

'Will we have lollipop while you come to occupy our land'

5

'SHADES OF GRAY' ADITI GOVITRIKAR'S HUNT FOR COMPLEXITY IN HER ROLES

9

Rajendra Prasad's shady remarks on **ALLU ARJUN**

PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

This is not Telangana Thalli, but 'Congress Thalli,' and it looks like a pauper. The new statue symbolises Congress's deception. Jokes are doing the rounds on social media asking who robbed Telangana Thalli of her golden crown, the Kohinoor diamond in it and her jewellery. No one in the world changes their mother's representation, but the Congress Government is attempting to distort the essence of Telangana Thalli

- KT Rama Rao, BRS MLA

P2

DON'T MISS...

Asha workers protest for salary hike

Asha workers from various districts staged a protest on Monday morning, demanding a salary hike and the resolution of other grievances. They gathered to submit a letter to the Commissioner and Director of Medical Education but were denied permission to meet the officials. The workers requested that either four representatives be allowed to submit the letter or the officials step out to ...

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'Pushpa 2' leads to poster war in Delhi

Allu Arjun-starrer blockbuster 'Pushpa 2' has led to a poster war between the ruling AAP in Delhi and the opposition BJP ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled early next year. AAP recently issued a poster on the lines of the movie, titling it in bold letters 'Kejriwal Jhukega Nahi' based on the cult dialogue of the movie. In the poster, Kejriwal poses as the protagonist of the film, carrying AAP's symbol 'jhaadu' (broom) on his shoulder. '4th Term ...

-PAGE: 5

India, Australia review progress of FTA talks

Senior officials of India and Australia have reviewed the progress of talks on the proposed free trade agreement between the two countries, the commerce ministry said on Monday. The two countries had implemented an interim trade pact in December 2022 and now they are negotiating to widen the scope of the pact for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). 'The three-day stocktake visit for the India-Australia ...

-PAGE: 8

Captain doesn't need to prove himself : Kapil

Let's not doubt Rohit Sharma's ability to bounce back', said the legendary Kapil Dev, who also felt that under-fire India skipper doesn't need to prove himself at this stage of his career. Rohit, who managed scores of 3 and 6 in the the Adelaide pink-ball Test after dropping down the batting order, is being criticized by fans and former players for being subdued. India lost the game by 10 wickets in just two and a half days. "He doesn't have to prove himself. He has done this ...

-SPORTS

Gukesh loses to Liren in 12th game

Both players at 6 points each

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Indian challenger D Gukesh lost the 12th game against defending champion Ding Liren of China to allow his opponent bounce back and level the World Chess Championship match here on Monday.

The 18-year-old Gukesh was ahead by one point after he notched his second win of the match on Sunday, which came after seven consecutive draws, but Liren's win on Monday brought the things on an even keel.

The two players are now tied at 6 points each with just two games left in the 14-round classical time control format, still shy of 1.5 points in order to win the title.

The remaining two games will be played on Wednesday and

Making headway on all fronts: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy unveiled the 'Telangana Thalli' statue on the secretariat premises on Monday.

Addressing the gathering he said that Telangana is moving from crisis to welfare and from corruption to development and reconstruction of the state.

He said that some people are feeling pain, anguish and sorrow as they think that decisions of the Congress Government like installing the Telangana Thalli statue on the secretariat premises are dangerous for their political survival. Telangana State was not created for a family or a political party, he said.

The CM said that Telangana's culture was 'assaulted' and 'insulted' in United Andhra Pradesh. After the formation of Telangana, a person and a political party gave priority to themselves and ignored the people of Telangana, he said.

Later, addressing the meeting, the CM said that Telangana faced 'humiliation' in United AP. Telangana was also neglected during the last 10 years. The Congress Government will organise Telangana Thalli celebrations on December 9 every year so that the humiliations of the past do not repeat, he said.

Continued on Page 2

● Says TG moving from crisis to welfare and corruption-free development

● Unveils Telangana Thalli statue on Secretariat premises

● Will organise Telangana Thalli celebrations on Dec 9 every year: Revanth



CM Revanth Reddy unveiling the statue of Telangana Thalli on Monday at Secretariat



Govt okays Telangana Thalli statue's shape, warns against insult

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TG Government has formally approved the design of the Telangana Thalli statue, describing it as a representation of the self-respect and identity of the Telangana people.

In a notification issued on Monday, the government emphasised that the statue symbolises the sacrifices of countless individuals, particularly youth, during the long struggle for statehood.

The Telangana Thalli statue is characterised by its design, with the figure standing on a pedestal of closed fists, signifying determination and the collective fight for rights.

Continued on Page 2

Tussle over T-shirts issue

BRS legislators prevented from entering Assembly with 'Adani-Revanth Bhai Bhai' slogans



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress protested in Parliament with masks carrying the slogan 'Modi-Adani Ek Hai' on Monday, but in Telangana the Congress Government didn't allow the BRS's 'Adani-Revanth Bhai Bhai' protest.

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) legislators were detained by the police at the entrance of the Legislature on Monday as they tried to attend the Assembly session wearing

Continued on Page 2

'GERMAN CITIZENSHIP' HC imposes Rs 30 lakh penalty on BRS ex-MLA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a blow to former BRS MLA Chennamaneni Ramesh, the High Court on Tuesday ruled that he is a citizen of Germany and imposed a fine of Rs 30 lakh on him for misleading the court for the last 15 years.

Venting its ire over the former MLA from Vemulawada for suppressing his German citizenship by submitting fake documents, the court imposed a huge penalty and asked him to pay it within a month.

Justice B. Vijayasen Reddy issued the order on a writ petition filed by the BRS leader

Continued on Page 2

Now AP-TG Ministers to meet over power dues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The unresolved dispute over power dues between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, a contentious issue after the bifurcation in 2014, has now escalated to ministerial-level talks after an inconclusive meeting of Chief Secretaries on December 6.

Officials acknowledged that some disputes, particularly over power dues and asset-sharing, exceed the scope of administrative resolution and require political intervention.

Telangana reportedly has to get

nearly Rs 26,000 crore as power dues from Andhra Pradesh, while Andhra Pradesh counters it saying that it should get Rs 6,756 crore for power supplied to Telangana between June 2014 and June 2017. This includes Rs 3,315 crore in delayed payment charges.

A significant point of contention is Telangana's claim of additional costs incurred to purchase power when Andhra Pradesh ceased supply in 2016, despite binding Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).

Continued on Page 2

Nagababu to join AP Cabinet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major political development, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has decided to induct K Nagababu, elder brother of Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief Pawan Kalyan, into the State Cabinet.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) officially announced this decision on Monday. Nagababu, currently the State general secretary of the Jana Sena, will be sworn in as a Cabinet minister soon.



With this induction, the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet will reach its maximum capacity of 25 members. Pawan Kalyan, Kandula Durgesh, and Nadendla Manohar are the other Jana Sena leaders who are already part of the State Cabinet. Meanwhile, on behalf of the NDA alliance in the State, TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu announced that Beeda Mastan Rao and Sana Satish (both from TDP) and R Krishnaiah (representing BJP) will contest for RS elections from AP.

SC issues notice to TG govt on GO: 46

2

MANCHU FAMILY FEUD SPILLS IN TO THE OPEN

Mohan Babu complains against his son Manoj

◆ Says he is illegally occupying property ◆ Approaches police

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A rift within the Manchu family spilled into the public domain on Monday as actor Manchu Manoj and his father, veteran actor Manchu Mohan Babu, filed separate complaints alleging threats and disturbances.

Manoj approached the police, seeking action against individuals who allegedly attacked him. His father Mohan Babu reached



out to Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu who confirmed receiving a complaint

from Manoj, requesting protection for his life and property.

Inspector Gurusu Reddy of Pahadi Shareef police station stated, "A complaint has been filed regarding an attack by unidentified assailants who trespassed and caused a disturbance to Manchu Manoj. The complainant did not name family members or specific accused individuals. We are investigating and reviewing CCTV footage."

Continued on Page 2

US SEC URGES JUDGE

Link Adani issue with the case against Cabanes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filed a notice on December 5 urging the judge in the civil case against billionaire Gautam Adani for securities fraud to consider it as connected to the case against former Azure Power Global Director Cyril Cabanes, who is accused of violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). The move seeks to ensure that both cases are assigned to the same court.

Last month, the SEC and the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York charged Adani with alleged involvement in a "massive bribery scheme" involving millions of dollars that were paid to officials of an Indian state. The Adani group dismissed the allegations as baseless.



Currently, three cases connected to these charges are going on in the Eastern District Court of New York. This includes a criminal case filed by the Department of Justice against Adani and seven others, alleging conspiracies to commit securities fraud and wire fraud, along with substantive securities fraud

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conspiracies to commit securities fraud and wire fraud, along with substantive securities fraud.

Continued on Page 2



Sanjay Malhotra appointed as RBI Governor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Malhotra's name, who has been appointed as the RBI Governor for three years, starting Wednesday.

Malhotra, a 1990 Batch Rajasthan Cadre IAS Officer, will replace Shaktikanta Das, whose tenure ends on Tuesday (December 10, 2024).

Malhotra, 56, will be the 26th RBI Governor. He is an engineering graduate in computer science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and has a Master's in Public Policy from Princeton University, the US.

In his career of over 33 years, he has worked in multifarious sectors, including power, finance and taxation, information technology, and mines, among others.

Presently, he is the Secretary (Revenue) in the Ministry of Finance. In his previous assignment, he held the post of Secretary in the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance.

An alternative approach to improve the finances of DISCOMs

The financial challenges facing India's electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) have become a persistent issue. Despite years of reforms, particularly after the implementation of the Electricity Act of 2003, the distribution segment remains financially fragile, even though generation and transmission continue to be relatively profitable. This imbalance highlights the need for innovative solutions to address the deep-rooted problems of DISCOMs.

THE PRIVATISATION DEBATE
The idea of privatising DISCOMs has often been proposed as a panacea for their financial woes. While examples from Delhi, parts of Uttar

Pradesh and Odisha show that privatisation can lead to better operational efficiency and financial health, the picture is far from uniform. States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and some regions of Maharashtra have struggled to replicate these successes due to systemic inefficiencies, political resistance and employee concerns over job security. This polarised experience suggests that privatisation, while beneficial in some contexts, cannot be a universal solution.

UNDERSTANDING THE CORE ISSUES
DISCOMs face several entrenched challenges. High power procurement costs,

DISCOMs face several entrenched challenges. High power procurement costs, stemming from long-term contracts and outdated tariff regulations, are a significant burden. The National Tariff Policy's 15% Return on Equity (ROE) is increasingly seen as misaligned with current economic realities, particularly as banking interest rates have fallen and the profit margins of power generators have risen

stemming from long-term contracts and outdated tariff regulations, are a significant burden. The National Tariff Policy's 15% Return on Equity (ROE) is increasingly seen as misaligned with current economic realities, particularly as banking interest rates have fallen and the profit margins of power generators have risen. The same is the case with transmission charges as transmission charges are now exorbitant and even free renewable transmission charges are loaded on to the remaining consumers forcing them to

bear it. Technical and commercial inefficiencies also add to the problem. High Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses, often above permissible thresholds, exacerbate financial deficits. Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs), although environmentally crucial, place additional financial strain on DISCOMs without adequate compensation mechanisms. Tariff structures further complicate matters. Frequent hikes, implemented to cover losses, have led to public dissatisfaction while doing little to



D. RADHAKRISHNA

close revenue gaps. Cross-subsidisation, where industrial and commercial users are charged significantly higher rates to offset lower tariffs for domestic and agricultural consumers, leads to revenue leakages and inefficiencies.

REIMAGINING SOLUTIONS
A more balanced approach is needed to resolve these issues. First, revisiting ROE

and tariff structures could help ensure fairer financial responsibility among stakeholders. Modernising infrastructure through smart meters and advanced grid technologies could reduce AT & C losses, while gradually phasing out cross-subsidisation and replacing it with direct benefit transfers for targeted consumers could improve cost recovery. Privatisation, where pursued, must include stringent safeguards to protect employees, ensure regulatory oversight and incentivise performance. Community engagement is equally important to build trust and ensure the smooth implementation of reforms.

THE DYNAMICS OF FREE AND SUBSIDISED POWER
The political and economic implications of providing free or subsidised electricity add a layer of complexity. On the one hand, these schemes often come with government

assurances of reimbursement to DISCOMs, offering a degree of revenue security. For many DISCOMs, this arrangement simplifies the revenue cycle and minimises the risk of default by individual consumers. However, delays in state payments frequently force DISCOMs to borrow at high interest rates, compounding their financial problems. Moreover, free power distorts demand patterns, particularly in agriculture, where it encourages wasteful energy use and over-extraction of groundwater. It also reduces cross-subsidisation revenue from profitable industrial and commercial segments, weakening the financial base of DISCOMs.

A BALANCED WAY FORWARD
The way forward lies in prioritising long-term solutions over temporary fixes. While free or subsidised power

schemes may ease immediate financial challenges for DISCOMs, they cannot be a substitute for structural reforms in pricing, operations and governance. A state-specific approach that combines regulatory innovation, operational efficiency and stakeholder collaboration is essential to ensure the sustainable delivery of reliable and affordable electricity.

Balancing social welfare with financial sustainability is no easy task. However, with the right mix of policies and strategies, it is possible to stabilise the financial health of DISCOMs without compromising on the accessibility and affordability of power for consumers. As India moves towards a more energy-secure future, these reforms will be pivotal in transforming the power distribution landscape.

(D. Radhakrishna former Chairman of TERC)

Sonia sole driving force behind Telangana's creation: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The creation of Telangana State is entirely due to the resolute leadership and unwavering commitment of Sonia Gandhi, the Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies, Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said in the Assembly on Monday.

He reiterated that the announcement of Telangana's creation on December 9, 2009, remains a landmark day in the state's history and urged perpetual recognition of its significance.

Recalling the historic announcement by the then Union Home Minister on December 9, 2009, at 11 pm, Uttam said it marked an unforgettable moment of celebration across Telangana.



Welcoming Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent decision to install a statue of Telangana Thalli on the secretariat's premises, he suggested similar installations in all district headquarters. He also advocated annual celebrations on December 9 to ensure the story of Telangana state's formation remains alive for future generations.

No Telangana if there was no Sonia: Venkat

Declaring that there would not have been a Telangana state if there was no Sonia Gandhi, Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that December 9 is the day on which the aspirations of four

crore people were fulfilled. Participating in the discussion on the Telangana Thalli statue on Monday in the Assembly, Venkat said that Opposition leader K. Chandrasekhar Rao himself had announced this in the Assembly.

Members must speak soberly in House: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Members should not allow slips of the tongue in the House and asked them to speak soberly.

Attending a CLP meeting held on Monday, the CM said that MLAs must attend the Assembly and if they do not they will be treated as failed MLAs. The CM suggested that MLAs should take the achievements of the government to the people.

He said that many parties and individuals had installed 'Telangana Thalli' statues during the Telangana Movement. However, the government did not identify the Telangana Thalli statue officially after the formation of TG, he said.

BRS slams 'Congress Thalli' statue on Secretariat premises, plans protest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS launched a scathing attack against the Telangana Thalli statue installed on the premises of the Telangana secretariat and referred to it as the "Congress Thalli."

The BRS said the statue undermines the cultural and historical identity of Telangana and accused the Congress Government of distorting the legacy of Telangana Thalli for political gains.

Addressing the issue, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) highlighted the controversial changes made to the statue's design, including the omission of culturally significant symbols like Bathukamma and the crown etc. This is not Telangana Thalli, but 'Congress Thalli,' and it looks like a pauper, he said.

KTR pointed out the addition of the Congress's hand symbol, which he described as an attempt to align Telangana's identity with the party's political agenda.

"No one in the world changes the rep-

resentation of their mother, but here in Telangana, the Congress Government is attempting to distort the essence of Telangana Thalli," KTR said during a public address in Medchal where he unveiled the Telangana Thalli statue.

He condemned the statue installed by the Congress as an insult to the people who fought for Telangana's statehood, calling it a mockery of the state's struggles and aspirations.

KTR did not mince words, describing the statue as a "symbol of Congress deception." He accused the government of using the statue to mislead the public while diluting the cultural essence of Telangana. He warned that if the BRS returns to power, the statue will be removed and sent to Gandhi Bhavan.

"Telangana Thalli represents the collective spirit of Telangana, and not any political party or individual," KTR emphasised, adding that the Congress Government is not only damaging cultural symbols like Bathukamma but is also tarnishing the state's identity.

SC seeks response from states over 'violations' in DGP appointments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from six states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and UP, on a plea alleging non-compliance with its directives over the appointment of directors general of police.

According to a fresh plea, seven states, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Jharkhand, did not allegedly comply with the 2006 judgement of the apex court in the Prakash Singh case and the subsequent directions on appointment of directors general of police (DGP).

The Jharkhand government filed its reply in the top court previously. The matter was brought to the attention of a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar through a plea filed by Jan Sewa Trust, alleging widespread violations of court-mandated procedures.

SC issues notice to TG govt on GO: 46

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Supreme Court has issued a notice to the Telangana Government regarding GO: 46, directing the state to file a counter-affidavit detailing its stance and the procedures adopted in hiring various posts under this order. The court has scheduled the next hearing on January 27.

Advocate Aditya Sondhi, representing the petitioners, demanded the halt should the recruitment process for the 900 vacant posts until the case is resolved. The Supreme Court advised to await further proceedings before making any decisions on the matter.

The legal team of the petitioners includes senior Supreme Court lawyers Aditya Sondhi, G. Vidyasagar and Mithun Shashank. BRS leaders Dasoju Sravan and Enugula Rakesh Reddy were present during the hearing, supporting the petitioners' cause.

GO 46, issued on April 4, 2022, by the General Administration Department, reserves 95% of direct recruitment posts for local candidates within specific zones.

HC imposes ...

Continued from page 1
challenging the cancellation of his Indian citizenship by the Central Government. The court directed the former legislator to pay a fine of Rs 25 lakh to the current Venulawada MLA, Aadi Srinivas, of the Congress and Rs 5 lakh to the Legal Services Authority.

Ramesh is a four-time MLA from Venulawada in the Rajanna Sircilla district of Telangana. Controversy surrounded his Indian citizenship since 2009 when he was first elected as an MLA on a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) ticket.

In 2019, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, had issued a notification stripping him of his Indian citizenship. Ramesh had challenged the same in the High Court. In January, Additional Solicitor General B. Narasimha Sharma had informed the High Court that Ramesh had a valid German passport and he got the passport renewed till 2033.

Citing the report of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the ASG informed the court that Ramesh visited Germany thrice in 2023 using his German passport. Srinivas of the Congress had challenged Ramesh's Indian citizenship in 2009 and accused him of obtaining it by fraudulent means by hiding his German citizenship.

In November 2019, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs cancelled the Indian citizenship of Ramesh as he had German citizenship and had not fulfilled the stipulated norms while obtaining Indian citizenship in 2009.

Ramesh had gone to Germany for employment in the early 1990s and had obtained German citizenship in 1993 when he surrendered his Indian passport. In 2008, he returned to India and applied for Indian citizenship which was granted to him by MHA.

Now AP-TG ...

Continued from page 1
"Telangana was forced to buy power when Andhra Pradesh stopped supplying it which violated agreements. These costs are being included in our claims," a Telangana official stated.

Further complicating matters, Telangana continues to bear the burden of pensions for retired power sector employees originally from Andhra Pradesh, along with debt servicing costs and contributions to the Employees' Provident Fund.

Chief Ministers Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh and

Revanth Reddy of Telangana recently agreed on a phased resolution approach. It was decided that officials would first deliberate on issues, followed by discussions at the ministerial level, and finally escalate to the level of Chief Ministers if required.

At the first meeting, officials could not sort out any issues. However, the officials are not certain whether the power dues issue will be sorted out at the minister level. Officials said that the state's interests will be the top priority for any party in power and settling disputes has many angles to it.

Gukesh loses ...

Continued from page 1
Gukesh started to miss out creating counter play in the middle game as white played just normal developing moves. By the 15th move, though less on time on the clock, white had a small advantage as a central breakthrough looked inevitable, giving Liren the space advantage.

Gukesh's 17th move did not help his cause as white was able to get the desired break in the

centre. Five moves later, another error by Gukesh gave Liren a huge advantage.

Liren's central pawn made a foray to the sixth rank in what was a near-decisive blow on the 27th move. Gukesh had to part with a couple of pawns. Adding to Gukesh's woes was an imminent rook invasion.

The game ended through a fine tactic by Liren who sacrificed a rook to force matters. The game ended in 39 moves.

Making headway ...

Continued from page 1
The CM said that the decision to install the Telangana Thalli statue was taken after discussing with cabinet colleagues and is intended to fulfil the aspirations of the people.

He said that earlier rulers decided to use "TS" instead of "TG" for vehicle registrations against the wishes of Telangana activists. That is why the Congress Government decided to use TG for vehicle registrations, he said.

"Today, we are organising this programme like a festival so that all our thoughts should be surrounded by Telangana Thalli. The government decided to recognise, honour and support poets who gave up everything for Telangana. Guda Anjaiah, Gaddar, Bandi Yadagiri, Andesri, Goreti Venkanna, Suddala Ashok Teja, Jayaraju, Pasham Yadagiri and Ekka Yadagiri Rao have been recognised. The government will provide them with a 300-yard

house plot, a cash award of Rs 1 crore and a felicitation letter," the CM said.

He said the mammoth gathering here reflects the combined flow of the Krishna and Godavari rivers.

The CM said, "Mother is the only identity in any part of the world. Mother is the embodiment of our culture and traditions."

He said that the famous 'Jaya Jaya He Telangana' song, which inspired us during the TG movement was not declared as the state song for 10 years.

"The 'people's government' declared the song as the Telangana song. I will remember the felicitation of famous poet Andesri at the secretariat forever, the CM said.

He said that various political parties have created different types of Telangana Thalli statues. However, the image of Telangana Thalli has not been officially declared so far.

Link Adani ...

Continued from page 1
that another action pending in this Court, SEC v. Cabanes, 24-cv-08081-BMC (Cabanes Civil Case), be considered related to this action."

According to the SEC counsel, Sagar Adani's lawyer indicated that they "do not have anything to share" on this request, while Gautam Adani's counsel did not respond.

The letter noted that the criminal case against Adani is also based on "substantially the same transactions or events as both this case and the Cabanes Civil Case - namely, the scheme to bribe officials of an Indian state to secure contracts that benefitted Adani Green and Azure, and false and misleading statements to investors in Adani Green's 2021 debt offering concerning that bribery scheme." Cabanes, identified as a French citizen staying in Singapore, is also a defendant in the criminal case filed in the Eastern District of New York.

'India adopts 'balanced' approach to West Asia conflict'

PNS ■ MANAMA

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said India's approach to the conflict that has been going on in West Asia since last year is "balanced" as it looks at the issues in all their complexities and also has a "fundamental commitment to justice and equity".

Jaishankar, 69, also reiterated that India supports a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine issue during an interaction with the Indian community here.

"As a country that itself has been impacted so deeply by terrorism, we are very strongly opposed to terrorism and hostage-taking. They should never be excused or condoned," Jaishankar said.

"But at the same time, it is very important that any action which is taken by any govern-

ment or any armed force must always take care of civilian casualties and must always be respectful of humanitarian law," the minister said.

Jaishankar further said that India has been contributing to the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), the primary relief agency in respect of Palestinians, and given relief to the Palestine authority and also given medical relief to Lebanon.

"At the end of the day, we do believe there must be a solution to the Palestine issue because if there is not one, it will always remain a cause of instability in the region," he said.

Jaishankar said India supports a two-state solution to the Palestine issue and that is something that the international community has to discuss and agree upon.



Mohan Babu ...

Continued from page 1
On the other hand, a document purportedly signed by Mohan Babu has gone viral. In the letter, Mohan Babu alleges that Manoj, along with anti-social elements, disrupted peace at his residence in Jalpally, Ranga Reddy district, on December 8. The letter states that Manoj had previously abandoned the family home but returned four months ago.

According to the letter, Mohan Babu claims that around 30 individuals, allegedly associated with Manoj, forcibly entered his residence, threatened his staff and took control of the property.

"These individuals, acting on my son Manoj's instructions, have illegally occupied my home, threatened my employees and created a hostile environment. I fear for my safety and property," Mohan Babu alleged.

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CITY EVENTS

Rubaroo With Gender 2024
Event On Women Safety
Venue
Lamakaan, December 10, 3:00 pm

Live Musical Orchestra
By Jai Ganesh Musical Events
Venue
Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, Chikkadpally, Hyderabad
December 10, 4:30 pm

Tuesday night
with DJ Vivaan
Venue
Insomnia, December 10, 8 pm

Elena Gabriele - OK!?
Venue
KLN Prasad Auditorium, December 13, 8 pm onwards

NYU CARNIVAL
With singer KARTHIK
Venue
Boulder Hills, Hyderabad
December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp
Master cooking and baking in 9 fun weekends
Venue
Culinary Guru Institute, Hyderabad.
Till January 11, 2025.

Accused wanted in multiple cases arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An accused with nine non-bailable warrants in various cases has been apprehended in Rajasthan by Cyberabad CCS Police.
On Monday, the Cyberabad CCS said a team of more than 10 policemen apprehended a wanted accused in Bichoula village, Rajkheda PS, Doulpur district, Rajasthan.

The accused, Pradeep (30) resident of Bichoula village, was wanted in connection with a case registered at Kollur PS. A non-bailable warrant (NBW) had been pending against him for the last three years. Following his apprehension, the accused was produced before the court at Mania, Rajasthan, where a transit warrant was secured.

Pradeep is involved in multiple criminal cases, with a total of nine non-bailable warrants (NBWs) pending against him in various cases.

BONHOMIE



JNTUH in-charge Vice-Chancellor Professor V Balakista Reddy visits Gautami Hostel at 9:00 pm, dines at the hostel mess and interacts with students to address their concerns. The visit was accompanied by the college principal and wardens

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 10, 2024

03

GHMC receives 118 grievances during Prajavani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) conducted its Prajavani programme on Monday, receiving a total of 118 grievances from citizens across the city, including at the head office and zonal offices.
Additional Commissioners participated in the programme at the GHMC head office, accepting petitions from citizens seeking solutions to various issues. Through the Prajavani phone-in programme, two requests were received and forwarded to the departments concerned for resolution.



Asha workers protest for salary hike; clash with police in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Asha workers from various districts staged a protest on Monday morning, demanding a salary hike and the resolution of other grievances. They gathered to submit a letter to the Commissioner and Director of Medical Education but were denied permission to meet the officials. The workers requested that either four representatives be allowed to submit the letter or the officials step out to address them, but their request was refused.

According to the Asha workers, the Sultan Bazaar police, along with security personnel, arrived at the protest site and began detaining them. Sunitha K, one of the Asha workers, told The Pioneer, "We work for every department in Telangana and



recently conducted the Caste Census Survey. Despite our efforts, we are paid mere pennies. We were promised a salary hike to Rs18,000, but instead, we

were pushed and dragged into police vehicles."

Videos of the incident show police pushing the Asha workers during the detention process.

One worker, whose leg was trapped in a vehicle, hit a policeman and was subsequently beaten by two policemen and female constables. The police were also seen taking photos of the worker who allegedly raised her hand.

Another Asha worker later fell unconscious and was admitted to Osmania General Hospital. Speaking to the media, she said, "We came to submit a letter, but the police started pulling us. When I fell, only male officers were present, not female constables."

A complaint has been filed with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) against Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) K Shankar for handling the situation of Asha workers.

The policeman who was slapped by an Asha worker has not filed a case yet.

BRS condemns police assault on ASHA workers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leaders, including MLA Sabitha Indra Reddy, strongly condemned the assault on ASHA workers by the police, calling the incident inhuman and a betrayal of the government's commitment to women's welfare. Speaking at the Telangana Bhavan, Sabitha expressed outrage over the treatment of ASHA workers, who were reportedly manhandled during their protests.

Speaking at the Telangana Bhavan, Sabitha expressed outrage over the treatment of ASHA workers, who were reportedly manhandled during their protests

Addressing the press, Sabitha Indra Reddy said, "On the one hand, the government speaks about Telangana Thalli in the Assembly, but outside, women like ASHA workers are being assaulted. This is not just inhuman. It is a blot on our governance."

She said that male police officers attacked ASHA workers, describing it as a disgraceful act that the government must take responsibility for. Sabitha called for immediate justice, urging the state to fulfil its promises made to ASHA workers and to address their concerns in the Assembly itself.

Referring to ASHA leader Santoshi, who is reportedly critical after the police assault, she demanded the government provide the best available medical care to her. "How can we talk about Telangana Thalli while ignoring the dignity of women?" she asked.

Echoing similar sentiments, MLA Palla Rajeshwari Reddy denounced the police brutality, labelling it a "draconian assault." He noted that the BRS, under KCR's leadership, had increased ASHA workers' honorarium to Rs 10,000, but the current actions against them undermine the respect and dignity they deserve.

"The police behaved like a mob, pulling at sarees and physically assaulting women. ACP Shankar's actions are unforgivable. Is this the governance that Telangana deserves?" he said.

IIITH's Language Tech Research Centre celebrates silver jubilee

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad's (IIITH) Language Technologies Research Centre (LTRC) celebrated the 25th year of its inception with a two-day event over the weekend that included several talks and panel discussions on the vision, mission, evolution and future of language technologies.

The event highlighted the importance of academic research connected with real-life problems, the need for collaboration in technology development and the role of language technology across regional languages for social good.

To mark the occasion, the LTRC launched free-to-download BhashaVerse language resources machine translation models. The multi-task encoder-decoder model can translate from any of the 36 languages into any other including Tulu, Bodo, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Santhali etc. It helps with machine translation evaluation, error identification and automatic post-editing of 10 billion sentence pairs.

The centre also announced the development of the BhashaVerse LLM decoder model for 36 Indian languages that can be used for summarisations, Q&A etc with some



fine-tuning. In addition to these models, LTRC released synthetically generated and curated 10 billion Bhashik datasets for Indian language to Indian language pairs; a generic dataset, one in the education domain that works across 17 different fields in English and 5 Indian languages and one for the health domain in English and 8 Indian languages. For the first time in Indian languages, a dataset for automatic post-editing of text and machine translation evaluation has also been made available.

Established in October 1999 in response to the preeminent scientific challenge of enabling machines to read, understand and derive meaning from human languages, especially in the Indian context and

Indian languages, it was, perhaps, the first such research theme-focused centre in the country. Today, LTRC is the largest academic centre of speech and language technology in South Asia.

Initially focused on areas like Machine Translation, Semantic Parsing and Information Extraction, the centre has expanded its research portfolio to include Speech Recognition, Text Generation, Sentiment Analysis, Dialogue Systems and more. Over the years, LTRC has built a thriving ecosystem of researchers, students and collaborators who have carried forward the centre's pioneering work in various directions, many of which had their origins at LTRC itself.

SCR holds safety review meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Arun Kumar Jain, general manager, South Central Railway, conducted a detailed review meeting on safety and punctuality of trains in the SCR jurisdiction on Monday at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. Divisional Railway Manager's (DRMs) of all six Divisions i.e. Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Guntakal, Guntur and Nanded joined the review meeting through video conference.

The general manager instructed the officials to intensify field inspections focusing on functioning of safety-related assets pertaining to signaling, engineering and station assets related to safety.

He also discussed on punctuality of the trains. He instructed all the DRMs to make an action plan to run the trains punctually regardless of 3rd line works



and fog-related issues during winter season.

Arun Kumar Jain discussed about the progress of ongoing 3rd line works and maintenance related works of private sidings. He instructed the officials to conduct frequent inspections in the private sidings though the track is maintained by private firms, since safety of the train operation is top priority.

He also discussed on the importance of maintaining the railway properties safe and secure. He stated that every railway employee must have the moral responsibility to protect the railway property and they need to inform the higher officials on any instances endangering safety.

He also discussed on implementation of the Railway Board safety guidelines and advisory and emphasised on the strict adherence over the zone.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Telangana Pradesh Congress president Mahesh Kumar Goud celebrating the birthday of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Monday.

Praja Palana Vijayotsavams conclude successfully

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government's Praja Palana Vijayotsavams concluded on a grand note, with celebrations held at Tank Bund, NTR Marg and HMDA grounds from December 7. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) department played a pivotal role in organising the events seamlessly, ensuring there was no inconvenience to the public.

Under the leadership of MAUD Principal Secretary M Dana Kishore, officials from GHMC, HMDA, CDMA, Metro Rail and the Water

Board worked in coordination to make the events successful. Key arrangements included the installation of lights, provision of drinking water, barricading, parking facilities and sanitation management. The unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue witnessed large-scale participation, particularly from women, with municipal officials actively mobilising attendees and overseeing the arrangements.

Speaking on the occasion, Dana Kishore commended the municipal staff for their round-the-clock efforts to maintain cleanliness and ensure smooth conduct of the



Drone image

events. "Our teams worked tirelessly to ensure the success of these celebrations and to uphold the spirit of Telangana," he said.

The grand culmination of the Vijayotsavams on Monday evening was marked by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy unveiling the Telangana

Thalli statue at the Secretariat. Thousands of women and citizens gathered to witness the historic moment. Dana Kishore closely monitored the arrangements over the three days to ensure their success.

The Principal Secretary extended his congratulations to GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi, CDMA Sridevi, HMDA Metropolitan Commissioner Sarfaraz, HMWSSB MD Ashok, Metro Rail MD NVS Reddy, Zonal Commissioner Anurag Jayanti and other officials and sanitation staff for their exemplary coordination and dedication.



Rashtrapati Nilayam to remain closed for public from Dec 10 to 23

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the sojourn of the President of India, Rashtrapati Nilayam will remain closed to the public from December 10 to 23.

The release on Monday said, "Rashtrapati Nilayam will remain closed for the public from December 10 to December 23, 2024. The closure is being implemented to adhere to security and procedural protocols during the President's visit."

The officials of Rashtrapati Nilayam stated that public visits will resume after the specified period. Visitors who had planned, are requested to reschedule their visits after December 23 and book tickets online.

Pushpa 2 premiere incident: Boy showing improvement

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The KIMS doctors have released a statement on Monday stating that the 8-year-old male child who was brought to emergency in a semiconscious state has shown gradual improvement in his condition.

He is on ventilatory support with minimal oxygen and pressure needs.

His blood circulation is well maintained without need of any inotropes. He is tolerating tube feeds well, the doctors said.

He still has intermittent fever spikes.

He is responding more to pain but still is not showing signs of full return to consciousness with mild paucity of right upper limb movements as compared to left upper limb. A repeat MRI brain scan with screening of the whole spine is being planned, said Dr Chetan R Mundada, Dr Vishnu Tej Pudi of KIMS Cuddles Mother and Child Centre in Secunderabad.

Mutyalamma temple to host idol reinstallation ceremony tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Mutyalamma temple in Secunderabad's Kummarguda is set to witness the reinstallation of the deity's idol on December 11 at 8:33 am. The reinstallation ceremony will be attended by Telangana's Minister for Environment, Forest and Endowments Konda Surekha, as the chief guest.

The invitation for the event was formally extended to Minister Surekha by the Endowments Department officials, including Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramaiyer, Commissioner Sridhar and Assistant Commissioner Sandhya Rani, at her office on the Assembly premises.

Minister Surekha appreciated the Endowments department for completing the idol reinstallation on schedule and praised their efforts in renovating the Mutyalamma temple.

She emphasised the need to conduct the ceremony in a festive manner, reflecting the spirit of devotion and community participation.



VHP, Bajrang Dal organise awareness programme on drug abuse

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal organised a community awareness programme promoting a drug-free India and the reduction of plastic use in Shadnagar. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of students from Vijetha, Vishwabharti, and Vignan Intermediate Colleges, as well as teachers and activists from the region. Shadnagar Town Circle Inspector Vijay Kumar, Traffic Circle Inspector Chandrasekhar, Sun-Inspector Sushila, VHP Kshetra Seva Pramukh Bandaru Ramesh, RSS Rashtra Seva Pramukh Sivashankar, RSS Kamalakara, and Bajrang Dal Vibhag Sanyojak Gudem Ramesh. Addressing the students, Vijay Kumar highlighted the dangers of drug addiction, smoking, and alcohol

consumption. He urged the youth to steer clear of such habits and actively contribute to the betterment of society. He also emphasised the need to minimize the use of plastics, advocating for environmentally conscious practices. Chandrasekhar provided valuable insights into road safety and vehicle related rules, encouraging students to prioritize safety while on the road. The programme aimed to create awareness about the harmful effects of drugs and plastic on individuals and the environment. Leaders from VHP and Bajrang Dal, including VHP General Secretary Balabrahma Chari, Akula Mallikarjuna, Bajrang Dal Prakhanda Sanyojak Rolu Giri, Shadnagar VHP President Emula Sandeep Kumar, and General Secretary Hrishikesh, joined the event along with several activists.



Police personnel keeping watch on a highway in Mulugu district on Monday

Maoist plans to enter Telangana foiled

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) has rightly predicted that there was a possibility of the members of the outlawed Communist Party of India-Maoist crossing into Telangana from Chhattisgarh.

Are armed Maoist groups from Dandakaranya, which consider Telangana's border a safe zone, crossing into the State? Are the Maoists in the Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra borders abandoning Dandakaranya? The deployment of paramilitary forces, anti-Maoist squads, and Central armed forces is driving the Maoists towards Telangana's border, police sources confirmed.

Several key Maoist leaders—Kurush Mangu, alias Bhadrudu, Papan, Egothu Mallayya alias Karunakar, Koti, Madhu, and others—died during this process. Over

the last two months, intense clashes between police and Maoists in Dandakaranya have resulted in a war-like situation. Recently, for the first time, Central armed forces entered the Narayanapur district of Abujmadh in Dandakaranya, leading to several encounters, where up to 254 Maoists are reported to have died, according to Maoist party announcements.

SIB's Early Warning: With Union Home Minister Amit Shah declaring that the Maoist movement will be eradicated by 2026, police operations have intensified. In response, Maoist leaders have strategised to move towards Telangana's border. The Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) has predicted this and alerted the state police. Recently, Telangana DGP Jitender held meetings with district Superintendents of Police from

Jayashankar Bhupalapalli, Mulugu, and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts, providing strategic directions. Within ten days, Maoists killed two informants—Ramesh and Arjun—in Mulugu district's Wajedu.

A significant encounter happened recently, proving that the predictions of the Intelligence agencies were correct. The leaders of the Maoist movement in the Telugu states have also been reportedly dealing with health issues, and the Central paramilitary forces have gradually taken control of their long-held safe zones in Dandakaranya. This has prompted Maoist forces to relocate and move towards the border areas.

Maoist Presence: Despite a lack of major activity in the state recently, Maoists have frequently been issuing letters in the names of various area committees. These letters have been

sent under the names of the Telangana State Committee and other divisions, such as the Alluri Sitarama Raju and Bhadradi Kothagudem Divisions. From the second half of 2023 to the first half of 2024, letters were increasingly issued by committees from areas like Palwancha, Manuguru, Illendu, Narsampet, Singareni, and Charla. These communications were an attempt by the Maoists to assert their presence in Telangana.

After the elimination of the Lachanna and Bhadrudu factions, there was widespread media coverage in June about Maoists crossing into Telangana after crossing the Godavari River. In line with this, on July 25, an encounter occurred in the forests of Damerratogu in the Gundala Mandal of Mulugu and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts, where one Maoist was killed. Police

later confirmed that the Maoists, led by Lachanna and Bhadrudu, had been active in the region with about 15 members carrying weapons.

In another encounter on September 5 in the Karakagudem Mandal of Bhadradi district, Maoists including Lachanna and five others were killed. This brought the total to seven of the 15 initially reported dead. While the Lachanna group was wiped out, Bhadrudu's faction continued to evade the police for some time, posing a challenge to law enforcement.

Recent Major Encounters: The recent major encounter in Mulugu district resulted in the death of seven Maoists, including several members of the Telangana state committee and district committee. This has been seen as a major blow to the Maoist movement.



Shadnagar MLA Veerapalli Shankar at the birthday celebrations of AICC former president Sonia Gandhi in Shadnagar on Monday

Sonia Gandhi's birthday celebrated at Shadnagar

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA and Chairman of State Public Sector Institutions Veerapalli Shankar extended greetings to Sonia Gandhi on her birthday on Monday. He described her as the "mother of Telangana" and a leader who resided in the hearts of millions. The celebration was held at the MLA's camp office in Shadnagar, Rangareddy district, under the leadership of Town President Kunkalla Chennaiah.

During the event, MLA Veerapalli Shankar highlighted Sonia Gandhi's instrumen-

tal role in the formation of Telangana. He praised Sonia Gandhi's commitment to the cause of Telangana, recalling her assurance to stand by the region despite potential challenges or political losses.

He further lauded her six guarantees for Telangana, which he described as a source of hope and assurance for the people. MLA Shankar emphasised that Congress government would fulfil the aspirations of Telangana's people, overcoming obstacles.

The MLA also took the opportunity to criticise the opposition, particularly the BRS party, accusing them of

hatching conspiracies to create trouble for the Congress government. He asserted that the success of the Congress-led administration over the past year has caused distress among the opposition, who, according to him, are now resorting to underhanded tactics.

The event witnessed the participation of several prominent leaders and party workers, including Market Committee Vice Chairman Babar Khan, former ZPTC P Venkatamireddy, Town President Kunkalla Chennaiah, and State Youth Congress General Secretary Andemohan, among others.

Driver dies as bus rams into lorry

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANGIRI

In an accident at Dandu Malkapuram under Choutuppal mandal, a TSRTC driver died. The accident happened when the bus rammed into a stationary lorry.

The driver was trapped in the cabin. The Fire Service personnel cut open the cabin to extricate the body.

The police said that 10 passengers were injured in the accident. They were rushed to hospital. There were 40 passengers at the time of the accident. A massive traffic jam occurred following the accident. Driver dies as bus rams into lorry.



Fire Service staff extricating the body of RTC driver trapped in the cabin following an accident at Dandu Malkapuram in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district on Monday

Cotton farmers face distress over delayed procurement

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Farmers in Ranga Reddy district are facing significant challenges as delay in cotton purchases continues due to storage and processing issues. Officials have urged farmers to move their harvested cotton crops to the markets, but purchases are being deferred because of bottlenecks at ginning mills. The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is only able to buy a limited quantity of cotton each day, ranging from 500 to 800 quintals, despite the growing stockpile in the mills. This delay is especially affecting farmers from regions such as Chevella, Shabad, Shankarpalli, Moinabad, Ibrahimpatnam, Yacharam, and Manchal.

The ginning mills, which have a storage capacity of 20,000 quintals, are currently processing cotton bales sporadically, leading to further accumulation of stock. As a result, farmers are incurring high transportation costs as they rely on rented vehicles to transport their cotton to the

mills. Any delays in unloading or processing only add to their financial burden.

Officials from the Marketing Department and CCI have attributed the delays to operational problems at the ginning mills, including machinery breakdowns and disruptions caused by recent rains. Although purchases resumed on December 7 after a three-day halt, the slow pace of procurement has left farmers frustrated. While payments for cotton sold up to November 29 have been settled, the sluggish purchasing process has intensified dissatisfaction among the farming community.

Currently, cotton is being bought at a support price ranging from Rs 7,521 to Rs 7,471 per quintal. In response to the delays, farmers are appealing to authorities to take up village-wise procurement schedules to streamline the process and avoid further delays. They urge officials to expedite the cotton purchasing process to alleviate both the financial and logistical challenges they are facing.

Railway Minister urged to sanction station at Chinna Kodur

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

BRS Rajya Sabha members KR Suresh Reddy, Vaddiraju Ravichandra, and Divakonda Damodar Rao have urged Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to establish a railway station at Chinna Kodur in Siddipet district. This is along the Kothapally-Manoharabad railway line. The new railway line has already been completed up to Siddipet town. Responding to local requests, Siddipet MLA T Harish Rao raised the matter with the BRS MPs, who subsequently submitted a formal representation to the Union Minister in New Delhi on Monday.

The MPs highlighted that the proximity of the popular tourist destination, Ranganayaka Sagar, to Chinna Kodur would make the establishment of a railway station in the area particularly beneficial.

FORM - C NOTIFICATION (Under Section 11 of the Act where 85A Exemption is given) (See rule 6/12) GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR, HYDERABAD DISTRICT														
Gazette No. Hyderabad HAMIL No.45 No. C6/2007/2024-LHS (301 to 325) Dated 07-12-2024 Dated 07-12-2024														
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Collector, Hyderabad District that a total of 1262.57 Sq. yds of land is required in the Shar-E-Hyderabad														
Village, Bahadurpura Mandal Hyderabad District namely affected under Metro Rail Phase-II, MGRS to Chandrayangutta, Corridor-VI, stretch from Shah Ali Banda to Shamsheer Gunj.														
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Shar-E-Hyderabad Village of Bahadurpura Mandal, Hyderabad District, land measuring more or less 1262.57 Sq. yds whose detailed description as following, is proposed for acquisition:														
Sl. No.	Shahd. No.	Particulars	Type of Title	Name & Address of person interested	Area Acq. in Sq. Yds.	Boundaries				Road		Type		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	381	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Smt. Vidya Devi W/o Late Ramesh Lal 2. Smt. Kamal Singh S/o Late Ramesh Lal	340.88	Dargah	Lane	Neighbour Property	Road	-	-	-	-	G-1
2	382	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	114.18	Lane	23-6-938	Neighbour Property	Road	-	-	-	-	G-2
3	383	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	122.98	Neighbour Property	23-6-938	Neighbour Property	Road	-	-	-	-	G-3
4	384	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	88.05	Neighbour Property	23-6-938	Neighbour Property	Road	-	-	-	-	G-4
5	385	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	90.36	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-5
6	386	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	34.35	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-6
7	387	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	39.85	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-7
8	388	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	8.39	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-8
9	389	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	37.36	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-9
10	390	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	67.67	Road	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-10
11	391	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	44.0	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-11
12	392	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	33.17	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-12
13	393	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	35.15	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-13
14	394	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	22.85	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-14
15	395	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	22.00	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-15
16	396	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	18.37	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-16
17	397	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	70.61	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-17
18	398	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	32.99	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-18
19	399	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	67.90	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-19
20	400	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	81.81	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-20
21	401	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	34.08	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-21
22	402	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	28.08	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-22
23	403	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	25.83	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-23
24	404	23-6-938	Owner	Patil Purnima Bhusal W/o Shree Kumar Bhusal	8.84	23-6-938	23-6-938	23-6-938	Road	-	-	-	-	G-24
Total						1262.57								
This notification made under the provisions of Section - 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30/2013), as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.														
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Hyderabad District and Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition), Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Rasoolpura, Begumpet, Hyderabad on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana /Collector cum appropriate Government is pleased to authorize the Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition), Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Rasoolpura, Begumpet, Hyderabad and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section 12 of the said Act.														
Under Section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e., sale/purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land/property from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the District Collector, Hyderabad District.														
Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all persons interested/affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (Sixty days) from the date of publication of this Notification as provided under section 15 of the Act before the District Collector, Hyderabad District/Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition), Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Rasoolpura, Begumpet, Hyderabad. The personal hearing on the objections so filed will be taken up on Dt: 12-02-2025 at 11.00 AM/PM in the office of the Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition), Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited, Metro Bhavan, Rasoolpura, Begumpet, Hyderabad.														
Place: Hyderabad Date: 07-12-2024.														
Sd/- Spl.Dy.Collector (LA), HAMIL, Hyderabad.														
Sd/- Addl. Collector, Hyderabad District.														
Sd/- Collector, Hyderabad District.														
DIPR No.458/LA-PP/ADVT/Agency/2024-25														

Five-year plan to restore forest cover in Mulugu initiated

PNS ■ MULUGU

Mulugu Divisional Forest officials have submitted proposals to the state government for restoring the forest in the Medaram area. The plan involves planting saplings across 800 acres of land, preventing fire accidents, installing chain link fences to keep grazing animals away, and employing 10 tribal youth as watchmen. The restoration efforts are planned to take place over five years, with work commencing as soon as funds are approved by the state government.

The proposal comes after significant damage to the forest caused by heavy rains and strong winds on August 31. Between 6 pm and 8 pm, gale-force winds reaching speeds of up to 120 km/h caused the uprooting of over 50,000 trees along the Tadwai-Medaram route, spanning from a half-kilometer radius to 2 km. The storm also damaged electric

poles, while 16 houses in the nearby Kondaparti village were partially affected. Forest officials, upon assessing the damage, used drones to identify the uprooted trees and determined that the wind, which

affected the forest in one direction, was the primary cause. On September 4 and 5, senior forest officials, including Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) RM Dobriyal, Kaleswaram Zone

Chief Conservator of Forests Prabhakar, Nirmal Circle Chief Conservator of Forests Bheema Naik, and Rahul Kishan Jadhav, visited the site to inspect the damage. According to Jadhav, efforts to remove the uprooted trees are already underway in the Medaram forest. A report has been submitted to the state government detailing the steps needed to restore the forest. Once the necessary funds are made available, the restoration process will begin.

Forest officials have determined that approximately 120 species of trees were uprooted due to the storm. As part of the recovery plan, a five-year strategy has been put in place, which includes developing an 80-kilometer fire line with a 5-meter width, erecting a chain-link fence to prevent human intrusion, and hiring 10 tribal youth to oversee and maintain the newly planted areas.



ACROSS THE STATES



Father attempts to kill child over family dispute

A father allegedly attempted to kill his four-year-old daughter in Erode on Monday due to a family dispute, police said. Thirumalai Selvan (30) was living with his wife Sukanya (23), their seven-year-old son, and four-year-old daughter in Madurai. Following a family quarrel, Sukanya moved to her parental home in Manickampalayam, Erode, with her children several months ago. On Monday morning, Thirumalai Selvan, reportedly intoxicated, went to his wife's place, quarrelled with her, and compelled her to return to Madurai with him. When she refused, he allegedly poured petrol from a bottle onto his wife and two children and attempted to set them on fire, in a fit of anger, police said. While Sukanya and their son managed to escape, Thirumalai Selvan allegedly set their daughter on fire. The girl screamed for help, prompting her mother and neighbours to rush to the spot and try to extinguish the flames.



Seer upset over curbs on protests

Lingayat seer Jayamruthyunjaya Swami has expressed his anger over the prohibitory orders imposed in Belagavi where the winter session of the Karnataka legislature started on Monday. The seer had planned a tractor rally in the town on Tuesday, but the district administration clamped prohibitory orders, restricting the entry of tractors in town. The pontiff of the Panchamasali Guru Peetha of Kudala Sangama has been pressing the successive governments to bring the Panchamasali community under the 2A category of the Other Backward Castes since December 2012. Addressing reporters, the seer said such restrictions were uncalled for when he was carrying out a protest in a democratic way. The community is presently under the 3B category and gets five per cent reservation in government education institutions and jobs. If the demand is met, the community would get 15 per cent reservation.



No land provided by Centre to Waqf board since 2019: Govt

No land has been provided by the Central government to the Waqf Board since 2019, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry told Rajya Sabha on Monday. In a written reply to a question about the total area of land represented by the Waqf Board by the Central and state governments from 2019 till date, MoS Tokhan Sahu said land is a state subject and hence, no data of land provided by the state governments is available with the ministry. He, however, said as far as the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is concerned, no land has been provided to the Waqf Board by the Government of India since 2019. In August, the government introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and referred it to a joint parliamentary committee after a heated debate. The government asserted the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques while the opposition called it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution. Last week, Jagdambika Pal, the chairman of the joint parliamentary committee, said the panel has written to state governments.

CUET-UG, PG set to undergo changes, revised norms soon: UGC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses is set to undergo several changes in the 2025 edition following a review by an expert panel, according to UGC Chairman Jagadeesh Kumar. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has constituted an expert committee to review the conduct of CUET-UG and PG.

"Based on the feedback from the past years, it is also essential to continuously improve the examination process to provide a better, more efficient and



conductive environment for students taking CUET. In this spirit, the UGC has constituted an expert committee to review the conduct of CUET-UG and CUET-PG for 2025," Kumar told PTI. "The committee has examined various aspects of the test, such as its structure, number of papers, duration of test papers, syllabus alignment and operational logistics.

India calls for ensuring territorial integrity of Syria

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after rebel forces overthrew President Bashar Assad's authoritarian government in Syria, India on Monday joined leading nations to call for stability and preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Arab nation.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is monitoring the unfolding developments in Syria and advocated a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process going forward in that country.

The Syrian government collapsed on Sunday as the rebels seized control of the capital Damascus after capturing several other prominent cities and towns.

Assad fled the country after the rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) took control of Damascus, marking the end of his family's 50-year rule.

"We are monitoring the situation in Syria in the light of ongoing developments. We underline the need for all parties to work towards preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria," the MEA said in a statement.

"We advocate a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process respecting the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society," it said.

The MEA said the Indian embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community in Syria for their "safety and security".

Hours after the rebels cap-



tured power, official sources in Delhi on Sunday said all Indian nationals in Syria are safe.

Russian state media reported that Assad is in Moscow and will be given asylum. His nearly 14-year tenure was marked by civil war, bloodshed and brutal crackdown on his political opponents. Many leading countries have also welcomed fall of the nearly 14-year-long Assad regime that witnessed civil strife across Syria.

"It is a moment of historic opportunity for the long-suffering people of Syria to build a better future for their country. It is also a moment of risk and uncertainty," US President Joe Biden said. "This is the best opportunity in generations for Syrians to forge their own future -- free of opposition," he said. British Prime Minister

Keir Starmer described the developments in Syria as "unprecedented".

"The Syrian people have suffered under Assad's barbaric regime for too long and we welcome his departure. Our focus is now on ensuring a political solution prevails, and peace and stability is restored," he said. "We call on all sides to protect civilians and minorities and ensure essential aid can reach the most vulnerable in the coming hours and days," Starmer added.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US strongly supports a peaceful transition of power to an accountable Syrian government through an inclusive Syrian-led process.

"During this transitional period, the Syrian people have every right to demand the

preservation of state institutions, the resumption of key services, and the protection of vulnerable communities," he said. The French foreign ministry welcomed the fall of Assad's regime and said the time for unity has come.

"France calls for weapons to fall silent, for the democratic institutions to be preserved, for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria to be respected," it said. France also pitched for peaceful political transition, one that respects the diversity of the Syrian people, and protects civilians and all minorities, in accordance with international law.

"It calls on all Syrians to unite, to reconcile, and to reject all forms of extremism," the French foreign ministry said.

Fadnavis-led ministry wins trust motion

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Devendra Fadnavis-led ministry on Monday sailed through a trust vote in the Maharashtra assembly. The trust motion, tabled by Shiv Sena MLA Uday Samant and others, was passed by a voice vote. Speaker Rahul Narwekar announced that the trust motion has been approved by

the House. The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP 'Mahayuti' coalition has a commanding majority of 230 seats in the 288-member state assembly.

Fadnavis was sworn in as the chief minister for the third time on December 5. Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar took oath as deputy chief ministers at the ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mumbai.



MANIPUR VIOLENCE

SC asks state to give details on arson, property encroachments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Manipur government to submit a detailed sealed cover report on the number of properties that were fully or partially burnt, looted, or encroached upon during the ongoing ethnic violence in the state. The bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar emphasised the need for the state to address the grievances of the displaced persons and take steps to restore their properties.

It therefore asked the Manipur government, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, to provide specific details such as "buildings burnt or partially burnt, buildings looted, buildings trespassed or encroached upon". The report should also provide information about the owners and current occupants of these properties, along with the



The bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar emphasised the need for the state to address the grievances of the displaced

details of any legal actions taken against trespassers, the CJ said. "We also direct the state government to provide the following details: 1. Buildings burnt and partially burnt, 2. buildings which are looted; and (3) the buildings

trespassed and encroached upon," the SC order stated.

The bench further directed, "In all these, give details of the name and address of the owner as well as the person, if any, in occupation of the property.

‘Will we have lollipop while you come to occupy our land’

Mamata dig at Bangla politicians

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday strongly reacted to provocative statements by a section of Bangladeshi politicians that Bangladesh could occupy Bengal within days, calling them "absurd" and dismissing it by saying, "you will occupy Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, and we will have lollipops?"

While addressing the West Bengal Assembly, Banerjee, without naming anyone, condemned the circulation of certain fake videos on this side of the border and blamed a certain political party for attempting to stoke tensions in the state. The chief minister condemned the persecution of minorities in Bangladesh, calling it unacceptable, and stressed the need for unity among India's religious communities.

Banerjee strongly rejected provocative statements from across the border, including a Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader who said that Bangladesh has claims over Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, and a viral video featuring Bangladesh Army veterans suggesting the country could occupy West Bengal within days, remarking, "You will occupy Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, and we will have lollipops? Don't even think that."

"No one has the guts to take our lands, don't even think about it," she said. Mocking some Bangladeshi leaders, who



have made provocative statements recently, she said, "Stay calm and healthy and have peace of mind." She also cautioned those seeking to politicise the situation in India, saying that such actions would harm West Bengal and its people.

"Those thinking of politicising this must remember that it will hurt our state too, and your friends, sisters, and brothers in Bangladesh," she said.

"A certain political party is responsible for the circulation of fake videos to stoke fire. I appeal to everyone to stay away from such misinformation. We are not in favour of any one group, we care for everyone here," she said.

Banerjee urged restraint, saying, "We should not make unnecessary statements that may threaten the situation

here." The chief minister condemned the ongoing persecution of minorities, especially Hindus, in Bangladesh, calling it unacceptable, and stressed the need for unity among India's religious communities.

"We condemn the ongoing violence on Hindus in Bangladesh. Communal violence is not done by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or Christians; it is done by anti-social elements that are burden on the society. We should all remember this and avoid making statements that could disrupt the peace in West Bengal," she said.

The Hindu community in Bangladesh, the country's largest minority group, has faced increasing persecution following the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, triggered by widespread student protests.



DELHI ASSEMBLY POLLS

‘Pushpa 2’ leads to poster war between AAP and BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Allu Arjun-starrer blockbuster "Pushpa 2" has led to a poster war between the ruling AAP in Delhi and the opposition BJP ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled early next year. AAP recently issued a poster on the lines of the movie, titling it in bold letters "Kejriwal Jhukega Nahi" based on the cult dialogue of the movie.

In the poster, Kejriwal poses as the protagonist of the film, carrying AAP's symbol 'jhaadu' (broom) on his shoulder. "4th Term Coming Soon" read the poster, referring to the previous electoral successes of Kejriwal-led AAP in 2013, 2015 and 2020 in the Delhi Assembly polls.

In the poster, Kejriwal poses as the protagonist of the film, carrying AAP's symbol 'jhaadu' (broom) on his shoulder. "4th Term Coming Soon" read the poster, referring to the previous electoral successes of Kejriwal-led AAP in 2013, 2015 and 2020 in the Delhi Assembly polls

working hard to retain power in Delhi for a third time after its massive electoral successes in 2015 and 2020 in which it routed the BJP, winning 67 and 63 seats, respectively, in the 70-member Assembly. The leaders in the BJP, out of power in Delhi since 1998, consider the upcoming Assembly polls their best opportunity to end AAP's sway in Delhi's politics.

How physical activity helps muscles produce energy?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers have identified a new process thought which physical exercise triggers the production of energy in muscles, even in those with genetic errors.

Researchers said the results, published in the journal Nature Communications, could pave the way for treating disorders affecting one's muscles, such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

"We have identified a new, important mechanism for energy production of the muscle cells and shown that it is activated by physical exercise -- regardless of age, gender and state of health," Lykke Sylow, an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen,



Denmark, and corresponding author of the paper describing

the findings, said. The team showed that a protein, vital to

the newly discovered process and named 'SLIRP', played a

key role in producing energy, which is known to occur in cells' energy factory -- the mitochondria.

They further found that through fitness, or aerobic, training, the SLIRP protein's role in energy production could be dodged.

"Our research shows that exercise can counteract genetic errors in muscular energy production. If this (SLIRP) protein is missing, exercise can activate alternative processes which recreate the muscle's energy capacity and circumvent the genetic error," first author, Tang Cam Phung Pham, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen, said.

The results showed how useful exercise can be in over-

coming genetic errors, Cam Phung Pham said.

The study could help develop a drug that mimics the health benefits of physical training in people who are unable to exercise, according to Sylow.

"It opens up the possibility of developing new treatments for more than 200 different disorders related to defects in the muscles' energy production," Sylow said.

"This includes rare mitochondrial genetic disorders as well as more common diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and neurodegenerative disorders - in which (a) lower muscle function is associated with increased mortality," the corresponding author said

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Renewed vigour

PM Modi and the King Wangchuck’s meeting strengthens ties with the Himalayan kingdom and lays the groundwork for future collaboration

India and Bhutan share a relationship rooted in historical ties, cultural affinity and a deep commitment to mutual progress. This bond was reaffirmed during a recent high-level meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutan’s King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. The meeting underscores the enduring importance both nations place on their friendship amidst a dynamic geopolitical landscape. The foundation of India-Bhutan relations was laid with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship in 1949, which established perpetual peace and friendship, free trade and mutual cooperation. This treaty was updated in 2007 to reflect evolving dynamics. It continued to emphasise close cooperation on defence, trade and cultural exchange. India has been a steadfast partner in Bhutan’s development journey, assisting in key sectors such as hydropower, infrastructure, education and health. Bhutan, in turn, has been a reliable neighbour, sharing India’s security concerns and supporting its diplomatic endeavours.



The recent interaction between PM Modi and King Jigme Khesar sought to address emerging challenges and explore avenues for deeper collaboration. Hydropower is a cornerstone of India-Bhutan relations. Bhutan exports surplus electricity generated from its rivers to India, a mutually beneficial arrangement. Discussions focused on scaling up hydropower projects, ensuring sustainable energy practices, and addressing financial challenges related to project execution. India remains Bhutan’s largest trading partner and the leaders explored ways to diversify trade and enhance connectivity. Emphasis

was also placed on digital infrastructure and technology transfer to support Bhutan’s aspirations for modernisation. Geopolitical developments, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and Himalayan region, were key discussion points. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to regional stability and countering security threats, including transnational crimes and emerging cyber risks. Recognising the importance of fostering people-to-people ties, leaders pledged to expand scholarship programmes, skill development initiatives and cultural exchanges. These efforts aim to empower the youth and deepen cultural understanding. The dialogue between India and Bhutan holds broader geopolitical significance. As China increases its outreach in South Asia, including in the Himalayan region, India’s proactive engagement with Bhutan reaffirms its commitment to its smaller neighbours. Bhutan’s strategic location makes its partnership vital for India’s security and regional influence. India’s support for Bhutan’s participation in global forums reflects its willingness to amplify Bhutan’s voice on international issues, including climate change. As both nations work toward common goals, their relationship serves as a model for regional cooperation based on trust, benefit and mutual respect.

PICTALK



Farmers carry harvested cauliflower at a field on a winter morning, in Kolkata

Superpower retreats and their fallout

Russians abandoning Assads is a stark reminder of the fact that promises of steadfast allegiance can falter when geopolitical will and resources wane

The Vietnam War was fought between the forces of the North (supported by the Soviet Union and China) and those of the South (supported by the United States of America). While it lasted twenty years (1955 to 1975) the direct involvement of the American troops lasted about a decade from 1965 onwards. The scars of 58,281 US fatalities and 303,644 wounded had tired the spirits, emotions and morale of the Americans, and they secretly negotiated a pull-out plan under the garb of the Paris Peace Accords that the Americans knew would not hold up.

The Americans made many insincere and knowingly immoral promises to intervene on behalf of its ally, the Southern side, but when the push came to shove, it pushed the Southern side under the bus with non-intervention or support. Later day US President Ronald Reagan was to coin the term ‘Vietnam Syndrome’ to suggest a reluctance to support an international military intervention, beyond a point. A similar renege of support after almost a decade of direct military intervention was to face the Soviet-propped puppet government of Afghanistan, under Mohammad Najibullah.

Ultimately the political and popular will of the Soviets had waned as the human and financial cost of continuing the war in Afghanistan had waned. A few years later, exactly as it had happened in Vietnam, the Afghan government was ousted in a bloody offensive and Najibullah’s corpse was dragged behind a truck through the streets of Kabul. Eventually, the Soviets left him to his fate. It was the sort of end of a regime that was far less than ideal as the land of many ‘Great Games’ earlier i.e., Afghanistan, had seen similar consequences of bloodlust with the British troops leaving Afghanistan in Jan 1842 (only one survivor had managed to reach the British controlled township of Jalalabad). Sadly, even Najibullah’s ouster wasn’t to be the last of the ‘abandoning’ of a regime in Kabul. In 2021, an exhausted and dispirited American force ‘abandoned’



its ally i.e., the Ashraf Ghani government, in Kabul on the pretext of a deal signed between the Taliban and the US in Doha.

Everyone knew that the deal would not hold up and lo behold the Taliban stormed into Kabul, soon after. The ‘longest war in US history’ with a two trillion financial cost, a no-win situation, and mounting pictures of ‘US body bags’ had yet again forced the Americans to push their ally under the bus. By blindsiding its purported ally, the Americans had unilaterally let down its ally after making promises to defend the same. Afghan Vice President Amrullah Saleh was left mocking the US on its pusillanimous stand, “when a superpower decided to become a mini power”.

Recently, and yet again, it was the decisive reluctance of a major power and ally i.e., Russia and Iran, that left the beleaguered Syrian Government of Bashar Al Assad, to its inevitable fate and within days of some token support, the Syrian capital of Damascus fell to rebels, who routed the Russia-Iran supported Bashar Al Assad regime. To be fair, the ‘abandonment’ of Bashar Al Assad cannot be compared to the Vietnam or Afghanistan situations, as the principal power



AFTER THE SYRIAN REBELS HAD TAKEN OVER IDLIB AND WERE DASHING THE NEXT PROFILE TARGET OF HOMS, THE RUSSIAN FIGHTER PLANES DID BOMB SOME REBEL STRONGHOLDS, BUT IT SIMPLY WASN’T ENOUGH

behind the Syrian regime no longer had the wherewithal to continue supporting, even if they wanted to.

Russia is already bleeding and reeling under the humiliating and costly stalemate on the Ukrainian front, whereas the Iranians and their strategic regional proxies (e.g. Hezbollah and the Houthis) were getting systematically decimated and attacked with literal impunity. After the Syrian rebels had taken over Idlib and were dashing the next profile target of Homs, the Russian fighter planes did bomb some rebel strongholds, but it simply wasn’t enough. Soon, the Syrian rebels made the kill for Damascus, and the isolated and unsupported forces of Bashar Al Assad simply couldn’t hold on. History repeated itself and in the face of supporting foreign allies failing the regime, it was tantamount to pushing the same under the bus!

The lessons are substantial for other regions facing similar belligerence or circumstances i.e., counting on declared allies cannot be assumed, definitely and certainly not, infinitely. When there were grave tensions on Indo-Sino borders in 2020, then President Donald Trump (author of a book aptly titled, ‘The Art of Deal’) made mean-

ingless offers to ‘negotiate’ between the two sides, as opposed to denouncing Chinese expansionism and aggression, unequivocally. While certain military orders with Delhi were indeed signed and expedited – the same made great transactional and commercial sense to the American defence sector. This is something that the already cornered Ukrainian President Zelensky must be fearing as President-elect Donald Trump sheepishly talks about yet another ‘deal’ to supposedly end the Russia-Ukraine war. History is instructive of the consequences that await whenever similar ‘deals’ (read, abandonment) are made by a Superpower, be it the Americans or most recently, the Russians in Syria. Reveling on the latest situation in Syria, Donald Trump tweeted, ‘Assad is gone. He has fled his country.’

His protector, Russia...led by Vladimir Putin, was not interested in protecting him any longer” – while it is true, it has been no different for the US, throughout history. Trump too has the blood of letting down Afghanistan on his hands.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WEST ASIA IN TURMOIL

Madam — This refers to the editorial on the developments in Syria (December 9). In West Asia, mostly countries are dominated by Muslims, the people have hardly anything to feel elated about. The hate against the subjects of the same religion is dominating the scene in most of the countries there. Each group is in constant war against the other not for economic benefits but for an upper hand over the other group. In the process the struggling groups have taken the path of terrorism forgetting that the one who wins is not the permanent winner and victories are purely ephemeral. In Syria also the number of such groups divided by sub-divisions of the same religion, culture, etc., is too many, and this makes it clear that whoever has won now is only for a temporary period, as the deprived groups will always be waiting to take revenge and capture power. In this entire game, the real beneficiaries are the developed nations whose main plank of economy is weapon trade. Selling weapons to every terrorist and warring group is a flourishing trade. Therefore, either of the groups is provoked, promoted, and equipped with enough weapons and the fire is kept alive. In the case of Syria, though Assad has fled the country, bowing to the rebels, the civil war among the groups will continue to be there. But all the groups call it a jihad meaning I am killing you to satisfy the same God whom we both worship piously. Terrorism knows no economy, no logic, no rationality, and no ideology, and it is simply a mental affair capable of destroying anything and nothing constructive.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

AUSTRALIA DEFEATS INDIA

Madam — Indian cricket is not in the pink of health and the second test at Adelaide was a highly disappointing one for the fans by this indigestible defeat. The scores of 180 and 175 in the first and second innings, respectively, by Indian batters were a little more than 19 runs behind the chase for the

World Meditation Day declared



Meditation is a timeless element that connects the soul’s depth, offering humanity a path to mental peace, physical health, and spiritual growth. Recognising December 21 as World Meditation Day honours this ancient practice and symbolises global recognition of India’s cultural heritage. In modern life, med-

itation has evolved as a science for holistic development, offering hope to those grappling with stress and spiritual unrest.

The winter solstice, marking the start of Uttarayan in Indian tradition, is especially sacred for meditation, as the flow of energy in nature fosters spiritual awakening. Amid personal, social, and economic challenges, meditation offers mental stability, reduces stress, and enhances concentration while alleviating disorders like anxiety and depression. Its benefits extend to physical health, stabilising blood pressure, heart rate, and boosting immunity. World Meditation Day, endorsed by the UN, reflects India’s cultural strength and influence.

R K Jain | Barwani

Aussies in the second innings, winning this test by 10 wickets. The coach, Gautam Gambhir, has got no time to spare except to bring in fresh changes to boost the morale of the team, which is certainly too low at the moment. The colour of the ball shouldn’t make them blind by coming out with lame excuses for their grand failure. Skipper Rohit Sharma, by batting lower down in this test, has signalled his poor form. Except for N K Reddy, the other batters took a stroll to the wicket by spending more time at the pavilion. Why did they drop Washington Sundar? He has no clue. It’s not good for Indian old horses to rest on old laurels to continue their guest appearances in the team. While going by retaining them despite single-digit scores on the board creates a serious doubt about whether they have been retained to promote their commercials in their ongoing contract. The selection policy needs more transparency, and there shouldn’t be format-based selections. The head coach must look for consistent performers by taking into account players like ‘Head’ to be

in our team rather than overlooking young talents at this crucial phase of Indian cricket. With 1 win each, the remaining tests will be the test of time for the future of Indian cricket.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

MORE SCHOOLS FOR RURAL AREAS

Madam — PM Modi’s Saturday-X post, stating the Cabinet decision to open the 85 new Kendriya Vidyalayas and 28 Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country and make accessible school education maximal, is a top-notch contribution. From the vantage point of the present, it seems that, ostensibly, rural students are still under scrutiny over facilities as compared to urban. There are far fewer schools, poorly qualified teachers, and miserable schools, grinding the little students’ study zeal and future immeasurably. The government must consolidate the correlation of urban development with rural. Pull up its socks to upgrade the situation of being more adept.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

Be receptive to contrary point of view!

As social beings, our lives are deeply intertwined with communication, but the same can often become a source of conflict

We are social beings. Communication with others is as integral to us as breathing. We often find conflicting conversations blowing out of proportion, sometimes leading to even a break in relationships. Unpleasantness can be avoided if we are mindful of others. We had lived in bungalows in well-planned colonies for a better part of our lives.

It was easy to be more social in such surroundings when we met only on social occasions. We, and more like us, have moved to condominium complexes only over the past few years. Private spaces are diminishing as neighbours fall over each other, literally and figuratively. This is a new life that we are still adjusting to. I noticed something different about a neighbour recently as we gathered for a meeting. We indulged in some idle banter before the start of serious business. It was a light-hearted conversation, over which we could smile or chuckle. Or so I thought, till I received his call the next day. I got the message loud and clear that



he was upset over the reference to his receding hairline. I apologised profusely for the faux pas. He does not seem to have forgiven me and has stopped greeting me when we cross each other during walks. He is the same person who does not think twice before breaking into a sarcastic verse on the community WhatsApp group, without considering the hurt he might cause to the intended victim. We have regular meetings with the governing body of our welfare association. There are arguments galore on any subject, which would not be such a bad thing, and may sometimes even be considered as a humorous interlude in an otherwise charged

environment, were it not for the seriousness with which the adversaries try to push their viewpoint to the exclusion of even listening to the other’s perspective. One morning, one of the members told me that it was good that he was now a part of the management body, otherwise he would have vehemently opposed some of the proposals. I could not fathom the logic. A wrong could not have been right only by his being inside the team. In yet another instance recently, two ladies insisted that they were right in their respective contentions. As the arguments went back and forth, I could see the gradual stubborn look on the faces of both, an indication that they were no longer listening to each other. As an independent observer, I realized that both were talking the same, albeit in different words. They were not taking the time to pause and reflect before responding. There is one more incident that I may not forget easily. I felt aggrieved enough to write to the promoter of our condominium complex about the supposed

transgressions of a neighbour in handling the community affairs. The latter was still working as an employee with the builder. I was upset and did not deem it fit to consider the latter’s point of view or the adverse impact that it might have on his professional prospects. I apologised to him in later years. He has moved on and continues to accord me respect. However, I could have avoided the unpleasantness had I taken the time to talk to him about my grievances. It would be good for everyone to be more respectful and less impulsive in an argument. If only we could follow the words of Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi, “We cling to our own point of view, as though everything depended on it. Yet our opinions have no permanence; like autumn and winter, they gradually pass away.”

(The writer is an author, speaker, coach, arbitrator and strategy consultant. He conducts workshops on creative writing for young adults and corporate executives. The views expressed are personal)




SANJAY CHANDRA

FIRST COLUMN

BRAIN ROT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

There is alarming cognitive decline linked to overindulgence in mindless digital content



SAKSHI SETHI

In a world saturated with endless entertainment, constant notifications and superficial distractions, the human brain faces unprecedented challenges. The term brain rot refers to the perceived decline in cognitive abilities or intellectual engagement due to excessive consumption of mindless or unproductive content. While it is colloquial and not a clinical diagnosis, it describes mental fog, reduced attention span and diminished problem-solving abilities often linked to prolonged screen time or low-value content. Studies suggest that heavy screen usage can correlate with reduced grey matter in the brain, which may impair critical thinking and memory, particularly among younger individuals. It also contributes to mental health issues like anxiety and depression, driven by constant comparisons and exposure to idealised online content. The rise of social media, streaming platforms and short-form content has revolutionised how we consume information and entertainment. While these platforms offer unprecedented access to global knowledge, they also foster habits of passive consumption. Endless scrolling and binge-watching also lead to mental fatigue and reduced attention spans, making it harder for individuals to engage with more complex ideas or tasks. Brain rot can also stem from a lack of intellectual stimulation. Activities that challenge the brain such as reading, problem-solving, or engaging in creative pursuits are often sidelined in favour of easier, low-effort distractions. Over time, this neglect can lead to a decline in critical thinking, memory retention and problem-solving skills.




The modern lifestyle, characterised by high levels of stress and constant multitasking, can contribute to cognitive decline. It is often said that chronic stress impairs brain function, particularly in areas responsible for memory and learning which creates a vicious cycle where individuals turn to mindless activities to escape stress, further exacerbating mental stagnation. Moreover, a sedentary lifestyle, coupled with a diet lacking in nutrients essential for brain function, can also lead to cognitive decline. In maintaining mental clarity and overall brain health, physical exercise and a balanced diet play crucial roles. The effects of brain rot are far-reaching and can manifest in various aspects of life. A lack of focus and motivation often results in decreased efficiency and the inability to complete tasks effectively. Overindulgence in passive entertainment stifles the ability to think creatively or generate original ideas. The overuse of escapist media can lead to a disconnect from real-world emotions and experiences, fostering feelings of emptiness or dissatisfaction. Excessive reliance on digital communication can impair interpersonal relationships and the ability to engage in meaningful, face-to-face interactions. Addressing brain rot requires a multifaceted approach that emphasises mindfulness, discipline and a commitment to personal growth. Setting boundaries for screen time and being intentional about the type of content consumed can help reduce the effects of brain rot. By choosing educational or thought-provoking material over passive entertainment the mind can be stimulated; by prioritising physical health such as regular physical exercise, a balanced diet and setting goals for personal and intellectual growth learning can help foster mental resilience and creativity. They will also help reduce stress and combat mental inertia.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

The imperative of continuous learning in India’s AI-driven future

The rapid growth of AI, has intensified the demand for skilled professionals. Yet, a stark talent gap threatens this progress



SUMIT SHUKLA

COM indicate that the AI market in the country could grow to \$17 billion by 2027, with an annual growth rate of 25–35 per cent. However, this growth is accompanied by a stark shortage of experts in advanced technologies. NASSCOM estimates that over a million skilled engineers specialising in AI and related technologies will be

needed in the coming years. Alarmingly, the talent gap could rise from 25 per cent to nearly 30 per cent by 2028, emphasising the critical need for skill development among both new graduates and experienced professionals. One significant challenge is the disconnect between formal education and the practical skills required in the job market. Every year, approximately 1.5 million engineering graduates enter the workforce in India, yet only a fraction secure jobs aligned with their field of study. This mismatch is not due to a lack of opportunities but stems from the gap between the theoretical knowledge imparted in academic institutions and the hands-on skills sought by employers. Beyond technical



AI AND JOBS FUTURE OF WORK

trends and practical learning experiences into their courses. Today’s workforce needs to think critically across disciplines and understand the broader implications of technology on economic, social, and cultural contexts. Flexible and continuous education plays a pivotal role in closing the divide between academic knowledge and the realities of the job market.

Digital learning platforms offer a promising solution in this context. With over 50 per cent of Indians actively using the internet, online education provides accessible opportunities to acquire new skills. Edtech platforms specialising in skill enhancement allow individuals to enroll in tailored courses and programmes, preparing them for rapidly evolving job landscapes. The benefits of continuous learning extend beyond career advancement. Employees who are adaptable and committed to enhancing their knowledge contribute to organisational innovation and help businesses navigate shifting market dynamics. For instance, as AI becomes more integrated across industries, the demand for experts in these technologies will continue to rise. Forward-thinking companies are already investing in employee training programs to stay competitive and ensure their teams are equipped to handle emerging challenges. Despite these efforts, many traditional educational institutions struggle to meet industry needs. Relying heavily on lecture-based teaching, these institutions often focus on theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical skills. Students have limited access to industry-standard equipment or opportunities for hands-on problem-solving, leaving them ill-prepared for the workforce. Integrating real-world applications into academic learning bridges the gap between theoretical instruction and practical expertise, ensuring graduates are ready to meet employer expectations. Upskilling is not just about addressing current deficiencies—it involves cultivating a mindset of continuous improvement. In a world where industries evolve rapidly and the shelf life of skills is shrinking, professionals must adapt to new technologies and methodologies quickly. Skills once considered indispensable can become obsolete within a few years, making the ability to learn and relearn critical for success in today’s professional environment. For individuals and organisations alike, embracing continuous education is a strategic move to navigate the present and excel in the future.

(The writer is CEO at Scholars Merit, views are personal)

IN BRIEF



PSB loan write off in H1 FY25 at Rs 42,000 cr

Public sector banks have written off loans worth Rs 42,000 crore in the first six months of the current fiscal, Parliament was informed on Monday. State Bank of India (SBI) wrote off loans worth Rs 8,312 crore, Punjab National Bank (Rs 8,061 crore), Union Bank of India (Rs 6,344 crore) and Bank of Baroda (Rs 5,925 crore) during the April-September period. "Such write-off does not result in waiver of liabilities of borrowers and therefore, it does not benefit the borrower. The borrowers continue to be liable for repayment and banks continue to pursue recovery actions initiated in these accounts through various recovery mechanisms available to them," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said. The loans written off by public sector banks during April-September of the current fiscal stood at Rs 42,035 crore, while recovery of Rs 37,253 crore was made.



Gautam Solar seeks patent for defect detection system

Gautam Solar on Monday said it has sought patent for its artificial intelligence (AI)-based system to detect defects in solar panels. This innovative solution integrates advanced imaging and AI technologies to enhance the efficiency and precision of defect detection in photovoltaic cells, setting a new benchmark in the solar industry. The system includes 100 per cent EL Testing, incorporating both pre and post-production stages with AI-assisted analysis. "This AI-powered defect detection system will transform quality control in the solar manufacturing process, ensuring greater reliability and performance for Technically Advanced Modules™ while reducing production inefficiencies," Gautam Mohanka, Director of Gautam Solar, said.



Vedanta to invest Rs 1 lakh cr in Rajasthan

Vedanta Group will invest Rs 1 lakh crore in Rajasthan over next 2-3 years to enhance production capacity of its companies in the state which will create additional 1 lakh employment, a top official of the conglomerate said on Monday. Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal in an interview to PTI also said that the group firm Hindustan Zinc is producing 1 million tonne zinc at present which the company plans to double to 2 million tonne. "It also makes 800 kilogram silver, which we are going to double to 1.6 tonne. Our all group companies will operate entirely on renewables. We will produce 3 lakh barrel oil and gas. This will lead to Rs 1 lakh crore investment," Agarwal said.

Pixxel to speed up deploying its satellite constellation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bengaluru-based space start-up Pixxel on Monday announced it has raised USD 24 million in additional funding as part of the Series B round, which would allow them to deploy more spacecraft for its unique hyperspectral satellite constellation.

With the latest round of funding, Pixxel has raised a total of USD 60 million in Series B funding and USD 95 million across all funding rounds, making it the highest-funded space-tech start-ups in the country.

"The new infusion of capital will help us launch more satellites quicker, transforming how humanity understands and acts on the challenges of our time," Awaish Ahmed, founder and CEO Pixxel said in a statement. Pixxel is preparing to launch six hyper-spectral imaging satellites -- Fireflies -- with five-metre native resolution from 550 km altitude and more than 150 wavelengths of light. The first batch of six satellites have already been shipped from Pixxel's headquarters in Bengaluru to the launch site for deployment early next year.

India, Australia review progress of FTA talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and Australia have reviewed the progress of talks on the proposed free trade agreement between the two countries, the commerce ministry said on Monday.

The two countries had implemented an interim trade pact in December 2022 and now they are negotiating to widen the scope of the pact for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

"The three-day stocktake visit for the India-Australia CECA concluded in New Delhi on December 6," the ministry said. The stocktake discussions covered several critical areas of the agreement, including trade in goods, services, mobility, agri-tech cooperation, and more.

"The discussions also centered on market access modalities that align with India's food security objectives," it said. Both parties evaluated the



The two countries had implemented an interim trade pact in December 2022 and now they are negotiating to widen the scope of the pact for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)

progress made so far and outlined a path forward for the early conclusion of the CECA.

The Indian delegation was headed by Additional Secretary and Chief Negotiator, Department of

Commerce, Rajesh Agrawal, and the Australian delegation was headed by First Assistant Secretary and Chief Negotiator, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ravi Kewalram.

Tata Motors, Kia India to hike vehicle prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors and Kia India on Monday announced plans to hike vehicle prices from January to offset the impact of rising input costs.

Tata Motors said it will hike the price of its passenger vehicle portfolio, including electric vehicles, by up to 3 per cent from January next year.

The price hike is being undertaken to partially offset the rise in input costs and inflation, the Mumbai-based auto major said in a statement.

"Effective January 2025, the price increase will vary depending on model and variant," it added.

Tata Motors sells a range of passenger vehicle models ranging from Tiago hatchback to SUVs Harrier and Safari.



Kia India, which sells models like Seltos and Sonet, said it will increase prices of its entire model range by 2 per cent from January.

The price hike, effective from January 1, 2025, is primarily due to rising commodity prices and escalating supply chain-related costs, the auto maker said in a statement.

Kia India Senior Vice President -- Sales and Marketing -- Hardeep Singh Brar said the company is committed to delivering technologically advanced vehicles of the highest quality to customers.

"However, due to the persistent rise in commodity prices, unfavourable exchange rates, and increased input costs, a necessary price adjustment has become unavoidable," he added.

Gold declines Rs 190 to Rs 78,960/10g

SILVER CLIMBS RS 350

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined Rs 190 to Rs 78,960 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity settled at Rs 79,150 per 10 grams on Friday.

However, silver climbed Rs 350 to Rs 93,850 per kg on Monday. The metal had ended at Rs 93,500 per kg in the previous session.

Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 190 to Rs 78,560 per 10 grams. On Friday, the yellow metal closed at Rs 78,750 per 10 grams.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for February delivery jumped Rs 410 or 0.54 per cent to Rs 77,029 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices surged on MCX, as geopolitical turmoil reignited safe-haven demand. Rebel forces ousted Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, with reports of Israeli involve-



ment in Syrian territory and Turkey-backed rebel activity escalating tensions.

"Meanwhile, South Korea's leadership crisis, involving President Yoon Suk Yeol's criminal investigation and impeachment survival, added to global uncertainty," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Silver contracts for March delivery advanced Rs 738 or 0.8 per cent to Rs 93,186 per kg on the bourse.

Hiring in IT sector to witness 15-20 growth in jobs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The IT sector, which is on the path of recovery, is expected to witness 15-20 per cent growth in job opportunities across various industries in 2025, talent solutions company NLB Services said on Monday.

The IT industry has gained back momentum in H2 2024 and is gearing up for a promising 2025 on multiple fronts, said NLB Services.

In the coming year, fresher hiring in the Indian IT sector is poised for significant growth, with an anticipated increase of 15-20 per cent in job opportunities across various industries, it added.

At the same time, the demand for highly specialised tech roles, including artificial intelligence, machine learning (ML), data analytics, and cloud technologies, is expected to surge by 30-35 per cent, driven by the increasing reliance on emerging technologies, it said.

This surge in demand is not limited to hiring but extends to a strategic focus on tech upskilling, with companies

investing heavily in training initiatives to equip their workforce with the necessary skills to meet the evolving technological landscape, the company noted.

NLB Services' analysis is based on the brand's view of the macro ecosystem, industry trends, and demand.

Further, the company stated that campus hiring remains the core focus for larger companies that are looking to hire aggressively for the second half of 2024-25.

Since the 2021-22, global economic slowdown, clients have curtailed their discretionary spending due to on-demand hiring patterns and global macroeconomic challenges, this has impacted the project pipeline however, it is expected to stabilise in 2025, thus promising hopes for freshers, it said.

IT fresher hiring in 2025, is projected to increase with high demand for roles in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), data analytics, Python, cloud technologies, and cybersecurity.

LIC aims to enrol 1 lakh Bima Sakhi in 12 months

PNS ■ PANIPAT

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation on Monday said it is targeting to enrol 1 lakh Bima Sakhi in the next 12 months as part of its women empowerment drive.

Speaking about the scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here, LIC MD and CEO Siddharth Mohanty said the insurer will spend up to Rs 840 crore towards stipend in the enrolment done.

"Bima Sakhi is expected to garner new business of five times of our spending. So we are hoping that they can bring Rs 4,000 crore new business in the first year," he said. The stipend for the first year would be Rs 7,000 per month, Rs 6,000 per month next year and Rs 5,000 per month in the third year. Mohanty said that Bima Sakhi will help in taking LIC to under-penetrated areas. Going forward, there is a plan of appointing one Bima Sakhi in every Gram Panchayat.

Sensex falls 200 pts due to selling in FMCG, PSU bank shares

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday, dragged down by selling in blue-chip stocks Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank amid mixed global trends.

After oscillating between highs and lows during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 200.66 points or 0.25 per cent to settle at 81,508.46. During the day, it moved between a high of 81,783.28 and a low of 81,411.55.

The NSE Nifty dropped 58.80 points or 0.24 per cent to close at 24,619.

From the 30-share pack, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors, Axis Bank, Nestle India, Asian Paints, ITC, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, IndusInd Bank and State Bank of India were among the laggards.

Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel,



JSW Steel, HDFC Bank, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel and PowerGrid were among the gainers.

"Markets witnessed a range-bound session and mostly languished in negative territory due to lack of investors' enthusiasm after last week's rally," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.46 per cent and midcap index gained 0.32 per cent.

CEAT shares rally over 10 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of tyre maker CEAT rallied over 10 per cent on Monday after the RPG Group firm entered into a definitive agreement with Michelin to acquire Camso brand's Off-highway Tyres and tracks business for about Rs 1,905 crore. On the BSE, the stock of the company soared 10.10 per cent to finish at Rs 3,404.45 apiece. On the NSE, it climbed 7.54 per cent to end at Rs 3,329 per piece. In the intraday trade, CEAT's shares advanced 16 per cent to hit a 52-week high of Rs 3,581.45 and Rs 3,578.80, on the BSE and NSE, respectively. In terms of volume, 55.55 lakh equity shares of CEAT were traded on the National Stock Exchange.

Retail inflation for farm, rural workers eases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers eased to 5.96 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, in October from 6.36 per cent and 6.39 per cent in September.

The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) registered an increase of 11 points and 10 points, respectively, in October 2024, reaching levels of 1,315 and 1,326, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the CPI-AL and CPI-RL were at 1,304 points and 1,316 points, respectively, in September 2024.

"The year-on-year inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL for October 2024 were recorded at 5.96% and 6.0%."

Sebi warns investors against trading in unlisted securities



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday warned investors against conducting transactions in securities of unlisted public limited companies on unauthorised electronic platforms and websites.

The markets watchdog highlighted that such activities violate the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956, and the SEBI Act, 1992, both aimed at safeguarding the interests of investors in the securities market. In its statement, Sebi noted that some electronic platforms are facilitating the trading of unlisted securities without proper authorisation.

Cautioning investors, the regulator asked them "not to

conduct any transactions on such electronic platforms or share any sensitive personal details on the same as these platforms are neither authorised nor recognised by Sebi".

This cautionary statement came following a similar warnings from the regulator regarding unauthorised virtual trading platforms, paper trading, fantasy games, and platforms offering unlisted debt securities. In the latest release, Sebi emphasised that only recognised stock exchanges are authorised to provide platforms for fundraising and trading securities of listed or "to-be-listed" companies.

The list of Sebi-recognised stock exchanges is available on the regulator's official website.

Air India places order to purchase 100 more Airbus aircraft

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private carrier Air India on Monday announced placing an order to purchase 100 more Airbus aircraft, comprising 10 wide-body A350 and 90 narrow-body A320 family aircraft including A321neo.

These 100 new aircraft are in addition to the orders of 470 aircraft that Air India had placed with Airbus and Boeing last year, Air India said in a statement.

The airline also announced it has tied up with Airbus for component and maintenance support for its A350 fleet.

The latest order takes the total number of aircraft that Air India

ordered with Airbus from 250 to 350.

The order placed in 2023 for 250 planes comprised 40 A350 and 210 A320 family aircraft.

Air India in February 2023 announced that it would place an order for 470 aircraft, with an additional 370 options.

This was confirmed in June 2023, with the order comprising 40 Airbus A350s, 20 Boeing 787s and 10 Boeing 777-9s wide-body aircraft, as well as 210 Airbus A320/321 Neos and 190 Boeing 737 MAX single-aisle aircraft.

However, in December last year, the airline rejigged this order with 140 neo planes and 70 A320neo, as



against the earlier order of 140 A320neo and 70 A321 neo aircraft.

Besides, it also reshuffled its A350 order with 20 A350-900s and 20 A350-1000s as against six A350-900 and 34 A350-1000s ordered in February 2023.

"With India's passenger growth outpacing the rest of the world, its significantly improving infrastructure and an aspirational young population increasingly going global, we see a clear case for Air India to expand its future fleet beyond the firm orders of the 470 aircraft placed last year," said Natarajan Chandra sekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons and Air India.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G LIMITED
E-Procurement/Open Tender Paper Notification RRZ - 07/2024-25
Tenders are invited from eligible contractors for tenders with Specification No. 32/24-25 (Reserved for ST) for extension of HT supply to Executive Engineer, Electrical, HMDA at Saroomagar Circle of CE/Op/RR Zone. For further details regarding detailed notification, specification and digital certificate please visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Chief Engineer, Operation, Rang Reddy Zone, KPHE Colony, Hyderabad
R.O. No.: 7693/PNDVHT/2024-25, Dt: 09-12-2024



Ankhee Ghosh



Telangana Handloom Textiles and Endowment Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramaiyar inaugurated the Indian Silk Gallery exhibition at Sathya Sai Nigamagam in Srinagar Colony, showcasing the finest handloom products from across the country. The exhibition, which will run until December 15, features 80 stalls displaying rare sarees and aims to promote the development of Telangana handloom weavers by providing them with a platform to market their products at the national and international levels.





The Touch of India's Best Silk Sarees







of Silk & Trust India's Best SILK GALLERY Hyderabad





INDIAN SILK GALLERY Presenting Hyderabad Sarees Utsav

PHOTOS BY- SV CHARY

PARTY



Bhavna and Neetika



Lavina Sachdev and Vishal Sachdev



Mamta Jain and Diksha



Sonia



Manju Agarwal





Renowned interior designer Lavina Sachdev celebrated her 40th birthday in style, surrounded by loved ones at an intimate gathering. The joyous occasion was marked by vibrant decorations, a custom cake, and a night filled with laughter.



Taruni mesmerised Hyderabad with an exclusive fashion show at Nexus, showcasing its finest collections of Indian ethnic wear. The event took guests on a visual journey through the rich and vibrant world of traditional Indian clothing, featuring intricate lehengas, sarees, anarkalis and festive ensembles that seamlessly blend heritage with modern elegance.











FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

1 Gigantic

6 The organs of sight

7 Cardboard box

9 Move on hands and knees

11 Hurt by a bee

12 Three times twenty

13 Yell

16 Gave out a long deep breath to show sadness or happiness

18 A sheet-like garment worn in ancient Rome

19 Think differently to someone else

DOWN

1 Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit

2 A sung musical drama

3 One time

4 Make longer by pulling

5 A place to see animals

8 A frightening dream

10 Observed

14 A smell

15 Counts up

17 Unwell

SOLUTION

S	A	F	E	S
J	O	R	N	A
D	E	M	I	N
T	A	L	I	N
S	A	D	O	P
C	O	N	S	I
U	S	O	I	E
S	A	L	O	N
G	L	A	S	S
S	T	E	U	T
E	X	P	L	A
I	N	G	I	N
D	S	I	S	T

Rajendra Prasad's shady remarks on Allu Arjun



Senior actor Rajendra Prasad has acted in numerous notable films as a lead actor over the past 48 years. During a latest event of his upcoming film, he remarked that nowadays, even a red sandalwood thief can become a hero, making an indirect reference to *Pushpa 2*. Additionally, he commented on the recent ticket price hike, which also appears to target the same film

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Senior actor Rajendra Prasad's web series, *Harikatha: Sambhavami Yuge Yuge*, is set to stream on Disney Hotstar from December 13. At a promotional event for the series, Rajendra Prasad made some remarks that indirectly targeted Allu Arjun and his film *Pushpa*.

Rajendra Prasad reflected on his 48-year career in the film industry,

saying, "It's not a joke to work in this industry for so long." He expressed his gratitude for the opportunities he has received and acknowledged that he has been fortunate to work on many good projects.

The actor emphasised that he has played the lead role in many films, including *Aa Naluguru*, *Senapathi*, *Ladies Tailor*, *Appala Appa Rao*, *Pekata Paparao* and *April 1 Vidudala*. He noted that these characters were inspired by society and his surroundings. In an indirect reference to

Pushpa, Rajendra Prasad said, "You are all seeing, recently a red sandalwood thief has become a hero." He added, "But I am lucky that I was a different kind of hero."

Rajendra Prasad also commented on the recent ticket price hike, which is believed to be related to *Pushpa 2*. He said, "You don't need to pay Rs 1000 to watch this web series; you can watch it at your home."

The senior actor acknowledged that the film industry is undergoing a significant change, with the rise of

digital platforms. "Now, the theater is coming to every home," he said. "The content should be strong, and we are presenting such strong content in this *Harikatha*."

Rajendra Prasad has acted with five generations of actors throughout his 48-year-long career. He listed some of the notable actors he has worked with, including NTR, ANR, Krishna, Sobhan Babu, Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Jr NTR and Allu Arjun.

The actor praised the director

Maggie for coming up with the web series *Harikatha*. He noted that some scenes in the series have drawn comparisons to late NTR's mythological roles.

Rajendra Prasad plays the role of Rangachari in *Harikatha*, a character who tells Harikathas and chants the name of Hari throughout his life. The web series is produced by Peoples Media Factory and features a talented cast, including Sriram Divi, Pujitha Ponnada and Mounika Reddy.

ANKITH KOYYA TAKES LEAD IN 14 DAYS GIRLFRIEND INTLO

Ankith Koyya, an upcoming actor, has already proven himself as a successful actor with films like *Aay* and *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam*. He is now set to play the lead role in the upcoming film *14 Days Girlfriend Intlo*, which is slated for release soon. Shriya Kontham stars as the female lead, while Sriharsha directs the film.

A promotional video from the film was released on Monday at a function in Hyderabad. The film is a romantic comedy, and Ankith is confident that the audience will enjoy it. "We hope the audience will enjoy this film as much as they enjoyed the *Amrutham* serial. Sometimes, we find humour in the struggles of others," said Ankith. Talking about the story, Ankith revealed that it revolves around his character, Harsha, who gets locked in his girlfriend's house for fourteen days. "The film explores what happens during those fourteen days. This is the main plot and it will keep you laughing. I particularly liked the unique angle of Harsha's character," said Ankith.

The actor praised his co-star and female lead Shriya, saying she gave an outstanding performance. "I'm confident her work will impress everyone," he said. Ankith added that he is eagerly waiting for the release of this film. "It's been worth the wait. We've come this far thanks to Krish Garu. Vennela Kishore garu's track has been fantastic, and the film will soon hit theatres. I'm sure it will impress the audience," said Ankith. The film is produced by Satya Komal.



Mega pressure on Ram Charan's Game Changer

Allu Arjun's *Pushpa 2* has shattered records on its first day, reaching the Rs 500 crore club in just two days. Interestingly, many Mega fans have been vocal about their opposition to Allu Arjun, with some even boycotting the film. This backlash may have contributed to the film's relatively low premiere show numbers. However, despite this, *Pushpa 2* performed exceptionally well, especially in the Hindi belt, creating history on its first day. The success of *Pushpa 2*

has now put pressure on Ram Charan, son of Mega Star Chiranjeevi. His upcoming film *Game Changer*, directed by Shankar and produced by Dil Raju, is scheduled to release on January 10, 2025, coinciding with the Sankranti holidays. Mega fans and Pawan Kalyan supporters are reportedly circulating messages on social media, urging fans to work towards achieving bigger collections on the first day. According to sources, the target is to collect at least Rs 200 crore on the first day. The film's release has

become a highly anticipated event, with many in the industry eagerly waiting to see how *Game Changer* will perform. However, one concern is that director Shankar's previous film, *Bharatheeyudu 2*, was a major flop, leading some to question whether he has lost his touch.

To generate buzz and attract overseas audiences, the makers are organising a grand event in the USA. Additional events are planned in both Telugu states and other regions to promote the film and woo audiences.

Siddhu donates ₹15 lakh to CMRF

Siddhu Jonnalagadda is on a roll, with the success of *DJ Tillu* and its sequel *Tillu Square*, which catapulted him into the prestigious Rs 100 crore club. This achievement is a remarkable feat, considering many actors are still striving to reach this milestone.

Siddhu, once again made headlines for his philanthropic efforts. He met with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and donated Rs 15 lakh to the Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF). This contribution is part of his earlier pledge to provide financial aid to flood victims in both Telugu states.

When devastating floods hit Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Siddhu announced a total donation of Rs 30 lakhs, with Rs 15 lakh each going to the CM Relief Funds of both states.

He fulfilled this promise by personally handing over the cheque to CM Revanth Reddy, accompanied by his father Sai Kumar and producer Kasi Konda. Siddhu's generosity is indeed commendable, and he is not alone in his efforts.

Other Tollywood celebrities, such as Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Jr NTR, and Vishwak Sen, have also made significant donations to support flood relief efforts.



Jani Master vows to fight back after removal from association



Jani Master, the former president of the Telugu Film TV Dancers and Dance Directors Association, has been removed from his position and had his membership terminated. This decision was made after Joseph Prakash was elected as the new president, marking his fifth time in the role.

According to reports, Jani Master's removal was due to the ongoing POCISO case against him and his alleged aggressive behaviour. However, Jani Master has denied these allegations, taking to social media to clarify his position.

In a video statement, Jani Master said, "Rumours are circulating in the media that I have been permanently expelled from the union

citing unsubstantiated allegations. Don't believe these rumours."

He emphasised that he is still the president of the association, as his term has not yet expired. "No one has the right to take their own decisions and positions by holding elections in an unethical manner," Jani Master said. "I am going to proceed legally against those responsible." On a separate note, Jani Master expressed his excitement about *Game Changer*, which he has choreographed. "A good song is coming from *GameChanger* in my choreography and you all will definitely like it," he said.

Vikram-starrer Veera Dheera Sooran Part 2 teaser is out now

Chiyaan Vikram, known for his versatile roles, joined forces with acclaimed director S.U. Arun Kumar of *Chithitha* (Chinna in Telugu) fame, for the highly anticipated film *Veera Dheera Sooran Part 2*. Young and passionate producer Riya Shibu is producing this prestigious project under the H.R. Pictures banner. Earlier, she produced films like *Mumbaikar*, *Mura and Thugs*, and distributed blockbusters such as *RRR* and *Vikram*. The film's visual glimpse which was released earlier this year garnered immense reception from the audience and amassed over 14 million views on YouTube. Now, the makers unveiled the stunning teaser of the film, leaving audiences even more excited.

The teaser initially presents Vikram as a loving father and husband but with a dark, hidden side. His character is part of a dangerous gangster network and is driven by a mysterious mission. As someone who conceals



his true identity for a greater cause, Vikram's character arc has raised expectations and fueled curiosity for the film.

The shooting of *Veera Dheera Sooran Part 2* has been completed and post-production work is currently in full swing. The film features an impressive ensemble cast, including the talented SJ Suryah, acclaimed actress Dushara Vijayan and popular Malayalam actor Sooraj Venjaramoodu.

The gripping musical score is

composed by GV Prakash Kumar. While Theni Easwar handles the cinematography, GK Prasanna takes charge of editing. The art direction is done by C. S. Balachander. *Veera Dheera Sooran Part 2* will be released in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi in January 2025 and promises to be a thrilling cinematic experience.



Despite her great successes, Rashmika remains as humble as ever: VD

Rashmika Mandanna is basking in the glory of her latest success, *Pushpa 2*, where she played the iconic character of Srivalli. Her performance and dancing skills have earned her widespread recognition at the national level.

Rashmika is now set to play the female lead in the upcoming film *The Girlfriend*, opposite Deekshith Shetty. Directed by Rahul Ravindran, the movie tells a beautiful love story. The film is produced by Dheeraj Mogilineni and Vidya Koppineedi.

On Monday, actor Vijay Deverakonda unveiled the teaser of *The Girlfriend*. Sharing his thoughts on the teaser, Vijay Deverakonda wrote on his social media page, "Every visual in the teaser of *The Girlfriend* is impressive. I'm eagerly waiting to watch this movie. I met Rashmika on set 8 years ago, and despite her many great successes, she remains as humble as ever. *The Girlfriend* has given her more responsibility as an actress and I believe she will take on that responsibility successfully. I'm confident that director Rahul will tell a beautiful story with this film that will touch the hearts of every audience. I wish the entire team of *The Girlfriend* all the best."

The teaser of *The Girlfriend* begins with Rashmika's character entering a college hostel. It introduces the characters of Deekshith Shetty and Rashmika, showcasing the beautiful relationship between them. The emotional journey of the lead pair during their time in college is depicted with heartfelt moments, accompanied by Vijay Deverakonda's captivating voice over.

Kapil Dev backs Rohit, says captain doesn't need to prove himself

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Let's not doubt Rohit Sharma's ability to bounce back, said the legendary Kapil Dev, who also felt that under-fire India skipper doesn't need to prove himself at this stage of his career. Rohit, who managed scores of 3 and 6 in the the Adelaide pink-ball Test after dropping down the batting order, is being criticized by fans and former players for being subdued. India lost the game by 10 wickets in just two and a half days. "He doesn't have to prove himself. He has done this for many, many years, so let's not doubt somebody. I won't doubt him. I hope his form comes back, that's important," Kapil said during the launch of the Vishwa Samudra Open, a

PGTI event set to begin at the Delhi Golf Club on Tuesday. Rohit had missed the opening Test due to the birth of his second child. Despite scoring most of his runs as an opener, the 37-year-old dropped down to the number six position, offering the top spot to KL Rahul, who played a pivotal role in the Perth win. "With one or two performances, if you doubt someone's captaincy, I mean, just six months back when he won the T20 World Cup, you wouldn't have asked me this question. Let it go, knowing his ability and talent, he will come back. They will come back strongly." Asked if it was a mistake to include young Harshit Rana in the second Test, Kapil said: "I am a nobody. How can I judge? There are people



up there who have the responsibility to decide who should be in the team." "We shouldn't talk. My former colleagues are sitting

there, and I hope they will do a good job." In Rohit's absence, vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah had led India to a 295-run in



Perth. Asked if Bumrah is shaping up well to take over the reins from Rohit, Kapil said: "I think it is too early to talk

about that. With one performance, you can't say he is the best, and with one bad performance, you can't say he doesn't deserve it.

"Let a player play a lot of cricket, take on a lot of captaincy. Ups and downs will come, and then you judge a person by how he reacts in difficult times, not in good times. In good times, we don't have to judge. When he is down and out. Virat Kohli, who also looked subdued coming into the five-Test series in Australia, managed to hit his first hundred in 18 months in Perth. However, the star batter failed in the second Test with scores of 7 and 11 in his two innings. "Like Virat Kohli, he is one of the best cricketers in our country. If you put the four top batsmen, he will be there. If he is going through a rough time, it is only up to him how fast he can bounce back," Kapil said. Kampli needs to go back to rehab. Former India batter Vinod

Kampli has been struggling with alcohol-related and other health issues. He appeared frail during a recent public event held in memory of legendary coach Ramakant Achrekar. He was seen refusing to let go of his childhood friend Sachin Tendulkar. Kapil expressed sadness over Kampli's condition, emphasising the need for self-help alongside external support. "We should all try to support him. But more than us, he has to support himself. We can't look after anybody if that person can't look after himself," Kapil said. "All the cricketers feel very sad about what we have seen. I wish his closest friends can try to get him some help, to look after himself, to go back to rehab. People do get this illness, but you have to get back to rehab."



Siraj fined, Head also sanctioned by ICC for Adelaide confrontation

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj was fined 20 per cent of his match fee, while Australian batter Travis Head was also "sanctioned" by the ICC for indulging in a heated exchange of words during the just-concluded day-night Test here. Siraj and Head were held guilty of breaching the world body's code of conduct following a disciplinary hearing on Monday. "Siraj has been penalised 20 per cent of his match fee after being found guilty of breaching article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel," the ICC said in a statement. The cited rule relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon dismissal." The ICC said Head too was "sanctioned" for breaching Article 2.13 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. However, he escaped a fine for breaching the rule that relates to the "abuse of a player, player support personnel, umpire or match referee during an international match." Siraj and Head also received one demerit point each on their disciplinary records, marking their first offence in the last 24 months. "Both admitted their offences and accepted the sanctions

proposed by Match Referee Ranjan Madugalle," the ICC said. Head and Siraj had a brief showdown on day two of the match that Australia won by 10 wickets on Sunday. Head had struck a splendid 141-ball knock of 140 before being castled by Siraj, who went on to give him an aggressive send-off following an exchange of words. The Indian endured boos from the Adelaide crowd following the confrontation. Head later claimed that he had merely said "well bowled" to Siraj and that he was disappointed at how the visiting bowler had responded. Siraj disputed that claim, asserting that Head had abused him. "I only celebrated and he abused me and you saw that on TV too. I only celebrated at the start, I didn't say anything to him," Siraj told broadcaster 'Star Sports'. "What he said in the press conference wasn't right, it's a lie that he only said 'well bowled' to me. It's there for everyone to see that that's not what he said to me." Head also acknowledged his role in the incident. "There was no confrontation leading up to him and I felt like it was probably, yeah, a little bit far at the time, and that's why I am disappointed in the reaction that I gave back," he said in a post-play press conference. The two teams are tied 1-1 in the five-match series.

World Chess Championship: Gukesh loses to Ding Liren in 12th game

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian challenger D Gukesh lost the 12th game against defending champion Ding Liren of China to allow his opponent bounce back and level the World Chess Championship match here on Monday. The 18-year-old Gukesh was ahead by one point after he notched his second win of the match on Sunday, which came after seven consecutive draws, but Liren's win on Monday brought the things on an even keel. The two players are now tied at 6 points each with just two games left in the 14-round classical time control format, still shy of 1.5 points in order to win the title. The remaining two games will be played on Wednesday and Thursday, after rest day on Tuesday. Irrespective of what happens in the next game on Wednesday, the match will go the distance (14 games) and more likely there will be tiebreaker - where games are of shorter duration - to determine the winner. The 32-year-old Liren had won the opening game before Gukesh emerged victorious in



the third game. The second, and the fourth to 10th games were drawn. In what was the first victory for Liren with his white pieces, Gukesh's preparation did not come as good as the other 11 games that he played here. The start was an English opening by the Chinese and much to the surprise of the fans, Gukesh went for a position that led to a Benoni defense with colours reversed. Gukesh started to miss out creating counter play in the middle game as white played just normal developing moves. By the 15th move, though less on time on the

clock, white had a small advantage as a central breakthrough looked inevitable, giving Liren the space advantage. Gukesh's 17th move did not help his cause as white was able to get the desired break in the centre. Five moves later, another error by Gukesh gave Liren a huge advantage. Liren's central pawn made a foray to the sixth rank in what was a near-decisive blow on the 27th move. Gukesh had to part with a couple of pawns. Adding to Gukesh's woes was an imminent rook invasion. The game ended through a fine tactic by Liren who sacrificed a rook to force

matters. The game ended in 39 moves. For Gukesh, much would depend on how he does in his last remaining white game after the final rest day on Tuesday. Liren has proved again that he is a tough nut to crack and his second victory in the match was pretty much one-sided compared to many other games in the match that had chances for both sides. In the previous world championship match against Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, Liren had to come back from behind as many as three times before being crowned the world champion. The Moves: 1.C4 e6 2.G3 d5 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nf3 d4 5.0-0 Nc6 6.E3 Be7 7.D3 dxe3 8.Bxe3 e5 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Re1 h6 11.A3 a5 12.H3 Be6 13.Kh2 Rb8 14.Qc2 Re8 15.Nb5 Bf5 16.Rad1 Nd7 17.Qd2 Bg6 18.D4 e4 19.Ng1 Nb6 20.Qc3 Bf6 21.Qc2 a4 22.Ne2 Bg5 23.Nf4 Bxf4 24.Bxf4 Rc8 25.Qc3 Nb8 26.D5 Qd7 27.D6 c5 28.Nc7 Rf8 29.Bxe4 Nc6 30.Bg2 Rcd8 31.Nd5 Nxd5 32.Cxd5 Nb8 33.Qxc5 Rc8 34.Qd4 Na6 35.Re7 Qb5 36.D7 Rc4 37.Qe3 Rc2 38.Bd6 f6 39.Rxg7+ Black resigned.

South Africa go on top in WTC points table

PTI ■ DUBAI

South Africa on Monday replaced Australia at the top of the ICC World Test Championship table after their massive 109-run over Sri Lanka while India are now in the third place following their defeat in the Adelaide Test. South Africa now have 63.33 percentage points after 10 matches in the cycle and they are followed by Australia (60.71 PTC). India were leading the WTC table, heading into the Adelaide Test after their massive win in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy opener in Perth. India had 61.11 points heading into the pink ball Test in Adelaide which they



lost inside three days and they now stand third with 57.29 percentage points. The best possible way for India to make a third appearance in the WTC final next year would be to win

each of the three remaining Tests in Australia. Australia had 57.69 percentage points before the Adelaide Test which improved to 60.71 after their win.

But even as they grabbed the top spot with the contest ending on Sunday, Australia remained table-toppers only for one day as the Proteas surged ahead with their win in the second Test at St George's Park in Gqeberha. With the Border-Gavaskar series now tied at 1-1, Australia are in a strong position for a top-two finish. They will also tour Sri Lanka next year for an additional two Tests, meaning they could theoretically draw 2-2 with India and stay in contention for a place in the final. Both England and New Zealand have been penalised with three WTC points each for slow over-rate in the Christchurch Test, according to the ICC.



India gets tricky group in 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers final round

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India was on Sunday drawn in a tricky group along with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Singapore for the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers final round matches, beginning March 25 next year. The draw, which saw 24 teams divided into six groups of four, was held at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Only the six group winners will qualify for the main tournament to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2027 and join the 18 teams who have already booked their tickets after the second round of qualifying. The final round will be contested over six match days in a home-and-away format between March 25, 2025 and March 31, 2026. Aiming to qualify for the third successive time, India will begin its Group C campaign at home against Bangladesh. India is the highest-ranked team in the group at 127, followed by Hong Kong (156), Singapore (161) and Bangladesh (185). But, they won't be easy opponents. India has faced all three opponents in the recent past.

The Blue Tigers last faced Bangladesh (1-1 draw) in the 2021 SAFF Championship, Hong Kong (India won 4-0) in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Kolkata in June 2022, and Singapore (1-1 draw) in the Hung Thinh Friendly Tournament in Vietnam in September 2022. After the draw, India head coach Manolo Marquez said, "We are a Pot 1 team and we need to show why we are the favourites to qualify. There are not too many differences between groups. Every group is difficult. "Hong Kong has improved a lot with naturalised players and with their coach Ashley Westwood. "We will play against Bangladesh first in March, who have been our regular opponents in the SAFF Championship. We know the calendar. We have six games and we need to top the group and qualify for the Asian Cup." India's fixtures: March 25, 2025: India vs Bangladesh (home) June 10, 2025: Hong Kong vs India (away) October 9, 2025: India vs Singapore (home) October 14, 2025: Singapore vs India (away) November 18, 2025: Bangladesh vs India (away)

Mohammed Siraj is a good character, he gets the crowd up like Kohli: Josh Hazlewood

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Mohammed Siraj's hot temper has become a topic of discussion but Australian quick Josh Hazlewood says the Indian pacer is a "good character" who fires up the crowd and is passionate about the game like Indian superstar Virat Kohli. Siraj was involved in two incidents where his temper flared during the pink-ball Test that India lost by 10 wickets. In Australia's first innings, Siraj threw the ball wide off the stumps near Marnus Labuschagne after the Australian batter pulled away from his stance, forcing the bowler to halt his run-up. This occurred when a man holding a tower of beer cups walked into Labuschagne's line of sight. The next day, Siraj was involved in a verbal altercation with Travis Head soon after cleaning him up, drawing the ire of the Adelaide crowd which booed him. "He's just a good character and it's

good to see sometimes," said Hazlewood, who shared the dressing room with both Siraj and Kohli during his time at the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL. "I really enjoyed my time at RCB with Siraj. He's probably the leader of the attack there, to a degree. He's another one who's a bit like Virat, very passionate, goes with the flow of the game, gets the crowd up. He has bowled serious spells in the IPL in the last few years," he added. Hazlewood, who missed the second Test due to a side strain, had dismissed Kohli for 5 in the first innings in the opening Test at Perth. It was the fourth time the Australian quick dismissed Kohli in red-ball cricket. "It just comes down to who executes well on the day, whether he leaves you well until the ball gets soft or someone else comes on the balls and doesn't ball quite well enough," he said. "There's a lot of match-ups like that throughout international cricket. You know, we've played each other



so much. If you've been around for 10 years, you pretty much know each other inside out." Hazlewood said the current crop of batters are much more eager to go after the ball as compared to the players who wielded the willow 10 years ago. "There are different players in different teams there are some players you really need to be patient with. There are others who come after you, so you don't have to be patient but they are dangerous because they can score. "I don't think betters are probably as patient as they were 10 years ago. They like to feel the ball and we've seen the way England play and even players in the Indian team with (Rishabh) Pant and (Nitish) Reddy and guys like that." India suffered a 10-wicket loss in the pink ball Test as Australia levelled the five match series 1-1 following their 295-run loss in the opener. The two sides now head to Brisbane for the third match, starting December 14. Australia have lost the last two

matches in the Gabba and will look to get back to winning ways at the venue, where they have done well, traditionally. The last time they played at the Gabba, pacer Shamar Joseph ripped through Australia to fashion West Indies 8-run win in the day night fixture. "We always play pretty well in Brisbane (but) the last Test was obviously pink-ball," Hazlewood said. "The pink-ball gets quite soft in Brisbane quite early on, with the wicket being quite hard, it doesn't have that that grass that we see here at Adelaide. "So we're back to the red-ball there, which suits us. We obviously haven't won recently up there, but it's a place we like to play as it suits our guys. "It's an experienced team, so we've all been there a lot of times. It's probably more just the time difference - the going from day-night and sleeping in - to your sleeping patterns, getting that adjusted and getting back on track."

