



There is a massive transformation underway across India, and Telangana sits at the centre of it. As the country accelerates its next wave of economic expansion, the state is emerging as a decisive force, a centre of investment and innovation. With a government focused on clarity, reform and competitiveness, Telangana is reshaping its policies, infrastructure and investment landscape, scaling into the most compelling destination.

A STATE OF GREAT GOVERNANCE

With a clear path to becoming a \$3-trillion economy by 2047, the government's approach prioritises ease of doing business, transparent approvals, and a regulatory framework aligned with global expectations. Policy direction now focuses on strengthening industrial land frameworks, improving investor facilitation, and building long-term competitiveness across high-growth sectors.

INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGNED FOR THE FUTURE

Hyderabad, the city built for elasticity. Scaling rapidly, and sustainably. A 3-tier growth vision drives it forward.

CURE

(The Core Urban Region Economy), between the city and the ORR, anchored by high-tech services and advanced urban systems

PURE

(The Peri-Urban Region Economy), a belt between the ORR and RRR, for manufacturing, industries and MSMEs

RARE

(Rural Agri Region Economy), beyond the RRR, focused on smart agriculture, forestry, food systems and handlooms



A major driver within this plan is the Future City. A 30,000-acre urban and enterprise hub for global businesses, research institutes, innovation clusters and sustainable living spaces. Combined with rail, road and logistics expansion, the state is building the backbone required for multi-sectoral growth.

A MATURE INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

Telangana's industrial ecosystem spans pharma, life sciences, aerospace, defence, IT/IeS, AI, food processing, and more. A reflection of the confidence global firms place in the state's direction. Pharma City, upcoming AI and Innovation Hubs, and support for GCCs and start-ups, are shaping Telangana into a competitive global investment hub built on talent, infrastructure and long-term planning.



8 & 9 DECEMBER, 2025
BHARAT FUTURE CITY
HYDERABAD
TELANGANARISING2047.ORG



THE RISE HAS BEGUN. THIS WAS DAY ONE.



We want to become \$1 trillion economy by 2034, and \$3 trillion economy by 2047. We comprise around 2.9% of India's population, but contribute around 5% of the national GDP. By 2047, I want to contribute 10% of India's GDP. The vision may look hard but we can do it. Today, I am more confident than yesterday. Yesterday was a dream, a plan. Today, all of you have joined us. Telangana Rising is unstoppable. Come, join the rise.

A. REVANTH REDDY
CM, TELANGANA

FOR TELANGANA,
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

VISION 2047 TAKES THE NEXT LEAP FORWARD.

The government's 8-point plan outlines a transformation grounded in growth and inclusion.

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|---|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 3-zone state | Core Urban Region Economy (CURE), Hyderabad, for high-tech hubs; Peri-Urban Region Economy (PURE), between the ORR and RRR, for MSMEs and industry; Rural Agri Region Economy (RARE), beyond the RRR, for smart agriculture, forests and handlooms. |
| 2 | \$3 trillion economy | 5x growth driving 10% of national GDP through innovation, entrepreneurship, manufacturing, tourism, and global competitiveness. |
| 3 | Investment magnet | Strong infrastructure, progressive policy, talent and logistics, enabling innovation and high-growth clusters. |
| 4 | Youth development and empowerment | Integrate education with skill development, to equip them for tech, industry and advanced manufacturing, for global opportunities, and start-ups. |
| 5 | Women-led development and social inclusion | Create 1 crore women millionaires, through life-cycle support of policies and entrepreneurship. |
| 6 | Farmer empowerment | Double incomes, promote crop diversification, agri-tech, irrigation, FPOs, market access. |
| 7 | Healthcare and human development | Strengthen primary and preventive healthcare, digital health, biobanks, skilled workers, and affordable and elderly care. |
| 8 | Net-zero development target | Focus on renewables, green infrastructure, circular economy, nature-based solutions. |

KEY ENABLERS

Tech & Innovation • Efficient Financing • Digital Governance

As India accelerates its growth trajectory, Telangana is aligning its governance, infrastructure and economic vision to match the moment. For investors and enterprises seeking clarity, stability, and opportunity, the state offers a landscape built for the future. A path that's never been more promising, and this is the moment to be a part of it. Join the rise.

Adani group to set up 48-MW Data Centre with ₹2500 cr outlay

PNS ■ Hyderabad

The Adani Group is setting up a 48-megawatt cutting-edge AI green data centre in Telangana at an outlay of Rs 2,500 crores, said Karan Adani, Managing Director of Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd on Monday.

Addressing the inaugural session of Telangana Rising Global Summit, he said the conglomerate has invested Rs 10,000 crore so far in infrastructure and manufacturing sectors, among others in Telangana.

In the area of digital infrastructure, the Adani group is setting up a 48-megawatt green data centre in Telangana with an investment of Rs 2,500 crores. This facility will be at the forefront of cutting-edge AI, cloud technology, and high-performance computing, and will play a crucial role in meeting the needs of rapidly digitising India. In the last few years, Telangana



In total, the group has so far invested nearly Rs 10,000 crores in the last three years in building state infrastructure and manufacturing facilities, and has contributed to employment generation of more than 7,000 people

has witnessed tremendous growth in capital infrastructure and logistics infrastructure. The group has played a key role in developing roads and making logistics more efficient, and positioning the state as a logistics gateway.

"In total, the group has so far invested nearly Rs 10,000 crores in the last three years in building state infrastructure and manufacturing facilities, and has contributed to employment generation of more than 7,000 people," he said.

According to Adani, with the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Adani Group has developed a leading defence and aerospace park in Hyderabad that manufactures UAVs, supplying products to both the Indian armed forces and the global market. The facility employs over 1,500 youth. With a total

investment of Rs 4,000 crores in road infrastructure, the Adani group has built over 100 km of highways connecting key districts such as Mancherial, Suryapet, Kodad, and Khammam.

Will invest ₹1L cr in Telangana

Announces Trump Media director

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Eric Swider, Director of Trump Media and Technology Group Corp, on Monday said the firms he represents will be investing Rs 1 lakh crore in Telangana's upcoming "Bharat Future City" near here, over the next 10 years. Addressing the inaugural session of Telangana Rising Global Summit, Swider said it would be blind not to see that the technology capitalists around the world are coming from India, and the country is on the rise.

"I would like the Honourable Chief Minister (A Revanth Reddy) to know that over the next 10 years, I intend to deploy through our organisations, up to Rs 1 lakh crore into the Future City and into the areas of development here, and I'm

very, very grateful for that opportunity," he said. Swider currently serves as the CEO and board member for Renatus Tactical Acquisition Corp, and previously served as the CEO of Digital World Acquisition Corp, which later merged with Trump Media and Technology.

"A lot of this talent is coming out of India. And now you move forward to today, and you would be blind not to see that the technology capitalists around the world are coming from India. India is on the rise, and I don't think India is going to stop. I think India will continue to be on the rise; it will lead the world in technology," he said. Telangana Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan requested Swider to inform Trump that a street in Hyderabad has been named after the US President.



HC stays CAT order allocating IAS officer Amrapali to TG

PNS ■ Hyderabad

In a setback to IAS officer Amrapali, the Telangana High Court issued interim orders suspending the Central Administrative Tribunal's (CAT) directions that had allocated the officer to Telangana state. In October last year, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued orders allotting Amrapali to Andhra Pradesh. Challenging the DoPT orders, she approached CAT, which directed Amrapali be sent back to Telangana as part of a "swapping" arrangement with IAS officer Harikiran.

However, the DoPT stated the swapping procedure did not apply to Amrapali because Harikiran belongs to a reserved category and hence it was not permissible. It appealed to the Telangana High Court which issued an interim stay in the CAT's decision. The next hearing has been adjourned for six weeks.

'Global Summit will contribute to state's long term vision, progress'

PNS ■ Hyderabad

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge wished for the success of the Telangana government's two-day Telangana Rising Global Summit beginning Monday and hoped that the event would contribute to the state's long-term vision.

In a letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Kharge said it is heartening to see the state taking forward a visionary agenda aimed at inclusive development, innovation, and global engagement, driving the vision of 'Telangana 2047'.

He expressed confidence that Telangana will continue to evolve into a global investment destination and an innovation hub in urban infrastructure, sustainability, and technology.

Kharge, in the letter shared with the media here late on December 7, thanked the chief minister for the invitation to attend the summit but expressed his inability



to attend in person owing to the ongoing parliament session. Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma would inaugurate the summit here on Monday, where the government would unveil its vision document to make the state a USD three trillion economy by 2047.

Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi, representatives of the Republic of Korea, World Bank, Trump Media and Technology, and other top companies, including Amazon and IKEA, will attend the summit, an official release said on Monday.

CM Revanth Reddy would speak on the government's achievements during the last two years and the plans for the future.

Armoor MLA questions TG BJP leadership

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Signs of internal dissent surfaced in the Telangana Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after Armoor MLA P Rakesh Reddy expressed displeasure with the leadership and suggested a change in the "format" to win.

At the party's protest program held at Dharna Chowk coinciding with the two years of Congress rule, Rakesh Reddy cited the party's performance in Maharashtra and Bihar polls, said that Telangana people doubt its leaders' performance.

"Along with the leadership, the BJP party's strategy should change as well. Right candidates must be identified for elections, and those who can hit a six should be given an opportunity," he said.

"We need to adopt the 20-20 format to ensure success in Telangana. The number of matches played is not important, but winning the final is essential," he said, referring to the recently concluded Jubilee Hills bye-election where the saffron party lost.

Five Nepalis held for dacoity at ex-Army captain's house

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Five Nepal nationals, who allegedly broke into the house of a retired Army captain here last month and looted gold ornaments and cash, were arrested on Monday, police said.

Based on credible intelligence, the Commissioner's Task Force arrested the five accused, part of a 13-member Nepali gang in Karkhana police station limits, a release said.

The gang forcibly confined the retired captain on the intervening night of November 15-16 and assaulted him before decamping with the booty-gold ornaments weighing about 23 tolas and cash Rs 95,000, DCP (Task Force) Gaikwad Vaibhav Raghunath said.

Police seized gold ornaments weighing 73.35 grams, silver ornaments weighing 22.90 grams, Rs 43,050 in cash, and five cell phones from the accused.

Four of the five arrested accused worked as security guards. Eight other



members of the gang, all from Nepal were absconding and efforts are on to nab them.

Initially, the complainant (ex-captain) approached an agency to hire a Nepali couple as domestic workers. The agency subsequently contacted the two Nepali nationals (part of the gang) to arrange for help.

According to police, the duo conspired with criminal intent to loot the complainant's house by planting two individuals-who would pose as husband and wife.

Thereafter, they began working at the complainant's residence from October this year pretending

to be a married couple.

To execute their plan, all the accused assembled at the room of one of the accused in Tolichowki, where they discussed the conspiracy.

On the intervening night of November 15-16, the accused entered the complainant's house, tied his hands and legs to a chair, and assaulted him. They snatched the jewellery he was wearing, and stole additional jewellery and cash before fleeing from the scene, police said.

After committing the offence, the accused divided the stolen property among themselves, police added.

Businessman murdered in Hyderabad

PNS ■ Hyderabad

A 46-year-old man was allegedly murdered by six persons under Jawaharnagar police station limits here on Monday over previous "enmity", police said.

The man, who is into real estate business, was stabbed to death and the assailants are also suspected to have used firearms, a senior police official said based on preliminary investigation.

The incident occurred at around 8 am when the man was returning to his house on a scooter after dropping his daughter at school. The six accused, who came in an auto-rickshaw and a two-wheeler waylaid him and attacked him with knives and firearms, resulting in his death on the spot and later fled the scene, the official said.

It seems the man was earlier involved in anti-social activities in another locality and due to previous grudges, he was murdered, the official further said.



HYDRAA reclaims land worth ₹600 cr in Miyapur

PNS ■ Hyderabad

The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) carried out an anti-encroachment drive in Miyapur and reclaimed over five acres of government land valued at more than Rs 600 crore.

According to officials, illegal shops, private bus parking facilities and car wash units had encroached on the land.

Following a complaint during the weekly Prajavani, it was found that that fake survey numbers were used to grab the land and that the occupants were allegedly earning lakhs of rupees every month through rentals.

The occupied area and the private bus were cleared, and a fence has been erected around the reclaimed area, which also includes the lake buffer zone.

Rahul to initiate debate on election reforms in LS

PNS ■ New Delhi

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will initiate the debate on election reforms in the Lower House on Tuesday. The opposition has been demanding a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Parliament since the monsoon session, but the government suggested having a debate on election reforms, citing that the Election Commission was an independent, autonomous and constitutional body.

The BJP is expected to field senior leaders Nishikant Dubey, P P Chaudhary, Abhijit Gangopadhyay and Sanjay Jaiswal in the debate, which will take place over two days. Besides Gandhi, the Congress is expected to field K C Venugopal, Manish Tewari, Varsha Gaikwad, Mohammed Jawed, Ujjwal Raman Singh, Isa Khan, Ravi Mallu, Imran Masood, Gowaal Padavi and Jothimani in the debate.

CM: TG rising...

"I call upon you to be the problem solver and globalise compassion. I call upon you to be the partner in this dream. Let's begin with Telangana here and now. I am sure we will win," he said.

Observing that he was appointed by the UN Secretary General some years ago as a UN SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) advocate, he said he can confess that none of the goals can be accomplished in the given time, 2025 goals and 2030 goals. He wished that Telangana and India would make a major contribution to advancing sustainable goals in the coming five years or so.

In a video message, Nobel laureate economist Abhijit Banerjee said Telangana has taken an important step by articulating explicitly that everybody has to be made a full participant in the state's prosperity efforts.

"I like the fact that, amidst these thoughts about prosperity, growth, USD 3 trn economy, there is also a very concrete set of thoughts which are about how to get there, such as the thought about ensuring that 80 per cent of the children can do math and read at a great level when they are in third grade. This is a very doable goal," he

said. "It represents a way of thinking that I totally endorse which is you need to break the whole claim of human liberation and human development into set of feasible steps," he said.

Will work with...

Observing that PM Modi often talks about his goal of 'Viksit Bharat 2047', he said this development goal is possible only when all the states play a meaningful role in the transformation journey of development through the twin mantras of "cooperative federalism" and "competitive federalism".

Kishan Reddy said healthy competition among states to attract industry, talent and others raises standards and accelerates reforms and ensures better outcomes for citizens.

He highlighted the progress achieved under the Make in India and various sectors during the last decade, and also the support extended to Telangana by the Centre.

Record-breaking...

1. Deep Tech, Future City & Core Infrastructure (approx. Rs. 1,04,000 Crore)

This cornerstone investment cluster accounts for over half of the Day 1 total,

focusing on next-generation urban and digital infrastructure;

Global Deep Tech Innovation City: The landmark Rs. 75,000 Crore commitment from the Brookfield / Axis Ventures Pvt Ltd consortium was the marquee agreement. This fund is dedicated to developing the Bharat Future City, a Net-Zero urban ecosystem for global R&D, Deep Technology, and high-value services.

Sustainable Urban Development: Vin Group formalised its Rs. 27,000 Crore pledge toward integrated projects, covering next-generation Renewable Energy generation, advanced EV infrastructure, and smart urban planning.

Innovation Ecosystem: The SIDBI Startup Fund of Funds confirmed a Rs. 1,000 Crore injection of critical seed capital for local ventures. This was complemented by the World Trade Centre Future City's Rs. 1,000 Crore commitment for a futuristic 'Walk to Work' innovation hub.

2. Renewable Energy Transition & Power Security (approx. Rs. 39,700 Crore)

Driving the shift towards energy independence and climate resilience with massive-scale projects: Solar & Wind Mega-Projects: The single largest

energy deal came from Evren / Axis Energy with a commitment of Rs. 31,500 Crore, allocated entirely to scaling up Solar and Wind Energy projects, crucial for securing industrial power needs.

Integrated Power & Mobility: The MEIL Group committed Rs. 8,000 Crore to a diversified portfolio including Solar Power Plants, vital Pumped Storage systems for grid stability, and advanced EV projects.

3. Aerospace, Defence, and Logistics Gateway (approx Rs. 19,350 Crore)

Reinforcing Hyderabad's position as India's strategic Aerospace and Logistics gateway: Aviation and Logistics: GMR Group sealed its Rs. 15,000 Crore expansion for the Aerospace/Aviation sector, significantly boosting MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) capabilities and cargo infrastructure.

Precision Defence Manufacturing: The Defence segment secured nearly Rs. 5,000 Crore in MOUs, led by Apollo Microsystems Ltd (Rs. 1,500 Cr) and Solar Aerospace & Defence (Rs. 1,500 Cr) for the manufacturing of Defence and Artillery Systems, Avionics for Missiles, and Aero Engine Structures.

Supply Chain Infrastructure: MPL logistics hub (Rs. 700 Cr) and TVS ILP

(Rs. 200 Cr) formalised pacts to develop large-scale warehousing and industrial parks.

4. Advanced Manufacturing & Core Industry (approx. Rs. 13,500 Crore)

Investments in high-value manufacturing that create quality, distributed industrial jobs:

Electronics & Hydrogen: The electronics sector saw nearly Rs. 7,000 Crore in MOUs from Renewsys, Midwest, and Akshat Greentech for PCB and specialised components. Sohhytech India added Rs. 1,000 Crore for Distributed Hydrogen technology.

Core Industry & Steel: Krishna Power Utilities committed Rs. 5,000 Crore for an Integrated Steel Plant, and cement majors like Ultra Bright Cements and Rain Cements added nearly Rs. 2,000 Crore.

Textiles and Livelihoods: Seetharam Spinners committed Rs. 3,000 Crore for an Integrated Textile Unit, while the Solapur Telangana Textile Association and Genius Filters added over Rs. 960 Crore, boosting the power-loom and technical textile sectors.

It is the power...

It is the power to change the reality of Telangana, he said. It will provide the financial strength needed for every

school, every innovation, and every green initiative, the DCM explained.

Reinstating the unwavering commitment to inclusive development, Bhatti showcased the welfare and development programmes that the government has been implementing, from women's empowerment to Rythu Bharaosa. from Young India Residential Schools to welfare initiatives— "These are not mere welfare schemes. They are investments in equality, ensuring no one is left behind in Telangana's development journey," he said.

Committed to...

He said 37 stations are planned to ensure emission compliance and improve road safety, adding that the Government permits 20,000 electric autos, 10,000 CNG autos, and 25,000 retrofitted electric autos.

He said that the government wants 25% of government vehicles to be EVs, promoting OEM growth in Telangana.

Saying that the government is focusing on the expansion of EV charging infrastructure, battery recycling, upskilling drivers, and integrating climate, transport, and urban planning goals.

Nehru echoed...

Modi said Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah first stepped up his opposition to Vande Mataram on October 15, 1937, from Lucknow.

Nehru wrote to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose five days later, sharing Jinnah's sentiments and observing that Vande Mataram's 'Anandmath' background had the potential to "irritate the Muslims", Modi said.

"Instead of firmly countering the baseless statements of the Muslim League and condemning them, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Congress president, did not reaffirm his and the Congress party's commitment to Vande Mataram, but began questioning Vande Mataram itself," he said.

Modi said it was ironic that Bankim Chandra's Vande Mataram underwent a review of its worth in his home state of Bengal at the Kolkata session of the Congress Working Committee in 1937, leaving the country in a state of shock and prompting patriots to take out processions against the decision of the Congress.

B'luru-Hyd can...

"Today, I am not here only as Deputy Chief Minister of

Karnataka, but as a proud voice for bidding the south... I could see the vision you (Telangana) have. It is a global vision. I know Telangana is a small state, not like Karnataka," he said.

The IT exports from Bengaluru are about 43 per cent of total exports from the country, and Telangana could be a little less. However, the Telangana government's vision is big, and he was glad to attend the event, he said.

"When we talk about India's technology story, it is impossible to tell the story without speaking about Bengaluru and Hyderabad together. So, let us all join together. People have tried to frame Bengaluru and Hyderabad as competitors. But, truth is more powerful. We are not competitors. We support each other. We grow each other and build better India and the entire world," he said.

Quoting late Ratan Tata that one has to walk together if he/she wants to walk far, he suggested working together to make Bengaluru and Hyderabad progress fast.

While 13 lakh engineers work in California in the US, 25 lakh engineers work in Bengaluru, he said.

"Even Telangana, Hyderabad, has a very big potential. So, both of us will work together," he said.



HC stays CAT order allocating IAS officer Amrapali to TG

2



Governor: Telangana choosing a story of inclusive development

3

Bengal CM Mamata slams Centre over IndiGo crisis

5



Zelenskyy hasn't read US peace proposal: Trump

8

India beat Wales in FIH Junior Women's World Cup

12



PIONEER IN SHORT

GLOBAL SUMMIT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO STATE'S LONG TERM VISION, PROGRESS: KHARGE

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge wished for the success of the Telangana government's two-day 'Telangana Rising Global Summit' beginning Monday and hoped that the event would contribute to the state's long-term vision. In a letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Kharge said it is heartening to see the state taking forward a visionary agenda aimed at inclusive development...

FULL REPORT ON P2

TG FAMOUS FOR ITS ATTIRE: KANCHI KAMAKOTI SEER

Kanchi Kamakoti Seer Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati said that Telangana is famous for its attire. He made it clear that hospitals, roads, factories, Vedas, Puranas, Shastras, cow protection, classical music and attire are very necessary in the State. He stated that he aspired for the Telangana state to be a place for spiritual programmes with dharma...

FULL REPORT ON P3

BJP CLAIMS LOPS SKIPPED PM'S SPEECH OUT OF GUILT

The BJP on Monday alleged that both Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra remained absent from the Lok Sabha out of a "sense of guilt" during Prime Minister's speech on the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram because he exposed their party and the Gandhi family. Initiating the discussion in the Lower...

FULL REPORT ON P5

TOP EU OFFICIAL WARNS US AGAINST INTERFERING IN EUROPE'S AFFAIRS

A top European Union official on Monday warned the United States against interfering in Europe's affairs and said only European citizens can decide which parties should govern them. European Council President Antonio Costa's remarks came in reaction to the Trump administration's new national security strategy, which was published on Friday and paints European allies as weak while offering tacit...

FULL REPORT ON P8

QUOTE OF THE DAY



AT A TIME OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC SHIFTS, RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND CLIMATE UNCERTAINTIES, TELANGANA INTENDS TO CONVERT EMERGING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES.

—DUDDILLA SRIDHAR BABU, MINISTER FOR IT AND INDUSTRIES

CM: Telangana rising unstoppable

Says the state aims to contribute 10 pc to national GDP by 2047

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday asserted that "TelanganaRising is unstoppable," adding that he wanted the state to contribute 10 per cent to the national GDP by 2047.

Speaking at the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2025, he also said the state government wants to replicate the model of Guang-Dong province, whose economy was the largest of any province in China.

He said his government aims to make Telangana a USD 1 trillion economy by 2034 and a USD 3 trn dollar one by 2047.

"We comprise around 2.9 per cent of India's population but contribute around five per cent of the national GDP. By 2047, I want to contribute 10 per cent of India's GDP," he said. Citing the example of Guang-Dong in China, he said the province has achieved the highest investment and growth in the world in "20 plus years".

"We want to replicate the same model in Telangana," he added. After 10 years of its



We comprise around 2.9 per cent of India's population but contribute around five per cent of the national GDP. By 2047, I want to contribute 10 per cent of India's GDP

formation, Telangana is now trying to become India's most developed state.

The CM said the state government's strategy is to make Telangana India's first and only state to be divided into three clear zones for services, manufacturing, and agriculture. "We call it the CURE, PURE, RARE model. Core Urban Region Economy (CURE), Peri Urban Region Economy (PURE) and Rural Agriculture Region Economy (RARE)," he said.

Observing that his government has taken inspiration from China, Japan, Germany, South Korea and Singapore, the chief minister said Telangana is now "getting ready" to compete with them. The state government has invited them to col-

laborate, invest and support it in the 'TelanganaRising' journey, he added.

With the support of industry and other stakeholders who attended the event, the state can achieve all its goals.

Time to globalise compassion: Satyarthi

Nobel peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi said economies, markets and others have been globalised and that this is the time to "globalise compassion".

CONTINUED ON >> P2

‘It is the power to transform TG’

DCM on the aim of a triple trillion dollar economy

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Speaking at the Global Summit on Monday, the Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka emphasised that the Telangana Vision Document is not something drafted behind closed doors. It is the outcome of a democratic, bottom-up process shaped by the suggestions of eminent personalities, discussions with experts, and the opinions of citizens.

"That is why this is not merely a government document — It is the document of the people of Telangana," he said. Stressing that the State Government's goal is clear to



achieve Net Zero by the year 2047, adding that economic development and environmental protection are not opposing forces from now on, they will work hand in hand. "We don't just greet guests with a smile..."

We are always ready to serve them hot biryani,

khubani ka meetha, and a memorable feast," the DCM said about the hospitality culture of Telangana.

Noting that Telangana has never lacked ambition, he said. "But for many years, what was missing was a comprehensive vision capable of channelling people's strength, aspirations, and potential in a unified direction. Today, we are unveiling that comprehensive document."

He said making Telangana a \$3 trillion economy is not just a slogan it is a district-wise, sector-wise, fully structured action plan.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Committed to clean energy, public health: Min Ponnamb

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Transport Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar emphasized Telangana's commitment to clean mobility, focusing on environmental goals, public health, economic growth, energy security, and urban livability. Speaking at the Telangana Rising Summit on Monday, he said the state policy aligns with India's net-zero commitments and Telangana Rising Vision 2047, aiming for a safe, smart, digital, and sustainable transport ecosystem.

The Minister stated Telangana offers 100%



exemption on road tax and registration fees for EVs until December 31, 2026, in order to boost EV adoption.

He elaborated that the Vehicle Scrappage Policy

includes green tax exemptions, waiver of pending fines, and tax incentives for purchasing new vehicles after scrapping old ones.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Nehru echoed Jinnah, betrayed Vande Mataram: PM Modi

PNS ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru betrayed Vande Mataram by echoing Muhammad Ali Jinnah's communal concerns and fragmenting the national song, which put India on the path of politics of appeasement, leading to its Partition.

Initiating a debate on the

'150th anniversary of national song Vande Mataram', Modi highlighted how Vande Mataram inspired the nation, energised the freedom struggle and became a symbol of national resolve, which prompted Mahatma Gandhi to liken it to the national anthem.

Penned by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1875, Modi said Vande Mataram challenged the British Empire that was unsettled by



the freedom struggle of 1857 and heaping injustices upon India and forcing its people into submission.

"Vande Mataram, which was a source of immense strength for every Indian both within the country and abroad, suffered grave injustice in the last century. I wonder why Vande Mataram was betrayed and what forces overshadowed the sentiments expressed by Mahatma Gandhi and dragged the sacred inspiration into controversy," Modi said.

CONTINUED ON >> P2



Govt to take strict action against IndiGo

Airline adds flights after disruptions

PNS ■ New Delhi/Mumbai

The government plans to take strict action against IndiGo to "set an example" for airlines that violate regulations, the Civil Aviation Minister said on Monday, as the country's largest carrier added more flights as its operations limp back to normalcy following a week of widespread flight cancellations.

IndiGo, whose delayed preparation for stricter pilot rest rules triggered last week's wave of cancellations, operated 1,800 flights on Monday, up from around 1,650 on Sunday. At the peak of disruptions, more than two-thirds of its roughly 2,300 daily flights were grounded on December 5. The sector regulator

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which had previously issued a show cause notice to IndiGo CEO to explain the disruptions, set up a four-member panel to probe the matter.

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers and COO Isidre Porqueras filed a "comprehensive" reply to DGCA show cause notices before the extended deadline expired on Monday evening, airline sources said.

IndiGo did not reply to an email sent for comments.

Meanwhile, a DGCA statement said it has received IndiGo's response to its show cause notice. IndiGo, the statement said, is "profusely" apologetic and deeply regrets the inconvenience and hardship caused to customers.

STATE BAR COUNCILS

SC orders 30 per cent seats for women advocates

PNS ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday directed that 30 per cent seats in state Bar councils, where the election process has not been set in motion, be kept for women advocates.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalaya Bagchi said for the current year, the state Bar councils where elec-

tions are yet to be held should fill 20 per cent seats with women candidates and 10 per cent by co-option if there are not many deserving lawyers to contest.

The top court directed that a proposal for co-option should be placed before the court regarding

the state Bar councils where the number of contesting women lawyers is inadequate. At the outset, senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra, who is also the chairperson of the Bar Council of India (BCI), informed the bench that the election process, as per the court's earlier

direction, has commenced in six Bar bodies with the notification of the poll.

He submitted that the BCI, in principle, is of the view that there should be at least 30 per cent women's reservation in the state Bar councils, and suggested that for the present year, the councils should be permitted to fill up the posts by co-opting women candidates.

He also proposed that 15 per cent of seats be filled by way of co-option of women members.

However, the bench said it would be appropriate if co-option is restricted to only 10 per cent of seats. The bench said it would not be prudent to reserve seats for women in the Bar councils, where the election process has already commenced.



B'luru-Hyd can support each other to build better India: DK

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Monday said Bengaluru and Hyderabad, major technology hubs in the country, are not competitors, but they can support each other to build a better India.

Shivakumar, who spoke at the two-day Telangana Rising Global Summit organised by the state government here, also said the country would rise further when the southern states make rapid progress.

He said that he thought Telangana is competing with Bengaluru and Karnataka, but it is not so. The state is competing "globally".

Shivakumar, who congratulated Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for completing two years in office, said the entire south stands with him for the progress of the country "to match the world".

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Intend to convert emerging challenges into opportunities

Telangana Government has announced the list of holidays for the year 2026					
Sl. No.	OCCASION/DETAILS	DATE	DAY	MARKA	
1	SHRADDH	14-10-2023	WEDNESDAY	PAUSING	
2	UNMANNI PUSPA	14-10-2023	THURSDAY	PAUSING	
3	REPUBLIC DAY	26-10-2023	MONDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
4	MAHA NAVARATRI	29-10-2023	THURSDAY	PAUSING	
5	HOLI	30-10-2023	FRIDAY	PAUSING	
6	GAUR	30-10-2023	FRIDAY	PAUSING	
7	ULLU PUSHAJANAM	23-10-2023	THURSDAY	PAUSING	
8	VEEDU PUSHAJANAM	24-10-2023	FRIDAY	PAUSING	
9	UPPANA MANAM	22-10-2023	THURSDAY	PAUSING	
10	COOTI PUSHA	23-10-2023	FRIDAY	PAUSING	
11	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	04-11-2023	MONDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
12	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	05-11-2023	TUESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
13	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	06-11-2023	WEDNESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
14	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	07-11-2023	THURSDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
15	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	08-11-2023	FRIDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
16	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	09-11-2023	SATURDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
17	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	10-11-2023	SUNDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
18	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	11-11-2023	MONDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
19	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	12-11-2023	TUESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
20	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	13-11-2023	WEDNESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
21	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	14-11-2023	THURSDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
22	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	15-11-2023	FRIDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
23	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	16-11-2023	SATURDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
24	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	17-11-2023	SUNDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
25	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	18-11-2023	MONDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
26	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	19-11-2023	TUESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
27	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	20-11-2023	WEDNESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
28	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	21-11-2023	THURSDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
29	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	22-11-2023	FRIDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
30	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	23-11-2023	SATURDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
31	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	24-11-2023	SUNDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
32	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	25-11-2023	MONDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
33	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	26-11-2023	TUESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
34	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	27-11-2023	WEDNESDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
35	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	28-11-2023	THURSDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
36	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	29-11-2023	FRIDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	
37	MAHA NAVARATRI BENARSI BENARSI BENARSI	30-11-2023	SATURDAY	10:00 AM 15:00 PM	

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
FORM-VI

OFFICE OF THE REVENUE DIVISIONAL OFFICER, KHAMMAM

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

(See sub rule (1) of rule -19 and Section -11(1) of the Act-30/2013)

District Gazette No.A359/2025 **Dated-03.12.2025**

District Collector, Khammam Rc.No.G1/1027/2018 **DL.02.12.2025**

LAO/RDO, Khammam Rc.No.G1/4690/2018 **DL.19.11.2025**

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Collector that a total extent of **Acs.00-05% Gts land** is required in the BURHANPURAM Village of KHAMMAM (URBAN) Mandal of Khammam District for public purpose, namely for the proposed **Srd Railway line** with electrification between Kondapalli to Kazipet Section in the village limits of BURHANPURAM Village of KHAMMAM (URBAN) Mandal and the notification is issued under Section 11(1) of the Right Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-2013 and the Publication is Made as shown in the below schedule.

The District Collector, Khammam has appointed the Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam as Land Acquisition Officer, vide proceedings Rc.No.G1/1027/2018 dated, 27.02.2018 for the acquisition of Patta Land for the proposed **Srd Railway line** with electrification between Kondapalli to Kazipet Section in the village limits of KHAMMAM Village of KHAMMAM (URBAN) Mandal

Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in BURHANPURAM Village of KHAMMAM (URBAN) Mandal of Khammam District at a piece of land measuring an extent of **Acs.00-05% Gts** of standard measure, whose detail description is as following, is under acquisition.

SCHEDULE

Village: BURHANPURAM Mandal: KHAMMAM (URBAN) District: KHAMMAM									
Sl No	Sur No	Type of Land	Area under Acquisition (in Sq yards)	Name of the Pattadar	Name of the Cultivator	Struc Trees/eries	Bou indies	If any	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	278/ 12	Patta Dry	00-03	OPEN PLOTS (NALA - Complete Sy.No)	OPEN PLOTS (NALA - Complete Sy.No)	--	--		
2	277/ 12	Patta Dry	00-02	OPEN PLOTS (NALA - Complete Sy.No)	OPEN PLOTS (NALA - Complete Sy.No)	--	--		
Total Extent			00-05¹/₂						

This notification is made under the provision of Section-11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-2013 (Act No.30/2013), to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Khammam & in the office of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana/Collector/Concerned Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam and his staff O/o the Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam 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 from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition if any may be filed by the person interested therein (Sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section-15 of the Act before District Collector, Khammam.

Sd/-Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Collector (Revenue),
Officer, Khammam

Sd/-Additional Collector (Revenue),
Officer, Khammam

Sd-District Collector,
Khammam

DIPR RO.No.929/LA/PP/Adv/Pub/2025-26

17	780 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,024 736	M.Srinivas Rao Open Plot No. 21, 22	E: W: N: S:
18	780 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	0.51 2388	Existing Road 30'-00" Road	E: W: N: S:
19	780 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	5,9196 7408	PW/VS/ Prasad S/o Subbaih	E: W: N: S:
					Total	0.09%₄	
20	781 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,699 9046	PW/VS/ Prasad S/o Subbaih	E: W: N: S:
21	781 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	7,5995 744	Open Land	E: W: N: S:
22	781 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,899 8936	Julu (Vagu)	E: W: N: S:
23	781 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,166 894	Open Land	E: W: N: S:
					Total	0.12%₄	
24	783 /I/ 12	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	0.788 552	Existing 30'-00" Road	E: W: N: S:
25	783 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,264 392	Nilugonda Padmaja	E: W: N: S:
26	783 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1,355 296	Garlapati Annapurna	E: W: N: S:
27	783 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	1.57 016	Sri Pada Umarani	E: W: N: S:
28	783 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	0.4012 172	BVD Prasad	E: W: N: S:
29	783 /I/ 2	Non-Agri- culture land	Patta	Dry	6,140 489	Open Land	E: W: N: S:
					Total	0.05%₄	
30	784 /I/ 2	Pattas		Dry	2,4198 5446	Mandodapu Shiva Panathi W/o Sarayaprakash Reddy	E: W: N: S:
31	784 /I/ 2	Patta		Dry	2,4198 5448	Mandodapu Shiva Nagireddy S/o Venkateswary	E: W: N: S:
32	784 /I/ 2	Patta		Dry	2,4198 5446	Mandodapu Laxmi Reddy S/o Srinivasa Reddy	E: W: N: S:
33	784 /I/ 2	Patta		Dry	1,899 893	Dubukuru Maheswar Open plots	E: W: N: S:
34	784 /I/ 2	Patta		Dry	0.338 824	Kusupati Venkate swaru	E: W: N: S:
					Total	0.09%₄	
35	794 /2	Patta		Dry	0.2096	Nallakurthi Mamatha W/o Rao Reddy	E: W: N: S:
36	794 /2	Patta		Dry	0.04 132	Mandodapu Ayyapareddy S/o Nagireddy	E: W: N: S:
					Total	0.00%₄	
					Grand Total	1.13%₂	
<p>This notification is made under the provision of Section-11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act-2013(Act No.30/2013), to all whom it may concern.</p> <p>A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Khammam & in the office of the Tahsildar Khammam (Urban) on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana/Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Additional Collector (Revenue) Khammam 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.</p> <p>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 from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.</p> <p>Objections to the acquisition, if any may be filed by the person interested within (60) sixty days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section-15 of the Act before District Collector, Khammam.</p>							
Sd/- LAO/ Additional Collector Khammam				Sd/-District Collector, Khammam			
DIPR RO.NO:928/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2025-26							



Editor's
TAKE

Why India needs a legal right to disconnect

A nation cannot build a future on depleted minds and exhausted bodies. Supriya Sule's Bill offers not just legal protection but a cultural reset

Stress has become endemic in the corporate world, and "burnout" is now the widely accepted term for it. Burnout is a state of intense physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive work-related stress. These two words capture the reality of today's corporate workforce on a massive scale. The death of 26-year-old chartered accountant Anna Sebastian Perayil, whose death was linked to severe work-related stress, is a case in point.

The irony is that most people do not even realise they are experiencing it, seeking treatment is a far cry. Reports of suicides and worsening mental health due to work pressure are increasingly common. Both mental and physical health deteriorate sharply, leaving individuals drained, cynical, and exhausted. Fatigue, insomnia, headaches, detachment, and disturbed sleep have become alarmingly routine.

The constant ringing of the smartphone and the rise of hybrid digital work culture have erased personal boundaries, making it difficult for many to have any "me time". Being available 24x7 has turned into a modern form of slavery that takes a heavy toll on lives.

To restore work-life balance, Supriya Sule has taken an important initiative. If her proposal succeeds, it may soon become law, introducing penalties for employers who overstep time boundaries and encroach on workers' personal lives. Supriya Sule's Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025, is a long-overdue intervention, seeking to restore a basic but endangered human need: the right to switch off and relax.

The core premise of the Bill is simple yet transformative. It states that employees should not be penalised for choosing not to respond to work-related communication after office hours. The bill sets to end the culture of checking messages throughout the day, during dinner, on weekends, and even on holidays. Studies have repeatedly shown that such constant pressure to check phone leads to sleep deprivation, chronic stress, emotional burnout, and a slow erosion of family life.

The Bill recognises that mental health is not separate from productivity; it is its very foundation. Importantly, the legislation does not ignore the realities of India's competitive and diverse business landscape. Sule's proposal allows companies to set their own after-hours communication norms through Employees' Welfare Committees. Companies that disregard these provisions could face penalties equivalent to one per cent of their total employee remuneration, ensuring that compliance is mandatory and damages are for real.

Yet the path ahead is not without challenges. India's workforce is vast and varied, and cultural attitudes often equate overwork with dedication. Smaller firms may fear compliance burdens, while multinational companies may worry about servicing their offshore clients. Besides, enforcement remains a perennial weakness in India.

Despite these obstacles, the direction is clear and the move is a step in right direction. For India to continue its progress, it must safeguard the well-being of its workers.

SAARC@40: An idea that refuses to die

As the world reorganises around regional blocs and shared vulnerabilities, South Asia cannot afford to remain disconnected. SAARC may be dormant, but its spirit endures, waiting for a political moment that restores its relevance



SANTHOSH
MATHEW

Forty years ago, on a December morning in 1985, South Asia embarked on an ambitious experiment. Seven neighbours — united by shared histories yet separated by borders, suspicion and political complications — met in Dhaka to outline a collective vision for peace, prosperity and cooperation. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) emerged from that hope, designed to transcend bilateral tensions and forge a regional identity grounded in development. Four decades later, that optimism feels remote. The organisation has been effectively frozen since 2014, its institutional vitality drained by enduring political hostilities. Yet, paradoxically, the idea of SAARC is more essential today than ever. The phrase "SAARC is dead, long live SAARC" captures this duality: the institution may be dormant, but the logic of regional cooperation remains compelling.

South Asia itself embodies profound contradictions. It is home to nearly 40 per cent of the world's democracies, each with its strengths and complexities. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka together represent one of the most diverse political landscapes on earth. Bangladesh's strides in poverty alleviation, Bhutan's pioneering Gross National Happiness framework, Sri Lanka's social indicators, Nepal's federal evolution, Maldives' climate resilience, Pakistan's active civil society, Afghanistan's enduring cultural heritage and India's unmatched electoral scale all testify to a region rich in innovation and vitality.

To see South Asia only through the prism of conflict is to overlook its immense civilisational, demographic and strategic advantages. This potential, however, has been consistently undermined by geopolitical mistrust, particularly between India and Pakistan. SAARC's stagnation is rooted in this unresolved hostility. Without political trust at the highest level, regional structures lose momentum. The cost of this paralysis has been significant. South Asia remains among the least economically integrated regions in the world. Intra-regional trade hovers around a mere 5 per cent, compared with ASEAN's over 25 per cent. High tariffs, rigid borders and bureaucratic obstacles have stifled the movement of goods, services and ideas that could dramatically uplift the region.

Against this backdrop, the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) deserves renewed focus. Operational since 2006, SAFTA was designed to dismantle tariff and non-tariff barriers and build a seamless regional market. Fully implemented, it could transform South Asia economically by strengthening supply chains, reducing logistics costs and opening vast new opportunities for employment and investment. The stakes are large: nearly 736 million South Asians still live in



TO SEE SOUTH ASIA ONLY THROUGH THE PRISM OF CONFLICT IS TO OVERLOOK ITS IMMENSE CIVILISATIONAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES. THIS POTENTIAL, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY UNDERMINED BY GEOPOLITICAL MISTRUST, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Santhosh Mathew is a Professor at Puducherry University, and Inputs by Denny Thomas Vattakunnel

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The Pioneer

extreme poverty. Global comparisons illustrate what is possible. The African Continental Free Trade Area is projected to raise Africa's regional income by 7 per cent and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035. With its larger consumer base and energetic private sector, South Asia could achieve even more if SAFTA were revived with genuine political commitment.

But cooperation must extend beyond trade. South Asia's civilisational heritage — Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufi traditions — offers a reservoir of cultural connections that can be harnessed to rebuild trust even when politics stagnates. India's soft power initiatives, such as the Buddhist Circuit, the revival of Nalanda University, the International Solar Alliance and the International Big Cat Alliance, create platforms that transcend political divides. These efforts draw on the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the world is one family — and demonstrate that meaningful regional collaboration does not always require formal institutional momentum.

India's neighbourhood-first policy has, in many ways, kept the idea of SAARC alive. The South Asia Satellite exemplified technological cooperation, supporting communication and disaster management across the region. India's vaccine diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted its role as a regional first responder. When global supply chains collapsed, India supplied vaccines and essential medical aid to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and other neighbours. More recently, India's rapid assistance during the Sri Lankan floods under Operation Sagar Bandhu reaffirmed its consistent commitment to regional humanitarian support. Such gestures cannot replace formal diplomacy, but they help rebuild trust and demonstrate the tangible value of cooperation.

Every member of SAARC, however, must recognise what is lost by leaving the organisation dormant. South Asia faces shared, transnational problems — climate change, water scarcity, terrorism, cybercrime, unemployment and migration — that no country can solve alone. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure provides a useful example of how coordinated security cooperation strengthens collective resilience. A comparable mechanism within SAARC could enhance intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism efforts at a moment when radicalisation and cyber threats are growing.

Equally significant is the demographic challenge. South Asia has the world's largest youth population, with nearly 100,000 people entering the labour force each day, yet UNICEF estimates that more than half will lack the skills needed for employment by 2030. Without regional frameworks for mobility, innovation, skilling and academic exchange, this demographic dividend could be squandered, even though instruments such as the dormant SAARC Youth Charter offer a ready framework for collaboration.

A reimaged SAARC must also prioritise mobility. Visa liberalisation, academic exchanges, cross-border tourism and digital corridors can revive cultural linkages and unlock economic potential. Drawing on Europe's multiple-entry visas or ASEAN's reciprocal arrangements, South Asia could adopt Mutual Favourable Access to facilitate travel, study and business with transformative impact.

Ultimately, SAARC's future may lie in redefining it as a flexible development platform focused on digital public goods, climate resilience, health networks and research collaboration. India's digital governance tools — UPI, Aadhaar architecture, e-governance and tele-health — could anchor such a partnership, reaffirming a shared South Asian destiny rooted in cooperation, connectivity and collective prosperity.

The Pioneer
SINCE 1865

Confronting popcorn brain in the digital age



SAKSHI
SETHI

2ND OPINION
THE PIONEER

In the relentless pulse of our digital era, silence has become a scarce commodity. Screens glow from dawn to midnight; alerts blink with the insistence of tiny sirens; content arrives in bursts designed to captivate and distract. In this environment of continuous cognitive stimulation, a troubling behavioural pattern has entered educational conversations: Popcorn Brain Syndrome. Though not a medical diagnosis, the term vividly expresses a growing reality: minds conditioned to crave rapid, high-intensity digital input, much like kernels bursting unpredictably in hot oil. For educators, this is no passing metaphor but a looming crisis. Increasingly, teachers observe shrinking attention spans, heightened restlessness, and an erosion of the ability to engage in deep, sustained thinking. The modern student,

equipped with limitless access to information, is paradoxically losing the capacity to grapple with it meaningfully. When the brain becomes accustomed to the quick bursts of dopamine offered by fast-paced media, slower, more reflective tasks—reading, writing, analytical reasoning—begin to feel burdensome. The very foundation of real learning is compromised. The signs are subtle yet unmistakable. A student sits in class, eyes fixed on the teacher, but their attention flickers. A phantom notification tugs at their mind; an impulse to check a device momentarily derails focus. This mental hopping mirrors popcorn in motion—bright, brief, and directionless. What suffers in the process is not merely academic performance, but the deeper capacities that shape intellectual maturity: critical thinking, creativity, emotional steadiness, and the ability to connect ideas in meaningful ways. Reflection, that slow and steady cultivator of insight, becomes a rarity.

Teachers now carry a dual mandate: to deliver curriculum content and to rebuild the cognitive stamina necessary to absorb it. It is a daunting task—almost like teaching a child to find stillness while surrounded by whirlpools of distraction. Yet it is not an impossible one. Recognising that Popcorn Brain is a cultural construct—not a personal failing—is the first step. Our digital environment is designed to hook, stimulate, and fragment; young learners are simply

responding to the architecture around them. The solution, therefore, is not to reject technology but to reintroduce balance. Classrooms can become places where deliberate pauses are woven into the learning fabric. Slow reading exercises, device-free discussions, and moments of reflection can act as anchors.

Teachers can cultivate an atmosphere where depth is celebrated over speed, where observation matters as much as reaction. Simple routines—journaling, mindful breathing, silent thinking—can gently retrain wandering minds. Parents, too, play a pivotal role. Children absorb what they see, not what they are told. A home where conversation, play, and unstructured time coexist with digital tools helps restore natural rhythms of attention. The partnership between school and family is essential to recalibrating young minds. The broader education system must recognise this phenomenon as a silent disruptor of learning outcomes. As curricula grow more rigorous, attention has become a critically limited resource, making investment in executive function, emotional regulation and digital discipline urgent. Without intervention, Popcorn Brain will continue to fragment focus across classrooms, undermining deep engagement and sustained understanding that are essential for shaping thoughtful, purposeful thinkers.

The writer is an educator and counsellor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IndiGo disruptions signal deeper crisis

There has been widespread chaos at several airports as turbulence in IndiGo's operations continues unabated, leaving passengers anxious, exhausted, and stranded for over a week. Mass cancellations and delays have transformed terminals into scenes of distress, with travellers sleeping on floors and, in some cases, near operational areas. Many passengers missed job interviews, family emergencies, and long-planned commitments, despite tickets being reissued multiple times only to face repeated cancellations. While IndiGo has stated that operations will stabilise by December 15, this assurance rings hollow for those still marooned without clarity or support. The situation reflects not merely operational failure but a deeper issue of regulatory oversight. Both IndiGo and the DGCA ignored early warning signs arising from new pilot duty norms.

Instead of adjusting manpower to meet regulatory requirements, IndiGo expanded its winter schedule, fully aware of its staffing limitations. It is deeply concerning that regulatory authorities appeared to yield under pressure, easing norms to manage public inconvenience. Such short-term relief undermines aviation safety and accountability. This crisis must serve as a moment for corrective action, not quiet compromise.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Goa tragedy highlights safety failures

Apropos "Goa nightclub blaze kills 25" (Dec. 8), the devastating incident once again exposes how routine disregard for safety norms turns leisure spaces into sites of avoidable tragedy. Reports indicate a convergence of structural violations, inadequate exits, and delayed emergency access—conditions that make disaster inevitable rather than accidental. More troubling is the apparent awareness of these violations by multiple authorities, followed by delayed or diluted action.

As Goa's tourism economy expands, the need for professional oversight becomes critical, especially in venues with high crowd density and limited evacuation options. Safety cannot depend on goodwill or post-incident outrage. Mandatory clearances, transparent licensing, and regular inspections must be strictly enforced. Officials who ignore violations must be held as accountable as operators who commit them. Infrastructure issues such as narrow access roads and informal expansions further compound risk and must be addressed urgently. A coordinated emergency protocol involving municipal bodies, fire services, and police should be standard, not reactive. A time-bound review of all public entertainment venues would be a constructive first step toward preventing future tragedies.

A MYLSAMI | TAMIL NADU

Aviation regulation under scrutiny

It takes years to build a reputation, but only days to destroy it. The ongoing IndiGo crisis appears less accidental and more self-inflicted, aided by regulatory inertia. Despite being aware of revised pilot duty norms, both the airline and the DGCA failed to act in time. IndiGo's decision to expand its winter schedule without adequate crew strength reflects corporate arrogance rather than operational prudence.

Equally culpable is the regulator's delayed auditing and passive oversight, which allowed the situation to escalate into a national disruption. When the crisis peaked, the DGCA appeared compelled to dilute enforcement to ease passenger hardship, effectively allowing the airline to escape accountability. Such precedents are dangerous in a safety-critical sector like aviation.

This year has already witnessed tragic incidents, including an aircraft crash in Ahmedabad, helicopter accidents in Uttarakhand, and an ATC systems failure in Delhi.

Together, these point to systemic vulnerabilities. The current disruption offers the aviation ministry a crucial opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review and institute reforms.

BAL GOVIND | NOIDA

PIC TALK



Artists from Punjab perform at the National Craft Fair in Prayagraj.

PHOTO: PTI

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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THE NAMAMI GANGA PROGRAMME: GANGA GHATS REVEAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAPSES

The front-page report of 8 December on the deteriorating condition of Ganga ghats exposes a grim and deeply troubling account of man-made neglect. The collapse of ghat infrastructure across Uttarakhand and along the Gangetic plains is the result of multiple failures, foremost among them weak municipal accountability compounded by persistent local political interference.

Ghats are often sanctioned to serve constituency interests, even when locations are ecologically fragile or geographically unsuitable.

The Namami Ganga programme was conceived as an ambitious and essential initiative to conserve the river and protect surrounding plains from floods during the monsoon. Yet, crores of rupees have been squandered

due to poor planning, inadequate supervision, and indifference on the ground. Public apathy has further aggravated the problem, with citizens frequently neglecting their responsibility to maintain cleanliness and preserve environmental assets created for their benefit.

Ganga ghats are sensitive environmental interventions requiring expert design and sustained oversight by conservation architects and geological scientists, yet serious consultation with such specialists appears largely absent. Local municipal authorities must therefore be held fully accountable for maintenance and for regulating public access during vulnerable periods to prevent further degradation.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

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Misuse of FRA: Undermining forest rights framework

From recognising ineligible encroachments to manipulating community forest rights, the law meant to protect vulnerable groups and safeguard forests is being bent and exploited. This misuse now threatens both conservation goals and the long-term credibility of India's forest rights framework

FIRST
Column



Although the Forest Survey of India, in its 2023 report, indicates an increasing trend in the country's forest cover, a major undisclosed ailment is affecting the heart of India's forest conservation efforts: the alleged widespread misuse of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. Apart from procedural irregularities and misreading of provisions noticed in the implementation of the FRA, the major and substantive issues are the recognition of post-2005 encroachments on forest land as Individual Forest Rights (IFR) for habitation or cultivation, and the mass-scale grant of management rights (named Community Forest Resource Rights, or CFRR, under the FRA Rules amended in 2012) in cases of grossly ineligible claims.

The pattern of misuse of the FRA was initially highlighted by the 2011 NC Saxena Committee Report. The Committee, an inter-ministerial body, raised serious concerns about the recognition of ineligible claims. It found evidence that "fresh encroachers, with business interests in forest lands", were manipulating the Act in states such as Maharashtra and Assam. The Committee pointed to specific instances of forest land being cleared after the cut-off date of December 13, 2005 in protected areas such as Kawal Sanctuary and Yaval Sanctuary, stressing that the FRA was never intended to be a "ploy to distribute national wealth of forest land to all claimants irrespective of their real legal eligibility". The FRA is meant exclusively for Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs).

The Maharashtra Forest Department launched a detailed study in 2012 covering 35,044 finally approved Individual Forest Rights (IFR) cases, encompassing over 60,000 hectares of forest land across six districts.

The Department established a system using Cartosat-1 satellite images from 2005, 2007, and 2011, overlaid with GPS polygons delineating land parcels for each claim. Data on granted cases was available on the website of Maharashtra's Tribal Research and Training Institute (TRTI), which had developed and utilised a robust, transpar-



THE FACT ALSO REMAINS THAT GENUINE COMMUNITIES AND ELIGIBLE LANDS, SUCH AS SACRED GROVES AND COMMUNITY-OCCUPIED, CUSTOMARILY AND RULE-BASED MANAGED AREAS AWAITING FORMALISATION OF THEIR MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE UNDER THE FRA, HAVE SIMPLY BEEN LEFT OUT

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ent, and technology-driven verification system for comparing land-use status before and after the December 2005 cut-off date, documenting approximately 2.9 lakh polygons under IFR claims.

Despite this technological safety net based on satellite imagery, it was found that about 16 per cent of the studied cases were granted IFRs on lands that were clearly ineligible-being fully barren, tree-covered, or a mixture of both, as seen in satellite images. More than 3,000 cases showing land-use change, specifically conversion to cultivation after the 2005 cut-off date, were also found to have been cleared as valid claims. Additionally, approximately 4 per cent of cleared claims exceeded the maximum permissible limit of four hectares.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) amended the FRA Rules in 2012, effectively downgrading the evidentiary value of satellite imagery. Such imagery, as well as other uses of technology, could thereafter be used only to "supplement" other forms of evidence and not as a replacement. Critics argue that this move prioritised subjective claims over objective science. As a result, while many states, including major ones such as Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, reportedly discontinued their use,

Maharashtra's well-grounded system was not only derailed but the invaluable dataset of 2.9 lakh GPS polygons embedded in satellite imagery also reportedly became untraceable. Notably, in response to a requirement from the Forest Survey of India (FSI) for analysis in compliance with the Hon'ble Supreme Court's February 2019 order in Writ Petition (C) No. 109/2008, Maharashtra did not make the data available. With regard to eviction of encroachers, no state has initiated proceedings against those with rejected claims, and even the Hon'ble Supreme Court, on February 28, 2019, stayed its own eviction order within fifteen days.

The right to minor forest produce is mandated to be limited to the quantity traditionally collected by beneficiaries. However, the recognition process has been misused to grant rights over the entire commercial MFP output and trade, often to Gram Sabhas, disregarding the heterogeneity and occupational diversity of their members. As a result, new intermediaries are emerging in states such as Maharashtra and Odisha. They operate as contractors in league with tendu leaf traders, while the intended empowerment of FDST and OTFD communities for resource conservation and democratic local governance envisioned by the FRA

is subverted. A similar atmosphere is being created in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to dismantle their federation-based systems.

With regard to CFRRs, these are being illegally recognised almost unabated on government forest lands (such as Reserved or Protected Forests under working plans), even though their specified location is statutorily limited to "customary common forest land" or "community forest resource" as defined in the Act. Further, CFRRs are being granted to ineligible communities that do not meet the criteria under Section 3(1)(i), which requires proof of a traditional role in protection and conservation of the land under claim. Such grants to ineligible entities have been facilitated by amendments to the FRA Rules themselves, whereby the presence of even a few Scheduled Tribes or OTFDs qualifies a Gram Sabha to submit a claim. Shockingly, scrutiny of 80 randomly selected sanctioned cases from districts in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh reveals that all are illegal recognitions. Meanwhile, genuine communities and eligible lands, such as sacred groves and customary rule-based managed areas awaiting formalisation under the FRA, have been excluded.

Unfortunately, misuse of the FRA has been continuously and systematically

ignored despite repeated complaints. Foresters objecting to ineligible claims in Sub-Divisional and District-level Committee meetings are often branded anti-tribal and persecuted. Pressurised, and frequently backed by political authorities and civil society, Committees tend to exceed the Act's provisions with impunity, without recognising that the long-term sustenance of forest rights depends on the sustainability of forest resources. While the MoTA issues regular instructions for reconsideration of rejected claims, it has never mandated scrutiny of approved claims, even on a sample basis. By reiterating that implementation responsibility lies with States and Union Territories, it overlooks the implication that reviewing rejected cases while ignoring illegally granted ones amounts to implicit permission for continued misuse.

Objective and verifiable scientific evidence must be treated as the primary defence against fraudulent claims, not merely a supplement to easily manipulated traditional evidence. The FRA Rules must therefore be amended to restore the high evidentiary value of satellite imagery and GPS data. The government, in accordance with Section 13 of the FRA, must demonstrate a genuine commitment to enforcing all existing laws.

Prosecution of powerful individuals misusing the FRA for land speculation or for harming the interests of genuine beneficiaries can act as a strong deterrent. While the Central Empowered Committee's recent action regarding alleged irregularities in IFRs granted to Podu cultivators in Telangana is welcome, rectifying errors requires significant resources and political neutrality. Comprehensive retraining must therefore be provided to Committee members to ensure strict implementation of the Act, and they must be held accountable for permitting demonstrably false claims.

The government should prioritise the establishment of a National Audit Mechanism for technology-based scrutiny of approved cases and cancellation of all illegally recognised rights. The MoTA, in collaboration with the FSI and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), must develop and maintain a centralised database to securely store GPS polygons and records of recognised claims nationwide. Given the scale of potential error, the FRA must not be allowed to undermine conservation laws or the rights of genuine, eligible forest dwellers.

Towards a home-grown knowledge ecosystem



India's Viksit Bharat aspiration by 2047 transcends traditional capital investment. While tangible infrastructure remains critical, the primary constraint to sustained, high-quality growth is the knowledge ecosystem deficit. To successfully transition from a middle-income economy to a fully developed nation, India must aggressively cultivate a robust, home-grown intellectual infrastructure; one encompassing R&D, credible think tanks, advanced data infrastructure, and scalable domestic innovation capacity.

India's gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) remains persistently low at just 0.65 per cent of GDP, far below advanced economies such as the US and Germany (3 per cent), as well as emerging markets like China (2 per cent). This places India well under the global average of approximately 1.8 per cent, reflecting a structural under-investment in innovation. This structural weakness is compounded by a profound imbalance: only about 5 per cent of India's R&D spending comes from the private sector, compared to approximately 70 per cent in the US.

While the 2025-26 Union Budget increased national R&D allocations to ₹61,028 crore, representing only 1.28 per cent of the Central Budget, the scale is still insufficient to trigger the kind of innovation acceleration India needs. The government's announcement of a ₹1 lakh crore Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund in 2025 could be transformative, but its impact will hinge on execution discipline and meaningful alignment with private-sector investment. For the fund to succeed, execution discipline must include transparent governance, mandated industry co-funding, and a focus on measurable outcomes tied to national priorities.

This chronic underinvestment depresses innovation output, technological absorption, and productivity growth. OECD studies show that a 1 per cent rise in business R&D increases productivity by approximately 0.13 per cent, and an equivalent increase in public R&D yields about 0.17 per cent productivity growth. If India does not correct its R&D deficit, it cannot realistically close its productivity gap with peer economies.

India's innovation output has improved. Patent grants have grown fourfold, from 7,509 (2010-11) to 28,391 (2020-21), and patent applications have risen from approximately 39,400 to 58,500 (Economic Survey 2022). In 2023, India was among the fastest-growing patent origins globally (WIPO). The gap, though, remains large. India's patent portfolio is still only a small fraction of China's or the United States', and over 70 per cent

of high-quality publications come from fewer than 200 institutions, signalling an ecosystem that remains narrow, institutionally shallow, and highly concentrated.

Yet India has proven that strategic investments yield transformative outcomes. ISRO's space programme, built on modest budgets and indigenous capabilities, has delivered world-class missions such as Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan at a fraction of global costs. India's digital public infrastructure (DPI) has revolutionised financial inclusion and service delivery and now serves as a model for developing nations worldwide. These successes demonstrate that when India invests in knowledge systems with clarity and commitment, the results can leapfrog conventional development paths. Talent is not the constraint. Institutional depth is.

A successful knowledge ecosystem requires more than isolated R&D labs; it needs the systemic translation of research into actionable policy and practice. Strong, independent domestic think tanks, policy centres, and data institutions are critical for:

- Contextualisation: Bridging the gap between academic research and on-the-ground implementation, generating timely, granular, India-focused data for evidence-based governance, which global firms often lack.
- Diffusion: Ensuring technology and best practices are adapted and diffused to MSMEs and lagging regions, mitigating the concentration of innovation within a few large firms or urban centres.
- Intellectual sovereignty: Protecting India's development agenda from being shaped by foreign-funded or non-contextual research, and offering a cost-efficient alternative to large, protracted global consulting engagements for structural and social reforms.

India's current policy research landscape remains fragmented. While NITI Aayog plays an important role in policy formulation, the broader ecosystem of independent think tanks and research institutions operates at a limited scale with constrained resources. Many rely heavily on external grants, limiting their ability to pursue long-term, strategic research agendas.

Global studies show that a 1 per cent increase in R&D intensity typically delivers a 0.13-0.17 per cent annual boost in productivity growth (OECD). Raising R&D spending could help India break into the upper-middle-income bracket, strengthen industrial competitiveness, and power high-skill job creation in digital technology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and clean technology.

To realise this vision, policymakers must act with long-term focus. Key steps should include: ● Raising R&D investment to globally competitive levels. Set a clear national target for R&D

intensity, for example, gradually increasing from approximately 0.65 per cent to at least 2 per cent of GDP by 2047, with an increasing share from the private sector. This will require not only higher government outlays but also incentives such as tax credits, grants, and public-private partnerships.

- Institutionalising long-term funding for domestic think tanks and policy research bodies. Create a dedicated Viksit Bharat Knowledge Fund or similar endowment, allowing multi-year grants, seed funding for new institutions, and stable operating resources.
- Building a National Knowledge Ecosystem. Link universities, research institutes, think tanks, industry, and government into a network that facilitates research, innovation, technology transfer, policy formulation, and diffusion of knowledge, especially to MSMEs and lagging regions.
- Promoting technology diffusion beyond large firms. Provide support for smaller firms and regional enterprises to adopt or adapt technologies through subsidies, incubation, outreach, and technical assistance.

- Expanding the notion of a "domestic Big Four" beyond consulting firms. Encourage the emergence of large, credible, Indian-owned knowledge institutions and think tanks that can compete globally in consultancy, policy research, data analytics, design, and technology transfer.

India's CSR spending has grown sharply, from ₹26,278 crore in FY22 to ₹34,909 crore in FY24 (Bharat CSR Performance Report, 2024), yet less than 3 per cent of this pool supports research, policy, or knowledge infrastructure. Redirecting even 5-10 per cent of CSR funding towards knowledge creation-such as think tanks, public data systems, applied research labs, and digital public goods-would significantly strengthen India's intellectual capacity. In parallel, industry must deepen its own R&D investment by leveraging fiscal incentives, building in-house research capabilities, and expanding industry-academia collaboration. Together, these shifts would reduce dependence on imported technologies and external consulting, while building the long-term competitiveness required for India's innovation-driven growth.

For India to become a developed nation, it must invest as much in brains, ideas, and institutions as in roads, ports, and industrial parks. Countries that mastered the knowledge game-South Korea, Germany, and Japan-used it to leapfrog into high-growth, high-productivity, high-innovation economies. India's story must now follow that path. Viksit Bharat requires Viksit Buddhi; a developed nation needs developed minds. The time to build is now.

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Understanding the Yogi factor



The figure of Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, invariably triggers a familiar, polarised debate. To his supporters, he is the 'Hindu Hriday Samrat', a decisive administrator who has restored order and pride. To his detractors, he is a deeply divisive communalist and a symbol of majoritarian assertion that undermines India's secular fabric. This binary, however, is a lazy and inadequate framework — a relic of an older political vocabulary that fails to capture the complexity of his political project. To understand Yogi Adityanath's enduring influence, one must look beyond the simplistic communal-versus-secular lens.

His politics represents a far more sophisticated and potent synthesis: a unique blend of spiritual authority from the Gorakhnath Peeth, a strategic project of "subaltern Hindutva", and a governance model framed around "Lok Kalyan" (public welfare). This model is rooted in a politics of labharthi (beneficiary) and a law-and-order situation unimaginable in Uttar Pradesh before 2017. It fulfils a public craving not just for a normal life but for a quality of life that many felt was sacrificed under the previous guise of social justice. These elements converge into a powerful form of identity politics that is fundamentally reshaping the Indian polity.

At the core of Yogi Adityanath's identity is his role as the Mahant, or head priest, of the Gorakhnath Peeth. This is not merely a religious title; it is the bedrock of his philosophical outlook and an autonomous source of political legitimacy. The Peeth, belonging to the Nath Panth tradition, carries a legacy of spiritual and temporal influence that predates modern political parties by centuries. This role grants him an authority insulated from the whims of party politics, setting him apart from career politicians. Crucially, the Peeth's ideology provides a philosophical bridge connecting the spiritual to the material.

The principle of 'Lok Kalyan' is central here. Adityanath articulates a vision in which spiritual values are not antithetical to material progress but are its very foundation. He has often stated that India's spiritual traditions provide a "moral compass to humanity", rooted in compassion and the principle of 'live and let live'. He argues that "spirituality, cultural advancement, and material development all require a safe, civilised, and clean environment". This philosophy allows him to seamlessly frame the construction of a temple and the building of an expressway as complementary, not contradictory, acts-both presented as sacred duties in the larger project of national rejuvenation.

This refutes the Western-inspired dichotomy that separates the sacred from the profane, offering a holistic vision in which development is imbued with cultural and spiritual meaning.

Perhaps the most politically astute element of the Yogi model is its project of 'subaltern Hindutva'-a conscious effort to broaden the social base of Hindu nationalism beyond its traditional upper-caste anchor. This is a strategic move to dismantle the caste-based political fortresses of parties such as the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, whose politics of social justice gradually converted into fiefdoms of specific families and castes. This re-engineering operates on multiple fronts. First, there is the radical inclusion historically associated with the Gorakhnath Peeth itself, an unorthodox institution known for its openness to lower castes.

Second, and more crucially, was the founding of the Hindu Yuva Vahini, an organisation that gave prominent positions and a sense of agency to youth from OBC and Dalit communities, alongside their mobilisation in the Ram Janmabhumi Andolan by his guru, Mahant Avaidyanath. This created a populist, often aggressive, form of 'non-Brahmin Hindutva'. It empowered non-dominant castes by tapping into their "anxieties and aspirations" — their desire for recognition and a share of power that they felt was denied to them by established 'social justice' parties. By offering a platform within a pan-Hindu identity, the Yogi model convinced a significant section of the subaltern electorate that their interests were better served by aligning with a majoritarian project than by remaining within caste-specific silos. This strategic inclusion is not about erasing caste but about subsuming it within a larger religious-political identity positioned against a perceived common 'other'.

This leads to the third pillar of his strategy: a distinct form of identity politics that constructs a pan-Hindu social coalition while positioning itself as a corrective to the "politics of appeasement", a term used to critique policies aimed at Muslim minorities. His discourse consistently contrasts this alleged appeasement with his government's commitment to 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', reflected in his labharthi politics. The implicit-and often explicit-message is the dawn of a new era in which the majority community receives its due. This is identity politics on a grand scale, appealing to a sense of historical grievance and majoritarian entitlement. The success of this strategy is starkly evident in electoral outcomes. The BJP, under his leadership, secured a massive majority in the 2022 State Assembly elections without fielding a single Muslim candidate.

Please read the complete article online at <https://www.dailypioneer.com>

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Thailand strikes Cambodia as border tensions flare

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Bangkok

Thailand launched airstrikes along the disputed border with Cambodia on Monday as both sides accused the other of breaking a ceasefire that halted fighting earlier this year.

Longstanding border disputes erupted into five days of combat in July that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians. US President Donald Trump pushed the Southeast Asian neighbours to sign a truce agreement in October, but tensions have continued to simmer.

The Thai army said that more than 50,000 people have left areas near the border for shelters, while Cambodia's Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said that residents of several villages near the border have been evacuated.

The latest round of clashes has killed at least one Thai soldier and four Cambodian civilians, officials said.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said in a televised speech that military operations would be carried out as necessary to defend the country and protect public safety.

"Thailand has never wished for violence. I'd like to reiterate



A wounded Thai soldier is carried to be transferred to a hospital in Sisaket province Thailand on Sunday after, according to a Thai army spokesperson, Cambodian troops fired into Thai territory

AP

that Thailand has never initiated a fight or an invasion, but will never tolerate a violation of its sovereignty," he said.

Fighting followed the exchange of fire on Sunday

The ceasefire was strained in early November after Thai troops were injured by land mines, leading Thailand to

announce that it would indefinitely suspend implementation of the agreement. Both sides continue to trade accusations over responsibility, even as they are supposed to be cooperating in getting rid of the mines.

Trump said in mid-November that he'd inter-

vened to preserve the ceasefire as tensions simmered between the two countries.

But another brief episode of fighting took place along the border Sunday, after which both sides said the other fired first. The Thai army said Cambodian fire injured two Thai soldiers, and Thai troops

retaliated, resulting in an exchange of fire that lasted around 20 minutes. Cambodia said that the Thai side fired first and that its own troops did not retaliate.

On Monday, Thai army spokesperson Maj. Gen. Winthai Suvarree said the Cambodian troops fired first into Thai territory in multiple areas. He said at least one Thai soldier was killed and about eight other soldiers were wounded, and civilians were being evacuated from the affected areas.

Thailand used aircraft "to strike military targets in several areas to suppress Cambodian supporting fire attacks," he said.

The Thai army said artillery rounds landed near residential areas on the Thai side, but reported no civilian casualties so far. Cambodian Defence Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata said the Thai military attacked the Cambodian troops first on Monday, and that Cambodia did not retaliate during the initial attacks.

"Cambodia urges that Thailand immediately stop all hostile activities that threaten peace and stability in the region," she said.

Neth Pheaktra, the Cambodian Minister of

Information, said fire from Thai forces killed four Cambodian civilians and injured about nine others.

The prime minister of regional neighbour Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, called for restraint in a statement posted to social media and said that his country is ready to support efforts to avert further fighting.

"Our region cannot afford to see long-standing disputes slip into cycles of confrontation," he wrote.

Centuries of rivalry lie beneath the territorial dispute Thailand and Cambodia have a history of enmity going back centuries, when they were warring empires.

Their modern territorial claims stem largely from a 1907 map drawn when Cambodia was under French colonial rule, which Thailand has argued is inaccurate.

The International Court of Justice in 1962 awarded sovereignty to Cambodia over an area that included the 1,000-year-old Preah Vihear temple, which still rankles many Thais.

The ceasefire does not spell out a path to resolve the underlying basis of the dispute, the longstanding differences over where the border should run.

Earthquake triggers tsunami on northern coast of Japan



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Tokyo

A powerful 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck off northern Japan on Monday, triggering a tsunami of up to 40 centimetres in coastal communities in the region, the Japanese Meteorological Agency said.

The agency said the magnitude quake struck just east of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main Honshu island, and just south of Hokkaido island. It said a tsunami of 40

centimetres struck the Hokkaido prefecture town of Urakawa and the Aomori prefecture port of Mutsu Ogawara. Several people were injured at a hotel in the Aomori town of Hachinohe, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, in a brief comment to reporters, said the government set up an emergency task force to urgently assess the extent of damage. "We are putting people's lives first and doing everything we can," she said.

'One Battle After Another' leads Golden Globe nominations



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Beverly Hills (US)

Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" scored a leading nine nominations to the 83rd Golden Globe Awards on Monday, adding to the Oscar favourite's momentum and handing Warner Bros. A victory amid its deal to be acquired by Netflix.

"One Battle After Another" landed nominations for its cast – Leonardo DiCaprio, Teyana Taylor, Sean Penn and Chase Ininiti – along with nods for Anderson's screenplay and

direction. It's competing in the Globes' category for comedy and musicals.

Close on its heels was Joachim Trier's "Sentimental Value," a Norwegian family drama about a filmmaking family. The Neon release's eight nominations included nods for four of its actors: Stellan Skarsgard, Renate Reinsve, Elle Fanning and Inga Lbsdotter Lilleaas.

The Globe nominations, a tattered but persistent rite in Hollywood, are coming on the heels of a potentially seismic shift in entertainment.

UK care home agency boss jailed for hiring Indian migrants illegally

PRESS TRUST OIF INDIA ■ London

A director of a care home agency based in south-east England has been jailed for two-and-a-half years after being found guilty of repeatedly employing immigrants from India with no right to work in the UK.

Benoy Thomas was convicted after a trial at Lewes Crown Court in July and sentenced on Friday, the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said.

The 50-year-old was found to have recruited Indian nationals to work as care assistants through his A Class Care Recruitment Ltd at Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex, despite being aware of their illegal migration status.

"Benoy Thomas knowingly breached immigration laws by employing people who had no right to work in the UK," Katie Samways, Specialist Prosecutor for CPS South East, said in a statement.

"Many of those he illegally employed were working with some of the most vulnerable people without adequate training or medical expertise, putting the safety and well-being of those who needed care at significant risk.

"The Crown Prosecution Service will continue to prosecute those who exploit our immigration system," she said.

An investigation by Immigration Enforcement, an agency of the UK Home Office, determined that Thomas assisted the "unlawful immigration" of 13 individuals between 2017 and 2018.

UAE-backed separatists tighten grip of southern Yemen

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Aden

The airspace of war-torn Yemen was briefly closed Monday, an official said, as tensions escalated in the country's south after a separatist group, backed by the United Arab Emirates, took over of an oil-rich region in a rift that could fracture the anti-Houthi alliance.

A Yemeni government official said that the Saudi-led coalition didn't issue required permissions for flights to or from Yemen, briefly halting flights to and from the southern city of Aden – the seat of the internationally recognized government.

The official described the move as a "Saudi message" to the separatist Southern Transitional Council's latest clashes across southern Yemen, including its seizure of much of the sprawling oil-rich province of Hadhramaut, which borders Saudi Arabia.

The move was later reversed, allowing flight operations in Aden airport, where hundreds of passengers were stranded for hours, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorised to brief the media.

An Associated Press journalist at the airport said workers have begun processing pas-

sengers of a Cairo-bound flight that was supposed to take off early Monday.

Since the entry of a Saudi-led coalition into Yemen's war in 2015, the coalition has controlled the country's airspace. Saudi Arabia didn't acknowledge closing Yemen's airspace on Monday.

The Southern Transitional Council (STC) – an umbrella of armed groups trained and financed by the UAE – has expanded its control over Yemen's south earlier this month.

They seized control of Seiyun in Hadhramaut, including crucial oil fields and energy installations following brief clashes with

the Yemeni military, and allied tribes.

Forces of the secessionist group were deployed across the strategic Wadi Hadramout area, which includes major urban centres and military bases, according to STC-allied media. They took over the presidential palace and the international airport in Seiyun last week, and advanced to the province of Mahra, which borders Oman, the group said.

STC hoisted the flag of South Yemen over government buildings across the country's south including on the border crossing with Oman. Images circulated on STC-allied media showed the South Yemen flag,

with its light blue chevron and a red star, flying over government buildings and schools in the south.

The separatists enjoy loyalty through much of southern Yemen and have repeatedly pushed to break up Yemen into two countries, as it was between 1967 and 1990.

Hundreds of STC supporters took to the streets in Aden to call for the establishment of an independent state in the south.

The demonstrators raised the flag of South Yemen, and pictures of Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the STC leader, who is also vice president of the country.

Rubio, Hegseth meet Australian counterparts on Indo-Pacific security

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Washington

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth are meeting their Australian counterparts Monday in Washington for annual talks expected to focus on Indo-Pacific security and countering China's increasing assertiveness in the region, including in the South China Sea and directed at Taiwan.

Rubio, Hegseth, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Defence Minister Richard Marles gathered at the State Department, with many eyes also on the Russia-Ukraine war, fragile ceasefire in Gaza and US military strikes against alleged drug traffickers in the Western Hemisphere that have raised questions about the use of force there.

"This is a very strong partnership, it's a strong alliance, and what we want to do is continue to build on it. We

think we have a lot of momentum behind this alliance," Rubio said, hailing cooperation between Washington and Canberra on critical minerals, defense production and troop deployments.

None of the four mentioned China by name in their brief comments to reporters before the formal meeting began, but the challenges posed by Beijing throughout the Pacific and elsewhere for years have been a central theme of the US-Australia relationship.

President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese signed a critical minerals deal at the White House in October after China imposed tougher rules on exporting its own critical minerals, used in technology from cellphones to fighter jets and of which Beijing is the top producer and processor.

After Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met last

that month, Beijing said it would pause those rules for a year. "We have to have critical mineral supplies and supply chains that are reliable, and that are diverse, and not overly invested in one place where they can be used as leverage against us or our partners of the world," Rubio said Monday.

One element of that is the AUKUS pact, a Biden administration-era agreement under which the US, Britain and Australia committed to building an Australian fleet of submarines powered by US nuclear technology.

Rubio is to meet later Monday with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper. "The alliance has always been to ensure it delivers concrete benefits for our security and prosperity and for that of the US. And AUKUS is central to that: a win for Australia, a win for the US and a win for the United Kingdom," Wong said.

China positive on Putin's India visit; calls for stronger trilateral cooperation

PRESS TRUST OF IDNIA ■ Beijing

China on Monday reacted positively to Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India, framing the three countries as an important part of the Global South and saying that sound trilateral ties are conducive to regional and global peace and stability, besides their own national interests.

"China, Russia and India are emerging economies and important members of the Global South," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here, reacting for the first time to Putin's high-profile visit to New Delhi last week and his interactions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Guo said that the "three countries maintaining sound relations is not only in line with their own interests but also conducive to regional



and global peace, security, stability and prosperity".

Putin's visit was watched here closely, considering Beijing's close and strong ties with Moscow.

Responding to a question about Putin's comments about New Delhi and Beijing ahead of his visit, Guo said that "China stands ready to work with Russia and India to continue advancing the bilateral relations".

In an interview ahead of his visit, Putin had said, "India and

China are our closest friends – we treasure that relationship deeply."

On India-China relations – currently on a path of normalisation after the Eastern Ladakh confrontation, which resulted in a freeze in ties from 2020 until last year –

Guo said China wants to promote sustained and strong ties with New Delhi with a long-term perspective. "On China-India ties, China stands ready to work with India to view and handle the

bilateral relationship from a strategic height and long-term perspective, promote the sustained, sound and steady development of China-India ties, so as to better benefit the two countries and two peoples and make due contributions to peace and prosperity in Asia and beyond," he said.

Besides terming New Delhi and Beijing as close friends of Moscow, Putin, in the interview with an Indian news channel, also expressed confidence that the leaderships of India and China are committed to finding solutions to their issues, and Russia has no right to interfere in their bilateral affairs.

Chinese official media highlighted Putin's comments on India-China relations.

The state-run Xinhua news agency carried his remarks refuting US accusations over India's purchases of Russian oil.

Corio Deepwater Port: India's strategic gateway to South America



JAVIER PAULINICH

As India accelerates its global economic expansion, the need for diversified and resilient supply chains has become central to long-term national planning. With nearly 90 per cent of global trade dependent on maritime routes, India's future industrial growth, food security, and energy transition hinge on access to strategic ports around the world.

In this context, the Corio Deepwater Port in southern Peru emerges as a rare geo-economic opportunity—an asset capable of shaping India's commercial and strategic trajectory for the next 30 to 50 years.

Its 28-metre natural depth and scalable capacity of over 100 million tonnes position it as one of the deepest and most future-ready ports on the Pacific

coast of South America, offering India an unprecedented gateway into a resource-rich continent.

Peru's importance to India is rooted in both mineral security and agricultural diversification. As the world's third-largest copper producer, Peru holds the key to India's rising demand for critical minerals essential for renewable energy, electric mobility, data centers, and advanced electronics.

With India projected to import more than 90 per cent of its copper needs by 2047, securing steady access to Peru's southern mining corridor becomes strategically indispensable. At the same time, Peru's \$24 billion agricultural transformation has positioned it as a global powerhouse for high-value agro-exports such as avocados, blueberries, quinoa, grapes, and specialty grains.

By 2040, Peru's agro-exports are expected to triple to \$40 billion, creating new avenues for India to diversify food imports and build integrated cold-chain and logistics networks.

What makes Corio uniquely valuable is its ability to serve as a continental gateway. The port connects India not



only to Peru but to four additional South American economies—Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile—each with substantial reserves of minerals, lithium, agricultural commodities, and industrial products.

This single-entry platform allows Indian companies to access the broader Andean, Amazonian, and Southern Cone

markets through interconnected overland routes. For example, Bolivia and Argentina provide strategic lithium access, Brazil's western states offer soy and protein exports, and northern Chile adds further copper and mineral capacity. Corio thus becomes India's multi-country springboard into South America.

A dedicated Corio-Visakhapatnam

(Vizag) maritime axis can further transform trade flows between India and South America. Vizag, one of India's leading deepwater ports, is already a major industrial and export hub on the eastern coast.

A direct corridor linking Vizag with Corio would create predictable, high-volume trade routes for copper, lithium, grains, and fresh produce outbound from South America, while enabling inbound shipments of Indian pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, heavy machinery, engineering goods, and digital infrastructure solutions. Such balanced cargo flows reduce empty return voyages and improve shipping economics, making the corridor attractive for private investment, Indian shipping lines, and long-term logistics planning.

Realising this opportunity requires proactive strategy. India should consider forming a public-private investment consortium, initiating government-level engagement with Peru, and commissioning an Indian-led pre-feasibility and ESG baseline study tailored to India's long-term needs.

Aligning Corio with India's critical

mineral plan and maritime strategy would ensure sustained national benefits. Ultimately, Corio is far more than a port—it is a strategic bridge to South America's natural resources, agricultural strength, and industrial potential.

For long-term investors, it represents a rare infrastructure platform capable of delivering commercial viability, supply-chain resilience, and geopolitical value for decades to come.

The Corio Deepwater Port is a rare, next-generation infrastructure asset. Situated in Peru's Arequipa region, it offers a natural depth of 28 metres—among the deepest on South America's Pacific coast—making it capable of accommodating Very Large Bulk Carriers (VLBCs). This depth, coupled with a scalable capacity exceeding 100 million tonnes per year, positions Corio as a long-term maritime platform that can evolve in tandem with India's expanding industrial and logistical requirements.

This article has been written by Amb. Javier Paulinich, the Ambassador of the Republic of Peru, presently stationed in New Delhi.



Chai Bisket, the pioneers of Telugu digital entertainment for over a decade, announced the official public launch of Chai Shots, India's first regional short-series OTT platform. Built specifically for the "Third Screen" – the smartphone, Chai Shots offers premium, vertical, scripted entertainment with episodes under 2 minutes, designed to turn daily micro-moments into storytelling experiences. Rana Daggubati guest of the event. At Park Hyatt, Hyderabad



Hyderabad witnessed a night of inspiration, pride, and powerful stories as She's India, an exclusive and heartfelt pageant, brought together 23 remarkable women from all walks of life. With participants ranging from the age of 18 to 81, the event stood as a living testament to the fact that strength, beauty, and ambition know no age. For further information, collaborations, or participation in upcoming initiatives, please connect with the She's India team.



Expanding marketing, increasing sales, team responsibilities, cash flow issues, profitable business model, hiring a high-performing team and other important factors are important for achieving development in business sectors, said Venu Kalyan, a prominent business development strategist. The 'Ultimate Business Mastery' workshop on the topic 'How to achieve development in the business sector?' was held on Monday at Taj Vivanta, Begumpet, Hyderabad, under the auspices of Unique Life Organization. About 300 industrialists and businessmen from the service, industries, textile, hospitality management, MSME, real estate, net marketing, insurance and other sectors from the states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka attended the workshop, which was led by Unique Life Organization.



Students should move forward with discipline and patriotism, as it will lead to good results and contribute positively to society, said Deputy Commandant, Army Major General Puneet Kapoor. He attended the Pancha Bhooth Sports Day program held at Meridian School, Banjara Hills, as the chief guest. The cultural programs performed by the students impressed the audience. Meridian Educational Institutions Founder Butta Renuka, Principal Poonam Jha, Vice Principal Rahat Rashid, and others participated in the event.

75,000 indians ditch traditional forex cards as wise travel card launches

Wise has launched its multi-currency travel card in India today, entering the market just as the country records its highest-ever outbound travel figures and heads into peak international travel season. India's outbound travel surged to a record 3.89 crore departures in 2024, driven by leisure travel (42.5%), diaspora visits (34.7%) and business trips (14.9%). Spending has jumped even more dramatically – prior to FY22, Indians spent roughly \$3-4 billion annually on overseas holidays according to data from the LRS, but over the last two years, this has shot up to an average of \$17 billion. Despite this travel boom, Indians continue losing substantial amounts to non-transparent markups applied on the exchange rate by traditional forex providers. Banks and travel companies have long dominated India's forex card market, with most providers adding 2-4% margins to currency conversions – costs that are rarely made explicit to customers. On a 22 lakh foreign currency conversion, these hidden markups can cost travellers 74,000-78,000 extra compared to the mid-market rate. The Wise Travel card, available from today, uses the mid-market exchange rate – the rate visible on Google – with only a small, transparent conversion fee. Over 75,000 people joined the Wise Travel card waitlist in just a month, announced at the Global Fintech Festival, signalling demand for a transparent alternative to traditional forex cards. They want transparency, convenience, and a great product experience. We're excited to bring this to international spending in India, just as the travel season kicks off," said Taneia Bhargava, South Asia Expansion Lead at Wise. Wise is waiving its standard 460 INR card issuance fee for customers who sign up before 10 February 2026. The card carries no annual fees, subscription charges or inactivity penalties.

Hyderabad pickleball league credicon mavericks set for major home showdown against team titans

The Credicon Mavericks are set to light up the city on Wednesday, December 10, 6 PM onwards, as they host a high-energy home match against Team Titans, adding fresh momentum to the rapidly growing pickleball movement in Hyderabad. The clash will be played at The League, Financial District, with an enthusiastic hometown crowd expected to show up in full force. The Hyderabad Pickleball League (HPL) known for its franchise-owned, auction-driven format, has been a major sporting attraction this season. Compact match formats, stadium-style energy within the city, and the blend of top-tier racquet talent are driving fan interest and community engagement like never before. "Hyderabad loves fast, competitive sport and pickleball is proving to be the perfect fit," said Abhishek, spokesperson of Credicon Mavericks. "Our supporters have been incredible, and we are ready to give them a performance to remember on Wednesday." Matchdays at HPL go beyond sport with food & beverage counters, family cheering zones, fan chants, customised banners, and city-focused fandom emerging across the stands.

Loca Loka, the globally acclaimed tequila brand, co-founded by entrepreneur Sree Harsha Vadlamudi, actor Rana Daggubati and composer Anirudh Ravichander, makes an entry into India's booming premium spirits market today, ushering in a new era for agave aficionados. The brand, which debuted internationally in late 2024 in the US and Southeast Asia has since expanded distribution across multiple markets, will introduce its Blanco and Reposado variants to Indian audiences. Loca Loka was imagined in India and authentically produced in Jalisco, marrying Mexican distillation heritage with Indian creative sensibilities, hence its name: Loca (Spanish for "crazy") meets Loka (Sanskrit for "world"). Since launch, the brand has earned serious shelf credibility, including medals at prestigious international competitions, and has been steadily building a premium foothold in duty-free and key export markets as part of their international strategy designed to build global equity before local release. The India debut signals a targeted push into urban,

experience-led retail and on-trade channels across the country. The launch was the talk of the town as the brand hosted an exclusive, invite-only tasting and conversation where the three founders explored the nuances of the tequila. Loca Loka Blanco and Reposado, that picked up medals at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2025. See Harsha Vadlamudi, co-founder and CEO, Rana Daggubati, Anirudh Ravichander, co-founder. Willy Bañuelos Ramirez, Head of Production at the Jalisco distillery, Loca Loka carries forward a legacy of precision and pride. Joining the founders at the India launch, Willy added "Bringing Loca Loka to India feels like the most natural next chapter in our journey."

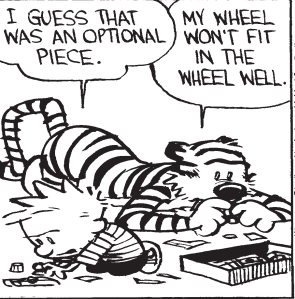


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



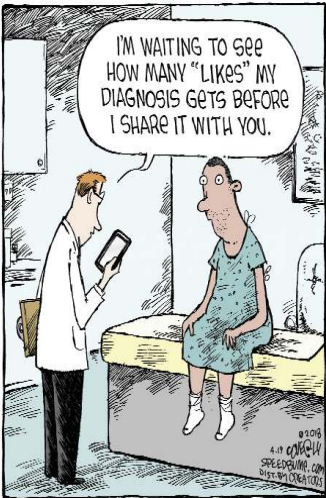
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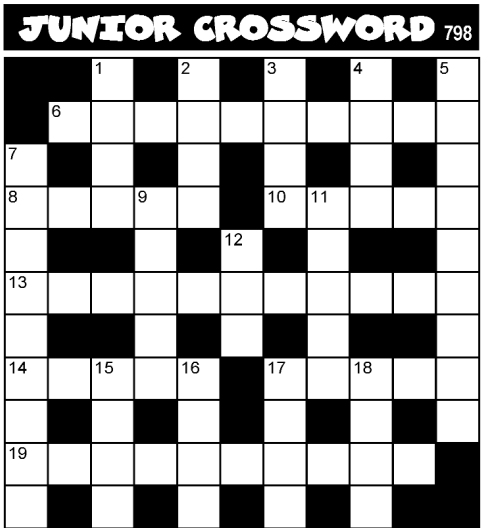
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



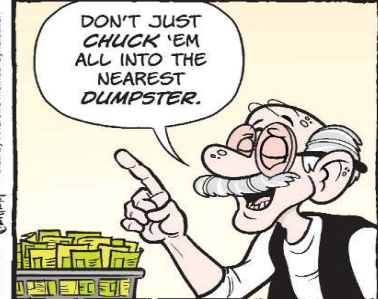
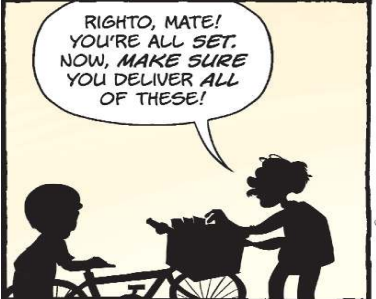
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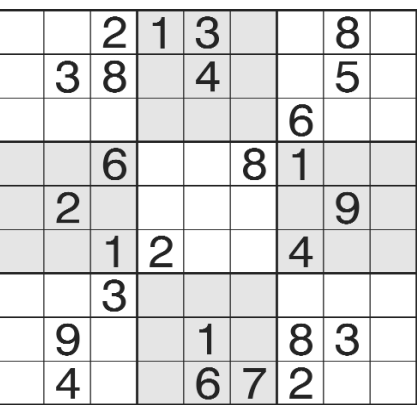
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A railway engine
- Wear these on fingers
- An orchestra conductor's stick
- Glass buildings for growing plants
- Small cities
- Nairobi is the capital of this country in Africa
- In the middle of lots of people

DOWN

- A day of the week
- Opposite of dull
- The colour of grass
- Make smile or laugh
- Timid
- This lives in soil
- Cold winter flakes
- He wears a crown
- Require

SOLUTION 797



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BLASÉ CAPITAL

SENSEX-ED



Yesterday, the Sensex, or the Bombay Stock Exchange index fell by 600 points. It was kind of unexpected since it had turned around its southward movement over the past few sessions. Once, the pundits began to explain the reasons behind the fall, there was a feeling of hollowness, and inexplicability about them. For example, one of the factors was the two-day meeting of the US Federal Reserve Board, which was expected to announce another minor rate cut. But then this was expected for weeks, and one thought that the stock markets, like it does with future expected events, had discounted it. Indeed, one of the reasons for the earlier rises was that the minor rate cut was unlikely to change things materially in the form of foreign outflows, which are turbo-charged when the US interest rates seem attractive, and the money flies to a safer less-risky haven.

Another factor that the experts harped on was the fall of the rupee, and it having crossed the ₹90 mark against the dollar. One can partially accept it. But then again, the rupee breached ₹90 days ago, and has firmed up since then, or at least has not gone down further, as the Reserve Bank of India stepped in to support the currency. One thought that the investors would be enthused by the intervention. No one can say, Maybe they believe the doomsayers, who contend that it is a matter of when, and not if, for the rupee to fall to ₹100 a dollar. Maybe the investors were more concerned by the central bank's opinion, which chimed with that of the finance minister, rather than the former's actions. In the recent past, both maintained that they have no target for the rupee, and the currency needs to find its stable, steady, and appropriate level.

The stock markets are uncertain about the India-US trade deal, which has been delayed. Thus, they reacted to the growing apprehensions. One can flip this argument, and contend that an American delegation is on its way to New Delhi to discuss the tariffs. This is good news as it shows an urgency among the two nations. Indian ministers have repeatedly claimed that an agreement will be in place by December 2025 since most of the issues are finalised, and the two sides need to dot the i's, and cross the t's. Of course, the investors are peeved that the earlier deadline was November 2025. But that one passed more than a week ago. Why should the Sensex and Nifty crash on December 8? This factor seems to be a non-factor that was cooked up by some of the experts as a reasonable factor to provide some logic to the market madness on Monday.

Several analysts reiterated a view that the Indian valuations were overstretched. For several months, in fact this entire year, valuations were raised as a worry. This is one of the major reasons why the markets behaved so erratically during 2025, and Indian equities were among the worst performers among Asian peers, and emerging markets. Hence, a concern about a persistent past concern, which has shaken up investors for more than 11 months, cannot be a legitimate one to explain a one-day fall of 600 points. Another twisted logic: Same analysts say in the same breath that steady (domestic) inflows, and long-term retail participation suggest continued optimism. In addition, high valuations may persist, supported by investor confidence, and consistent domestic equity inflows. Please explain clearly whether valuations are stretched or not, whether investors will sell to book profits or not, or whether the high valuations do not matter because of the steady inflows. We are suitably confused.

To add to the confusion and uncertainty, the stock markets went down on Monday because of the steady outflows by foreign investors. For months, and throughout this year, the foreigners have proved to be net sellers in the secondary market. Yet, they have aggressively participated in the IPOs (Initial Public Offerings), which provides clear hints that they feel the listed stocks are overvalued, and there are chances to earn higher returns on new stocks. But again, this trend is evident for the past several months, and is nothing new. It is not that on Monday the foreigners dumped the stocks. One can add this as a factor if the Indian equities had consistently gone down due to this regularly-occurring trend. But stocks went up in the past few sessions, and the same analysts remarked that this was the great turnaround, which would push the Sensex past 1,00,000 points by December 2026. Moreover, one is unsure which section is more important, foreigners or domestic investors.

At one level, the net selling by the foreigners pulls down the market indices. At another, there is a feeling that valuations will remain stretched because of huge domestic inflows. There is a tussle between the two, and one is not sure who will win. Both cannot, or maybe they can. The foreigners will book profits, and the locals will take valuations to higher levels to book profits later. A clear win-win.

Marathon, steeplechase & sprint

In the third global business race, India is fast losing to China

It was a manufacturing marathon. While India and China were the favourites, South Korea, Taiwan, and Brazil were the dark horses. India lost, China won, and the smaller Asian nations stood on the podium. In the steeplechase in the software and hardware space, India and China are the joint winners. The former vaulted over the oceans to emerge as the world's IT leader, and China overcame the obstacles to directly compete with the US in chips, and Artificial Intelligence. In the ongoing healthcare sprint, while China is about to touch the tape, India has not even left the blocks.

Until a few years ago, 'Big Pharma' in the West focused on the discovery and launches of billion-dollar blockbuster drugs, India became the global supplier of generics (off-patent medicines), and China mastered the science of Active Pharma Ingredients (APIs). Today, after America, China is the world's largest developer of new molecules and drugs. According to a recent article in 'The Economist,' Chinese firms conducted a third of the global clinical trials last year and, in the first six months of 2025, they were responsible for a third of the licensing deals signed by 'Big Pharma.'

Over the next decade, the battles in areas such as biosciences, medical research, and discovery of life-saving medicines (cancer) will be aggressively fought between China and America. India is more likely to pursue its generics journey, and take advantage of the steep 'patent cliffs,' "as drugs expected to generate more than \$300 billion in total revenues over the next six years will lose their patent protection by 2030. Yet again, India will be left behind in this third global race. Americans and Europeans, who will intensify their global searches for new molecules, will increasingly find them in China.

The signs are visible, and the writing on the medical wall is getting clearer. Early this year,

Pfizer, the largest manufacturer in the US, paid \$1.25 billion to a Chinese biotech firm for the rights to make-and-sell a new cancer drug. GlaxoSmithKline of Britain paid \$500 million to another Chinese firm for lung-disease treatment, and unbelievably committed a further \$12 billion for 11 drugs in the pipeline. China's share in global licensing has gone up four times in four years. In comparison, except for a small oasis of new discoveries, India is way behind despite a slew of ongoing clinical trials.

Like the Indian market, the Chinese one is rugged, and difficult. Both are price-sensitive, with political and social pressures to enable the poor to access the medicines. In China, "state insurance covers most purchases," which forces private firms into "bidding wars." Drugmakers need to "slash prices by half or more to reach a wide patient pool." Hence, it made sense for the Chinese, as well as Indians, to work with generics, which are cheaper. India extended the business model in the overseas markets, either by exporting, or setting up generics' plants in the West. China chose differently.

In conjunction with the policy-makers, Chinese firms looked at America and Europe as "big prizes," or markets where they could sell new drugs, rather than continue to export generics or APIs. They decided to boost research, and ink licensing agreements with 'Big Pharma' to boost profits, and margins. According to the article in 'The Economist,' "A growing model is the 'New-Co,' under which a biotech company sets up a legally distinct company in America, often backed by foreign investors, and spins off promising assets into it." Since 'Big Pharma' spends billions of dollars to launch a new drug, the deals with Chinese pharma seem lucrative, and tempting.

Governance models make a huge difference. In the recent past, India has struggled with clinical trials due to irregularities, even illegality, which were highlighted by the judiciary, and activists. These rightfully delayed, and derailed them. In China, the period to secure human trials shrank from more than 500 days to less than 90. Unlike India, the workforce at China's regulator quadrupled, and cleared a backlog of 20,000 drug applications within two years. Despite reforms, Indian drugmakers continue to complain about

red tape. In a sense, China has reinvented regulation. One is not sure if it is for better or worse, but it has speeded up the approval processes.

Of course, given the existing security, economic, energy, business, defence, and trade tensions between China and the West, China's regulatory framework is being questioned and scrutinised. The US drug regulator is stricter when it deals with medicines based on clinical trials only in China. There are concerns about data security, and data privacy. The US halted trials that exported American genetic data to China. The US policy-makers, states the piece in 'The Economist,' "fret about the security risks at the junction of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology." India faces some of these challenges as the US questions its drug-efficacy data.

This explains the Indians' penchant to make generics in America through the inorganic M&A route. China innovated to produce "fast followers," which enhance the safety and/or delivery of the existing drugs. The next step was to move on to the "first-in-class" medicines, which have proteins or genes, or mechanisms to boost functions. The first, according to experts, provided the firms with the courage to do the second. This led to the making of new drugs. For example, according to a media report, of the 160 obesity drugs in development across the world, a third are being made in China.

India has the potential for drug discoveries. The skills, management, and research were evident during the pandemic, when India emerged as a leading drugmaker, and a low-cost exporter. But this was due to the help from the Government, which cajoled and pushed the private sector. Similar impetus lacks in other cases, and Indian firms are generally happy with their march in the generics segment. They are low-hanging fruits, with ample margins, especially when they are sold in the US and Europe. In most cases, Indian firms lack the risk-taking abilities to spend billions on a new discovery.

However, as of now, China, which won the manufacturing race comfortably, and raced ahead in chips and AI, is comfortably placed in healthcare and biosciences. India needs to build an efficient ecosystem to achieve similar results. It has the right ingredients such as scientific temper, cheap manpower, research and manufacturing units, and government support. What it requires is access to foreign capital, and a change in entrepreneurial mindset so that producers switch from off-patent mentality to new-patent one.

OUR TAKE



The Cynical Optimist

India goes, India grounded

Why does competition invariably crash in the aviation sector?



acquire aircraft. In most cases, the planes are purchased before the demand increases, which create a lag time before the investments pay off. Despite the lucrative finance-and-lease deals offered by the manufacturers, airlines can find themselves in a tailspin, and get stuck in financial air-pockets. Several airlines are in trouble because either they buy too many planes, and are forced to operate them on low-profit routes, or buy too less, and lose volumes, and market shares on high-profit ones. It is a delicate balance that keeps changing, and needs to be tweaked.

Thus, the levers to control and manage costs fall on manpower since most other expenses are necessary, and continuous. This forces even the dominant and successful airlines, or rather only these ones, to short-circuit salaries and benefits. This implies that they understaff certain areas, overwork others, and underpay most. This creates a vice-like cycle of safety concerns combined with apathy and unhappiness among the employees. Morale is down, even as the senior management claims profitability over a few years. The medium-term

impact is quite like what happened to IndiGo.

Policies, regulations, and external non-controllable factors play a part. For instance, the global prices of crude oil and, hence, aviation fuel fluctuates, and eats into profits. In several quarters, IndiGo went from profits to losses, largely because of the prices of aviation fuel. Sudden policy changes impact operational and business models, especially for low-cost airlines. Regulations can create havoc, and force the planes to fly off the radar. The flight-schedule rules imposed by the regulator after the recent crash in Ahmedabad apparently forced Indigo's delays, and cancellations. The low-cost structure spun out of control, which was blamed on management errors.

According to experts, aviation fuel accounts for 20-30 per cent of the total costs, and the prices can be highly-volatile. Leased engines, and aircraft result in "significant fixed monthly rent payment," which is around 16 per cent of the revenues. Add the various taxes such as landing fees, gate charges, and navigation fees, which account for another nine per cent of the revenues.

The Pioneer

SINCE 1865

BRIEFLY

DORTMUND BEATS HOFFENHEIM 2-0 IN BUNDESLIGA



Former Tottenham defender Mauricio Taricco will resign as assistant coach of South Korean champion Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors after receiving a five-match ban for an alleged racist gesture during a K League game, the club said on Tuesday. On November 8 as Jeonbuk faced Daejeon Hana, the Argentine assistant was sent off by referee Kim Woo-seong for vehemently protesting a penalty decision. Subsequently, Taricco placed his index fingers besides the corner of his eyes – a gesture the referee interpreted as racist and reported to the league’s disciplinary committee. On November 19, the committee banned Taricco for five games and fined him 20 million won (\$13,646). The 52-year-old, who featured for Tottenham between 1998 and 2004 and also played for Ipswich Town, West Ham and Brighton in England, denied any racist intent, insisting that he was asking the official if he had seen the incident.

HORNBILL E-SPORTS FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN KOHIMA



The Hornbill Esports Festival 2025, the second edition of Nagaland’s premier competitive gaming showcase, will feature competition in three categories including E-chess. The event that began Monday is being organised by the Esports Association of Nagaland (ESAN) in collaboration with the Department of Youth Resources and Sports. Speaking at the inaugural session, Abu Metha, advisor to the Chief Minister and Vice President of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), said, “E-Sports is a modern-day trend and a billion-dollar industry that cannot be ignored.” He emphasised that Nagaland does not want its youth to miss opportunities in this fast-growing sector.

India beat Wales in FIH Junior Women’s World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Santiago (Chile)

Out of quarterfinal contention, India defeated Wales 3-1 to remain in the hunt for a ninth-place finish at the FIH Junior Women’s World Cup. Hina Bano (14’), Sunelita Toppo (24’), and Ishika (31’) scored for India, while Eloise Moat (52’) netted the lone goal for Wales. India had logged two wins and a loss to finish outside the top eight in the pool stage. In Sunday’s match, India began with a penalty corner in the first 30 seconds. They were playing between the lines to carve out opportunities on regular occasions, but couldn’t find the opening goal early on. Wales had the opportunity



ty to surge ahead with a penalty stroke, but were denied by Nidhi as she made a sharp stop to keep the scores level. India eventually managed to break the deadlock towards the end of the first quarter, courtesy a tap-in from Hina after some neat work by Sakshi Rana. Looking to double their

advantage, India maintained the pressure with another penalty corner at the start of the second quarter. They continued to create chances regularly, and were rewarded for their persistence after Rana’s initial shot fell in the way of Sunelita, who made no mistake from close range. With 14 circle penetrations in the first half, India held a deserving 2-0 lead at the break. India extended their lead to 3-0 early in the second half as Ishika found the back of the net after a rebound from the Welsh goalkeeper fell in her way. Jyoti Singh’s side controlled the tempo of the game, stretching the Welsh defense by playing between the lines and pressing high, while remaining disciplined and compact at the back. India continued to create chances, pushing Wales back in their own half to close out the third quarter. With the lion’s share of possession, India remained in pursuit of more goal-scoring opportunities to further increase their advantage in the final quarter. Wales had an opening on the other end and Eloise Moat (52nd) made it count, pulling one back for her side. However, that only proved to be a consolation goal as India held firm to secure a well-deserved 3-1 win. India will next play Uruguay on Tuesday and the winner of this match will progress to the ninth place showdown. The losing team will fight for the 11th spot in the overall standings.

1191 posts lying vacant in SAI: Sports minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday acknowledged that over 1,000 posts are currently lying vacant in the Sports Authority of India (SAI), a concern that was highlighted in a recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report which had described the body as “critically” under-funded and under-staffed. The minister was responding to a question from Congress MP Adoor Prakash, who represents Kerala’s Attingal constituency, in Lok Sabha. Asked whether the government has noted the concerns raised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee over severe shortage of funds and staff in SAI, Mandaviya said, “The Government has taken note of the observations.” “A total of 1,191 posts are lying vacant in the SAI. The recruitment process of certain posts has already been initiated,” he added. In its report in August, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on sports, headed by Congress’ Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh, observed that about 45 per cent of sanctioned posts in the SAI are



Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi

presently vacant. “The fact that these short-falls in staff are being managed through contractual appointment may at best be only an ad hoc arrangement,” it had pointed out. The Committee, which also includes cricketer and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, and BJP MPs Sambit Patra and Bansuri Swaraj, among others, expressed “grave” concern over the shortage of staff and low funding of SAI. The panel “heard the views” of Sports Secretary, and SAI representatives in its meeting held on June 6 this year. It commended the recruit-

THE GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED ₹3,794 CRORE TO THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS. OF THIS ₹830 CRORE WERE EARMARKED FOR SAI

ment drive to fill up these vacancies but asked the Sports Ministry to complete the process in the next six months and “furnish an Action Taken Report (ATR).” In its annual budget this year, the government allocated ₹3,794 crore to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Of this ₹830 crore were earmarked for SAI. “The budget allocation to SAI is based on the proposals submitted by them for the respective financial year. Any additional requirements that arise during the year are examined at the RE stage and, where appropriate, considered through supplementary grants,” the minister stated in Lok Sabha. Dealing with sexual harassment To another question on whether the government has a consolidated record of sexual harassment complaints filed by sportspersons, the minister reiterated that no such dedicated database exists. He, however, listed the measures that have been in place to “ensure a safe and positive environment.” “In order to provide a safe environment in sports, the SAI also runs a 24x7 helpline for the players,” he said. In addition, National Sports Federations have been told to mandatorily have women coaches in contingents that feature female athletes during camps and competition exposures. They have also been asked to increase the strength of women Coaches and Support Staff in camps.

Santos stuns Cruzeiro

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Sao Paulo

Neymar’s Santos secured its survival in Brazil’s Serie A on Sunday with a 3-0 win over Cruzeiro, and the 33-year-old soccer star later confirmed he will undergo surgery on his left knee. Playing its last league match of the season, Santos — which achieved a global following with all-time great Pelé — avoided what would have been the club’s second relegation in its history. Santos was relegated in 2023 for the first time almost a year after the death of Pelé. Neymar struggled to recover from a torn ACL in October 2023 during a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay. But he proved key for Santos in its successful fight to avoid relegation in the Brazilian championship after its promotion last year. Neymar, who returned to Santos in January, was decisive for the club where he started his professional career. In the last three rounds of the league, Neymar scored a goal against Sport Recife in a 3-0 win, netted a hat trick against Juventude on Wednesday in another 3-0 victory, and on Sunday was an effective playmaker.

NEYMAR, WHO RETURNED TO SANTOS IN JANUARY, WAS DECISIVE FOR THE CLUB WHERE HE STARTED HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER Thaciano (26th and 28th minutes) and João Schmidt (60th) scored against Cruzeiro at Vila Belmiro Stadium as Santos finished 12th with 47 points. Neymar played only 19 of the 38 rounds of the league, which started in April. He scored eight goals. “I came for this, to try to help the best way I can. These have been tough weeks for me,” Neymar said after the game. “I thank those who were with me to lift me up. If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t have played these matches because of these injuries, this knee problem. I need to rest and then we will have this knee surgery.” Neymar did not give more details about the knee injury and surgery. He still hopes to be included in Brazil’s final squad for the 2026 World Cup, though coach Carlo Ancelotti is yet to pick the former captain since he took over in May.

Napoli beat Juventus 2-1 in Serie A La Liga: Real Madrid lose 2-0 to Celta Vigo

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Milan

Luciano Spalletti’s return to the team he led to the Serie A title was spoiled by Rasmus Højlund’s brace as host Napoli beat Juventus 2-1 on Sunday. The result also lifted Napoli back to the top of the Italian league. The defending champion moved a point above Inter Milan and three points above AC Milan, which visits Torino on Monday. It was Juventus coach Spalletti’s first time at Napoli as opposition manager since he led the southern team to its first scudetto in more than 30 years in 2023. Napoli coach Antonio Conte was also facing his former team. He steered Juventus to three Serie A titles during his time in charge and also played for the Bianconeri for 13 years, winning numerous trophies. Adding to the occasion, it was the first time the two coaches had faced each



other. Napoli got off to a great start as the in-form David Neres got away down the right before rolling the ball across for Højlund to tap it in with less than seven minutes on the clock. Napoli had the better of the chances but Juventus leveled in the 59th minute as the Bianconeri went on the counterattack and Kenan Yildiz played a one-two with Weston McKennie before placing an angled drive into the far bottom corner. McKennie inadvertently also played a role at the other end in what proved to be the winner for Napoli in the 78th. The United States international tried to head away a cross for Neres but his attempt was rather weak and went to Højlund to head in from four yards (meters). Roma loses ground Roma lost ground in the title race as it fell to a 1-0 defeat at Cagliari after playing most of the match

with 10 men. Roma remained fourth but slipped four points below Napoli. It was Cagliari’s first win since September and lifted the Sardinian team four points above the drop zone. The match turned in the 49th minute when Roma defender Zeki Çelik brought down Cagliari midfielder Michael Folorunsho right on the edge of the area. The referee initially awarded a penalty but realized the foul was just outside the area after reviewing the incident. He revoked the spot kick but showed Çelik a straight red card for denying a clear scoring occasion. Roma goalkeeper Mile Svilar pulled off a number of impressive saves but Cagliari broke the deadlock in the 82nd minute. Gianluca Gaetano was left completely unmarked to chest down a corner and fire the ball in off the inside of the far post.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Madrid

Real Madrid had two players sent off in its 2-0 home defeat to Celta Vigo on Sunday and lost more ground to Spanish league leader Barcelona. Madrid conceded early in the second half and then saw red cards for Fran García and Álvaro Carreras in its first defeat of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in all competitions. Unused Madrid substitute Endrick also was shown a red card for complaining. Willot Swedberg scored for the visitors with a nice flick from near the penalty spot in the 54th. Madrid lost García with a second yellow card in the 64th and Carreras in stoppage time. Swedberg sealed Celta’s victory in a break-away shortly after Madrid was reduced to nine players. “We are all upset. It wasn’t the game or the result that we wanted,” Madrid coach



Xabi Alonso said. “The referee’s decisions threw us off balance. I didn’t like the refereeing.” Madrid has won only two of its last seven matches across all tournaments. It next hosts Manchester City in the Champions League on Wednesday. Madrid’s only other league loss this season was a heavy defeat at Atletico Madrid in September. It also lost at Liverpool in the league phase

Madrid defender Éder Militão had to leave the game in the first half because of an injury. Celta moved to 10th place with its second win in three league games. Goalkeeping mistakes Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga had an afternoon to forget in Girona’s 3-0 loss to Elche at home. The Argentine goalkeeper’s mistakes led to two Elche goals, including one after he passed the ball straight to an opponent inside the area while trying to send it to a defender. Earlier, he had failed to make a routine save on an angled shot by the near post. Gazzaniga also had a nightmare game in Girona’s opening league match, when his blunders led to a goal and a penalty and his ejection in a 3-1 loss to Rayo Vallecano. Girona, sitting inside the relegation zone in 18th place, has only one win in its last six games in all competitions.

Nice fans boo team during 7th loss

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Nice (France)

Nice was booed on the field a week after its players were attacked by supporters. The French team’s crisis on and off the pitch deepened as it lost 1-0 at home to Angers in Ligue 1 on Sunday for a seventh straight loss across all competitions. After last week’s defeat at Lorient, Nice players were confronted by a large number of their supporters when they returned to the club’s training and academy centre. Players and staff were reportedly assaulted and fans shouted insults and demanded greater commitment from the squad. Jérémie Boga and Terem Moffi took multiple blows,

including to the head and groin. Those two players were absent against Angers and their teammates took the field with the names of either Boga or Moffi on the backs of their jerseys instead of their own. The jeers rang out right from the start. Yassin Belkhdid scored for Angers in the 33rd minute and Nice’s hopes of ending its losing streak diminished early in the second half when Tom Louchet was sent off for a foul on Jacques Koméié. Surprise win Lorient upset fifth-placed Lyon 1-0 to move up to 13th. Lyon had to play the entire second half with 10 men after Ainsley Maitland-Niles was sent off in the 42nd minute following two quick yellow cards. Lorient had taken the lead three minutes before the dismissal with a goal from Pablo Pagis. Off the bottom Auxerre moved off the bottom of the table with a 3-1 win over Metz, which took its opponent’s spot. The result ended a nine-match winless run for Auxerre. Lassine Sinayoko’s penalty and a goal by Oussama El-Azzouzi three minutes later put Auxerre 2-0 ahead before Gauthier Hein halved the deficit on the stroke of halftime. But Kévin Danois scored his first Ligue 1 goal late on to secure the win. Le Havre forward Issa Soumaré failed to convert a penalty as another relegation fight, against Paris FC, ended in a 0-0 draw.

F1 in 2026: Key dates, new title hopefuls and Cadillac’s debut

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Abu Dhabi

Say goodbye to DRS, and hello to a battery power boost. Sunday’s Abu Dhabi Grand Prix marked the last time Formula 1 uses the Drag Reduction System overtaking aid, introduced in 2011. Next year, drivers will have to manage the car’s systems more closely than ever with a more visible role for aerodynamic and electrical technology. After a season-long title battle ended with Lando Norris’ first title, here’s what to expect in 2026: Smaller, lighter, more electric The biggest regulation changes in years make cars shorter, narrower and lighter, with movable “active aerodynamics” — X-mode for straight-line speed, Z-mode



for cornering — and more reliance on electric hybrid power. The FIA’s target was for electrical power to make up half of total output along with a traditional V6 turbo engine. Instead of DRS, drivers can deploy extra electrical power at key moments. That makes driving even more strategic but could lead to drivers lifting off the power and coasting on some straights to allow the electrical systems to harvest energy. The FIA claims the rules emphasize driver skill but there have been mixed reviews from those who’ve tried 2026 designs in their teams’ simulators.

Smaller, more agile cars could help overtaking but the fastest and slowest cars may be up to four seconds per lap apart on pace, tire supplier Pirelli has reported. In F1 terms, that’s an eternity. Expect to see more engine failures as teams balance reliability with performance. Mercedes, Aston Martin aim for more Could this be the year Lewis Hamilton finds his form again at Ferrari and chases an eighth title? Maybe not. Even though he never got on with the 2022-25 cars, Hamilton told the BBC he was “not looking forward” to 2026 after the Las Vegas Grand Prix last month, yet another disappointment since he joined Ferrari. Mercedes has designed some of F1’s most dominant engines before, but its eye-

catching “zero-pod” aerodynamic concept was a bust when the last regulation period began in 2022. Get both aspects right this time and George Russell could be a title contender after two wins in 2025. Another team to watch is Aston Martin, which has its first car created with design great Adrian Newey in charge, and is hoping it can make two-time champion Fernando Alonso an F1 race winner for the first time in 13 years. Williams too could make a step forward after abandoning its 2025 projects early to focus on 2026. New Cadillac team, old faces The F1 grid expands to 22 cars for the first time since 2016 as Cadillac becomes the 11th team with backing from General Motors.

