyer invitations, and complete industrial elements. It is widely recognized as the "Canton Fair" of the cross-border e-commerce sector. The size of the fair has expanded by 20% compared to the previous session, with an area reaching 60,000 square meters. It gathers lots of popular global e-commerce platforms, including Amazon, Walmart, eBay, Alibaba, SHEIN, TikTok Shop, TEMU, Rednote, 1688, Shopee, Lazada, and Mercado Libre etc., 80% of Participants are Suppliers



**Gold prices rise by Rs 200 to Rs 87,900 per 10 g**

Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 87,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid fresh buying by jewellers and retailers and a weak rupee, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 87,700 per 10 grams on Friday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced by Rs 200 to Rs 87,500 per 10 grams. It had settled at Rs 87,300 per 10 grams in the previous market close. Additionally, silver prices also went up by Rs 100 to Rs 96,500 per kg. In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for April delivery jumped Rs 698 to Rs 84,917 per 10 grams. "Gold remained positive after last week's 1.60 per cent profit booking. The fresh upside comes as global uncertainty persists, with tensions between US and Ukraine leaders over deal negotiations," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

**Samira Khan Mahi joins Babu88Sports as brand ambassador**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Babu88Sports, leading online sports news platform in South Asia is pleased to announce its partnership with acclaimed Bangladeshi actress and model, Samira Khan Mahi, as its new brand ambassador. This collaboration aims to merge the thrill of online gaming with the dynamic appeal of the entertainment industry, offering users a unique and engaging experience.

works include Mayabi (2017), Shokal Bikal Ratri (2021), Girl's Squad (2021), Biye Korte Giye (2022), Hangor (2022), Marriage Breaker (2023), and Overtrump (2023). With a strong social media presence, particularly on TikTok, where she boasts over 2 million followers, Samira continues to captivate audiences both on and off-screen.



About Samira Khan Mahi  
Born on February 7, 1997, in Lakshimpur, Sylhet, Bangladesh, Samira Khan Mahi, whose real name is Farjana Yesmin Koly, has established herself as a prominent figure in the Bangladeshi entertainment industry. She first gained recognition in 2014 as the first runner-up in the Rang RTV 2020 Colours Model Search. Her success in modeling led to collaborations with renowned brands such as Ecstasy, O2, Sailor, Pride Girls, Banglalink, and Textmart.

Transitioning into acting, Samira has demonstrated her versatility through compelling performances in numerous Bengali television dramas, series, telefilms, and digital content. Some of her notable

A Strategic Collaboration  
The partnership between Babu88Sports and Samira Khan Mahi represents a strategic alignment of entertainment and sports. As the official Brand Ambassador, Samira will leverage her star power, digital influence, and vibrant personality to enhance Babu88Sports's brand visibility and connect with sports enthusiasts. This collaboration will also introduce innovative opportunities for fans to engage with Samira through exclusive promotions, interactive content, and special events on the platform.

**'Sufficient wheat stock to meet PDS requirement'**

PNS ■ PANAJI (GOA)

Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra on Monday said the government has sufficient wheat stock to meet the requirement of welfare schemes and for market interventions to keep prices under check.

He said the Centre has offloaded 30 lakh tonnes of wheat to flour millers and processors this fiscal year under the open market sale scheme (OMSS) and stressed that benefits should be passed on to consumers.

In a written message read at a conference organised by Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India (RFMFI), Chopra said the Centre is committed to ensuring food security for every citizen of India through initiatives such as efficient procurement of foodgrains, safe storage, and timely distribution under the Targeted Public Distribution Scheme (TPDS)/Other Welfare Schemes (OWS).

"Government has sufficient stocks of wheat to meet own requirements and also for necessary market interventions. This year government has offloaded 30 lakh tonnes of wheat to processors/millers through OMSS(D)," he said.

India produced a record 1,132 lakh tonnes of wheat in 2023-24 crop year (July-June).



The government expects a bumper crop in 2024-25 as well on the back of higher acreage.

Chopra said the Centre is also implementing an ambitious silo construction programme to ensure bulk storage and movement of wheat.

"This will assist in dispersed storage and efficiency in logistics, he added.

"Ensuring food security and self-reliance in wheat production is a key government priority, and the milling industry plays a vital role in this effort," he said, and added that the Federation's market insights has helped in framing policies and strategic plan-

ning. The Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India has been a valued partner in addressing industry challenges and working closely with the Government to ensure smooth supply chains, the secretary said.

"The Federation must maintain oversight over its members to ensure that the benefits of OMSS conducted by FCI reach the consumer and inflationary tendencies are curbed," he said.

More than 600 delegates are participating in a global conference organised by the federation, which has 1800 direct and indirect members.

**IEX reports 9 pc rise in trade volumes to 9,622 million units**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) has registered a 9 per cent year-on-year rise in trade volumes to 9,622 million units in February compared to the year-ago period, a company statement said on Monday.

A total of 16.37 lakh renewable energy certificates were traded during the month, marking a 167 per cent year on year (y-o-y) increase, it said. The next REC trading sessions at the Exchange are scheduled for March 12th and 26th.

In the electricity market, the day-ahead market (DAM) achieved 5,369 MU volume in February as compared to 4,722 MU volume in the same month last year, an increase of 14 per cent YoY.

The real-time electricity Market (RTM) volume increased by 23 per cent to 2,887 MU in February from 2,340 MU in February 2024. Day Ahead Contingency and Term-Ahead Market (TAM), comprising of contingency, daily & weekly and monthly contracts up to 3 months, traded 814 MU during February 2025, lower by 45 per cent on YoY basis.

**ED issues Rs 611-cr notice to Paytm for flouted RBI guidelines**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday said it has issued a notice to Paytm's parent company, its MD and linked entities for "contravention" of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) involving Rs 611 crore.

According to Paytm's annual report for the financial year 2024, the fintech major's founder, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, is its chairman, managing director (MD) and chief executive officer.

The notice has been issued by a special director of the federal agency after the completion of an investigation and before the initiation of adjudication proceedings under the said law.

A Paytm spokesperson said the company was working to resolve the matter in accordance with applicable laws and regulatory processes.

The show cause notice has been issued to Paytm's flagship company One 97 Communication limited (OCL), its managing director and other Paytm subsidiaries such as Little Internet Pvt Ltd



and Nearbuy India Pvt Ltd for "contraventions" of the provisions of the FEMA to the tune of around Rs 611 crore, the ED said in a statement.

Investigations found that OCL made foreign investments in Singapore and "did not" file necessary reporting to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the creation of an overseas step-down subsidiary, it said.

The company had "also received foreign direct investment (FDI) from overseas investors without following proper pricing guidelines stipulated by the RBI", it alleged.

The ED said OCL's subsidiary company in India -- Little Internet Pvt Ltd -- received FDI from overseas investors "without following" the pricing

guidelines stipulated by the RBI. The other subsidiary -- Nearbuy India Pvt Ltd -- "did not" report the FDI received by the company within the time frame prescribed by the RBI, it said.

In a regulatory filing made on Saturday (March 1), Paytm said it received a notice from the ED for alleged violation of certain FEMA rules by the company and its two subsidiaries -- Little Internet and Nearbuy -- with respect to certain investment transactions.

Later, Paytm clarified that the alleged breach pertains to the period when the two companies were not its subsidiaries. It acquired the two companies in 2017.

**Coal India sets 788 MT production, 765 MT offtake for FY'25**

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Coal India Limited (CIL) is expecting production of 788 million tonnes (MT) and an offtake of 765 MT for the current fiscal year ending March 2025, its chairman P M Prasad said on Monday, while ruling out any price rationalisation despite a decline in international coal prices.

The initial production target was 838 MT, which was revised to 806-810 MT in January.

In FY'24, the company achieved production of 773.65 MT, reflecting a 10 per cent year-on-year growth.

Speaking at the Indian Coal Market Conference organised by mjunction, a joint venture between Tata Steel Ltd and SAIL, Prasad attributed the slowdown in offtake to a rake shortage in large mines.

At the same time, he remained optimistic about growth in the coming months. Both production and offtake are expected to grow by 1.5 per cent this year, based on current estimates, against 10 per cent and 8.5 per cent growth, respectively, last year.

Prasad also mentioned that

the availability of rakes had been a concern due to the Kumbh Mela, but after discussions with the Railways, the situation has improved in the last few days.

He also mentioned that currently there is no shortage of coal and stock at power plants is 51 million tonnes.

According to the latest estimates, pithead coal stock is also



over 80 million tonnes. Despite softening international coal prices in the recent months, Prasad ruled out any price cuts by CIL, stating that the company aims to complement, not compete with, commercial mines.

He urged private commercial block owners to seek support from Coal India's CMPDI, as the company is committed to complementing the government's target of reducing coal imports.

**Nissan Motor India total sales up 44.76 pc at 8,567 units**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nissan Motor India on Monday reported a 44.76 per cent year-on-year rise in total sales at 8,567 units in February 2025, riding on exports.

The company, which sold 5,918 units in February 2024, said all the powertrain options of its compact SUV Magnite are now E20-compatible with the Magnite BR10 naturally aspirated engine also becoming fully-compliant recently after the more powerful 1-litre HR10 turbocharged petrol engine, which became E20-compatible in August 2024.

In February 2025, domestic sales accounted for 2,328 units, down from 2,755 units in the same month last year.

Exports last month totalled 6,239 units, up 97 per cent year-on-year, compared to 3,163 export units in February 2024. Nissan Motor India said in a statement.

**Naveen Jindal to acquire Bhadrashwar Vidyut**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jindal Power Limited is set to acquire Bhadrashwar Vidyut for nearly Rs 500 crore as the lenders of the Gujarat-based thermal power producer have approved its bid.

The Committee of Creditors (CoC) of Bhadrashwar Vidyut, which is currently going through an insolvency resolution process, has voted in favour of the resolution plan by Jindal Power Limited (JPL), a Naveen Jindal Group company, according to industry sources.

As per the provisions of the

Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC), the resolution professional of the debt-ridden thermal power producer will send the plan to the National Company Law Tribunal for final approval.

A source close to the deal said, "Jindal Power was the highest bidder in the second challenge process. The company will now work towards completing the acquisition within the next six months".

In a rigorous multi-round bidding, each participants were given a chance to improve their offers. Eventually, Jindal Power

emerged as the highest and sole bidder in the final round, he added.

JPL plans to fund its around Rs 500 crore bid entirely through internal accruals, and committed Rs 25-50 crore additionally for capital expenditure to ensure operational efficiency post-acquisition, he noted.

After completion, the acquisition will be crucial for a strategic expansion of the Jindal Group, reinforcing its presence in Gujarat and significantly bolstering its power generation portfolio.

The move aligns with the

company's long-term growth strategy of expanding its energy footprint across India while ensuring financial sustainability, the source said.

As Jindal Power moves swiftly to integrate Bhadrashwar Vidyut into its portfolio, industry experts anticipate that this acquisition will breathe new life into Gujarat's power sector, ensuring energy reliability and economic growth.

Bhadrashwar Vidyut, formerly known as OPGS Power Gujarat, operates two 150 MW coal-based power plants in Kutch.

**VW to drive in Golf GTI, Tiguan R-line in India**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

German carmaker Volkswagen will be driving in its two globally acclaimed performance models Golf GTI and Tiguan R-line in India as part of its steps to enhance brand positioning in the country, a senior company official said on Monday.

Volkswagen India will be launching the two models latest by the second quarter of 2025 by importing as fully built units under the 'GSR 870 rule' as a result of which volumes will be limited, Volkswagen India Brand Director Ashish Gupta told PTI.

"We are calling 2025 the year of 'Progressive Performance' for us... we want to make sure that we continue to grow in the Indian market. We want to make sure that we take the brand even higher up in terms of customer accessibility in terms of awareness and also in terms of brand image," he said.

While the company has been

able to establish the VW brand on the credentials of German engineering, fun to drive safety and build quality, he said, "We now want to take it up a notch higher with the introduction of our global iconic products, which signify performance".

As early as the second quarter of 2025, Gupta said VW India will launch the Golf GTI and the all-new Volkswagen Tiguan R-line as part of the brand enhancement exercise.

"Golf is a legend worldwide with 50 years of legacy behind it and on top of that, the Golf GTI is our highest selling performance oriented 'Golf' worldwide. So that's something which we are bringing to India," he said. On the all-new Tiguan R Line, he said, "It is not the normal Tiguan. We are bringing the top spec R-Line into India, a totally new third generation Tiguan, which is Volkswagen's one of the best sellers after the Golf worldwide."

**House of Surya unveils 'Adira': A timeless tribute**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a world where fashion trends ebb and flow, House of Surya presents Adira, a collection that transcends time, celebrating the essence of strength, heritage, and grace. This latest launch redefines contemporary luxury by blending exquisite craftsmanship with the deep-rooted traditions of handwoven artistry. More than a mere collection, Adira is a narrative—an homage to the resilience of generations, the quiet power of femininity, and the enduring beauty of heritage.

A Legacy Woven in Every Thread  
At the heart of Adira lies an unwavering commitment to preserving tradition while embracing modernity.

Every drape tells a story—of artisans who have honed their craft for centuries, of mothers passing down heirlooms to daughters, and of the modern woman who honours her roots while carving her own path. Each saree in this collection is not just an ensemble but a living testament to legacy and resilience. The collection's hallmark is its intricate handwoven textiles, crafted using time-honoured techniques that elevate every piece to an heirloom. The artistry of skilled weavers breathes life into each design, ensuring that no two pieces are exactly alike. From the softest silks to the most intricate Zari work, Adira represents the pinnacle of craftsmanship—where every motif carries the whispers of the past and the



strength of the present. The Magnolia Motif: A Symbol of Strength and Grace

Central to the collection is the Magnolia motif, an emblem of timeless resilience and beauty. Chosen for its significance, the Magnolia flower symbolizes strength wrapped in grace—an apt reflection of the modern woman. Whether delicately embroidered onto flowing silk or woven into the very fabric of the saree, the Magnolia motif serves as a poetic reminder that elegance is not just in appearance but in the quiet fortitude that defines true femininity. In Adira, the motif seamlessly intertwines with age-old weaving techniques, presenting a collection that is both rooted in

tradition and refreshingly contemporary. The Magnolia's presence across the collection celebrates the woman who walks with the wisdom of the past yet strides forward with unyielding confidence.

A Tribute to the Modern Woman  
The name Adira, meaning bold yet graceful, is a tribute to the essence of modern femininity—fearless, resilient, and effortlessly elegant.

The collection honours women who carry their heritage with pride while embracing their own unique journey. Each saree is designed to empower, serving as a reminder that strength and beauty are not opposing forces but rather harmonious elements that define today's woman.

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## CRAFTING SONIC WORLDS ACROSS GENRES



In conversation with **The Pioneer**, three-time Indian Recording Academy Award (IRAA) winner **Ninad Lad** delved into his journey from an award-winning guitarist to one of India's most sought-after sound engineers. He further shared insights on balancing commercial precision with artistic expression, the impact of digital platforms on sound engineering and how AI and immersive audio are reshaping the future of the industry

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Three-time Indian Recording Academy Award (IRAA) winner Ninad Lad has shaped the soundscapes of some of the biggest films, TV shows and commercials in India. With over a decade of experience and a portfolio spanning 5,000+ TV commercials and numerous high-profile projects, Ninad has mastered the art of sound engineering. His latest works include mixing the background score for *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, *Dunki*, *Guns & Gulaabs*, *Lust Stories*, *Fukrey 3*, *Chup* and *Mismatched Season 2*. Before becoming one of the most sought-after sound engineers in the industry, Ninad was an award-winning guitarist, securing the IIT Mood Indigo title in 2007. His passion for music still runs deep, as he continues to collaborate on jazz and indie projects with artists like Rhythm Shaw, Gino Banks and Mohini Dey.

In this candid conversation, Ninad shares insights into his creative process, the transition from guitarist to sound engineer and how he balances commercial expectations with artistic freedom.

With a filmography that spans action thrillers to comedies, Ninad has honed the ability to adjust his sound approach based on genre. He emphasises that each project demands a unique sonic treatment.

"With action thrillers like *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, the sound needs to feel larger than life. Punchy percussion, deep bass and immersive spatial effects help build tension and excitement. On the other hand, for a comedy like *Fukrey 3*, the focus is on making the sound lively, playful and crisp, ensuring that dialogues and comedic timing shine through without unnecessary distractions. It's all about understanding the mood of the film and letting the sound enhance that experience organically."

Ninad's transition from being a guitarist to a sound engineer has profoundly influenced his work. His background in music allows him to approach sound design with a deep understanding of tones, textures and

emotions. "Being a guitarist taught me to listen deeply to tones, textures, and emotions within music. This instinct carries over into sound design, where even the smallest sonic detail can shape a scene's impact. When collaborating with filmmakers, I translate their vision into sound, much like I would interpret a song's mood through my instrument. My musical background also helps me communicate better with composers and artists, ensuring the sound not only fits technically but also feels right emotionally."

Having worked on over 5,000 TV commercials, Ninad knows the challenges of capturing a listener's attention in just a few seconds. He believes that experimentation is key to making sound stand out in advertising.

"Advertising is all about impact—you have just a few seconds to grab attention. The key is to experiment with textures, rhythms and unique sound elements that instantly stand out. Sometimes, it's about stripping things down to their essence; other times, layering unexpected sounds can create something fresh. Each brand has a distinct identity, so I always tailor the sound to reflect that while ensuring it feels modern and engaging."

While precision is crucial in sound engineering, Ninad also takes creative risks to push the boundaries of conventional sound mixing. Films like *Dunki* and *Guns & Gulaabs* provided opportunities to explore new sonic landscapes.

"Absolutely! *Dunki* had moments where we played with subtle distortions and unconventional reverbs to heighten the emotional weight of a scene. For *Guns & Gulaabs*, the retro crime setting allowed me to experiment with vintage-style processing, giving the soundtrack an era-specific grit while maintaining modern clarity. Taking creative risks is crucial—some of the best mixes come from stepping outside the traditional playbook."

Working on both mainstream hits and indie projects, Ninad has mastered the balance between maintaining authenticity and appealing to global audiences.

"The core of any project is storytelling, and authenticity comes from staying true to that. For mainstream projects, the sound needs to be polished yet distinct, blending global production standards with cultural nuances. In

indie projects, there's more room to explore raw, unconventional sounds. Whether working on a commercial hit or an independent film, my focus is always on enhancing the emotional connection through sound while keeping the sonic identity unique."

From the youthful vibrance of *Mismatched* to the dark psychological depth of *Chup*, Ninad carefully curates the sonic identity of every project.

"Every project starts with understanding the world it creates. *Mismatched* had a youthful, modern energy, so the sound was crisp, clean and vibrant to match that vibe. *Chup*, on the other hand, was intense and psychological, requiring a darker, more atmospheric approach. The goal is to complement the story without overpowering it and using sound as a subconscious tool that heightens emotions and immerses the audience in that world."

While commercial projects demand precision and polish, indie projects allow for more artistic freedom. Ninad enjoys the challenge of both.

"It's about finding the right space within each project. Commercial work has specific expectations—there's a need for precision and polish. Indie projects allow for more creative freedom and experimentation. I enjoy both because they challenge different aspects of my craft. Even within structured commercial projects, there's always a way to infuse a personal touch, whether through a unique sonic texture or an unexpected mix choice."

Deciding which sounds, beats, or instruments best evoke emotion is an instinctive process for Ninad. He believes sound should elevate a scene without distracting from the storytelling.

"It all starts with feeling. If a scene needs tension, I look at ways to build anticipation through bass swells, subtle echoes, or rhythmic patterns. For emotional moments, warm textures and soft reverbs can create an intimate connection. Sound should never distract—it should elevate the scene without the audience necessarily noticing why they feel a certain way. A good mix is one that disappears into the storytelling. With digital platforms democratising music production, sound engineers have a greater impact on audience experiences than ever before."

"It's an exciting time. Independent artists now have access to high-quality production tools without needing massive studio budgets, which allows for more experimentation and unique sounds. Sound engineers play a crucial role in shaping these sonic experiences, helping independent music stand shoulder to shoulder with mainstream releases. The direct-to-audience model also means more creative control, and that's a big win for both artists and engineers."

Looking ahead, Ninad is excited about the next wave of innovation in sound design.

"AI-driven tools are becoming increasingly sophisticated, helping streamline workflows and opening up new creative possibilities. Spatial audio and immersive sound experiences, especially with VR and AR content, are also pushing boundaries in storytelling. The way audiences consume sound is evolving and I'm excited about how technology will continue to redefine what's possible in sound design."



## Driving social impact through education

Education leaders can catalyse social change by igniting minds, empowering teams and striking collaborations across stakeholders in the education ecosystem.

With education emerging as an important tool for social change, the need for a new kind of education leadership couldn't be overemphasised. The next-gen leaders heading educational institutions need to imbibe special social skills that will help them create a culture of partnership, collaboration and inclusivity in educational practices. Here are key lessons that leaders in the educational domain can implement to make campuses a catalyst for community empowerment and social justice:

**Recognise needs:** With the world today distressed by societal issues, some challenges are unique to specific regions, people, cultures, and nations. Education leaders must recognise this urgency and select issues that need immediate redressal for the larger benefit of society. Be it the problem of unsustainable consumption or income inequality, leaders in the education domain should prioritise solving the pressing issues in their neighbourhoods. Further, university head needs to align their focus areas with societal issues so that impactful results can be obtained to reform the lives of communities.

**Adopt EID:** Equity, Inclusion and Diversity (EID) are fundamental for bringing social change and by adopting the approach as an operating philosophy, leaders can help societies on fundamental parameters of progress. Conducting training programs on equality, gender sensitisation, and human rights can be a good starting point for inculcating EID. Education leaders can also opt to establish Equity Departments (ED) on their campuses to develop, analyse, and implement policies through the lens of EID.

**Listen to empower:** While active listening has always been a fundamental aspect of great leaders, creating social impacts mandates

leaders in the education domain to empower their teams. Providing departmental heads with space, freedom and decision-making autonomy is also crucial for creating a wider impact on society. Leaders should encourage their team heads to conduct impact assessments on social issues, community problems and sustainability challenges. This attitude, in turn, will have a rub-off impact, prompting departmental heads to empower student communities to bring change to society.

**Be approachable:** Although rated underdog, approachable education leaders can induce social change by enhancing coordination and collaboration among partners. Both direct and virtual interactions are important, and by exchanging views with departmental heads, faculties, students and community representatives, valuable insights can be gained into what needs to be done for the larger welfare of society. The benefit of being open also helps uncover many dragging factors that would have never come to light otherwise.

**Redesign pedagogy:** To create caring communities, leaders must focus on developing responsive pedagogy that is strongly based on the socially relevant curriculum. There is a need to include diverse perspectives, and by integrating culturally responsive courses into the curricula, university leadership can contribute to uprooting social ills. Education leaders should ensure that department heads adopt a comprehensive approach to develop academic structure and focus on sensitizing students on issues like poverty, inequality, healthcare, child labour, etc. Student leadership forums can also be formed, and making community service a part of the internship programs can also help in addressing community issues in the long term. Generating social awareness among students is critical for achieving social justice and can help universities catalyse change in the way societies exist around the world.

(The author, Kalpesh Banker, is a managing partner at EduShine Search Partners.)

PNS/HYDERABAD

People are yearning for a simpler lifestyle and a closer relationship with nature as the world grows more urbanised. A new trend in tourism has emerged as a result of this desire: farm stays! Imagine spending your days surrounded by verdant fields and amiable farm animals, waking up to the lovely sounds of birdsong and inhaling the aroma of blossoming flowers. Sangam Farms provide a special chance to get your hands dirty, experience rural living and re-establish a connection with nature. Every moment is an opportunity to learn, develop and relax—from picking fresh food to feeding cute farm animals. You'll find yourself letting go of the worries of city life and embracing a more laid-back, genuine way of being as you become accustomed to the tranquil rhythms of farm life. It gives an opportunity to disconnect, rejuvenate and rediscover the splendour of the great outdoors, whether you're a foodie hoping to enjoy the freshest, locally produced delicacies, an adventurer keen to try your hand at farming, or just someone searching for a peaceful getaway from the bustle. This novel weave is being developed in the center of Bhilwara, the textile town in Rajasthan. Such a silent revolution is occurring amid the busy looms! The land is being tended by the same hands that once created elaborate designs on textiles.



## RISE OF FARM STAYS!

Bhilwara is leading the way as it develops into a center for farm stays, providing tourism that is guided by the community. But what really stands out is how the lush fields give way to a savannah-like setting as nightfall descends at the farms, bringing to mind the majesty of Africa's Masai Mara! The opulent tents take you right into the middle of nature. The noises of nocturnal animals and the rustle of foliage combine to produce a symphony that is both distinctively Indian and definitely African as you fall asleep beneath the starry sky.

### Moo-ving experiences

A dairy farm tour is the newest trend here, where guests of all ages may enjoy the creamy treats of farm-fresh milk, cheese and butter. Enjoy the tastiest delights, like freshly churned butter and the newest ice cream which comes next, while watching the gentle giants from Netherlands get milked. You'll find that the true magic occurs not just in the milking parlour but also in the relationships that are formed between people, animals and the land itself as you inhale the delightful aroma of fresh hay. You will feel thankful and maybe even a little "moo-ved" after this really amazing tour.

### Explore world of hydroponics

Greetings from the futuristic world of hydroponics, where nature and innovation collide in a way that is really revolutionary. Over here, hydroponics tours are the newest buzz. Observe the captivating interplay between nutrient-rich mist and well designed systems as vegetables grow in poly-houses with never-before-seen speed and vigour. Your exploration of the climate-controlled greenhouses will open up a world of limitless possibilities. You'll doubt everything you believed you knew about growing your own food after this mind-blowing experience and you'll be itching to embrace the hydroponic revolution!

### Ultimate strawberry experience

Then, savour the sweet life, where you can pick the juiciest strawberries! With the aroma of juicy strawberries filling the air, picture yourself walking through fields. You will experience the delight of selecting your own treasures and the gratification of biting into a fruit that is still warm from the sun as you stroll through the strawberry patches. With the extra benefit of bringing your freshly picked strawberries home to enjoy with loved ones, it's

a sensory experience that's equal parts thrilling and soothing. Your taste buds (and your Instagram feed) will thank you!

### Khad Paneer and magic of Mewar

A royal adventure awaits beneath the starry sky that illuminates the undulating farm fields with a beautiful orange hue. Enter the magnificent realm of Rajputana, where Mewar's imperial tradition coexists with the rustic beauty of rural India. As the aroma of spices fills the air, assemble around the roaring fire. Savour the mouth-watering flavours of traditional Mewar food, which is skillfully prepared by the chef who works his magic with each delicate herb and spice. The eerie sounds of folk music fill the night air as the stars start to shine above. The splendour of rural Rajasthan comes to life in the middle of farmland on this evening of regal proportions. The magnificent preparation of "Khad Paneer," a centuries-old dish that was handed down through the royal kitchens of Mewar, was what really ignited the Rajputana experience. Located in a pit buried in the ground, this personalized dish, appropriate for kings, was slow-cooked to perfection in a clay pot. The pit was shut while the succulent paneer cooked in a flavourful broth that was

infused with aromatic spices, allowing the flavours to develop like a great wine. With the paneer so supple and the flavours so deep that they lingered on the mouth like a comforting whisper, the end product was a culinary masterpiece. It was an absolutely royal dining experience in the middle of "khet"!

### Dam-side delights

The atmosphere changed to a calm symphony of golden hues as the last rays of the day danced across the rippling waters of Guwardi dam. Enjoying a traditional Indian meal of crispy, golden pakodas and steaming glasses of chai was the ideal backdrop. Good tea, crunchy snacks and the beauty of nature came together in a moment of perfect ecstasy as the sun sank below the horizon, painting the sky in pink and orange strokes.

### Meet farm's colourful residents

Each animal that lives on the farm is a thread in the complex web of farm life and together they form a colourful tapestry of species that go about their daily lives. Eager for the daily feeding frenzy, fish congregate at the water's edge and swim languidly in the lotus ponds, their scales gleaming in the sunlight. A bright kingfisher bird dazzles with its burst of colour, while two inquisitive young turtles by the name of Seth Ji & Tortuga peek out nearby.

### Your own Geet-moment awaits

The farm becomes a mystical movie theatre beneath the stars beneath the heavenly canvas. The aroma of freshly made cocktails fills the air while the soft glow of artificial lanterns creates the perfect atmosphere for an enchanted midnight. The expert mixologist creates signature drinks that go well with the film's theme and give the viewing experience a whimsical touch. It was an evening of old-school glitz! You can't help but experience déjà vu as well. You feel as though you had wandered into a scene from *Jab We Met*, when the fanciful romance between Aditya and Geet took place beneath the "Machan". The scenery was bathed in a golden glow from the sun! As one gives in to the peace of the moment and feels the worries of daily life dissolve, time seems to stop. When the freedom of the broad fields and the beauty of nature combine to provide an unrestrained sensation of joy and liberty, it can be your own Geet moment.

### Tactile tour

A tactile tour that tells a rich story of touch and tradition is another option. The

rustic charm of rural India meets the world of high fashion in this one-of-a-kind tour, where craftsmen provide gorgeous fabrics to well-known brands like HRX, Jockey, Zivame, Zudio and more. Every stitch, weave and thread narrates a tale of luxury lingerie and sportswear. The lines between art, fashion and culture become less distinct as you handle, feel and investigate the complex patterns and textures, giving you a greater respect for the unsung heroes of Bhilwara's textile heritage. Another passion project of the farm's owner is C9, an internal brand that captures the spirit of his textile appeal. It's an act of love!

A vision to cultivate a haven where peace and freshness flourished emerged in the middle of nature. It is the realisation of this goal, where the power of locally cultivated love is demonstrated by the journey from seed to plate. They deliver wholesome treats directly from their dairy farms and hydroponic gardens, celebrating the essence of farm-fresh goodness by adopting sustainable procedures and lowering their carbon footprint. The story doesn't stop there, though. The founders' dedication resulted in the establishment of a calm sanctuary where visitors find peace amid verdant surroundings and locals find comfort. Everyone is invited to enjoy the beauty of nature, which has been lovingly and carefully tended, in this picturesque haven.





# what's brewing?



Wood Shot Badminton Academy, a state-of-the-art badminton training facility, was officially inaugurated, marking a significant milestone in the region's sports development. Notable guests included T. Prakash Goud, MLA of Rajendranagar constituency; Mondra Sangeetha, Atapur Corporator; Sulige Venkatesh, Atapur Division President; Mondra Komuraiah, Secretary of RR District; Augustine Thomas, Principal of DSE, Atapur; RJ Krish of Big FM and the founders Sirisha Pamula, Sarandeep, BC Manjula, Satyavani, Swathi, Kiran Patel, Madhuri and Mohammad Nayeem, attended the event.



In celebration of World Hearing Day, the DecibelDash event brought together a diverse group of individuals and organizations dedicated to raising awareness about hearing health. Dr. Sri Prakash, speaking at the event, emphasized the goal of creating a world where hearing health is universally prioritized, empowering individuals of all ages to live fulfilling lives free from the challenges of untreated hearing loss.



An impressive Kathak dance performance was held at Banjara Hills, Road No. 7, in a joint collaboration between Aadyam Hand Woven and Oro Jewels. The event, titled Hori, was organized to celebrate Women's Day and featured New York-based Kathak exponents Barkha Patel and Tanveer Alam, who performed to a variety of Kathak numbers. The event marked the presence of several dignitaries, including retired IAS officer Ajay Mishra, Nandini Mallu, wife of Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Turkey's Council General Urhan and FICCI Flo Chairperson Priya Gajjar, among the rest.



Kiranmayee Alivelu, the founder of Miss & Mrs Strong & Beautiful inaugurated the Hand to Hand - An Handloom Expo at Kalinga Cultural Hall, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills. The event, organized by Jagdishwar Hastkala, showcases a variety of handloom products. The exhibition is being held from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM and will run until March 5, 2025



A unique initiative by Loyola Academy's Counselling Cell, the Affirmative Event aimed to foster emotional awareness and self-reflection among students. Conceptualized by A. Sandhya Thomas, Assistant Professor in Psychology and Student Counsellor, along with 2nd-year student coordinators Jessica, Lalitha and Nypunya from BA Psychology, English Literature, and Journalism, the event provided a space for students to acknowledge and understand their emotions. The highlight was an interactive exercise featuring three emotion boxes—Happy, Sad and Angry—each filled with affirmative chits.



Spoorthy Engineering College, Nadergul, Hyderabad, hosted its highly anticipated national-level tech fest, PRAZASTI-2025. The event was inaugurated by S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Secretary and Correspondent of the college, along with Dr. Giridhar Akula, the Principal, who lit the ceremonial lamp to mark the occasion.



MAA E.N.T. proudly joined the global community in celebrating World Hearing Day, an annual observance aimed at raising awareness about hearing loss and the crucial importance of ear and hearing care. The event saw chief guest Konda Surekha, Minister for Forest and Environment and Endowments, applaud MAA E.N.T. for its vital role in promoting hearing care. She also felicitated the doctors for their contributions on World Hearing Day, which was celebrated on Monday.



Apollo Cradle & Children's Hospital in collaboration with MSD Pharmaceuticals introduced 'Together for Her Well-being,' an initiative to empower women with information on self-care and preventive actions for better reproductive health. Dr. Mahitha Reddy A - Sr. Consultant Obstetrics & Gynecology, Dr. Padmini Silpa, Sr. Consultant Obstetrics & Gynecology and Dr. Jasmin Rath, Sr. Consultant Obstetrics & Gynecology, Laproscopy & Robotic Surgeon had attended the event.

PARTY  
Photos by- SV Chary

## FUN

**ARCHIE**

**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

**GARFIELD**

**NANCY**

**GINGER MEGGS**

**REALITY CHECK**

**SPEED BUMP**

**CROSSWORD**

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**SUDOKU**

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Yesterday's solution

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

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.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**ACROSS**

- A thing with wheels that is fun to ride on
- Don't go
- A large bird of prey
- See-through
- Time of darkness
- Sickness with a high temperature
- On a trip

**DOWN**

- The body's covering
- A woodwind instrument
- The sound of an explosion
- An unusual or exciting experience

**SOLUTION**

F	L	E	E	C	E	S	T	O	P
A	N	O	T	O	B	T	A	I	N
I	D	O	T	A	R	G			
I	G	N	I	T	E	S			
S	H	C	R	A	B	L			
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P	L	I	G	E	O	N			



# Kingston will transport audiences into a magical world, says GV Prakash

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

**G**V Prakash Kumar is set to take audiences on an adventurous journey with his upcoming film *Kingston*, a sea-based fantasy horror thriller. Marking his 25th film as an actor and his debut as a producer, the multi-talented composer-turned-actor promises a unique cinematic experience.

GV Prakash Kumar, who plays the lead in *Kingston*, shares, "This project is also special as it marks his debut as a producer. "For the first time, we are bringing a sea adventure horror film. It's a magical fantasy world, and we plan to develop it into a franchise with sequels."

Discussing how he manages his multiple roles, he said, "I schedule my work meticulously and always prioritise timing. When I commit to delivering music on time, I make sure I do it. I remain calm, composed and focused primarily on my work."

"For me, I always strive to offer something new, regardless of a film's success. Every project, whether as an actor or a music composer, is a learning experience," he added. GV Prakash has completed 100 films as a music director and 25 as an actor.

Speaking about *Kingston*, he shared that several scenes were shot underwater. "I underwent underwater training for a few days before filming. We ensured we had a proper trainer to guide us during the shoot," he explained.

The music director believes that whenever he ventures into something for the first time, it brings him success. "I composed my first music for *Veyil*, which was a hit. Then, my first Telugu film, *Ullasanga Utsahanga*, was also a success. In Hindi, I composed for *Gangs of Wasseypur*, which became a huge hit. Now, as a producer for the first time, I feel lucky again and believe *Kingston* will be a success," he expressed with confidence.

GV Prakash's acting journey began unexpectedly. "I became an actor by accident when AR Murugadoss asked me to act in a film. Later, Geetha Arts and Gnanavel Raja roped me in for *Darling*, a remake of the Telugu hit *Premakatha Chitram*. It turned out to be a big hit, followed by *Trisha Illana Nayanthara*, which was another



GV Prakash Kumar, who is going to make his debut as a producer in the upcoming film *Kingston*, interacts with the media here, sharing insights about the film, his approach to music and acting, the challenges of shooting at sea



blockbuster. I never planned on becoming an actor, but the offers kept coming," he recalled.

When asked if juggling multiple roles was challenging, he admitted, "Nothing is easy in this world. Every profession has immense competition, and there's no safe zone. Cinema is my passion, and I want to push myself. I need to keep the audience engaged—that's why I decided to make *Kingston*."

GV Prakash describes *Kingston* as a blend of horror, adventure, fantasy, and treasure hunting. "This is the first time an Indian film of this kind is being made," he stated.

The film also posed physical challenges. "Shooting on boats in the sea was extremely difficult. It's physically exhausting, and the environment is slippery, making it a tough experience," he shared.

Interestingly, GV Prakash admitted that he doesn't pay special attention to music when he acts in a film. "People often say I create better music for films in which I don't act. But I always compose based on the story's requirements. For *Kingston*, however, I tried to create something different, and I hope audiences like it," he said.

He also emphasised originality in his work. "I don't believe in copying. Our film is rooted in a sea-based community. The story revolves around a cursed sea village where fishermen are unable to enter the waters. When a boy dares to venture into the sea, his fate unfolds in an intriguing way. To find out what happens, you have to watch the film," he teased.

GV Prakash also spoke about his distinct musical style. "I don't believe in loud music—I believe in style. Whether it's *Lucky Bhaskar* or *Amaran*, I have my own approach. When it comes to *Good Bad Ugly*, which features Ajith sir, it's a mass entertainer, so the music is completely different," he explained.

Having composed music for several Telugu films, has he received acting offers in Tollywood? "Yes, I was actually supposed to do *Dasara* with Nani. But they wanted to start shooting in just two weeks, and I couldn't adjust my dates. If I get an offer, I'm ready to act in a Telugu film," he said.

He also revealed that he is producing another film with director Selva Raghavan. Addressing his separation from his wife, GV Prakash said, "We are friends and have mutually decided to part ways. Mental health is very important, and having personal space is essential. I spend a lot of time with my daughter," he shared.

When asked about the role of AI in music, he stated, "We can use AI as an advantage, but we cannot rely on it entirely. AI can assist in various aspects, but creativity is something that remains human-driven."

GV Prakash is confident that *Kingston* will provide audiences with a fresh cinematic experience. "When *Baahubali* was released, it transported audiences into a new world. The same happened with *Kantara*. Now, I am confident that *Kingston* will take everyone into a unique fantasy world," he concluded.



## Sonakshi Sinha's South cinema debut with *Jatadhara*

**B**ollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, renowned for her versatile roles in Hindi films, is all set to make her much-anticipated debut in Telugu cinema. The actress, known for hits like *Dabangg* and *Raees*, is reportedly joining the cast of the thriller *Jatadhara*, which also stars Sudheer Babu in the lead role. While an official announcement is awaited, industry sources suggest that Sonakshi has been finalised for a powerful and unique character that will showcase her talent in a new light.

The upcoming film *Jatadhara*, presented by Zee Studios and produced by Prerna Arora, has already piqued the interest of audiences after its grand muhurat ceremony in Hyderabad. Sonakshi's inclusion in the project marks a significant milestone in her career as she ventures into South Indian cinema, where the actress will be playing a role never seen before on screen. Filming for the movie is set to commence on March 8, 2025, with the excitement around her entry into the film only growing.

Interestingly, Sonakshi Sinha's very first film offer came from the Tamil film industry. She was initially considered to star opposite the legendary Kamal Haasan in the 2000 film *Hey Ram*. However, she did not pursue that opportunity, and the actress later went on to achieve massive success in Bollywood. Her long-awaited South debut is now generating significant buzz, with fans eager to see how she fares in a completely different cinematic landscape.

While her South debut has made waves, Sonakshi Sinha continues to make headlines in Hindi cinema as well. The actress was recently seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, a Netflix series that explored the lives of tawaifs in Lahore's Heera Mandi during the Indian independence movement. Sonakshi played dual roles in the show—Rehana Jahan and Fareedan Jahan—which showcased her acting range in a complex period drama. The series, which also stars Manisha Koirala, Aditi Rao Hydari and Richa Chadha, has been one of the most anticipated Netflix projects.

In addition to *Jatadhara*, Sonakshi is gearing up for the release of *Tu Hai Meri Kiran*, where she will share the screen with actor Zaheer Iqbal. Directed by Karan Rawal and Sanjana Malhotra, this film marks their second collaboration following *Double XXL*. However, *Tu Hai Meri Kiran* has been facing legal issues, as reports suggest that Adlabs has raised concerns over potential copyright infringement regarding the film's song, *Tu Hai Meri Kiran*. The film's release is currently under a cloud of legal uncertainty.

Sonakshi Sinha's career continues to evolve with a series of intriguing projects on the horizon. One of her upcoming films, *Nikita Roy and the Book of Darkness*, promises to add another feather to her cap. As she continues to diversify her roles, Sonakshi is cementing her place as one of Bollywood's most dynamic actresses, with a mix of thrilling and emotionally complex roles across genres.

## Pawan Kalyan's *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* release postponed

**P**awan Kalyan, who recently became the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, was eagerly awaited to make his big-screen return with *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*. The film was initially slated for release on March 28. However, the makers have now confirmed that the release will not happen on this date.

Sources reveal that the delay is due to the incomplete shooting schedule, as the team is awaiting Pawan Kalyan's availability for a few more days of shooting. Although the promotional content, including songs, is being released to maintain buzz, the film will not hit theaters on March 28, as two other films — Nithiin's *Robinhood* and *Mad Square* — are scheduled to release on that date.

The filmmakers are now targeting a summer release, with June or July being the potential windows. The final release date will depend on Pawan Kalyan's schedule. The film, directed by Jyothi Krishna and Krish, features Nidhi Agerwal as the female lead and is produced by AM Ratnam. *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* is a high-budget project that has created considerable excitement among fans.



## Nani's bold new avatar in *The Paradise*

**N**ani, known for his versatile acting in films, is ready to take on a more daring role in his next project, *The Paradise*. The actor, who is currently shooting for *Hit 3*, is teaming up once again with director Srikanth Odela for this bold and intense film. The filmmakers recently released a teaser titled 'Raw Statement', which set the tone for the gritty, unfiltered narrative that will define the film.

The teaser presents a raw atmosphere, an unapologetic language, and a story that aims to break new ground in cinema. Nani, who has

already shown his range with the 2023 hit *Dasara*, will continue to push his boundaries with *The Paradise*. His character is described as one of the most intense and raw roles he has played so far. Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas, *The Paradise* promises a larger-than-life experience for audiences. The film will be released in multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, English and Spanish, with versions in Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali set to be released soon. The film is slated to hit theaters on March 26, 2026.



## Pradeep Rangarajan's *Dragon* becomes a massive hit



**P**radeep Rangarajan, who became an overnight sensation with the success of *Love Today* in 2022, has scored another hit with *Return of the Dragon*. The film, directed by Ashwath Marimuthu, released in both Tamil and Telugu on February 21 and has already crossed the Rs 100 crore mark, becoming one of the highest-grossing films of the year.

Pradeep, who also played the lead role in the film, travelled to Hyderabad to thank the Telugu audience for their support. He expressed his gratitude, saying, "The Telugu audience has treated me like one of their own and I'm very thankful for that. They even started memes calling me their 'adopted son.'"

Director Ashwath Marimuthu attributed the success of the film to its emotional depth. "If the emotion connects with the audience, it will succeed in any language," said Ashwath. He also mentioned that Superstar Mahesh Babu had tweeted about his previous film *Oh My Kadavule*, which contributed to its success, and now he hopes Mahesh Babu will watch *Return of the Dragon* and share his thoughts on it.

## STANDALONE



The makers of the upcoming Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna-starrer *Sikandar*, dropped the teaser of the song *Zohra Jabeen* on Monday. The teaser promises a vibrant, foot-tapping dance number and features Salman and Rashmika Mandanna, and their palpable chemistry. From dazzling costumes to smooth, lively choreography, the teaser is packed with everything needed to make this track a worldwide sensation.



# Four spinners a tempting combination after Varun's effort: Rohit

PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Rohit Sharma did not commit to following the four-spinner template in the Champions Trophy (CT) semifinal against Australia, but said Varun Chakravarthy's splendid effort against New Zealand has made that option very tempting.

India played with Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel and the quartet wrecked the Kiwis, sharing nine wickets among them in their team's 44-run win here on Sunday. "We really need to think, even if we want to play four spinners, how we can squeeze four spinners. The reason I say it is because we are very much aware of the conditions here and we know exactly what works and what doesn't work," Rohit said in his pre-match press conference.

"So, we will think about it, what is the right combination to go with, but it is tempting," he added.

Chakravarthy, who came in as a replacement for rested pacer Harshit Rana, was excellent while returning with the figures of 5/42, and Rohit said the spinner is certainly in the team management's thoughts.

"He just showed what he is

capable of. Now, it is up to us to think and see how we can get that combination right. He got a game, and he did everything that was asked for.

"He has got something different about him and when he gets it right, he knocks people over and he takes 5-5. So, it is very tempting to think about what to do, which is a good headache to have. We will also assess the Australian batting lineup to see what kind of bowling options will work against them," he detailed.

**Rohit lauds Chakravarthy**

During the course of his match-winning effort against the Kiwis, the Tamil Nadu spinner had also rinsed away the memories of his modest outing against Pakistan in the 2021 T20 WC at this stadium. Rohit explained the improvements Chakravarthy has made in the interim.

"He has become more accurate now from the last time he played for India in 2021. There was a little bit of inexperience in him as well because he hadn't played a lot of cricket.

"But right now in the last two or three years he has played a lot of cricket, IPL and now for India in T20s and now the ODIs as well. So, he understands his bowling



really well," he said.

The Mumbai man said Chakravarthy has put in a lot of hard yards into his craft of late, which is now reflecting in his wicket column.

"You know, some of our batters also could not figure that (variations) out, which is always

nice. His pace variation now is superb. When you have a little bit of mystery, you do not want to be a one-dimensional bowler and bowl with the same speed.

"You need something different, the pace variation and the accuracy as well. So, he has worked on both and now you see

that he is getting a lot of wickets which is a good sign for us as a team," he added.

Drafting Chakravarthy into India's CT squad ahead of players like Yashasvi Jaiswal and Mohammed Siraj had raised some questions. Rohit explained the rationale.

"It is just the talent. If there is

something really special about that particular player, you want to fast track him. Certain formats require a certain skill set and whenever we look at these kinds of players, if the talent is there, then you don't want to shy away from blooding them."

Rohit did not read too much into the criticism of stacking the side with spinners.

"There will be questions asked, there will be few eyebrows raised but as a team you want to do certain things which can help you win games. So, it's important to understand that talent and I have been here long enough to understand what kind of players are talented.

"With Varun especially, we had to sacrifice a batsman which we thought it's only five games in this tournament and it's very unlikely that batter is going to play at any stage unless there is an injury."

**'Middle-order did well'**

India's top three — Rohit, Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill — had an off-game against New Zealand, leaving the side reeling at 30 for three. But Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel and Hardik Pandya batted well to take India to a defensible total.

Rohit said middle-order batters getting runs was important for the team during the business end of

the tournament. "The middle-order is very experienced but to just get some batting time in the middle and to get those runs and get that fighting total was very important from our standpoint. Shreyas, KL, Hardik and Axar, they batted brilliantly which is a good sign for us going into the semis because we wanted to have these kind of situations where we are slightly under pressure and then the middle-order takes us through to that target which they did," he said.

**'Axar's improvement is superb'**

Rohit also praised Axar for repaying the think tank's faith in him while promoting to No. 5 ahead of KL Rahul.

"The clear message was given to him when we started the ODI series against England. That no matter what, you will bat at No. 5. The kind of improvement he has shown with the bat over the last year or so is superb and that is where we felt that we can utilise him in the middle.

"He likes to take the game on, likes to play his shots. And sometimes when you are in trouble, you want to always take that positive route. He showed it in the T20 World Cup final (2024) which was a very, very crucial knock," he added.



## Champions Trophy: New Zealand to face South Africa in semifinal

PTI ■ DUBAI

Senior batter Tom Latham said New Zealand will take confidence from their recent win over South Africa in the tri-series when they face the same opponents in the semifinal of the Champions Trophy (CT) in Lahore on Wednesday.

New Zealand lost to India by 44 runs in their final Group A match here on Sunday but Latham said it would have no bearing on the semifinal.

Recently, New Zealand successfully chased 305 against South Africa in Lahore and then went on to win the tri-series, beating Pakistan in the final, and Latham feels those experiences will hold them in good stead on Wednesday.

"Yeah, the (South Africa) team that we played potentially will be slightly different, they had a lot of guys that weren't in that side. They were still playing in their SAT20 back in South Africa so will be slightly different.

"But I guess from our point of view, we'll lean back on those experiences of Lahore in playing against South Africa," Latham said after the loss to India.

"So yeah, we'll look to prep as best we can. We'll do everything that we do leading up to a game. It's obviously going to be a

reasonably quick turnaround, but it is what it is. And, we'll be looking forward to the challenge of a semifinal."

Latham said what matters for the Kiwis is their attitude towards the game and preparation.

"As we go into every game, we prepare as best we can. Individuals have slightly different preparation. And, yeah, we obviously fielded fantastically well today (Sunday), which was something we like to do.

"Especially from a fielding point of view is to I guess have a presence in the field and keep taking every I guess attacking option that we can and I think we've seen throughout the tournament some of the catches that the guys have been taking. For us we believe that I guess from a fielding point of view, it's an attitude thing," he said.

"Our attitude is always the same. We turn up trying to play our brand of cricket as best we can. And if we stick to that, then hopefully that will give us a good chance at the back end of the game."

Latham added that they are in no mood to take the Proteas lightly.

New Zealand had sealed their semifinal spot ahead of Sunday's loss to India in Dubai. The Kiwis also had prior knowledge that they

would have to return to Pakistan for their last four game.

"That's something that's out of our control. We don't decide the schedule, for us it is about turning up at each game regardless of where it is and trying to play our best brand of cricket as best we can," Latham said.

"So, whether it be here, whether it be in Pakistan, our focus will obviously be on South Africa. We're fortunate enough we had a tri-series in Pakistan and against South Africa.

"So, we've got a chance to look back on those experiences and give it our best in a semifinal, which is pretty cool."

Latham said though the surfaces in Pakistan were on the slower side, they have not spun as much as the pitches in Dubai.

"I think if you look at the surfaces that we've played in Pakistan, they've obviously been on the slower side, potentially haven't spun as much as we've seen here in Dubai, but things or conditions can change a little bit from the daytime to the nighttime," he said.

"We've seen throughout the games in Pakistan that towards the back end of the game - a little bit of juice settles in and sometimes can be a little bit easier. A little bit nicer to bat on potentially"

## Connolly replaces injured Short in Australian squad

PTI ■ DUBAI

Young spin-bowling all-rounder Cooper Connolly on Monday replaced injured Matthew Short in the Australian squad for the knock-out stage of the ongoing Champions Trophy (CT).

Top order batter Short was ruled out of the ICC event, being held in Pakistan and Dubai, due to a calf injury sustained during the match against Afghanistan on Friday. The 21-year-old Connolly, who made his ODI debut in England last year, was initially named as a travelling reserve for the tournament.

The ICC's Event Technical Committee has approved his inclusion in the Australian squad early on Monday. Connolly has thus far featured in six internationals for Australia, of which three have been ODIs. He's a left-handed



batter, who bowls left-arm spin as well.

Short injured his calf on Friday while fielding and appeared hindered when making a quickfire 20 at the top of the order before the match was abandoned due to rain in Lahore.

"I think he'll be struggling," Australia captain Steve Smith had said of Short's injury status.

"I think we saw tonight he wasn't moving very well and I think it's probably going to be

too quick between games for him to recover."

Australia will face India in the first semifinal of the Champions Trophy here on Tuesday.

**Australia squad:** Steve Smith (c), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Adam Zampa.



## Praggnanandhaa draws with Aravindh in Prague Masters

PTI ■ PRAGUE

Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa played a draw with fellow Indian Aravindh Chithambaram as the two stayed a full point ahead of nearest challengers after the fifth round of Prague Masters chess tournament here.

With 3.5 points in their kitty, Aravindh and Praggnanandhaa are now followed by top seed Wei Yi of China, Anish Giri of Holland, Quang Leim Le of Vietnam and Vincent Keymer of Germany, who all have 2.5 points apiece.

Sharing the sixth spot are the remaining four contestants, Czech duo of David Navara and Nguyen Thai Dai Van, Sam Shankland of United States and Gurel Ediz of Turkey.

There are four more rounds remaining in the 10-players round-robin tournament.

The day provided just one decisive game with Wei Yi cashing in on his new-found form to beat Shankland. Anish played out a draw with Dai Van, David Navara came back from a much worse position to hold Keymer, while Le signed the peace with Gurel Ediz.

This was the third Classical game between Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh but the result did not change. Aravindh, playing black, decided not to push Prag in to complexities and his Berlin defense was simply an easy guess to get a level position right through.

The opening that was popularised by Russian

Vladimir Kramnik quarter of a century ago in his match against compatriot Garry Kasparov, held Aravindh in good stead right through the course of the game as Praggnanandhaa exchanged pieces at regular intervals.

The players soon reached a rook and pawns endgame where Aravindh was a pawn less but had enough counterplay. The position petered out to be a theoretically drawn when Aravindh gave up a second pawn leaving no shelter for the white king to hide behind.

Wei Yi capitalized on a tactical oversight by Shankland who played white. After a rather shaky start that cost him two losses out of first three games, the Chinese came back roaring with his second victory in a row after beating Navara in the previous round.

Shankland allowed a dangerous passed pawn on the queen side and it was all over in a mere 27 moves as black crashed through in the base rank with his heavy pieces.

In the challengers section, Divya Deshmukh succumbed to her third loss in the event at the hands of MarcAndria Maurizzi of France and remained on 1.5 points. After attaining a nearly balanced position, Divya was outplayed by the French grandmaster in the ensuing endgame.

Nnodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan emerged as the sole leader here taking down Jachym Nemeč of Czech Republic. The Uzbek has four points from his five games.

## KKR appoints Rahane as captain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India batter Ajinkya Rahane was on Monday assigned captaincy of defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) after a remarkable run in the domestic T20 competition.

The 36-year-old Rahane, who has played majority of his international cricket in whites, has reinvented himself in the shortest format which was evident in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy wherein he emerged as the leading run getter with 469 runs at a strike rate of 164.56. In the IPL, the right-handed batter had also given a good account of his transformation while playing for Chennai Super Kings.

Rahane replaces Shreyas Iyer as KKR skipper, with the latter set to lead Punjab Kings this season. Iyer and KKR had surprisingly parted ways after a triumphant campaign in the last edition. Venkatesh Iyer, who was also in the reckoning to lead KKR, has been made Rahane's deputy.

Rahane has played for KKR in the past and the franchise bought him for his base price of Rs 1.5 crore at the mega auction.

"It's an honour to be asked to lead KKR, which has been one of the most successful franchises in the IPL. I think we have an excellent and balanced squad. I look forward to working



with everyone and taking up the challenge of defending our title," said Rahane in a statement.

Rahane, who captained India to a historic Test series in Australia in 2020-21, led Mumbai to the semifinals in the recently-concluded Ranji Trophy. In IPL, he has previously captained Rajasthan Royals where he was replaced by Steve Smith in the middle of the 2019 season.

KKR did not have too many captaincy options in the squad. Among the Indian players, they had to choose between Rahane, Venkatesh and Rinku Singh.

KKR will face Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL season-opener at the Eden Gardens on March 22.

# India will rely on spin battery to break knockout jinx against Australia

PTI ■ DUBAI

History weighs heavily against them but India would rely on a potent spin battery and familiarity with the conditions to break the knockout jinx against an undermanned Australia when the two formidable cricket forces clash in the Champions Trophy (CT) semifinal here on Tuesday.

It will not be a straightforward task, though, as the Aussies are a resilient beast in global tournaments even without their lead cast of Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc.

Their stunning chase of 352 against England at Lahore a few days back validates the thought.

The last time India triumphed against Australia in the knockout stage of an ICC event was way back in 2011 World Cup quarterfinal.

India lost to Australia in the semifinals of the 2015 ODI World Cup and in the title clash of the

2023 ODI World Cup before succumbing to them in the World Test Championship final in 2023.

This Indian side will realistically hope to rewrite that largely melancholic script over the last 14 years and the primary reason for that optimism is the presence of some top of the line spinners in their ranks.

Their pre-tournament decision to fill the squad with five spinners drew a lot of flak from all corners, but it is now proving to be a masterstroke on the slow pitches in Dubai.

The easiest explanation of their dominance is the knowledge of the conditions having had the luxury of playing all their matches in Dubai. But that is only partially true. They have made an effort to tweak their craft as per the needs of the surfaces here.

Since there was no fast or spitting turn on offer here like in a dustbowl, the Indian spinners were made to play the waiting



game.

Patience rather than magic is the key in bowling on these decks, as revealed by Varun Chakravarthy.

"The pitch here is not a rank turner as such, which people were projecting it to be, But definitely it

was holding on a bit, and it was deviating a little bit to create the doubt. So basically, you had to play around it," said Chakravarthy.

The Indian spin quartet of Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel

walked away with nine New Zealand wickets, but they applied the pressure consistently to earn their rewards.

They delivered 128 dot balls in the 39 overs bowled between them as the Kiwis struggled to break free, a sequence eventuating in a flurry of wickets.

Even the dismissal of an otherwise stoic Kane Williamson had a touch of desperation as his shimmy against Axar ended in a stumping by KL Rahul.

On the other hand, Australia have only one genuine spinner in Adam Zampa, while hoping for part-timers Glenn Maxwell and Travis Head to deliver the goods.

Matthew Short has been ruled out of the tournament with a calf injury and it has also robbed the already creaking Australian bowling unit of a handy spin option.

The absence of premier names was felt in the previous matches as the Aussie bowlers conceded 352 and

273 against England and Afghanistan respectively, albeit in better batting conditions.

Hence, the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Shreyas Iyer and Shubman Gill will be eager to go full throttle at them here. They have found the perfect rhythm of batting on these sluggish tracks here.

Skipper Rohit hoped as much.

"It is going to be a good game. Australia has a rich history of playing well in ICC tournaments. Now, it's about us to do things right. We have to be focussed on what we need to do on that day. Looking forward to that, hopefully we can stitch one towards us," he said after the match against New Zealand.

But he will not be unaware of the batting might the Aussies possess as the latter hunted down a 350-plus target without any meaningful contribution from Head and captain Steve Smith.

India will certainly want to evict

them at the earliest, particularly Head as he has been the team's nemesis in recent years.

It is also a chance for Rohit and his company to mitigate the still lingering pain of losing to Australia in the 2023 World Cup final in Ahmedabad.

This match could be slow-burner but brace for a cracker nonetheless.

**Teams (from):**

**India:** Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ravindra Jadeja, Varun Chakravarthy.

**Australia:** Steve Smith (c), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Adam Zampa, Cooper Connolly.