



The Pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

I have great respect for Modi. But I would like to ask the PM to explain why people from Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are coming to South India for jobs. Why are people from other states not going to UP and Gujarat? Who brought about the development visible in Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad? Is it us or Modi? Some leaders focus on marketing. However, we work hard

— A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister



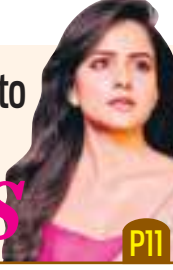
Over Rs 22 cr incurred on PM's visit to US in June 2023'



'FILM FESTIVALS ARE FOR EVERYONE—COME, WATCH, BE INSPIRED'



Vaishnavi Chaitanya responds to SKN's remarks about Telugu ACTRESSES



DON'T MISS...

IMD issues Yellow and Orange alert

Telangana will see light to moderate thunderstorms starting Thursday, with a slight drop in maximum temperatures over the next three days. According to the Telangana Weatherman, storms will begin in North Telangana due to weather convergence. With the Nanded belt becoming active, Adilabad, Nirmal and Nizamabad will see thunderstorms from Thursday night. The IMD Hyderabad has issued a Yellow alert for thunderstorms with lightning in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, ...

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India ranks 118th in World Happiness

India ranked 118th in the World Happiness Report 2025 published Thursday, up from the 126th position in the previous year but below countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Ukraine and Palestine. The 13th edition of the annual report, released coinciding with the International Day of Happiness that falls on March 20 each year, focuses on the impact of caring and sharing on people's happiness, including how sharing a meal increases happiness. Finland is ranked as the happiest country in the...

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Investors' wealth surges Rs 17.43l cr

Market investors kitty swelled by Rs 17.43 lakh crore in four days of sharp rally in equities where the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped over 3 per cent. On Thursday, the 30-share benchmark Sensex jumped 899.01 points or 1.19 per cent to settle at 76,348.06, regaining the 76,000 level. During the day, it soared 1,007.2 points or 1.33 per cent to 76,456.25. In four days, the Sensex zoomed 2,519.15 points or 3.41 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 17,43,418.8 crore to Rs 4,08,61,851.73 cr...

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BCCI lifts saliva ban in IPL

The BCCI on Thursday lifted the ban on use of saliva on the ball in the upcoming Indian Premier League after a majority of captains agreed to its proposal, making it the first major cricket competition to do away with the restriction that was a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision was taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai ahead of the league starting on Saturday. "The saliva ban has been lifted. Majority of captains were in favour of the move. Some had reservations about the..."

-SPORTS

22 Naxals killed in two Chhattisgarh encounters



PNS ■ BIJAPUR

In a fresh offensive against Naxals, at least 22 members of the banned CPI (Maoists) were killed in two separate encounters in Chhattisgarh, officials said on Thursday. While 18 Naxals were killed in Bijapur district, four Maoists were gunned down in Kanker areas by a joint team of the BSF and DRG personnel of the state police.

Intermittent firing was still going on in Kanker as reports last came in, the officials said.

A police jawan was also killed in the encounter at Bijapur, they said.

The gunfight broke out at around 7 am in a forest along the border of Bijapur and Dantewada districts when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation in Gangaloor police station area (in Bijapur), he said. Bodies of 18 Naxalites along with firearms and explosives were recovered from the spot, the senior police official said.

A jawan of the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) unit was also killed in the gunfight, he said.

The operation was still underway in the area, he added.

Shah: Moving forward with ruthless approach



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the security forces have achieved another big success in its march to make the country Naxal-free by killing 22 members of the CPI (Maoists) in Chhattisgarh.

Shah also said the Narendra Modi government is moving forward with a ruthless approach against the Naxalites, and adopting a zero tolerance policy against those extremists who are not surrendering despite all the facilities being offered.

I will not function dictatorially like KCR, says CM Revanth

'Why are people coming to South India for jobs from Gujarat and UP'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy stated that he has great respect for Prime Minister Narendra Modi but Modi should explain why the people from Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are coming to South India for jobs.

Targeting Prime Minister Modi CM said, "I have great respect for Modi. However, I would like to ask Modi to explain why people are coming from Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh to South India for jobs. Why are people from other states not going to UP and Gujarat? Is this the development brought about by Modi? Some people focus on marketing. But we work hard."

On the other hand, CM Revanth Reddy wondered why the opposition is saying that people are angry with him.

"Are people angry with me for launching social welfare schemes? Only the politicians in power have changed but officials are the same. Officials will go to jail if I order a probe. However, I will not function dictatorially like KCR," the CM said.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was speaking while taking part in



Are people angry with me for launching social welfare schemes? Only the politicians in power have changed but officials are the same. Officials will go to jail if I order a probe. However, I will not function dictatorially like KCR," the CM said.

'Koluvula Panduga' where he launched the 'Build Now' portal in Hyderabad on Thursday.

The Chief Minister handed over compassionate appointment letters to candidates selected for posts in the Panchayat Raj and Municipal Administration departments.

"Unemployed youth fought for Telangana state. Even after the state was formed, the hopes of those who died for Telangana have not been fulfilled."

you inherited from your family members, he said.

The BRS government's refusal to carry out recruitments on compassionate grounds for 10 years is visible. We are completing these appointments to ensure that such negligence does not exist when the Congress is in power, he said.

"Unemployed youth fought for Telangana state. Even after the state was formed, the hopes of those who died for Telangana have not been fulfilled. Soon after coming to power, the 'people's government' filled 57,924 posts in government service. Some leaders are saying that the BRS government issued notifications for the jobs and that the Congress government has done nothing," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Celebrities named in betting apps FIR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Miyapur Police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) naming actors Rana Daggubati, Prakash Raj, Vijay Devarakonda, Lakshmi Manchu, Praneetha and Nidhi Agarwal in connection with the promotion of online betting applications. The FIR, filed under Sections of the IT Act and BNS, follows an investigation into celebrities and social media influencers endorsing gambling platforms.

In all, the list of actors/actresses leads to six and social media influencers are 19, totalling 25.

A few names of social media influencers mentioned among the 19 are Ananya Nagella, Sreemukhi, Nayani Pavani, Neha Pathan, Imran Khan, Harsha Sai, Bayya Sunny Yadav, Tastyteja and Rithu Chowdhary.

Rana, Prakash Raj, Vijay Devarakonda, Lakshmi Manchu among 'endorsers'



According to Miyapur Police, these actors were featured in advertisements and pop-up promotions for betting apps like Junglee Rummy, A23, and Yolo247.

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Our fight is for the state's future: KTR Warns Cong, BJP that BRS will rise like a phoenix

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) lashed out at the Congress Government calling it a 'commission government' which prioritises personal gains over public welfare.

Addressing a BRS workers' meeting in Suryapet, KTR accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of being more interested in collecting commissions than in governance.

He stressed the government's failure to implement its promise to waive farm loans amounting to Rs 37,000 crore and asked where the



money had disappeared. He held the Congress Government directly responsible for the severe

water crisis and the drying up of crops across Telangana.

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Raise TG issues in Parl

Venugopal asks Cong MPs to become active in State politics

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

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary, KC Venugopal, asked Telangana Congress MPs to become active in state politics.

He said that Congress MPs should raise issues connected to Telangana in Parliament and participate in debates. He advised TG Congress MPs to encourage the good things in the state and control bad things while being active in politics.

Telangana Congress MPs Mallu Ravi, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy,



Balaram Naik, Suresh Shetkar, Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, Gaddam Vamshi Krishna and Kadiam Kavya met KC Venugopal at his Parliament office on Thursday.

Addressing them Venugopal said that the Congress is not telling what it has done to the people.

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HC quashes phone-tapping case against Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a big relief to senior BRS MLA T. Harish Rao, the Telangana High Court on Thursday quashed the phone tapping case registered against him.

Justice K. Lakshman quashed the First Information Report (FIR) registered against Harish at the Punjagutta Police Station in Hyderabad in December 2024.



On a complaint by G. Chakradhar Goud, a real estate businessman and a leader of the BSP, the police had registered a case under relevant sections for criminal conspiracy, extortion, criminal breach of trust, criminal intimidation and Section 66 of the Information Technology Act against Harish, former police officer Radha Kishan Rao and others.

Continued on Page 2

HC dismisses case against Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, heaved a sigh of relief as the High Court dismissed a case filed against him on Thursday. It may be recalled that some peo-



ple had filed a case against Sanjay alleging that he had made a speech inciting communal hatred. The Secunderabad Market Police had filed a case regarding this and had filed a chargesheet.

Continued on Page 2

Israeli strikes Gaza again, kills 85 Palestinians



PNS ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli airstrikes overnight on Thursday struck several homes in the Gaza Strip and killed at least 85 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

Among those pulled alive from the rubble was a month-old baby girl, but her parents and brother were killed.

Hamas fired three rockets at Israel on Thursday without causing casualties. It was the first such attack since Israel resumed heavy bombardment of Gaza on Tuesday,

shattering the ceasefire that had halted the 17-month war.

The Israeli military also restarted its blockade of northern Gaza, including Gaza City, which it maintained for most of the war. It said people would only be allowed to leave and head south on Gaza's coastal road.

And in Israel, hundreds of people demonstrated outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem to protest his handling of the hostage crisis and his plan to fire the country's head of internal security.

Road density below average in 18 districts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Despite Telangana's expanding road network, 18 districts in the state have road density lower than the state average of 99.29 km per 100 sq. km, highlighting the persistent infrastructure gap in rural and tribal areas.

While urban centres like Hyderabad and Medchal-Malkajgiri boast significantly higher road densities, many districts continue to struggle with inadequate connectivity.

According to the Economic Survey Report, Mulugu (41.3 km) and Bhadradi Kothagudem (61.0 km) have the lowest road density, making transportation and economic activity challenging. Other districts with lower than average road density are Komaram Bheem Asifabad (66.0 km), Jogulamba Gadwal (65.0 km), Nagarkurnool (65.0 km), Mancherial (69.1 km), and



Even relatively developed districts like Nizamabad (99.1 km), Kamareddy (97.1 km), and Sangareddy (97.1 km) fall slightly below the state average, indicating that road infrastructure gaps are not limited to remote regions.

Jayashankar Bhupalpally (71.6 km). Even relatively developed districts like Nizamabad (99.1 km), Kamareddy (97.1 km), and Sangareddy (97.1 km) fall slightly below the state average, indicating that road infrastructure gaps are not limited to remote regions.

Districts like Peddapalli (97.2 km), Mahbubnagar (95.9 km), and Vikarabad (88.0 km) also face sim-

ilar issues. The Chief Minister's native place Mahbubnagar and current constituency Kondangal in Vikarabad also have less than the state average.

The stark contrast in road density between urban and rural districts underscores the uneven development in the state. Hyderabad (1,332.8 km per 100 sq. km) has the highest road density, followed by Medchal-

Malkajgiri (385.4 km) and Rangareddy (158.4 km). These figures highlight the concentration of infrastructure investments in metropolitan areas, while many interior regions remain underserved.

The data reveals that 61.32 per cent of Telangana's roads are rural roads, while only 4.46 per cent account for National Highways. The remaining 34.22 per cent includes

state highways, GHMC roads and other district roads. However, the uneven distribution of roads has left several interior regions struggling with poor connectivity, limiting access to essential services and economic opportunities.

Among the districts, Rangareddy has the longest road network at 7,932 km, followed closely by Nalgonda with 7,766 km.

Although the Telangana Government has sanctioned Rs 5,672 crore for road development, rural areas continue to struggle with non-metalled roads, poor maintenance and lack of last-mile connectivity.

The state government has approved Rs 5,672 crore for road development through various plans. A total of 150 rural infrastructure projects, including 121 roads and 29 bridges, are currently being implemented.

Mahesh, CM going to Chennai to attend meet on delimitation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President, B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, is attending the meeting of leaders from South Indian states on delimitation on March 22. It may be recalled that an all-party meeting is being held under the leadership of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

It is learnt that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud are going to Chennai on Thursday itself.

It may be recalled that the

Chief Ministers of Kerala, Telangana and Punjab – Pinarayi Vijayan, Revanth Reddy and Bhagwat Mann – are going to attend the meeting which is aimed at showing the strength of the opposition parties against the BJP.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Siva Kumar is attending the meeting from Karnataka. However, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, former AP CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik have deputed their party leaders.

CM: Will protect Telangana's representation in Parliament

Telugu states lost 84 Assembly seats over two elections

Political analyst briefs CM on the impact of delimitation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was briefed on the implications of the delimitation process and its impact on parliamentary seat allocation across states.

Political analyst Inaganti Ravi Kumar met the Chief Minister at his residence on Thursday and presented a detailed report on the expected changes and their consequences for Telangana and other southern states.

The Chief Minister said that there is no question of stepping back on this issue, reaffirming his commitment to safeguarding Telangana's representation in Parliament.

The report, which includes an in-depth analysis from 2003 to 2008 covering past delimitation exercises in the Telugu states, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, highlights the declining parliamentary representation of southern states.

Despite various methods of allocation – population percentage, pro-rata share or the 2011 census data – the southern share in the Lok Sabha is projected to shrink from 24% to 19% or even lower, he explained.



Ravi pointed out that although the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill of 2014 provided for an increase of 34 Assembly seats in Telangana and 50 in Andhra Pradesh, the constitutional restriction under Article 170 prevented implementation until 2026. While the Centre has repeatedly cited this limitation in Parliament, it bypassed the restriction in Jammu and Kashmir by

increasing seven Assembly seats through a special Bill, he said.

Due to this delay in seat expansion, both Telugu states collectively lost 84 additional Assembly seats over two election cycles (2018 and 2023). Moreover, SC and ST communities in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh lost out on 20 additional reserved seats, which should have been created as part of the reorganisation process, the report said.

If they have TTD we have the YTD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy responded to the TTD controversy while launching the 'Build Now' portal at the Ravindra Bharathi here. "Why do we ask them for darshan with letters from our MLAs? If they have the TTD, we have the YTD. Is there no Ram in Bhadrachalam? Don't we have Shiva temples?" he asked.

"KTR asked why the government is holding the Miss India pageant. What is KTR's problem? Do they not want tourism in Hyderabad," he asked.

He clarified that the Miss India pageant is a great opportunity and that we are organising it for the 72nd time.



Block reservation for Muslims, support quota for BCs: Amit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana BJP leaders who recently registered victories in the MLC elections held in the state met BJP President JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

First, Telangana BJP leaders met Nadda for half an hour. He congratulated the leaders who achieved good results in Telangana. He said that if they work hard like this they can gain power in Telangana.

Later, the Telangana MPs and BJP leaders led by Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy met

Amit Shah at the Parliament building.

Amit Shah congratulated Malka Komuriah and Anji Reddy, who won the Telangana MLC elections from the BJP. They discussed the strategies to be followed for victory in local body elections.

He also spoke about the caste survey, which has become a hot topic in the state at present and advised Telangana BJP leaders that they should not oppose reservation for BCs, but must prevent the granting of reservation to Muslims on that pretext.

BRS wants all-party MLAs' panel to probe sand revenue claims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS spokesperson Krishank Manne has accused the Congress Government of misleading people by claiming that it is generating more revenue from sand mining than the BRS admin and demanded the constitution of an all-party panel of MLAs to probe the government's claims on revenue from sand.

He pointed out that during BRS rule, the price of fine sand per tonne was Rs 1200, inclusive of GST and transportation, while the Congress Government has increased it to Rs 1,800 per tonne, excluding

ing GST and transportation, thereby placing an additional burden on the people of Telangana.

Refuting Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's claims, Krishank said that during BRS rule, daily sand revenue collections reached Rs 3.5 crore, making it no new feat for the Congress Government.

He asked why if the Congress Government was truly collecting more revenue, its annual target remained at just Rs 800 crore, as stated in the official order released by the Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation (TGMDC).

YIPS holds draw of lots for admissions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Young India Police School (YIPS) conducted a draw of lots for the admissions process and it is ready to welcome the first batch of students for all classes.

Given the overwhelming response and the large number of applications received, the

school committee adopted a lottery-based admission system to ensure transparency.

The draw of lots for admissions for the upcoming academic year was held on Thursday at the YIPS campus in Manchirevula under the direct supervision of CV Anand, DG and Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad.

Centre must withdraw UGC Bill immediately: NSUI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Students Union of India (NSUI) demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should withdraw the University Grants Commission (UGC) Bill immediately saying that the BJP is trying to keep the UGC in its grip.

On Thursday, NSUI Telangana President Venkata Swamy released the Parliament siege poster at the Gandhi Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, Venkata Swamy said the NSUI will lay a siege on Parliament on March 24. NSUI activists across the nation would attend the programme. He said that around 400 NSUI activists are going to New Delhi to take part in the programme.

'Just another day at the office'

Govt rules say no overtime for Sunita, Butch

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Will Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore get overtime for staying longer in space than planned? Not a chance.

Williams and Wilmore, who returned to Earth on Tuesday after spending 286 days in space - 278 days longer than anticipated after their spacecraft malfunctioned - will not get any overtime for their unexpectedly long stay, according to NASA rules, the New York Times reported.

But they do get USD 5 a day for "incidentals", the paper added.

Despite their far-flung destination and the danger of space travel, when it comes to pay, astronauts are treated effectively "like any other government employee who takes a business trip...", the NYT said.



"While in space, NASA astronauts are on official travel orders as federal employees," Jimi Russell, a spokesman for the agency's Space Operations Mission Directorate, told NYT via email.

Williams and Wilmore were essentially unable to leave their workplace for more than nine months. But astronauts aboard the International Space

Station receive no overtime, holiday or weekend pay, Russell said.

Their transportation, meals and lodging are covered, and like other federal employees on work trips, they receive a daily "incidentals" allowance, Russell said. This is a per diem payment given to employees in the place of reimbursements for travel expenses.

UP: Woman kidnapped, 'gang-raped', strangled in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 32-year-old woman was allegedly kidnapped, gang-raped and strangled in the Malihabad area here, police said on Thursday.

The woman, who resided in Ayodhya, was en route to her brother's house in Chinhat after returning from a job interview in Varanasi.

According to her family, she hired an autorickshaw from Alambagh in the early hours of Wednesday, but the driver took her to Malihabad.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP)-Crime Kamlesh Kumar Dixit said, "The woman's brother reported her missing around 4 am on Wednesday. She had shared her live location with her brother, expressing suspicion that the autorickshaw driver was taking her on an incorrect route."

When her last location was

near Malihabad, her family reported the issue on 112, an emergency service number, after which the local police station formed teams and started searching for the woman.

"She was found unconscious in a mango orchard near Mohammad Nagar Talukdar in Malihabad," said the DCP.

The woman was rushed to King George's Medical University but was pronounced dead by doctors.

Police said a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered against unidentified individuals, as prima facie, it appeared that multiple persons were involved in the crime.

Three police teams are investigating the case. Even as the hunt is on to arrest the accused, seven police personnel, including a Station House Officer (SHO), were suspended on Thursday for dereliction of duty, said the DCP.

Raise TG issues in...

Continued from page 1

He asked the MPs to tell people about what the Congress Government has done, it is learnt.

He asked the Telangana Congress MPs Forum Convenor Mallu Ravi to conduct get-togethers frequently to discuss freely all issues connected to the party, it is learnt.

"This kind of get-togethers will develop good relations between me and you. Get-togethers will definitely help to chalk out strategies for strengthening the party. I will try to make Rahul Gandhi attend your get-togethers," KC Venugopal said. Mallu Ravi explained the

recent political developments in Telangana regarding the budget, the BC caste census, integrated schools and other initiatives taken by the Congress Government in Telangana and about the commitments made before elections, it is learnt.

Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy appealed to Venugopal to make Rahul Gandhi exert pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the 42 per cent BC Reservations Bill and the SC Classification Bill and get them passed in Parliament, it is learnt.

He also asked Venugopal to make Rahul Gandhi give time to meet the Prime Minister regarding these two Bills, it is learnt.

HC quashes phone tapping case ...

Continued from page 1

The complainant, who had contested unsuccessfully against Harish from the Siddipet Assembly constituency in 2023, alleged harassment, threats and unlawful phone surveillance.

Chakradhar said in his complaint that Harish developed a grudge against him due to his charitable activities, including financial support to the families of farmers who had committed suicide. The complainant alleged threats, registration of fabricated false cases and unauthorised surveillance of his phone by

Harish and his associates.

Harish, who is the nephew of BRS President K. Chandrasekhar Rao, had filed a petition in the High Court seeking orders to quash the FIR. During the hearing on the petition, the state government had urged the court to take strong action against Harish for using the state Intelligence machinery to crush his political adversaries by tapping phones.

Appearing on behalf of the state government, senior Supreme Court lawyer Sidhartha Luthra had argued that a Minister should act like a protector but Harish behaved like a

predator.

However, Harish's counsel Seshadri Naidu had argued that none of the sections of law quoted such as criminal breach of trust, criminal conspiracy and extortion were applicable.

He also told the court that many criminal cases were pending against Chakradhar. The phone-tapping allegations under the BRS government came to light in March 2024 with the arrest of DySP Praneeth Rao following a complaint from his superior, D. Ramesh, an Additional SP of the Special Intelligence Branch (SIB).

HC dismisses case ...

Continued from page 1

However, the High Court dismissed the case stating that the case was filed without any evidence. Earlier, Sanjay's lawyer argued that the police had filed the case without any evidence.

Our fight is for the state's ...

Continued from page 1

"This is not a drought caused by nature but by the incompetence of the Congress Government," he stated.

He pointed out that while the KCR Government ensured 36% utilization of Krishna waters, the Congress administration has failed to even reach 24%. He also criticised the government for not repairing the Medigadda Barrage thereby allowing Godavari waters to flow into Andhra Pradesh instead of Telangana.

Despite having a minister for water resources from Nalgonda, the region continues to suffer from acute water shortage, KTR said. He also reminded the audience of the SLBC tunnel accident, where, instead of tackling the crisis, a Minister was seen enjoying a feast.

Calling upon party workers to

actively participate in the upcoming Warangal Sabha on April 27, KTR emphasized that this year will be a 'year of struggle' for the BRS. He urged BRS supporters from every village to mobilize and make the Silver Jubilee celebrations a historic event.

"The fight is not just for power; it is for Telangana's future. Congress' misuse must be ended, and BRS must return to power," KTR declared.

He also announced a massive membership drive in May, followed by a restructuring of party committees from the booth level to the state level.

KTR concluded by warning the Congress and the BJP that the BRS is rising like a phoenix. "The Congress government's oppressive rule and false cases against our leaders will not intimidate the pink army. April 27 will mark the first step in BRS' resurgence," he asserted.

Celebrities named ...

Continued from page 1

The crackdown comes amid rising concerns over the financial distress caused by online gambling, particularly among young and middle-class users.

Reacting to the FIR, actor Prakash Raj dismissed the allegations, stating that his association with such advertisements was nearly nine years old. "I was part of a campaign nine years ago but after understanding the impact of such applications, I withdrew my support," he clarified.

Vijay Deverakonda's team clarified that he had signed a contract as a brand ambassador for A23, a legally recognized skill-based gaming platform, only in regions where it was permitted. They said that the Supreme Court distinguishes skill-based games like rummy from gambling. However, his association with A23 ended in 2023.

I will not function dictatorially ...

Continued from page 1

"Doesn't the opposition know that the unemployed were facing problems as the government was not conducting recruitment exams during the last 10 years? The BRS rulers gave posts to their family members. Don't you see the suffering of these poor job hopefuls in Telangana? Why didn't the BRS government think of giving jobs for the poor? What we did in 10 months is remarkable. Why couldn't you do it in 10 years?" the CM said.

"No other state in the country has filled 57,924 government posts in just 10 months after coming to power. The government will give appointment letters to candidates selected for around 2,000 posts in Group 1, 2 and 3 services in a few days," he said. "As the BRS has not done anything it is saying that our government should also fall in line. That is the reason why the opposition is creating hurdles," he said.

Earlier, decisions used to be made by

a single person and were party-centric. Today, we are taking decisions as per the public's wishes, he said.

"The 'Build Now' portal is intended to check irregularities in sanctioning building permits in Hyderabad city. Everyone irrespective of their status in society should apply online for permission. Our objective is to deliver a transparent administration to the people. This is the Telangana Model," the CM said. "Some of our rivals are saying that the people are angry with us. Are you angry with me for giving appointment letters to the unemployed? Are you angry with me for providing opportunities to women and for generating solar energy to compete with the Adanis and Ambanis? Are you angry with me for allowing women to travel free in TGSRTC buses and for supplying 200 units of free electricity to the poor? Why should people be angry with us?" Revanth said.

"Some opposition leaders said that I do not have a grip on the administra-

tion. We may not have grown up in 'Gadi' (forts), but we grew up watching the poor in the Nallamala forests. That is why we are generous. Opposition leaders have no humanitarianism in them. The leader of the opposition never comes out of his farmhouse," the CM said. "Some people are talking about the Miss Universe pageant crossing their limits. That is a wonderful opportunity to expand the tourism business in Telangana. Representatives from various countries will visit Hyderabad and Telangana will emerge as a well-known tourist destination. The world is looking at Telangana as the state is hosting the 72nd Miss Universe pageant. The event will generate business worth hundreds of crores in future," he said.

"Opposition leaders swindled public funds in the name of the Formula E race. There is no comparison between me and the opposition leaders. The BRS rulers were careless. Our government is committed to developing the state," the CM said.



CITY EVENTS

Natraj Ramakrishna Jayanthi
By TSNA
Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
March 21, (9 am)

Live Performance
By Harish & Martin (Band)
Venue
Stone Waters - Kitchen & Lounge
March 21, (8 pm)

Live Performance
With Kalakaarii (Band)
Venue
36 Downtown Brew Pub (Vapour)
March 21, (8 pm)

Friday Night Featuring
By DJ Rohith
Venue
10 Downing Street - Gachibowli
March 21, (8 pm)

Workshop
Basics Of Photography
Venue
Kalyan Cricket Academy, Kukatpally
March 21, (4:30 pm)

Friday Halem Fest
@Arabella
Venue
Arabella House of Arabic & Lebanese Cuisine
March 21, (12 pm)

IMD ISSUES YELLOW AND ORANGE ALERT

TG to witness light to moderate thunderstorms

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana will see light to moderate thunderstorms starting Thursday, with a slight drop in maximum temperatures over the next three days.

According to the Telangana Weatherman, storms will begin in North Telangana due to weather convergence. With the Nanded belt becoming active, Adilabad, Nirmal and Nizamabad will see thunderstorms from Thursday night.

The IMD Hyderabad has issued a Yellow alert for thunderstorms with lightning in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna Sirsilla, Karimnagar and Peddapalli districts.

Orange and Yellow alerts are in place for thunderstorms with lightning, gusty winds of 40-50 kmph and hailstorms in several districts of Warangal, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, Siddipet, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Medak and Kamareddy.

Hyderabad will have a generally cloudy sky from March 22, with expected thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph.



UDID cards to be issued to differently abled

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Revenue Officer E Venkat Chari provided insights on the process of obtaining the Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID) for differently-abled individuals in Hyderabad district. During a meeting held on Thursday at the Collectorate Conference Hall, representatives of various disability groups were given a detailed explanation of how to register and obtain a UDID card. The District Revenue Officer addressed queries raised by the disability representatives.

Since the UDID card is a newly introduced initiative, a special cell will be set up at the Hyderabad Collectorate to address concerns. The DRO assured that strict measures would be implemented to ensure a transparent and fair issuance process.

To facilitate easy access, arrangements have been made for individuals to apply for the UDID card free of cost at all MeeSeva centres across the district.



TO FEATURE CONTESTANTS FROM 140 COUNTRIES

Miss World 2025 opening ceremony to be on May 10

To be held across 20 venues, with a Rs 27 cr budget

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Miss World 2025 is set to begin on May 10 with an opening ceremony at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium, featuring contestants from 140 countries. The event will showcase Telangana's folk and tribal dances in a parade-style format. Contestants will arrive at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport on May 6 and 7.

In the first press conference at The Tourism Plaza on Thursday, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao called the event a great opportunity to highlight Telangana's beauty. He commended Miss World Organization CEO Julia Morley for maintaining the pageant's legacy at 86 and wished reigning Miss World 2025 Krystyna Pyszkova well. He emphasized the importance of celebrating women's transformation, beauty and values.

The Minister highlighted the economic power of cultural events, comparing Miss World's impact to BTS band's role in South Korea's



economy and the Jurassic Park franchise's success, hoping that Telangana will surpass the record with the hosting of Miss World 2025. He announced that Telangana is spending a budget of Rs 27 crore on the event, mostly funded by sponsors.

Meanwhile, Tourism Secretary Smita Sabharwal announced plans for 24 teams from all departments to coordinate with the Tourism department to manage the event.

She also noted that the contestant's activities include visiting over 20 different venues, competing in events, cultural performances, a spiritual tour at Buddhavanam, heritage visits to Chowmahalla Palace and Ramappa temple and interactions with students in Warangal. They will also visit T-Hub, Telangana Police Integrated Command and Control Centre, State Secretariat, Experium Eco Tourism Park,

Key competitions include the Sports Finale on May 17, Talent Finale on May 22 and Fashion Finale on May 24. The grand Miss World Final will be held at Hitex on May 31

Yadagirigutta temple, Pochampally's handloom centre and major hospitals along with a gala dinner at Taj Falaknuma.

Key competitions include the Sports Finale on May 17, Talent Finale on May 22 and Fashion Finale on May 24. The grand Miss World Final will be held at Hitex on May 31, with the winner meeting Telangana's Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on June 2.



HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath visiting the water bodies on Thursday

GANGARAM LAKE

HYDRAA chief orders action against Illegal dumping

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath conducted an inspection of Gangaram Lake in Chandanagar, Serilingampally mandal on Thursday.

The visit was prompted by concerns raised by Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi, who alleged that HYDRAA was failing to control illegal dumping in the lake. The Commissioner was accompanied by Chandanagar Corporation Manjula, HYDRAA officials, and local plot owners.

Irrigation officials were questioned

about who was responsible for the dumping and whether cases had been registered against them. Commissioner Ranganath confirmed that in December 2023, irrigation officials had registered cases against those involved in dumping.

Recently, HYDRAA's DRF Lake Protection Guards also filed a complaint at Chandanagar police station. Commissioner Ranganath emphasized that a dedicated HYDRAA police station is necessary to effectively tackle lake and government land encroachments, which will soon be formed and identify the culprits.

15 faculty at Gandhi Hospital issued show cause notices

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

Fifteen faculty members, including assistant, associate, and full-time professors, have received show-cause notices following Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha's inspection of Gandhi Hospital in Secunderabad.

A highly placed source told The Pioneer that these notices demand explanations for their absence from duty. "The responsibilities of professors differs from those of assistant or associate professors. At times, they rush to their departments and later attend surgeries. That could be one of the reasons for their absence. However, this notice serves as a warning for both senior and junior staff to be more accountable," the source said.

30 additional beds for Emergency Ward

In a separate development, 30 additional beds were allocated to Gandhi Hospital's Emergency Ward on Thursday to address the growing number of emergency cases. The hospital's casualty and emergency departments handle around 1,000 patients daily, leading to a severe shortage of beds.

Dr CH N Raj Kumari, Superintendent of Gandhi Hospital, chaired a meeting with the teams overseeing the expansion.

Dr K Sunil Kumar, Deputy Superintendent, stated, "The newly added beds will cater to critical patients, enhancing services such as monitoring, surgery and intensive care. We



Dr CH N Raj Kumari, Superintendent of Gandhi Hospital, along with Dr K Sunil Kumar, Deputy Superintendent, addressing a meeting

have the beds, and with the necessary funding, they are being converted for use."

He added that funds have been sanctioned and preparations are underway to make

additional beds available across various wards. With the new additions, the Emergency Ward now has 204 beds, with further conversions planned based on necessity.

50 Indian students who completed MBBS in Uzbekistan honoured at AIG Hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 150 Indian students who completed their MBBS in Uzbekistan were honoured at AIG Hospital on Thursday. The event, organised by the NEO Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology, marked the third consecutive year of NEO's graduation ceremony at the AIG. These students had moved from Ukraine to Uzbekistan after the Russia-Ukraine war.

The ceremony highlighted the success of NEO students in the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE). Out of 150 graduates, 114 (76%) cleared the FMGE on their first attempt. Padma Vibhushan awardee and AIG Hospitals Chairman Dr D Nageshwar Reddy appreciated their achievement, stressing the importance of medical excellence.

Top performers who were awarded medals are Dr J



Indian students who completed their MBBS in Uzbekistan honoured at AIG Hospital on Thursday

Tarunam (gold), Dr P Yashwanth (silver), and Dr S Nitesh (bronze). The Uzbekistan Ministry of Health honoured Dr Nageshwar Reddy with the Avicenna Award and an Honorary Professorship. Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, former RTI Commissioner Vijay Babu and Dr Sandeep also received honorary titles.

Dr Ganni Bhaskar Rao highlighted Uzbekistan's growing

role in MBBS education for Indian students. Dr Divya Raj Reddy celebrated NEO's continued success, while Professor Shukhrat Teshayev highlighted Indo-Uzbek educational ties.

The event, attended by officials from Uzbekistan's Ministry of Health and Bukhara State Medical Institute, saw collaboration between India and Uzbekistan in medical education.

TGSPDCL secures third rank in consumer service rating

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana (TGSPDCL) has achieved a notable milestone by securing the third rank in the Consumer Service Rating of Discoms (CSR) Report 2023-24, released by the Ministry of Power. The ranking, part of the Distribution Utilities Ranking (DUR) Report, evaluated 41 power distribution companies (DISCOMs) across the country.

TGSPDCL's performance was recognized for its excellence in various consumer service aspects. The company has streamlined electricity connections through faster approvals, simplified regulations for availing services with minimal paperwork and improved billing accuracy with the implementation of IR port-based meters.



Additionally, the company has ensured that 99 per cent of electricity-related services are available online via its website and mobile app, reducing the need for consumers to visit offices.

Prompt resolution of consumer complaints further contributed to its high ranking. TGSPDCL Chairman and Managing Director Musharraf Faruqi congratulated consumers, company officials and staff on the achievement.

He encouraged them to continue their efforts to enhance the company's service standards and further improve its national standing.

SCR bags Railway Minister Rajbhasha shield in Delhi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway (SCR) Rajbhasha department has won the Railway Minister Rajbhasha shield for the best performance in implementing Rajbhasha. Vijayawada Division received the Acharya Raghuvver Chal Vijayanti award as a Model Division, while the Wagon Workshop in Guntupalli won the Railway Minister Rajbhasha shield as a Model Workshop.

Rajesh P Khade, Mukhya Rajbhasha Adhikari and Principal Chief Materials Manager (PCMM), SCR, received the Railway Minister Rajbhasha Silver Medal. The awards were presented by Satish Kumar, Chairman & CEO, Railway Board, at an event in New Delhi on Thursday, attended by senior railway officials.

The Rajbhasha Shield for

SCR Headquarters was received by Rajesh P. Khade, Dr. Shyam Sundar Sahu (DGM-OL), and M.K. Nagaraju (RBA-Hqrs). The Acharya Raghuvver Chal Vijayanti for Vijayawada Division was received by Narendra A. Patil (Divisional Railway Manager) and M.K. Nagaraju. The Rajbhasha Shield for Wagon Workshop, Guntupalli, was received by S. Srinivas (Chief Workshop Manager).

General Manager of SCR, Arun Kumar Jain congratulated the Rajbhasha team for their national-level achievement. He appreciated the efforts of the headquarters, division and workshop in implementing Rajbhasha. He also commended Rajesh P Khade for winning the Silver Medal and encouraged the team to continue their good work.

GHMC starts digital feature for fogging on request

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The citizens of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) who are facing mosquito menace can login in my GHMC mobile app and request for fogging.

Initially this feature's functionality is to be tested as a pilot project at Jubilee Hills circle and will be extended to the entire GHMC. This request will be received by an assistant entomologist and assigned to the area fogging worker. Once the request is attended to by



fogging in that area, it gets resolved by uploading a photo with geo location, said the GHMC release.

Enabling technology might solve the generic complaint of not covering many areas and repetitive fogging in some areas

and resources can be utilised optimally. Number of slots will be available based on staff availability of the area.

To prevent redundant requests from the same area once fogged, it will be restricted for one week.

Hyd Metro to remove betting ads

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metro has come under scrutiny for displaying advertisements of betting applications. As videos of these ads went viral on X sparking public concern, Metro authorities responded swiftly.

MD NVS Reddy addressed the issue, stating, "It has come to my attention that some Metro trains are displaying betting-related advertisements. I have instructed L&T and the concerned advertising agen-



cies to remove them immediately." He assured that all such advertisements would be completely removed by Thursday night.

OBSCENE DANCES

Women's Commission warns film industry

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Women's Commission has received several complaints regarding dance steps used in certain movie songs, which are deemed vulgar and disrespectful to women.

The Commission has responded strongly to this issue. Since cinema is a powerful medium that influences society, elements that degrade or portray women inappropriately are causing significant concern, said a release.

In this context, the Women's Commission urges directors, producers, choreographers and other related parties to act responsibly. Dance steps that degrade

women, or, are inappropriate, must be immediately stopped. If this warning is not followed, the Commission is prepared to take strict action in accordance with relevant laws.

The film industry has a moral responsibility to deliver positive messages to society and protect the dignity of women.

Given the impact movies have on youth and children, the film industry must ensure self-regulation.

People and social organisations can share their views with the Women's Commission on this matter. The Commission will continue to closely monitor this issue and take further action.



'Nest man' saving sparrows

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The once-beneficial sparrow species, which helped humanity, is rapidly disappearing due to pollution. Sparrows, which used to chirp in the fields, backyard, and among piles of grains, are now becoming extinct. The excessive use of pesticides in the fields, tree cutting, air pollution, increasing vehicle traffic, and radiation from mobile phone towers are causing sparrows to die. "The survival of the sparrow species now depends on every individual's efforts. To save the vanishing rural sparrow species, I have created a rural environment in my home for sparrows. I have placed a small clay pot with water for them to drink, set up bird feeders bought online with a handful of grain, and also installed nesting boxes. The number of sparrows visiting my house has increased over time, bring-

ing me great joy. In the mornings, the chirping of sparrows makes my house lively, and my mind feels calm and joyful," said Anantula Ramesh, a resident of Kisanagar colony in Karimnagar.

This is a small narrative shared on March 20, "World Sparrow Day." Sparrows typically live for four to five years in the wild, but this is not the case in urban areas. Who is there to provide food or place water in a clay pot in front of their house? That's why, much like the endangered peacock, the life span of sparrows is now cut short, he said.

Experts reveal several reasons for the decline of sparrows. The vanishing rural landscape, the loss of backyard spaces, increasing urbanisation, and a lack of places for sparrows to build nests are some of the factors. Furthermore, the use of poisonous chemicals in agriculture is killing sparrows.

'Indiramma govt is committed to welfare of downtrodden'

PNS ■ KHAMMAM



Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy laying the foundation stone for Indiramma houses at Penuballi in Khammam district on Thursday. District Collector Muzammil Khan is also present

The State government is working towards constructing 20 lakh Indiramma houses over the next four years, with the construction of 4.5 lakh houses every year, said the Revenue, Housing, Information, and Public Relations Minister P. Srinivas Reddy.

On Thursday, the Minister toured Penuballi and Kalluru mandals. He was accompanied by District Collector Muzammil Khan. He laid the foundation for Indiramma houses, cement concrete roads, and drain works, and inaugurated the Scheduled Castes community hall.

In Ramachandra Puram village under Penuballi mandal, Minister Srinivas Reddy laid the foundation for the internal cement concrete roads and drain construction works worth Rs 87 lakh.

During the occasion, the Minister stated that while implementing welfare schemes for the poor, the government is also focusing on developmental activities.

He added that the government is working towards the development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, minorities, and poor people.

He mentioned that the government is correcting past mistakes and fulfilling the promises made to the people. He also mentioned that, in the first year of the government,

57,626 jobs were filled, and appointment letters were given to the unemployed. He further stated that the government has spent Rs 5,450 crore for women's free bus travel, provided free electricity up to 200 units, supplied gas cylinders at Rs 500, and increased the Aarogyasri scheme's limit to Rs 10 lakh. He also announced that fine rice would be supplied under ration cards starting from Ugadi.

He mentioned that the government had waived loans worth Rs 20,676 crores for farmers, provided a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for fine rice, and that each acre of land would receive Rs 12,000 under the Rythu Bharosa scheme. The first instalment

of Rs 6,000 would be distributed to farmers by March-end.

He also spoke about the new initiative launched by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to provide self-employment to the youth through the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam Scheme, which aims to empower 5,000 youth in each constituency.

State Irrigation Development Corporation Chairman Muvva Vijay Babu, Working Project Director Bhukya Srinivas, Kalluru RDO L Rajender, Mission Bhagiratha EE Pushpalatha, FRVO P Snehalatha, Tehsildars G. Pratap, Sambasivudu, MPDOS. Annapurna, Chandrashekar, and various department officials participated.

Teacher booked under POCSSO Act

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

A Hindi teacher working in Sampath Nagar Girijan Ashram School in Tekulapalli mandal was thrashed by villagers for allegedly attending duty under the influence of alcohol. The accused was allegedly found drunk while on duty.

Apart from it, he allegedly misbehaved with a Class 10 girl. The girl managed to escape with the help of her friends.

The girl's family members, along with the villagers, came to the school to question the teacher but he left by then. On the next day when the girl's family and villagers came to the teacher was present in the school, they thrashed teacher.

But the teacher managed to escape from school with the help of staff present in the school. It came to know that the accused acted as the hostel warden as well.

The accused teacher was arrested under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act.

'Budget will benefit all sections of people'

PNS ■ NALGONDA



Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy speaking at a media conference in Nalgonda on Thursday

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Thursday praised the state budget presented in the Assembly on Wednesday.

Speaking at a media conference at the Nalgonda District Collectorate on Thursday, he emphasised that the budget was designed to benefit all sections of society. He highlighted that irrigation was given top priority, with Nalgonda district receiving significant attention.

He mentioned that irrigation coverage in the district increased by one lakh acres during Yassangi eason, leading to higher crop yields. The government is setting up paddy procurement centres to ensure that farmers face no difficulties in selling their produce, and these centres will be operational soon.

The Minister announced that funds for Brahmin welfare schemes had been doubled in the budget. He also revealed that Rs 37 crore had been allo-

ated for the completion of canal and project works, which would enhance groundwater levels. The government aims to provide irrigation to one lakh acres by December.

Venkat Reddy stated that Rs 11,000 crore was allocated for school education, with 58 integrated schools being constructed at a cost of Rs 200 crore each. These schools will offer free education from classes 6 to 12 for students belonging to the SC, ST, BC, and minority.

Young engineer dies in hit-and-run accident

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A tragic hit-and-run incident in Narsingi claimed the life of a young engineer, Naveen Chari. The accident happened near Koppakot T Grill when an unidentified vehicle rammed into his bike.

Naveen Chari sustained severe injuries in the accident and was immediately rushed to NIMS Hospital for treatment. However, despite medical efforts, he succumbed to his injuries. According to the police, the incident took place while Naveen was returning home from work on his very first day at the job. His sudden demise has left his parents devastated.

The Narsingi police have registered a case and launched an invest.

GWMC seizes nursing college for not paying property tax

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

Jaya college of Nursing in Hanamkonda has been seized by the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) officials for defaulting on property tax payment.

The property taxes constitute a primary income source for the GWMC.

The GWMC taxation wing is running special drives against defaulters particularly with domestic and commercial property owners.

The government offices have also not cleared their pending taxes and there are many defaulters among private assesses.

The officials from the GWMC are facing many challenges in tax collection.

In response to this shortfall a special drive has been launched against defaulters, particularly among the city's commercial property owners was in the last one week the officials seized 365 properties for defaulting on property tax payments. The officials appealed to the property owners to pay their taxes on time to avoid penalties. The revenue from property tax is crucial for the city's development and maintenance. Residents are advised to check their pending dues and make payments promptly to support the city's infrastructure and services.

he Jay Nursing College management had been issued several warnings in recent days regarding the tax payment but did not respond.

In light of this, the municipal authorities decided to take strict action and began the process of seizing the college due to non-payment of taxes.



Cong govt will protect rights of every citizen: MLA

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar speaking at a meeting in Shadnagar on Thursday

Local legislator Veerlapalli Shankar reaffirmed that the Congress government is committed to protecting the rights of every citizen in society. On Thursday, he led Congress ranks in garlanding Dr BR Ambedkar's statue at the town's main square. The event was marked by drum beatings from leaders, captivating the gathered audience. Following the tribute, MLA Shankar proceeded to his camp office, where he held a media conference.

During the conference, he criticised the previous BRS administration, alleging that it neglected the welfare of marginalised communities over the past decade.

He emphasised that the Congress government, under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's leadership, has worked tirelessly for the upliftment of weaker sections. He highlighted that numerous welfare schemes had been launched for the poor and that the

recent approval of the SC classification resolution is a historic milestone in ensuring social justice.

The MLA underscored that the Congress government has remained committed to its promise of SC classification, which was a major agenda in the Chevella public meeting attended by top Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge.

He assured the people that the government would continue its efforts until the Central government grants approval for the classification.

Two die, four injured as truck rams bus

PNS ■ MEDAK

Two women died and four others were injured when a mini truck rammed into a stationary private bus

at Koalpalli under Peddshankaram pet mandal in the district on Thursday. A major accident was averted as most of the passenger got off the bus when the accident hap-

pened. Around 40 tourists from Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh were travelling in a tourist bus on a pilgrimage trip. They were en route from Shirdi to Srisailem.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT FORM-VII (See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 And Section-19 (1) of the Act-30/2013) OR Collector/Additional Collector/ RDO Huzurnagar DECLARATION									
District Collector Suryapet File No: G/1461/2022 Dated: 18-03-2025 RDO Huzurnagar File No: F/999/2023 Dated: 15-03-2025 Gazette No: 05/2025; Dated: 18-03-2025									
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Collector Suryapet that a total land to an extent of Ac: 23.08 1/2 gts in survey number 24, 39, 41, 42, 50, 51, 62, 63, 64, 65, 276, 282, 287, 288, 289, 290, 296, 309, 305, 386, 385, 394, 395, 398, 399, 401 & 402 patta land is required in the Chinthalapalem Village of Chinthalapalem Mandal, Suryapet District for public purpose namely Formulation of Lift Irrigation Scheme to Mukhyatha Branch Canal from Krishna River near Vella t-turu Village of Chinthalapalem Mandal.									
The said land acquisition for the project is exempted from the Chapter II and chapter III of the LA Act 2013 i.e., social impact Assessment (SIA) and Food Security as per Section 10 (A) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement 2013, Telangana Amendment Act -2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017)									
Therefore, declaration is made that a piece of land measuring, more or less Ac.23.08 1/2 Gts of patta land of standard measurement under acquisition in the Chinthalapalem Village, Chinthalapalem Mandal Suryapet District for public purpose namely for Formulation of Lift Irrigation Scheme to Mukhyatha Branch Canal from Krishna River near Vellaturu Village.									
SCHEDULE									
Village: Chinthalapalem; Mandal: Chinthalapalem; District: Suryapet									
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Type of land	Type of area number	Name and Address of Person interested	Name of the Enjoinder	Boundaries			Structures
1	2	3	4	5	6	North	South	East	West
1	24/2261	Assi-gned	0.07	Anjani Cements	Anjani Cements	392	392	392	243
2	24/1A32	Assi-gned	0.02	Sk Hafizea W/o Rafi	Sk Hafizea W/o Rafi	392	392	241	243
3	24/236	Assi-gned	0.15	Gudepu Mattiah	Gudepu Mattiah	392	392	241	243
4	24/232	Assi-gned	0.11	Sk Mahamud S/o Nanne Saab	Sk Mahamud S/o Nanne Saab	392	392	241	243
5	24/243	Assi-gned	0.08	Janige Venkateswaru S/o Saidu	Janige Venkateswaru S/o Saidu	392	392	241	243
6	24/243	Assi-gned	0.12	Gujjala Linga Reddy S/o Shambi Reddy	Gujjala Linga Reddy S/o Shambi Reddy	392	392	241	243
7	24/243	Assi-gned	0.01	Boreddy Shanti Krishna Reddy	Boreddy Shanti Krishna Reddy	392	392	241	243
8	24/294	Assi-gned	0.03	Sk Inmasab S/o Badesab	Sk Inmasab S/o Badesab	392	392	241	243
9	24/177	Assi-gned	0.11	Sk Moula Sab S/o Lal Sab	Sk Moula Sab S/o Lal Sab	392	392	241	243
10	24/118	Assi-gned	0.12	Sk Gal Sab S/o Janiab	Sk Gal Sab S/o Janiab	392	392	241	243
11	24/238	Assi-gned	0.03	Sk Rasool Sharif S/o Sondumyia	Sk Shakra W/o Tahemiyia	392	392	241	243
12	24/141	Assi-gned	0.23	Sk Sondumyia S/o Janiab	Sk Sondumyia S/o Janiab	392	392	241	243
13	24/3491	Assi-gned	0.03	Sk Abdul Gani S/o Janimiyia	Sk Abdul Gani S/o Janimiyia	392	392	241	243
14	39/411	Patta	1.18	Sri Uma Maheshwara temple	Sri Uma Maheshwara temple	422	422	411	413
15	42/43	Patta	0.02	Parimi Lakshmaiah S/o Sataiah	Parimi Lakshmaiah S/o Sataiah	512	512	423	421
16	42/412	Patta	0.20	Boreddy Konda Reddy S/o Venkat Reddy	Boreddy Sairi Reddy S/o Ram Reddy	512	512	423	421
17	50/A/203	Patta	0.02	Sk Salar S/o Khasesab	Sk Madansab S/o Janesab	512	512	503	501
18	50/A/1	Patta	0.25	Varabolu Ramakrishna Reddy S/o Papi Reddy	Varabolu Ramakrishna Reddy S/o Papi Reddy	602	602	603	601
19	50/E1	Patta	0.12	Kandula Gunra Reddy S/o Sundaram ouleshwar Reddy	Varabolu Ramakrishna Reddy S/o Papi Reddy	602	602	603	601
20	51/1U2	Patta	0.03	Morthala Yashoda Rajeshwari W/o Laxma Reddy	Donka	502	502	511	513
21	51/1U2	Patta	0.01	Morthala Yashoda Rajeshwari W/o Laxma Reddy	Morthala Yashoda Rajeshwari W/o Laxma Reddy	502	502	511	513
22	51U/201	Patta	0.14	Kandula Jagannathan Reddy S/o Seetharam Reddy	Kandula Jagannathan Reddy S/o Seetharam Reddy	502	502	511	513
23	51U/1	Patta	0.08	Malu Adilazmi W/o Nagi Reddy	Malu Adilazmi W/o Nagi Reddy	502	502	511	513
24	62/A/2	Patta	0.08	Mathangi Kotaliah S/o Narsaiah	Mathangi Kotaliah S/o Narsaiah	502	502	621	623
25	62/A/2	Patta	0.23	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	602	602	601	603
26	63/A/11	Patta	0.08	Boreddy Shantamma Reddy S/o Krishna Reddy	Boreddy Shantamma Reddy S/o Krishna Reddy	602	602	603	601
27	63/A/21	Patta	0.02	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	602	602	603	601
28	63/A/11	Patta	0.08	Boreddy Shantamma Reddy S/o Krishna Reddy	Boreddy Shantamma Reddy S/o Krishna Reddy	602	602	603	601
29	63/A/21	Patta	0.02	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	Boreddy Narsamma W/o Venkateswaru Reddy	602	602	603	601
30	63/A/21	Patta	0.12	Kandula Srinivasa Reddy S/o Ramkoti Reddy	Kandula Srinivasa Reddy S/o Ramkoti Reddy	652	652	652	652
31	63/A/13	Patta	0.08	Kandula Venkat Reddy S/o Ramkoti Reddy	Kandula Venkat Reddy S/o Ramkoti Reddy	652	652	652	652
32	64/EE	Patta	0.01	Morthala Kamalamma W/o Ram Reddy	Veeramreddy Mohan Reddy, S/o Punna Reddy	652	652	652	652
33	64/EE	Patta	0.01	Morthala Kamalamma W/o Ram Reddy	Veeramreddy Veera Reddy S/o Seetharam Reddy	652	652	652	652
34	64/EE	Patta	0.01	Morthala Kamalamma W/o Ram Reddy	Veeramreddy Venkateswaru Reddy S/o Seetharam Reddy	652	652	652	652
35	65/2	Patta	0.03	Ravula Veeramanna W/o Narsaiah Reddy	Gangreddy Shanti Reddy S/o Sheshi Reddy	642	642	651	653
36	65/5	Patta	0.20	Boreddy Krishna Reddy S/o Venkat Reddy	Boreddy Krishna Reddy S/o Venkat Reddy	642	642	651	653
37	65/3	Patta	0.11	Boreddy Laxmanamma W/o Bikhshama Reddy	Boreddy Bikhshama Reddy S/o Ram Reddy	642	642	651	653
38	65/2	Patta	0.17	Ravula Veeramanna W/o Narsaiah Reddy	Ravula Narsaiah S/o Sheshiah Reddy	642	642	651	653
39	276/A/15	Patta	0.05	Mathangi Kotaliah S/o Narsaiah	Mathangi Kotaliah S/o Narsaiah	2862	2862	2761	2763
40	276/A/22	Patta	0.10	Chintala Surenaramulu (Hussen)	Chintala Surenaramulu (Hussen)	2862	2862	2761	2763
41	276/3	Patta	0.01	Chintala Surenaramulu (Hussen)	Donka	2862	2862	2761	2763
42	276/3	Patta	0.22	Chintala Surenaramulu (Hussen)	Chintala Surenaramulu (Hussen)	2862	2862	2761	2763
43	276/1	Patta	0.01	Mathangi Narsaiah S/o Kotaliah	Kampasali Lingiah S/o Narsaiah	2862	2862	2761	2763
44	276/141	Patta	0.07	Mathangi Narsaiah S/o Kotaliah	Katiboina Venkateswaru S/o Saidu	2862	2862	2761	2763
45	282/A3	Patta	0.12	Yerram Laxma Reddy S/o Kashiram Reddy	Yerram Laxma Reddy S/o Kashiram Reddy	4012	4012	2821	2823
46	282/EE2	Patta	0.08	Routha Venkatesh walu S/o Guvvaiah	Routha Guvvaiah S/o Bikhshama Reddy	4012	4012	2821	2823
47	282/E1	Patta	0.06	Palle Venka taravamma W/o Srinivasa Reddy	Palle Venka taravamma W/o Srinivasa Reddy	4012	4012	2821	2823
48	287/34	Patta	0.05	Banavath Bavoji S/o Thulasiram	Banavath Bavoji S/o Thulasiram	2802	2802	2871	2873
49	287/41	Patta	0.08	Banavath Devoji S/o Thulasiram	Banavath Devoji S/o Thulasiram	2802	2802	2871	2873
50	288/4	Patta	0.04	Sk Moulali S/o Mansoor Ali	Sk Moulali S/o Mansoor Ali	2872	2872	2881	2883
51	288/4	Patta	0.19	Thokala Ramurthy S/o Venkatesh	Thokala Ramurthy S/o Venkatesh	2802	2802	2881	2883
52	288/4	Patta	0.06	Thokala Ramurthy S/o Venkatesh	Thokala Ramurthy S/o Venkatesh	2802	2802	2881	2883
53	288/4	Patta	0.02	Thokala Ramurthy S/o Venkatesh	Madhavesu Venkateshwaru S/o Saidu	2802	2802	2881	2883
54	290/EE	Patta	0.03	Madhavesu Venkateshwaru S/o Saidu	Madhavesu Venkateshwaru S/o Saidu	2802	2802	2901	2903
55	290/1U1/1	Patta	0.08	Pillala Saidu S/o Maitaiah	Pillala Ramakrishna S/o Maitaiah	2802	2802	2901	2903
56	290/2U2	Patta	0.17	Sk Moulali S/o Mansoor Ali	Sk Moulali S/o Mansoor Ali	2802	2802	29	

ACROSS THE STATES



Temple demolition in Delhi's Mayur Vihar deferred

Delhi High Court-ordered demolition drive against three temples in Mayur Vihar was postponed in the face of a protest led by the local MLA on Thursday. A team of DDA accompanied by police reached the east Delhi locality around 4 am Thursday to raze Kali Mandir, Amarnath Mandir, and Badrinath Mandir – supposedly built in a green belt in the area's Phase 2. "As per the High Court's order, the DDA team, along with police, reached Mayur Vihar Phase 2 in the Patparganj Assembly. But we were already there, trying to ensure the temple remained safe," Patparganj MLA Ravinder Singh Negi said on X. A DDA spokesperson confirmed that the demolition was postponed. "We had to postpone the drive due to the outrage it sparked. However, our legal team is reviewing the matter," the spokesperson said. Negi said that he and others had been present at the site since 3 am and made every effort to protect the temples. He claimed that the drive was postponed after a discussion with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha



Kerala to provide houses, skill training for STs: Min

Kerala Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes O R Keli announced on Thursday that 10,000 new houses will be allotted to Scheduled Tribes (ST) under the Secure Accommodation and Facility Enhancement (SAFE) scheme, aimed at completing unfinished houses. During the discussion on the demand for grants in the Assembly, the minister also stated that land would be provided to 3,340 more individuals. "All Scheduled Tribe families in Kannur, Malappuram, Thrissur, and Kollam districts will be ensured land, making Kerala the first state where no tribal families remain landless," he said. Additionally, 6,000 study rooms will be provided for tribal students, and a regional study will be conducted in collaboration with Sree Narayana Guru Open University to assess the impact of Gandhian and Narayana Guru's philosophies on social change.



J-K: BJP leader shoots himself dead

BJP leader and former Independent MLA from Jammu and Kashmir's Gurez Faqeer Mohammad Khan on Thursday allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself, party officials said. Khan (62) shot himself using his security personnel's SLR rifle inside his official accommodation in the Tulsibagh government quarters here, they said. BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur, while confirming the incident, said the former MLA has died due to suicide. It was not immediately known as to why Khan took the extreme step. Khan, who was elected to the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in 1996 as an Independent candidate, had joined BJP in 2020 and unsuccessfully contested the assembly polls on the party ticket last year. Police, in a statement, said it has taken cognizance of the incident and launched legal proceedings. "An incident of firearm discharge was reported today in the Tulsibagh area of Srinagar, resulting in the death of former legislator Faqeer Mohammad Khan, son of Jumma Khan, a resident of Gurez. Police have taken cognizance of the matter, and legal proceedings under section 194 of the BNSS have been initiated at Police Station Sherghari," Srinagar Police said in a statement.



Row over DMK MPs wearing T-shirts with slogans

RS fails to transact business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha failed to transact any significant business on Thursday and was adjourned for the day after witnessing three adjournments over a row on some DMK members wearing T-shirts with slogans written on them.

This is the first day during the second part of the Budget Session when the House was adjourned without transacting any business except for the laying of papers.

Soon after the House met in the morning, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar allowed the laying of papers and some reports of the parliamentary standing committees, after which he adjourned the House for about an hour.

He said he wanted to meet leaders of political parties over what he witnessed in the House. Without sharing details of what he witnessed, Dhankhar adjourned the proceedings till noon.

"I will be calling a meeting of floor leaders in my chambers at 11.30 am today. I would share with the members what I have seen in the House a while ago," he said soon after listed papers were laid on the floor of the House.

While the chairman did not cite any reason for the adjournment, the issue of DMK members wearing T-shirts with slogans written on them was objected to by the chairman.

While the chairman did not cite any reason for the adjournment, the issue of DMK members wearing T-shirts with slogans written on them was objected to by the chairman.

Some of the DMK MPs attended the House proceedings wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Delimitation - Tamil Nadu will fight, Tamil Nadu will win", which was objected to by the Chair.

Some MPs also donned stoles that played upon Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's remarks on DMK MPs' protest in Lok Sabha against the three-language formula of National Education Policy (NEP), and had the word "uncivilised" written on it, with the first two alphabets 'U' and 'N' having been crossed.

As the deadlock over the issue continued, when the House reassembled at noon, Deputy Chairman Harivansh announced that the proceedings had been adjourned again for another 15 minutes.

India ranks 118th in World Happiness Report

PNS ■ LONDON

India ranked 118th in the World Happiness Report 2025 published Thursday, up from the 126th position in the previous year but below countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Ukraine and Palestine.

The 13th edition of the annual report, released coinciding with the International Day of Happiness that falls on March 20 each year, focuses on the impact of caring and sharing on people's happiness, including how sharing a meal increases happiness.

Finland is ranked as the happiest country in the world for the eighth consecutive year and other Nordic countries – Denmark, Iceland and Sweden – continued to remain in the top four, in that



order.

The United Kingdom is at the 23rd position, the US is 24th and China stands at 68th position in the list of 147 countries this year. The State of Palestine is ranked 108th (103 in 2024) while Ukraine is at 111 rank (105 in 2024).

The annual report, published

by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford in partnership with Gallup, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network ranks the countries according to the self-assessed life evaluations by those polled averaged over the years 2022–2024. Country rankings for the three benevolent acts

covered by the Gallup World Poll – donating, volunteering, and helping strangers – vary depending on cultural and institutional differences, the authors of the report said.

Researchers say that beyond health and wealth, some factors that influence happiness sound deceptively simple: sharing meals with others, having somebody to count on for social support, and household size.

While India ranked 118th overall, in terms of the 'Country rankings for six measures of benevolence', it was listed much higher at 57 for (how people) donated; at 10 for how people volunteered; 74 for helping a stranger; and in case of wallet returned by a neighbour (115), stranger (86) and police (93).

SC TO ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS

Approach state legal services authority for compensation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said acid attack survivors could approach their respective state legal services authority in case there was a delay in receiving compensation.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar took note of the submissions of the counsel of Mumbai-based NGO Acid Survivors Sahas Foundation that such survivors were finding it tough to receive compensation from authorities in Maharashtra.

"Just get in touch with the state legal services authorities (SLSAs)," the CJI said.



tion to acid attack survivors will be brought to its notice.

Observing the Centre and 11 states hadn't filed their replies to the petition, the court granted them four weeks and posted the hearing in the May 5 week.

The hearing related to a 2023 PIL of the NGO seeking the strict implementation of the court's directions issued in the famous Laxmi v. Union of India in 2014.

The order, among other things, said acid attack survivors should receive free treatment in both public and private hospitals and compensated with a minimum of Rs 3 lakh by the state government concerned as aftercare and rehabilitation cost.

588 antiquities repatriated to India from US so far: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 588 antiquities have been repatriated to India from the US so far, out of which 297 were received in 2024, the government informed Parliament on Thursday.

Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said this in a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha.

He was asked the number of "looted or stolen artifacts" expected to be repatriated under US-India Cultural Property Agreement to prevent illicit trade of antiquities.



"Cultural Property Agreement (CPA) has been signed with the United States of America (USA) to prevent smuggling of Indian antiquities.

Agreement, being preventive in nature, has no timelines or target numbers. So far, 588 antiquities have been repatriated from USA, out of which 297 were received in 2024," he stated.

The Union minister was also asked whether the government plans to collaborate with international organisations or other nations to strengthen India's efforts in recovering stolen antiquities.

"India collaborates with different international organisations, including UNESCO and INTERPOL, as per requirement."

Bihar craving for change: Kharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Newly-appointed Bihar Congress president Rajesh Kumar met party President Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi here on Wednesday and discussed the preparations for the state Assembly polls later this year.

In a significant move ahead of the Bihar polls due later this year, the Congress named Kumar, a Dalit leader, as the new president of its state unit on Tuesday.



India, Brazil key to global climate action: COP30 prez

Says Global North fails to show way

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Global South, especially countries like India and Brazil, which have strong institutions and scientific expertise but also large vulnerable populations, is in a unique position to lead the fight against climate change, with developed countries failing to show the way, the president of this year's UN climate conference said on Thursday.

COP30 President André Correa do Lago, currently in India for bilateral meetings, told journalists at a press conference that Brazil aims to go beyond the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement to ensure the implementation of commitments made at UN climate conferences, as many financial and governance institutions operate outside the UN system.

Correa do Lago, a former Brazilian ambassador to India, highlighted a shift in global climate leadership from the Global North to the Global South, saying that the US has "reluctance regarding this subject", while "the Europeans now have priorities regarding defence" and "other countries [are] presenting other priorities."

"The Global South has an important role to play in this stage... The South has participated in this multilateral process of rules in a very constructive way. We followed the agreements, debated a lot, but remained constructive. We accepted the Paris Agreement, etc. But the part of the (Global) North, which involved financial support and accelerating emission reductions, has not happened as planned."

"So, there is a new space for the Global South because a country like India or Brazil has, at the same time, advanced science, very strong institutions, and also parts of the population that are very poor.

Over Rs 22 cr incurred on PM's visit to US in June 2023

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over Rs 22 crore was incurred on the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in June 2023, according to data shared by the government. Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita shared the data in his written response to a query in Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Leader of Opposition in the Upper House Mallikarjun Kharge asked the government the total expenditure incurred by Indian embassies on arrangements for the prime minister's foreign visits in the past three years.

He also asked for visit-wise details of expenses under major heads such as hotel arrangements, community receptions, transport arrangements and other miscellaneous expenditures among others.

The data on country-wise expenditure on foreign visits by the prime minister, including the expenditure on official, accompanying, security and media delegations, in 2022, 2023 and 2024 was shared in a tabulated form in his response.

According to the data, an expenditure of Rs 22,89,68,509 was incurred on the visit of the prime minister to the US in June 2023, while the expenditure incurred was Rs 15,33,76,348 on the September 2024 visit to the same country.

The tabulated data pertained to over 38 visits, from May 2022 visit to Germany to Kuwait visit in December 2024. According to the data related to the PM's Japan visit in May 2023, the expenditure incurred was Rs 17,19,33,356 while the same was Rs 80,01,483 on the Nepal visit in May 2022. The min-

ister in his response also shared some corresponding data for years prior to 2014.

"For reference purpose, expenditure on Prime Minister's foreign visits earlier were INR 10,74,27,363 (USA, 2011), INR 9,95,76,890 (Russia, 2013), INR 8,33,49,463 (France, 2011) and INR 6,02,23,484 (Germany, 2013). These figures show actual expenditure without adjusting for inflation or currency fluctuations," he said.



National interest key in decisions on intl oil purchases: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's decision on international oil purchases is based on diverse factors, with the country's national interests at the top, the Centre informed Parliament on Thursday.

The Ministry of External Affairs was asked in Rajya Sabha whether "it is a fact that the USA had asked India to stop unloading Russian oil tankers and has set a deadline for it."

MEA Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh in his response said that the ministry was informed by the US about its

January 14 sanctions imposed on more than 400 Russian energy sector-related entities.

He said the sanction, pronounced by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control, or OFAC, extended to oil majors and their subsidiaries, LNG terminals, insurance companies, oil traders/brokers, oil vessels and providers of oilfield services.

A 60-day "winding down period" was also announced after which the US was supposed to designate all those that continue to deal with sanctioned parties in Russia's energy sector, he said.

Voter list updating to be strengthened: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a debate on the purity of electoral rolls, the Election Commission said on Thursday that the regular updating process of the voter list will be strengthened in close coordination with the birth and death registration authorities.

Technical consultations between the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and experts of the EC will begin soon on voter list-Aadhaar linkage, it said, adding that though an elector can only vote in the assigned polling booth and nowhere

else, the poll body has resolved to remove duplicates country-wide and end a decades-long issue within three months.

"Regular updation of the voter list shall be strengthened in close coordination with the birth and death registration authorities," the EC said in a statement.

In the EC's interactions with political parties, it was clarified that any inclusion or deletion in the draft elector list is governed by the process of appeals under relevant legal provisions for filing claims and objections available to all political parties in the Representation of People



act, 1950. In the absence of such appeals, the list is prepared by the electoral registration officer (ERO) prevails.

The EC recalled that merely 89 first appeals and just a single second appeal were filed after the

completion of the Special Summary Revision exercise in January.

The poll authority also said it has charted out "bold steps" towards strengthening election processes.

It said nearly 5,000 poll officials, including state chief electoral officers, district electoral officers and electoral registration officers, will hold regular meetings with political parties for resolution of issues at the grassroots levels by March 31.

The poll panel said digital training has also been planned for continuous capacity augmentation of nearly one crore

election officials. Within a month of Gyanesh Kumar assuming the charge as the chief election commissioner, the EC has put the entire election machinery, right up to the booth level and officer level, on a "path firmly on course for promoting participation of all electors and ensuring a pleasant experience for them at the polling stations", it said.

Political parties being key stakeholders are also being involved at the grassroots level.

Steps will be taken to ensure that no polling station has more than 1,200 voters and that the stations are within a two-km dis-

tance from the electors' residences.

Basic facilities will be ensured even at the remotest rural polling stations, the EC said, adding that to tackle urban apathy and encourage more participation, clusters of high-rise buildings and colonies will have polling stations within their premises.

The offer of the commission to train political parties' representatives and their appointed booth-level agents on the due processes in accordance with electoral laws, including claims and objections to the voter list, has been welcomed by political parties, it said.

Editor's TAKE

Welcome back to Earth, Sunita

The safe return of Sunita Williams to Earth has brought immense relief to her admirers

The prayers of millions of admirers and fans were finally answered when NASA astronaut Sunita Williams, along with her colleague Butch Wilmore, returned to Earth after an unplanned nine-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Originally slated for a brief eight-day stay, their mission was extended due to technical issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, underscoring both challenges within NASA's commercial partnerships and the resilience of its astronauts. Launched on June 5, 2024, aboard Boeing's Starliner for its inaugural crewed flight, Williams and Wilmore were expected to return after approximately a week. But that was not to be, as a technical glitch left Sunita stranded on the space station for nine long months, testing her resilience and the acumen of NASA scientists.

However, during the mission, Starliner encountered propulsion problems and helium leaks, rendering it unsafe for the astronauts' return. Consequently, NASA opted to keep the crew aboard the ISS while addressing these issues. Boeing's Starliner has faced multiple setbacks since its development, including delays and technical malfunctions. The propulsion system anomalies and helium leaks experienced during this mission highlighted significant concerns about the spacecraft's reliability. These issues not only delayed the astronauts' return but also raised questions about NASA's strategy of partnering with private contractors for crewed spaceflight missions.

The astronauts finally returned aboard SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule, which landed off the coast of Florida. Throughout the extended mission, Sunita Williams demonstrated exceptional adaptability and commitment. She continued to contribute to various scientific experiments and participated in spacewalks, maintaining her professionalism despite the prolonged stay which can be tough psychologically as well as physically. Her ability to navigate the uncertainties of space travel exemplifies the resilience and mental fortitude required of astronauts. Back home in India, there was great relief, as images of the Space Shuttle Columbia explosion—in which Kalpana Chawla lost her life—flashed on people's minds.

Sunita Williams, the Indian-American astronaut, has become an emblem of perseverance, determination, and excellence for millions of young girls across India and beyond. With her extraordinary achievements in space exploration, she has shattered stereotypes, proving that no dream is too ambitious if one has the will to pursue it. Born in 1965 in Ohio, US, to an Indian father and a Slovenian mother, Sunita Williams' journey to space is a testament to hard work and resilience.

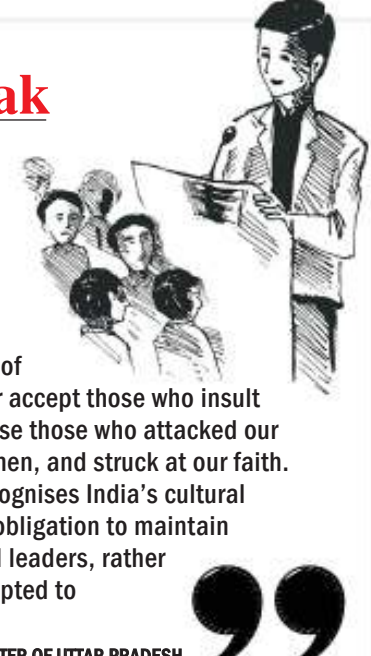
A graduate of the US Naval Academy, she served as a naval officer and test pilot before being selected as a NASA astronaut in 1998. Her achievements include holding records for the longest spacewalk time by a female astronaut and commanding the International Space Station (ISS), making her one of the most influential figures in space exploration. Sunita Williams' success story is a beacon of hope for countless Indian girls who aspire to excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Her journey sends a powerful message—that with courage and dedication, any barrier can be overcome. Coming from an Indian heritage, she represents the vast potential that lies within young minds across the country, encouraging them to dream beyond societal expectations.

Though the story has a happy ending, it also serves as a wake-up call for NASA to recalibrate its processes, ensuring that such glitches do not happen again—potentially costing human lives and shattering the dreams of millions.

Leaderspeak

“Glorifying invaders means strengthening the very roots of treason. New India will never accept those who insult our great ancestors and praise those who attacked our civilisation, violated our women, and struck at our faith. At a time when the world recognises India's cultural legacy, every citizen has an obligation to maintain respect for our distinguished leaders, rather than praise those who attempted to eliminate our identity.”

YOGI ADITYANATH, CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH



Respect women's right to choose

As the world experiences an increasing number of climate-related calamities, it is high time to move towards the goal of a 'human rights-based economy' to mitigate vagaries of weather

Some recent photographs of Elon Musk, now, heading President Trump's newly created DOGE, in several of the US government Official meetings, including the one with the Indian Prime Minister, showed him with his children and family. A section of the media considered this overtone, apart from showing his familial love, also 'as the promotion for his pro-natalist position', a view shared by many conservative voters who elected Trump to power. Musk also made it clear that 'demographic decline, is a much bigger risk to civilisation than global warming'.

While on the campaign trail, the Vice-President nominee, JD Vance's comment 'childless cat ladies' referring to the Democratic presidential candidate, Kamala Harris, and Musk's calling her out as an "extinctionist", for citing 'climate anxiety' as a reason for not having kids, amply indicated about the upsurge of an intense wave of pro-natalism in the US, once Trump comes to power. In Trump 2.0, pro-choice activists apprehend that the Mexico City Policy, or the Global Gag Rule, which banned the US global health funding to non-US organisations, providing abortion care, reinstated during his first tenure, is going to be expanded to all US foreign assistance. Many also expect a nationwide abortion ban this time in the aftermath of the overturning of the 1973 Roe vs Wade decision during his earlier tenure. Trump's Project 2025, with its anti-choice agenda, casts a shadow on women's reproductive rights, while, the 'great replacement theory' of white supremacists finds a new life inside the Republican Party.

Many consider Trump's pro-life stand to be more 'about controlling women's bodies, rather than a genuine concern for the earliest stages of human life. As the global average number of births per woman hovers around 2.3, a little above the 'replacement level, and population ageing becoming a significant trend, policymakers and economists across the world expressed concern about 'diminishing labour force, upending consumer culture, increased inflation, and the prospect of overstressed government programs for ageing populations'.

Around three in ten nations are now pursuing pro-natalistic policies, restricting abortion and clamping down on family planning programs. A 2021 report, titled 'Welcome to Gilead', in a reference to a dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood, which examined the policies that promote childbearing in Iran, China, Turkey, Russia, Hungary, Poland, Germany, and the US, reported that 'there is a rise in toxic mix of



nationalism, xenophobia, and racism to serve nationalistic, economic and patriarchal interests, instrumentalising women's bodies, though, pronatalism, is not, in and of itself, coercive (Researcher, Monica Scigliano).

Many feminists dubbed such pressures for high birth rates from family, religion, politics and economy as the products of millennia of patriarchal disempowerment of women, considering their bodies as vessels for advancing a growth agenda.

On the other hand, climate protagonists debunk the theory of 'perpetual growth', which treats 'babies as cogs in a growth machine', and overlooks their rights to be born into social and ecological conditions that support their well-being (Nandita Bajaj, Antioch University).

Almost half of the world's 2.2 Billion children live in one of the 33 countries classified as 'extremely high-risk' facing a deadly combination of exposure to multiple climate and environmental shocks. However, despite growing evidence, policymakers, journalists, and academics tend to de-link demographic factors from environmental sustainability concerns. As the world is besieged with rhetorics of pro-growth narratives and the racist 'great

replacement theory', author Laura Carroll, an exponent of reproductive rights and ethics, in her book, the 'Baby Matrix' urged people to make 'the most informed decisions about parenthood, as a society can no longer afford to leave pronatalism unquestioned'.

Many climate economists also discard the bogey of 'Ponzi demography', based on the 'more is better' philosophy for sustained economic growth. Several development economists like Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, found the current yardsticks of the GGDP-based economic growth on only material consumption, and not quality-of-life factors, as 'inadequate' in measuring human well-being.

Many espoused for a new economic model which can work on declining populations, and also on the ageing demographics.

Researchers revealed that 'fears about ageing population are often guided by the false idea that older people are homoge-

neously ill, dependent, and unproductive'. The recent economic analyses also disclosed that the costs connected with an ageing society are 'manageable, while the economic, social, and environmental benefits of smaller populations are substantial'.

Moreover, a shrinking labour force is less likely to threaten economic growth as new technologies can take over more tasks. In the book, Decline and Prosper, the demographic expert, Vegard Skirbekk, argued that 'low fertility is on the whole a good thing, and the outcome is good for people, particularly women, and beneficial for the planet'.

In 2021-22, the UN recognised the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a fundamental human right, which has been enshrined into law by 161 countries, barring the UK, US and Russia.

As the world experiences an increasing number of climate-related calamities, it is high time to move towards the goal of a 'human rights-based economy', which proposes to give women the option of 'free choice' about childbirth and work for economic prosperity without compromising ecological concerns.

(The author is former Director General, Doordarshan and All India Radio. Views expressed are personal)



Wome- e-trepre-eurs pla-t the seeds of health

SECOND Opinion

The children are getting fidgety. The suspenseful music blaring from the speakers near a small makeshift stage on the playground of their primary school in Samsa Tarahar village, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh, adds to the excitement as they eagerly await the arrival of Salman, the magician. As parents, the village pradhan, and other residents—men and women, young and old—settle down behind the rows of children, a sudden silence falls. All eyes are riveted on a snazzy dressed man wearing a long, flashy red and gold cape with a matching turban, making a dramatic entrance from behind a curtain. "Do you know there is another magician like me who lives in your village? How many of you know her and want to meet her?" Salman asks. As the audience responds enthusiastically, he waves the wand in his hand, mumbling some magical words. Just as the music reaches a crescendo, a woman, simply dressed in a cotton sari, stands up from the audience and makes her way to the front of the stage. Pointing to her, he announces, "This is Shashi Devi, the didi who makes your illnesses vanish with her magical vegetable plants from her nursery."

Her saplings are chemical-free and full of nutrients. The health of those who have set up poshan vatakas (nutrition gardens) in their homes with her saplings has vastly improved—



just like Shashi Didi's family. For those who haven't yet experienced this magic, all you need to do is get vegetable saplings of your choice from her and reap the health benefits. While the magician's deft weaving of magic tricks with health and nutrition messages has successfully raised awareness and curiosity about Shashi, she is not the only one creating magic. Ever since 24 women from marginalised communities, like Shashi, in 24 villages across four blocks were trained to become vegetable nursery entrepreneurs under the Aga Khan Foundation's Poshan Prerna and Aspirational District Programme, they have been sowing multiple seeds of health and empowerment—both within and beyond their villages—thanks to their nurseries. Initiated to address the health and economic challenges faced by rural families in Bahraich, the programme, implemented with support from IndusInd Bank, has not only created new income opportunities for these women but also improved their health.

In fact, these nursery entrepreneurs are proving to be life-savers for other women as well. When frontline health workers and the AKF team monitoring pregnant women found that Prema Devi, a resident of Balaha village in her third trimester, was anaemic and needed nutritional support, they immediately reached out to the AKF team, as there was no nursery entrepreneur in her village. A direct link was established with the nearest entrepreneur, and high-impact saplings of cauliflower, brinjal, cabbage, chili, tomato, long gourd, bitter melon, spinach, and coriander—rich in essen-

tial nutrients like iron, calcium, and vitamins—were provided to establish a nutrition garden in her backyard. Regular monitoring of her nutritional intake by a proactive panchayat, ASHA workers, ANM, AWW, and the AKF team yielded significant results, including weight gain and an increase in haemoglobin levels. Our data indicates a 17.1 per cent reduction in anaemia prevalence among pregnant women in areas where linkages were established between panchayats actively supervising health and nutrition indicators and vegetable nursery entrepreneurs. Increased consumption of iron-rich foods, combined with IFA supplementation, has also contributed to this positive trend, states Ashok Singh, District Programme Officer, Health. Learning about the nutritional value of saplings and receiving AKF training on organic methods for pest and disease management to ensure chemical-free growth has significantly boosted the entrepreneurs' incomes as well. Each entrepreneur was provided with 130 trays containing 15,000 saplings free of cost. According to Raghvendra Singh, the district coordinator for skill development, each woman earned approximately ₹20,000 over a six-month cycle spanning two seasons, increasing their annual family income by nine per cent—a remarkable achievement for a district ranked as the second most backward in India. Their achievements are not only making them economically independent but also empowering them to take charge of their own health—conjuring magic one sapling at a time.

(The author is a journalist writing on development and gender. Views are expressed are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Are farmers' demands justified?

Madam — Refer to news report, 'Farmers MSP talks with centre in deadlock, Punjab police detain key leaders' (March 20). Farmers in Punjab receive free electricity, heavily subsidised seeds, and fertilisers from the government. They do not pay income tax but receive significant financial support from their relatives abroad. Additionally, they easily obtain loans from banks on lenient terms, allowing them to buy expensive tractors fitted with music systems.

Many farmers have leased their lands to contractors or given them on rent for farming, while they hire poor labourers from UP, Bihar and Jharkhand at low wages. With minimal personal involvement in farming, they have ample free time for politicking.

Due to their free time, many farmers actively engage in politics, frequent protests and movements. Earlier, they staged a nearly year-long sit-in at the Delhi border, severely inconveniencing the general public.

Now, for over a year, they have been blocking roads at the Khanauri and Shambhu borders in Punjab, creating hurdles for commuters, traders, and industrialists.

These roadblocks have caused significant economic losses and daily hardships for travelers and business owners alike. While Punjab farmers have the right to fight for their demands, it is unfair to violate the rights of other citizens.

VINAY KUMAR MALHOTRA | AMBALA CANTT

The decline of education system in MP

Madam — The data presented in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly paints a grim picture of the state's education system. The government has left no stone unturned in increasing education expenditure—rising from ₹25,953 Crore in 2021-22 to an estimated ₹36,581 Crore by 2025-26. Yet, the number of students in government schools has seen a drastic decline. Over the past decade, student enrollment has dropped from 7.896 Million to just 5.817 Million. The most alarming fact is that in the 2024-25 academic session, not a single student enrolled in the first grade in 5,501 schools. Meanwhile, private school enrollments have surged, clearly indicating that parents are losing faith in government schools.

The government has attempted to attract students by offering free books, uniforms, mid-day meals, and laptops, but these measures have failed. Experts believe that the 'Child Tracking System' has revealed the true figures, but the core issue remains the lack of quality education, inadequate infrastructure, and the growing preference for private schools. This is a wake-up call for the government. Increasing the budget alone is not enough, appointing more teachers, improving school infrastructure, and enhancing education quality are crucial. Winning back parents' trust is now the biggest challenge. If effective steps are not taken soon, the future of government schools could be in deep crisis.

RK JAIN | BARWANI

The cost of divisive politics

Madam —The quicksand of communalism presents a balanced and logical points to ponder over. Organisations without constructive ideas and ideologies seek to take divisive factors like regional, communal or caste or colour as a fertile ground to flourish for themselves. After incurring heavy loss of men and materials those trapped in the tussle realise their mistakes and return to a peaceful reconciled life. But the damage they cause is immense and the pains are borne for along time. Identify seekers find communal and caste platforms as potential ones for their instant response. Such leaders or organisations seeking identity in communal or caste grounds can be easily identified by the absence of any constructive agenda like removal of poverty, equality, equidistribution of wealth and peaceful co-existence.

But the history makes it clear that any advancements and achievements such elements make will be only ephemeral. Those who find fault with the Muslim rulers for their overactive communal activities against Hindus should remember that more such activities can be counted upon as Sivaites against Vaishnavaites, Vadakalai Vaishnavaites against Thenkai Vaishnavaites and so on. Those who take oath to preserve the Constitution with spirit and essence openly promote communal hatred and the concerned authorities sit muted as number ones.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

HEALTH HAZARDS OF PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN INDIAN FOOD SUPPLY

Pesticide residues in food are small amounts of pesticides that remain on or within foods after they have been used on crops. These residues can potentially pose health risks, depending on the specific pesticide and its concentration. India is one of the top consumers of pesticides globally, using them extensively in agriculture to protect crops from pests and diseases. However, the detection of pesticide residues in food has emerged as a significant health issue. Research shows that most foods in India contain these residues, some of which have levels higher than safe limits.

This situation raises serious health concerns and highlights the need for better food safety regulations and greater public awareness.

The recent appeal by the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare for a comprehensive national strategy for monitoring pesticide residues in food is important to enhance public health and food safety in India.

Contamination of food with pesticides poses a serious health risk, which is further worsened by modern farming practices and reckless use of chemicals. Although several regulatory measures are in place, there are gaps in monitoring, enforcement and public education, which require stronger government action at both the central and state levels.

Reports from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and various independent studies show that pesticide residues have been found in more than 50 per cent of food samples tested in India. Some foods, such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses and spices, have been found to contain pesticides in excess of the maximum residue limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies.

Pesticides are used on crops to control insects, fungi and weeds and can be transported through water, soil and air, affecting nearby crops.

SATYAWAN SAURABH | BHIWANI

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

Indian Railways: Powering India's growth

With strategic investments, technological advancements and a visionary public policy approach, Indian Railways is redefining connectivity, efficiency, and sustainability

FIRST Column

The Indian Railways, often regarded as the crouching tiger of India's growth story, is one of the world's most remarkable yet under-discussed examples of how strategic investments in infrastructure and connectivity-focused public policy can yield exponential dividends for national development. The progress made by Indian Railways (IR) over the past decade (2014-2024) could well be considered its golden period of growth and transformation, making it one of the fastest-growing railway networks globally.

What sets India's railway story apart, making it a lesson for countries and regions with similar growth ambitions? The key lies in a public policy approach best summarised as: planning for the railways has been done with Bharat and for Bharat.

This approach recognises that the railway system must remain both world-class and affordable, fulfilling its essential role as the common person's mode of transport while simultaneously supporting India's industry, commerce, and the ambition of a \$5 Trillion economy. Every day, 22.4 Million people rely on Indian Railways as an integral part of their economic lives, and the system must grow in tandem with their aspirations.

This transformation required revolutionising business operations. Historically, Indian Railways faced criticism for slow modernisation and infrastructure constraints. However, many fail to recognise the crucial shift in priorities. While the total network length has gradually increased to 68,000 km since 1950, a more significant achievement is the expansion of track kilometers, which has grown to an impressive 132,000 km today, enhancing capacity and efficiency.

A decade-on-decade comparison highlights the scale of progress. Between 2014 and 2024, Indian Railways laid 31,000 km of new tracks compared to just 14,900 km in the preceding decade (2004-2014). Similarly, cumulative freight loading surged from 8,473 million tons to 12,660 million tons, revenue generation soared from ₹8.64 Lakh Crore to ₹18.56 Lakh Crore, and electrification expanded from 5,188 km to over 44,000 km, significantly reducing carbon footprints. The development of world-class Dedicated Freight Corridors (2,741 km, compared to none in the previous decade) has further bolstered efficiency. Locomotive production nearly doubled from 4,695 to 9,168 units, while coach manufacturing rose from 32,000 to 54,000 units. Across all productivity and performance indices, Indian Railways has set new benchmarks.

A major reform was the merger of the Railway Budget with the General Budget—a decision still lamented by some who hold onto outdated per-



spectives. Historically, inadequate financing led to a thin spread of resources across a vast backlog of pending projects. However, focused investments have changed the landscape, with Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) soaring to ₹8.25 Lakh Crore over the last decade, compared to just ₹1.56 Lakh Crore in the preceding 10 years.

One of the most significant upcoming milestones is the completion of the railway link to Srinagar, featuring some of the world's tallest bridges and longest tunnels, seamlessly connecting the valley to the national network. Additionally, Indian Railways is on track to become the first major railway system to achieve 100 per cent electrification, ensuring seamless connectivity while reducing dependence on fossil fuels and drastically cutting carbon emissions.

The proliferation of the KAVACH anti-collision system across the network is the most extensive implementation in any mixed-traffic railway system globally. Meanwhile, Indian trains are surpassing "world-class" standards, blending advanced global technologies with domestic priorities to create safer, faster, cleaner, and more comfortable travel experiences—all while maintaining affordability to keep rail services



M JAMSHED

POST-2014, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A PROGRESSIVE AND AMBITIOUS APPROACH TOWARD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. A MODERN INDIA DEMANDS A NATIONAL TRANSPORTER FREE FROM OUTDATED CONSTRAINTS, FOSTERING INNOVATION AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

accessible to all.

A unique aspect of Indian Railways' business model is its ability to subsidise passenger travel using freight revenues while remaining profitable. In contrast, major railway systems in developed countries are either privatised with the freedom to set high tariffs or reliant on government subsidies to cover losses. Despite stiff competition from other transportation modes and its dependence on derived demand, Indian Railways continues to meet ambitious revenue targets, delivering record-breaking performance year after year.

This transformation may come as a surprise to those who remember an era when anything labeled "export quality" was reserved for affluent nations, while Indians settled for substandard goods and services. Generations of citizens were conditioned to lower their expectations, even for crucial services like Indian Railways. However, post-2014, the government has adopted a progressive and ambitious approach toward infrastructure development. A modern India demands a national transporter free from outdated constraints, fostering innovation and global competitiveness. This progress has been achieved while maintaining high levels of localisation for essential railway components and scaling up domestic manufacturing to unprecedented levels. While Vande Bharat trains have captured public attention, Indian Railways' transformation extends

far beyond these high-speed marvels.

India is now set to roll out the world's most powerful hydrogen trains in the coming months, a feat comparable to Operation Smiling Buddha, which established India as a nuclear superpower. At 1,200 horsepower, these locomotives far surpass those being developed by "advanced" nations still struggling with half as much power. To ensure safety, Germany's TÜV SÜD has conducted third-party audits of India's hydrogen trains.

With the establishment of the world's longest hyperloop test facility, India is emerging as a global leader in futuristic transportation. Following the completion of a 422-meter test track in December 2024, India is now developing a nearly 50-km test track to assess hyperloop's commercial viability. Agreements with SwissPod (backed by Elon Musk) and France's SYSTRA underscore India's commitment to leading hyperloop innovation. Even China has recognised the strength of the 'Make in India' initiative. CRRC India is actively localising metro coach manufacturing for the Bangalore Metro, achieving over 75 per cent domestic content, with plans to reach 90 per cent. Furthermore, the facility is set to handle export orders for West Asia and Africa.

While bullet train rolling stock supply agreements with Japan are being finalised, India has already embarked on domestic high-speed train manufacturing. Beyond rolling stock, Plasser India, a subsidiary of Austria's Plasser and Theurer, is revolutionising railway maintenance with locally produced track machines, enhancing self-reliance while supporting global exports.

Indian Railways is also spearheading ambitious connectivity projects. The BBIN initiative aims to enhance rail connectivity across South Asia, while the 'Act East Policy' envisions linking India with ASEAN. The 'IMEC initiative' is set to establish a Rail-Sea-Rail corridor connecting India with Europe. Meanwhile, Indian Railways' public sector undertakings (PSUs) are exporting rolling stock, undertaking track infrastructure projects, and providing consultancy services across Asia and Africa. With its new trains, modernised stations, faster speeds, dedicated freight corridors, and high-speed networks, Indian Railways has solidified its place as a world-class transportation system. This success story serves as a model for other nations yet to fully leverage the transformative potential of railways in national growth.

The motto 'Viksit Rail, Viksit Bharat' (Developed Railways, Developed India) is not just a vision for 2047, it is an ongoing journey for Bharat and with Bharat, with new records, milestones, and achievements being set every day.

(The writer is a distinguished fellow at CRF and former member, Traffic Railway Board. Views expressed are personal)

Foreign interference in India's farmer protests: A threat to national sovereignty

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent call to ban Sikhs for Justice underscores a growing consensus within the Indian establishment that foreign-backed elements are actively working to destabilise the country's internal social fabric. His statement is not a reaction to isolated incidents but a recognition of a broader, orchestrated effort to exploit India's challenges for geopolitical leverage. At the heart of this manipulation lies the Open Society Foundations (OSF), led by George Soros, which has been systematically influencing India's internal affairs through financial backing, ideological infiltration, and political maneuvering.

The farmer unrest in India over recent years is not merely a reaction to domestic policy, it is closely linked to Soros's global network, which exploits social fault lines to exert influence and undermine sovereign decision-making.

Indian agriculture has undergone a transformation with direct government support and market interventions, yet the farmer protests are increasingly entangled in international financing and hidden political agendas. What started as grassroots struggles for farmers' rights have been infiltrated by foreign forces with interests far beyond agriculture.

Historically, Indian farmers have fought for better prices, market access, and protection from exploitative policies. Their movements have centered on resisting corporate encroachment and demanding fair subsidies. However, recent years have seen a shift where external funding has played a role in redirecting these movements. OSF has strategically injected capital into India's rural protests, not to empower farmers but to destabilise internal governance and promote an agenda aligning with Western geopolitical interests.

The 2020-21 farmers' protests exemplify how Soros's network infiltrates domestic movements. What started as a call for fair pricing quickly evolved into a sophisticated and well-funded political movement, backed by global media campaigns and international endorsements. This escalation was not organic—it was engineered. OSF-linked entities have funneled funds into Indian non-profits and activist groups under the pretext of supporting democracy and human rights, but the real intent was to use these protests as a tool against the Indian state.

Financial backing from international sources raises concerns about whether genuine farmer grievances are being amplified or manipulated. Soros's OSF, known for its involvement in "regime change" operations across Eastern Europe and Latin America, has been accused of funding civil unrest in developing nations. Similar patterns have emerged in India. The well-organised nature of the farmer protests, from logistics to media coordination, suggests significant financial and

strategic backing. The question remains: Why are these protests so well-funded, and what is the ultimate objective?

The consequences of such interference are multifaceted. While real farmer issues persist, external involvement risks overshadowing them with hidden political motives.

The movement, originally meant to empower farmers, risks becoming a tool for destabilisation. What began as a struggle for fair Minimum Support Prices (MSP) has transformed into a political agitation aimed at discrediting the Indian government and fracturing social cohesion.

The farmer protests received significant support from Canadian politicians, particularly in areas with a large Punjabi diaspora. Public endorsements, fundraising campaigns, and rallies abroad highlighted how a local agricultural movement turned into an international diplomatic issue.

Canada's Liberal Party, influenced by OSF-backed think tanks and lobbying groups, played a key role in amplifying the protests. Radical elements with foreign funding further intensified tensions, raising doubts about the protests' true motives.

The Sovereign Guarantee Fund (SGF) is another financial mechanism under scrutiny. Designed to provide security for agricultural projects, it has drawn concerns that foreign governments and financial institutions may be using it to influence farmer movements and shape internal policies. Soros's network has been linked to sovereign funds in various developing countries, often tying them to policy shifts favoring Western financial interests over local farmers. This creates economic dependencies that align with Western strategic goals rather than the welfare of Indian farmers.

Soros's network has been linked to sovereign funds in various developing countries, often tying them to policy shifts favoring Western financial interests over local farmers. This creates economic dependencies that align with Western strategic goals rather than the welfare of Indian farmers. For Indian farmers, this situation presents both opportunities and risks. While they demand fair prices and financial aid, there is a danger of being drawn into international power struggles.

The growing influence of foreign-backed transnational corporations (TNCs) is particularly alarming. These firms, often supported by sovereign guarantee agreements, introduce patented farming solutions that increase dependency, eroding farmers' autonomy.

What is presented as modernisation frequently results in escalating costs for farmers, reduc-

ing their control over their own practices.

The fingerprints of OSF are evident across these movements—international media coverage, coordinated social media campaigns, and well-timed statements from Western governments align with Soros's strategy of influencing emerging markets.

The influx of foreign-backed corporations undermines domestic agricultural enterprises, shifting control from Indian farmers to multinational conglomerates. Small farmers, in particular, bear the brunt of rising input costs and decreasing market power.

This is not about democracy or civil rights—it is about strategic geopolitical manipulation. The objective is clear: to weaken India's internal social cohesion, influence policymaking, and create economic dependencies that serve Western interests.

The increasing presence of foreign-backed elements in India's farmer movements is no accident, it is a calculated strategy to erode India's sovereignty and dictate internal policies.

At the core of these complexities is a fundamental truth—Indian farmers require genuine policy support, direct financial aid, and reforms that prioritize their interests over corporate or geopolitical agendas.

Their protests should not be battlegrounds for international diplomacy but platforms for real agricultural change. India's agricultural sector must remain sovereign, with policies driven by national interests rather than foreign capital.

As Rajnath Singh's statement suggests, the time for vigilance is now. The Indian government must safeguard its agricultural sector from external influences and hidden financial agendas. Protecting Indian farmers is not just about agriculture—it is about preserving national sovereignty, dignity, and economic independence. The future of Indian farming must not be dictated by foreign interests but shaped by the resilience and determination of India's farmers.

Their fight is not just for today—it is for the generations that will inherit their land, knowledge, and legacy. Ensuring a self-reliant agricultural sector is essential to achieving the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

India's farmers deserve genuine support, not foreign interference. The influence of external forces threatens national sovereignty, turning rightful protests into geopolitical tools.

As Rajnath Singh warns, vigilance is crucial. India must protect its agricultural sector from hidden agendas, ensuring that policies prioritise farmers' welfare over external manipulation, securing a self-reliant future.

(The writer is secretary general, Confederation of NGOs of Rural India and Member, PM-MSP Committee, Government of India. Views expressed are personal)

Raisina dialogue 2025 convenes amid global uncertainty

The not-so-subtle changes in international diplomacy are quickly becoming the leitmotif within the first 50 days of President Trump's inauguration. While there have been some major embarrassments in the Oval Office—such as an ugly spat between President Zelensky of Ukraine and US Vice President JD Vance, as well as Vance's controversial statements in Europe regarding European politics—the expulsion and deportation of several international students and academics for their ideological leanings, travel bans on multiple countries, and a semi-trade war have all contributed to destabilising the global order.

Amidst this backdrop, the Ministry of External Affairs hosted its prestigious annual foreign policy event, the Raisina Dialogue, this week.

The tone was set by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary, and the event's organisers, ORF, who underscored the constant evolution and reshaping of the global order. In his welcome note, EAM Jaishankar wrote: "In a world where relationships are no longer mutually exclusive and every nation seeks to benefit from the best of the international order can offer, there is a constant flow of geopolitical convergences, alignments, turbulence, and transitions.

It is these shifts, with their continuities and discontinuities, that the Raisina Dialogue 2025 will deliberate upon. We are also living through an era of globalisation fatigue, where older partnerships are being remade and new ones forged.

The world is experiencing a wave of intense economic competition, where interdependence and de-risking struggle to find a balance. There are no lasting landing points, underscoring the continuing nature of competition. Since 2020, instability and conflicts around the globe have continued or escalated, whether in Ukraine, the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa. Divergent approaches toward climate action have created deep fissures.

Meanwhile, emerging technologies, particularly AI, have become a driving force in contemporary geopolitics, triggering a new tech race with the potential to shape the destinies of people and nations. The need to strive for peace, progress, prosperity, and security has never been greater."

The reshaping of the old world order was further emphasised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he sat down for a first-of-its-kind podcast with US computer scientist Lex Fridman. During the interview, he stated:

"We must also understand that the world has become one small village today. No country can thrive in isolation. Today, we all depend on one another. No one can make it far alone. That is why

you must learn to synchronise with everyone, and everyone else must learn to synchronise with you. That's the only way to propel this initiative forward.

Organisations like the United Nations came into being after the First World War, but they failed to evolve with the times, and this inability to adapt has sparked a global debate on their relevance."

PM Modi dedicated an entire segment of the conversation to his relationship with President Trump, sending a bold message to global leaders about their close affiliation. He said:

"When he was shot during the recent campaign, I saw the same resilient and determined President Trump—the one who walked hand in hand with me in that stadium.

Even after being shot, he remained unwaveringly dedicated to America. His life was for his nation. His reflection showed his 'America First' spirit, just as I believe in 'India First.' That's why we connect so well.

These are the things that truly resonate. And I believe that, across the world, politicians are covered so much by the media that people mostly perceive each other through its lens. People rarely get the chance to truly meet or personally know one another, and perhaps third-party intervention is the real cause of tensions."

Regarding his negotiating skills in comparison to President Trump, PM Modi added:

"It's his graciousness and humility—it is very kind of him to openly appreciate me on various occasions and in different contexts. But when it comes to negotiation, I always put my country's interests first.

That's why, in every forum, I speak up for India's interests—not to harm anyone, but in a positive manner. And because of that, no one takes offense. People know that if Modi is present, he will strongly advocate for these things. After all, the people of India have given me this responsibility. For me, my nation is my high command, and I will always honor their will."

It was no surprise that a top official from the Trump administration, the US Intelligence Chief, was in New Delhi this week.

She highlighted the personal bond between the two leaders and also spoke about the rise of the Islamic Caliphate while stressing the need to address the continued atrocities against religious minorities in Bangladesh.

New Delhi is pleased this week, but it will proceed with cautious optimism.

(The writer is a political analyst. Views expressed are personal)



IN BRIEF



Malabar Gold to open 12 new showrooms

Jewellery retailer Malabar Gold on Thursday said it will add 12 new showrooms across the country in the current fiscal at an investment of Rs 600 crore. Malabar Gold & Diamonds operates 11 state-of-the-art factories across India and 5 international units. The new showrooms will be opened in Panvel in Mumbai, Sinhagad Road in Pune, Brahmapur and Soubhagya Nagar in Odisha, Dhanbad in Jharkhand, Hospet, Nagarbhavi and Chitradurga in Karnataka, Nandyal, Amalapuram, Machilipatanam in Andhra Pradesh and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This will take the total showroom count to 391 showrooms across 13 countries and 19 states in India and create employment opportunities this financial year, the company said in a statement, adding that currently, it employs over 25,000 professionals from 26 countries. Malabar Gold is also planning to open 60 new showrooms in India and overseas in 2025-26, of which 5 stores will be launched in April in the Middle East, UK, and Canada.



Gold falls Rs 300 to Rs 91,650 per 10 gram

Gold prices declined by Rs 300 to Rs 91,650 per 10 grams on Thursday, bringing an end to the three-day rally in the national capital, amid fall in precious metal rates globally, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Wednesday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed Rs 700 higher at its lifetime high of Rs 91,950 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity, which ended the previous session at Rs 91,500 per 10 grams, slipped by Rs 300 to Rs 91,200 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver prices also tanked by Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,02,000 per kg from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 1,03,500 per kg, also its historic high. In the preceding three sessions, gold added Rs 2,500 per 10 gram to hit its all-time high level, while silver surged by Rs 2,300 per kg to reach its fresh peak during the period. In the global markets on Thursday, spot gold fell by USD 14.44 or 0.47 per cent to USD 3,033.35 per ounce. In the morning trade, it rose to hit a lifetime high of USD 3,057.36 per ounce. Similarly, Comex gold futures for April delivery slipped 0.11 per cent to USD 3,038 per ounce. During the session, it touched a fresh peak of USD 3,065.09 per ounce.



Rupee rises 1 paisa to close at 86.36 against US dollar

The rupee stayed firm and appreciated 1 paisa to close at 86.36 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday supported by positive domestic equities. Forex traders said the Indian rupee has staged a counterattack against external pressures, gaining support from strong foreign inflows into debt markets. However, risks remain due to unabated foreign institutional investor sell-off, and uncertainty surrounding Trump's tariff stance could pose challenges to the rupee's upward momentum. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.39 then touched an intraday high of 86.20 and a low of 86.41 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 86.36 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 1 paisa from its previous closing level. On Wednesday, the rupee appreciated 19 paise to close at 86.37 against the US dollar. This is the fifth straight session of gain for the rupee, during which it has added 87 paise.

'Taiwan ready to assist India reduce trade deficit with China'

Assures Taiwanese Deputy NSA Hsu Szu-Chien

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taiwan can help India reduce its import of electronic components from China and the best way to bolster the economic engagement including in the semiconductor sector would be to seal a free trade pact, Taiwanese deputy national security adviser Hsu Szu-Chien said on Thursday.

Hsu said a trade deal will pave the way for greater investment in India by Taiwanese companies in the high-technology sectors as it will help in bringing down the "high tariffs". The Taiwanese deputy national security adviser was in the national capital to participate in the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics, and hold talks with senior Indian officials.

Hsu said there can be a match-making between technology of Taiwan and India's

demographic dividends to produce high-end technology components in India that will help New Delhi cut its imports from China.

"I think there's great potential for the relations to expand, especially on economic cooperation," Hsu said.

He said India can bring down its "huge" trade deficit with China by going for joint production of various electronics components instead of keep importing them from China.

"Most of these are ICT (information technology) products, which from our perspective, India has great potential to produce. And Taiwan can be of help, not only semiconductor, but all other ICT products," he said.

"India itself is a huge market and you have a demographic dividend of a very young age of population, which can be put into the workforce."



India's 'AI for All' mantra backed by concrete action: Min

Asserts Commerce and IT MoS Jitin Prasada

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's 'AI for All' mantra is backed by concrete action with the country leading in AI skill penetration and talent concentration, Union Minister Jitin Prasada said on Thursday as he urged industry leaders to prioritise research and development (R&D) to capitalise on India's position as a global skill capital.

Prasada, Union Minister of State for Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, was delivering a keynote address at the Nasscom Global Confluence 2025 here.

"Our mantra 'AI for All' is backed by concrete action. India is number one in the world in AI skill penetration - the AI skill index even outstrips the US and Germany."

"It's just not about numbers, it's about impact. As nations across the globe embrace digitalisation to modernise traditional sectors and fuel economic growth, India stands ready to be a strategic technology partner," the minister asserted.

Stressing that India is open for business and ready to lead,



Prasada urged industry leaders to make research a top priority in their future strategies.

"India is the skill capital of the world and we are ready to share, venture across the world, and contribute to various sectors given the enormous edge that we have on the skill front."

"We are also ensuring that even the future skills programmes reach every nook and corner to the last mile on the ground -- to our villages, where our workforce should be ready to tackle and engage with the changes in the transformation that's happening across the globe in the tech front," he said.

The country's strength reflects its capacity for innovation and resilience in the dynamic global landscape, Prasada said, adding that the Indian IT industry is a testament to that vision and resilience.

"In the fiscal year 2024, this industry recorded a remarkable revenue of USD 254 billion, a figure that underscores its role as a global powerhouse."

"With a presence in over 80 countries and a track record of delivering cutting-edge solutions to fortune 500 companies, Indian IT firms have

become synonymous with innovation, reliability, and excellence.

Our strength lies in our highly skilled workforce, our deep expertise in emerging technologies, and our ability to partner with the world in its digital transformation journey," he noted.

Referring to his dual responsibilities in governance -- Commerce and IT, the minister noted that both sectors are currently the flavours of the season, and emphasised that India is on a strong footing to capitalise on its growth.

FOUR DAYS OF MARKET RALLY

Investors' wealth surges Rs 17.43 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Market investors kitty swelled by Rs 17.43 lakh crore in four days of sharp rally in equities where the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped over 3 per cent.

On Thursday, the 30-share benchmark Sensex jumped 899.01 points or 1.19 per cent to settle at 76,348.06, regaining the 76,000 level. During the day, it soared 1,007.2 points or 1.33 per cent to 76,456.25.

In four days, the Sensex zoomed 2,519.15 points or 3.41 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 17,43,418.8 crore to Rs 4,08,61,851.73 crore (USD 4.73 trillion) in four days.

"Benchmark indices got a Fed booster shot on Thursday extending gains for fourth straight session, after the US Fed kept the forecast for two rate cuts in 2025 intact despite inflation risks from Trump's trade war. Broader mid and smallcaps also posted gains for the day. All major sectors also logged gains in broad-based rally with Nifty IT recovering from steep losses in recent weeks," Satish Chandra



Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

The US Fed is undoubtedly the driving force behind today's market rally as markets took comfort from the strong overnight gains in US indices, after Fed kept the projection for two rate cuts in 2025 unchanged, he added.

From the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Nestle, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank and Tata Motors were the biggest gainers.

However, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance and UltraTech

Cement were the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.73 per cent and mid-cap index went up by 0.61 per cent. All BSE sectoral indices ended higher where telecommunication jumped 1.94 per cent, teck (1.89 per cent), oil & gas (1.56 per cent), energy (1.42 per cent), auto (1.39 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (1.23 per cent).

"The rally was driven by gains in the US market after the Federal Reserve maintained its forecast of two rate cuts this year despite the ongoing tariff concerns," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Rs 124.98 cr demand notice to New India Assurance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector general insurer New India Assurance on Thursday said it has received a Rs 124.98 crore demand notice from the Income Tax Department.

The company received an order on March 19, 2025, from the National Faceless Assessment Centre, Income Tax Department, levying a penalty of Rs 1,24,98,58,050 for disallowance of payment made to auto dealers for the assessment year 2016-17, New India Assurance Company said in a regulatory filing.

The amount would be shown as a contingent liability in the financial statements of the company, it said.

Based on the merits of the matter, the company would pursue an appeal before the National Faceless Appeal Centre (NFAC) or other legal options against the order, it said.

Bengal's revenue receipt for FY'26 pegged at over Rs 2.66 lakh crore

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal's revenue receipt for the 2025-2026 fiscal is projected to be Rs 2.66 lakh crore, as per the recently tabled budget, a state minister said on Thursday.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the revenue receipt was a little over Rs 2.36 lakh crore, Minister of State for Finance (Independent Charge) Chandrima Bhattacharya said in the assembly.

Bhattacharya, during a discussion on two appropriation bills for the fiscal ending March 31, said it is estimated that there will be an increase of Rs 29,809 crore in revenue receipt for 2025-2026.

She maintained that the scope of taxation by the state has narrowed since most of the indirect taxes have come under the GST ambit.

The projected market loan of the state in 2025-26 has been pegged at Rs 81,972 crore, the minister told the House.

The West Bengal government is "well within its limits" in terms of obtaining market

loan, she said. Bhattacharya said the state's market loan in 2024-25 was Rs 79,727 crore.

Noting that capital expenditure has a significant influence in creation of long-term assets, employment and betterment of living standards, she said expenditure on this account



for 2025-26 has been pegged at Rs 39,337 crore, which was Rs 34,915 crore in the current fiscal.

The assembly passed the two appropriation bills, authorising payment and appropriation of certain further sums from the consolidated fund for the current fiscal.

DPIIT inks pact with Yes Bank to support startups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Thursday said it has signed a pact with Yes Bank to facilitate funding access, mentorship, and infrastructure support for early-stage startups.

This agreement aims to foster innovation and provide crucial support to product startups, innovators, and entrepreneurs across the country, it said.

"The partnership will leverage DPIIT's Startup India initiative and Yes Bank's financial expertise to facilitate market linkages, funding access, men-



torship, and infrastructure support for early-stage ventures," it said.

Startups will benefit from Yes Bank's HeadStartup programme, which offers tailored banking and financial solutions, including working capital, credit access, and cash flow management.

offer emerging startups the right resources and opportunities to scale and thrive.

The DPIIT has also inked a similar agreement with Kyndryl Solutions for supporting startups in the manufacturing and IT sectors by leveraging Kyndryl's expertise in digital transformation and Generative AI solutions.

It said Kyndryl will institutionalise dedicated programmes to support digital product startups, AI-driven innovators, and entrepreneurs.

"Startups will receive mentorship on product development, market readiness, cybersecurity resilience, and enterprise deployment," it added.

PFRDA notifies assured pension scheme for govt staff

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA) on Thursday notified operationalisation of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) which promises an assured pension of 50 per cent of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation.

This follows the UPS notification dated January 24, 2025 by the government for central government employees covered under the National Pension System

(NPS).

The regulations shall come into effect from April 1, 2025, PFRDA said in a statement. These regulations enable the enrolment of central government employees including an existing central government employee in service as on April 1, 2025, who is covered under NPS and new recruit in the central government services, who joins service on or after April, 2025.

The enrolment and claim forms for all these categories of central government employees will be available online from April 1, 2025 on



the website of Protean CRA - <https://nps.cra.nsdl.co.in> The employees also have

the option to submit the forms physically, it said. UPS or assured payout

would not be available in case of removal or dismissal from service or resignation of the employee, as per the notification.

The notification added that the rate of full assured payout will be 50 per cent of 12 monthly average basic pay, immediately prior to superannuation subject to a minimum qualifying service of 25 years against a market returns linked payout under the NPS.

The notification will give the option to 23 lakh government employees to choose between UPS and NPS, which came into effect on

January 1, 2004.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 24, 2024, approved the UPS.

Under the old pension scheme (OPS), effective before January 2004, employees got 50 per cent of their last drawn basic pay as pension.

Unlike the old pension scheme, UPS is contributory in nature, wherein employees will be required to contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary and dearness allowance while the employer's contribution (the central government) will be 18.5 per cent.

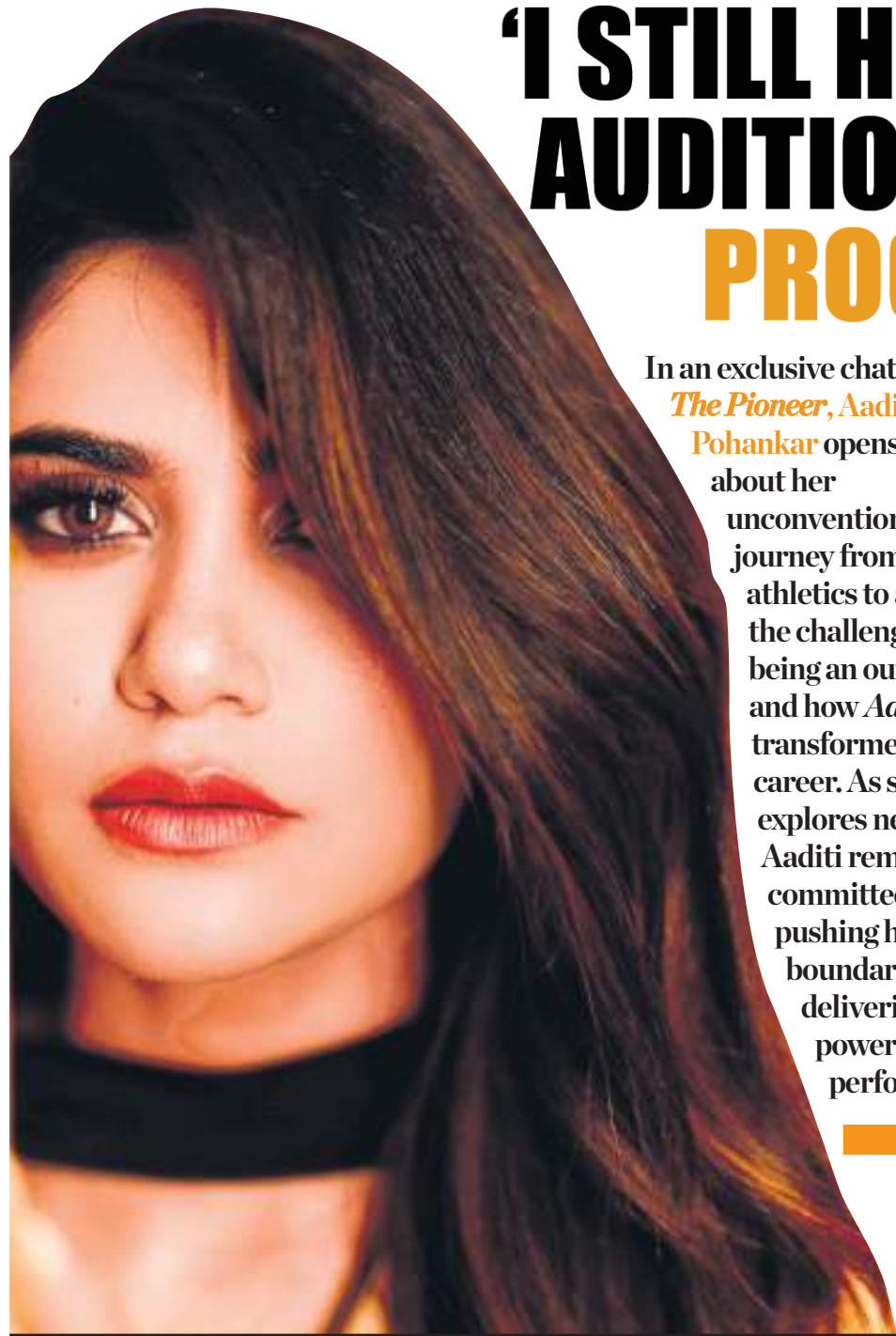
GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE
Online tender are invited through: www.e-procurement.telangana.gov.in by the Deputy Director (Veterinary), Kukatapally Zone, GHMC for the following works/service for the year 2025-2026.
(1) NH No. 01/VET/IKPZ/GHMC/2025: Name of the work: e-procurement for supply of food and other ingredients for the year 2025-2026 pertaining to Veterinary Section, Kukatapally Zone, GHMC. Estimated Cost: Rs. 45,56,545/-.
(2) NH No. 02/VET/IKPZ/GHMC/2025: Name of the work: e-procurement for supply of medicine and vaccines for the year 2025-2026 pertaining to Veterinary Section, Kukatapally Zone, GHMC. Estimated Cost: Rs. 43,37,317/-.
(3) NH No. 03/VET/IKPZ/GHMC/2025: Name of the work: e-procurement for supply of surgical equipments & other material for the year 2025-2026 pertaining to Veterinary Section, Kukatapally Zone, GHMC. Estimated Cost: Rs. 43,76,449/-.
Date & Time of tender schedule: 21-03-2025 at 12.30 P.M. to 28.03.2025 upto 12.30 P.M.
Name & Address Officer, Cell No.: Dr. G. Venkateshwar Deputy Director (IC), Veterinary Section, GHMC, Kukatapally Zone, Mobile No. 8125971021. (This has the approval of the Zonal Commissioner, Kukatapally Zone, GHMC) Sd/- Deputy Director (IC), Veterinary Section, GHMC, Kukatapally Zone, GHMC. D.P.R. No.: 1188-PR/CLAD/11/2024-25, Dt: 20-03-2025

The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS DIVISION, OSMANIA UNIVERSITY, HYDERABAD
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
e/NIT. No. 257/EE/UBD/1/2025. Dt: 18.03.2025.
Name of Work: Providing Thermoplastic painting to centre and outer lines along the O.U. Main road on the O.U. Campus. Last date / time of closing of Bids: On 03.04.2025 up to 05.00 p.m. ECY: Rs. 8,19,000/- Name & address: Executive Engineer, Buildings Division, O.U. Hysr. - 7, Ph. No. 8331997296. Further details can be seen at 'e' procurement market at www.tender.telangana.gov.in after Dt: 20.03.2025 time: 11.00 A.M.
D.P.R. No.: 1188-PR/CLAD/11/2024-25, Dt: 20-03-2025 Sd/- Executive Engineer

OFFICE OF THE MAHABUBABAD MUNICIPALITY
E/11616/ EPROC-19/02n-12/2024-25. Dated: 20-03-2025
(1) Total No of E-procurement Tender Works: 03 Nos. (2) Type of Tender Works: Civil & Other Works etc. Rs. 96,35/- Lakhs. (3) Bid Submission Start & Received Closing Date & Time from Dt: 20-03-2025 @ 10.00 A.M. to 27-03-2025 @ 05.00 P.M. (4) Bid Opening Date & Time: 27-03-2025 @ 05.10 P.M. (4) Quotation Called for Rates Purpose (i) for supply of cattle pond and filling with water (Daily 3 times) including labour, Driver, Tanker, water etc., all changes, in Mahabubabad Municipality. Quotations Submission Start & Received Last Date: 20-03-2025 to 24-03-2025 @ 05.00 P.M. Opened: 24-03-2025 @ 05.10 P.M. contact: Dy.E.E. 9649903992. Sd/- Commissioner, Mahabubabad Municipality
D.P.R. No.: 1188-PR/CLAD/11/2024-25, Dt: 20-03-2025

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE
e/NIT. No. 33/GHMC/PT/EE/2024-25. Dt: 18-03-2025
Name of Work: Sanitary Resource person, Estimate Amount/ ECY: Rs. 553416/-
Start Date/ Last Date & Time for receipts of Bids: 20.03.2025/ 10.30 AM, 27.03.2025/ 10.40 AM. Name & Address Officer: Sri. V. Srinivas Executive Engineer, GHMC, Moosapet Circle - 23, Cell. 9649906745. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tender.e-procurement.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer GHMC, Moosapet Division - 23
D.P.R. No.: 1188-PR/CLAD/11/2024-25, Dt: 20-03-2025

'I STILL HAVE TO PROVE MYSELF THROUGH AUDITIONS, BUT IT'S A FAIR GAME IF THE PROCESS APPLIES TO EVERYONE'



In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Aaditi Pohankar opens up about her unconventional journey from athletics to acting, the challenges of being an outsider, and how *Aashram* transformed her career. As she explores new roles, Aaditi remains committed to pushing her boundaries and delivering powerful performances

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

From an unexpected entry into acting to becoming a household name with *Aashram*, Aaditi Pohankar's journey has been one of perseverance and passion. Aaditi Pohankar's rise in the entertainment industry has been anything but conventional. From her early days to becoming a widely recognised face through *Aashram*, her journey has been marked by perseverance, learning, and transformation. In this candid conversation, Aaditi opens up about her career, the struggles of being an outsider, her approach to acting and how *Aashram* changed her life. Before stepping into acting, Aaditi was deeply invested in athletics. "Honestly, *Lai Bhaari* happened to me when I was just 17 or 18. At that point, I didn't even know if I wanted to be an actor. I was a runner, and my focus was on sports." However, an incident from her childhood left a lasting impression. "My mother was a teacher and she once told me she wanted to see me on a hoarding. She meant a school hoarding with student achievements, but I mistook it for a film hoarding," she shares with a smile. "After she passed away, that wish stayed with me, and I unknowingly walked into this profession." Her entry into the film industry wasn't immediate. She took time to train, attending workshops and performing in theatre to hone her craft. "I had no godfather in the industry. My only strength was my ability to learn, so I committed myself to the process—understanding my characters deeply and bringing them to life authentically." The *She* fame is candid about the difficulties she faced as an industry outsider. However, she doesn't label them as struggles but rather as part of the process. "Yes, I wasn't handed roles on a platter. There were multiple auditions, meetings and rejections. Even now, after two hit shows with three seasons each, I still have to prove myself through auditions. But I believe that if this process applies to everyone, then it's a fair game."



She also notes the changing landscape of the industry. "Earlier, actors had distinct personalities and now, that individuality is making a comeback. I think real, raw performances are being appreciated again." One of her most defining roles has been Pammi in *Aashram*. The transformation of Pammi—from a naive devotee to a determined woman seeking justice—was an intense experience for her. "The most difficult scenes for me were when Pammi realises she is being abused. There's a scene where she first understands that something is terribly wrong, and another where she realises Baba Nirala is the one violating her. These moments broke me into pieces." To prepare for the role, Pohankar took a unique approach. "I don't over-rehearse. I prepare by understanding the character's emotional depth, but once I'm on set, I react spontaneously to the environment and my co-actors. That's where the real magic happens." Playing Pammi was physically and emotionally exhausting. "There were scenes where I had to be extremely vulnerable, and it took a toll on me. I remember feeling completely drained after certain sequences. It was like living through Pammi's trauma, and that wasn't easy." The *Star* actress shares an interesting anecdote about

working with Bobby Deol. "We didn't have any prior rehearsals and I first met him on set. I was rehearsing my expressions intensely, and he thought I was genuinely giving him angry looks. Later, he told me, 'I thought you were upset with me! We laughed about it, but that initial distance actually helped build the tension needed for our characters.'" She also speaks highly of Prakash Jha's directorial approach. "His discipline and honesty to the script are inspiring. Even when we faced disruptions on set, he never let it affect the shoot. That kind of dedication and courage is something I truly admire." She acknowledges that *Aashram* was a turning point in her career. "When the series was released, my phone didn't stop ringing. Suddenly, people who had never spoken to me before were reaching out." She recalls an incident when she was recognised by a fan in a remote area. "I was traveling, and this woman came up to me and said, 'Pammi! *Aapko dekh ke bahut himmat milti hai!*' That moment made me realise the power of storytelling and how much the character had resonated with people." She believes that the rise of OTT platforms has transformed the entertainment industry, creating more opportunities for actors based on talent rather than connections. "OTT has leveled the playing field. The audience wants to see strong performances, and that has opened doors for so many of us who might not have had these chances otherwise." She also acknowledges that social media has played a role in changing the way actors engage with their audience. "Social media is a double-edged sword. It gives you direct access to your audience, but it also means there's constant scrutiny. I try to keep a balance—engaging when necessary but not letting it dictate my life." Despite her growing recognition, Aaditi is in no rush to sign multiple projects. "I'm taking things slow and choosing roles that truly challenge me. I've been lucky to work with some incredible directors, and I want to continue growing as an actor," she says. While she remains tight-lipped about her upcoming projects, she assures that she is exploring diverse roles. "I want to surprise myself and my audience. Whether it's an intense drama, an action-packed role, or even a lighthearted film, I want to push my boundaries."

'Film festivals are for everyone—come, watch, be inspired'

PNS/HYDERABAD

Vikramaditya Motwane, one of India's most celebrated filmmakers, has been deeply passionate about cinema—not just as a director but also as a cinephile. As he participates in the Red Lorry Film Festival, starting today, he reflects on the magic of film festivals, the evolution of his cinematic journey, and his latest project, *Black Warrant*. For Motwane, film festivals are more than just industry events; they are life-changing experiences. He fondly recalls how attending his first film festival—MAMI in Mumbai—opened his eyes to the boundless possibilities of cinema.

"My life, in a sense, was changed by a film festival. The first time I went to MAMI, I saw incredible movies that completely shifted my perspective. *Dr. Strangelove*, *Close-Up*, *A Brighter Summer Day*—these films blew my mind. They didn't just inspire me to write and create but also made me realise the impact a film can have when experienced on the big screen," heshares.

Encouraging audiences to embrace the festival spirit, he emphasises that film festivals are not just for industry insiders but for anyone willing to step into a world of unique and transformative storytelling. "It's a wonderful opportunity to open up your mind and expand your taste in cinema. If you've never been to a film festival, come, watch something new—you won't be disappointed."

Motwane praises the Red Lorry Film Festival as "an amazing initiative" and highlights its eclectic selection of films. "There are so many interesting categories this year. Apart from the obvious competition sections, which showcase both established filmmakers and debutants—there are also country-specific selections like those from Spain and France, as well as films made by women."

However, the section he is most excited about is Legacy Films, which brings classic masterpieces back to the big screen. "This category has

some absolutely stunning movies. *Deewar*, *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, *Teesri Manzil*—all of these are cinematic gems. It's almost like a retrospective now, which makes it so special."

The *Berlin* filmmaker's latest project, *Black Warrant*, dives into the complex and morally ambiguous world of crime and justice. Based on real-life accounts, the series offers a gripping, unfiltered look at the underbelly of prison life and the criminals who inhabit it.

"We did a lot of research on Charles [Sobhraj]—as much as we could find," he says, referencing the notorious conman who inspired aspects of the story. "Sunil Gupta, who personally interacted with Charles, provided a first-person account of events, which gave us invaluable insights. Much of what we depict in the series comes from his voice, his memories, and his book."

One of the most significant creative decisions was casting Siddhant Gupta as Charles. "That was an inspired choice by Mukesh Chhabra. Siddhant brought something remarkable to the role—his research, his performance, everything was fabulous. Full credit to him for bringing the character to life."

Motwane describes *Black Warrant* as a mix of gritty realism and gripping storytelling. "There are moments where the true masala nature of the story comes to the forefront," he explains. "For instance, the opening of

Episode 4, where a World Cup final is playing while drugs are being smuggled—that's a perfect example of how we balanced intense drama with high-stakes storytelling."

Certain scenes stood out for him, both in terms of their impact and their execution. "Episode 7, where you see Sarju being beaten for information—that was a very strong moment. You also see the effect it has on Sunil, which adds depth to his character. Another scene that really stays with me is the hanging of Ranga and Billa in Episode 2. It's unsettling, but at the same time, you can't look away. It's deep, it's disturbing, and it pulls you into the emotional core of the series."

While adapting the book, the initial instinct was to condense 35 years of events into a single season. However, writer Satyanshu Singh proposed a different approach—focusing on just four years in Season 1.

"This allowed us to really dive deep into Sunil's story—his life in prison, his relationships, his traumas, and his inner world beyond just his interactions with criminals. Prison defines your life, but it doesn't mean life stops there. There's so much happening inside, and that's what we wanted to explore."

For Motwane, cinema is more than just entertainment—it is an experience, a conversation and sometimes, even a catalyst for change. Whether it's through *Black Warrant* or his advocacy for film festivals, he believes in the power of storytelling to challenge, inspire, and transform. "If you've never been to a film festival, go. Watch something new, something different. Open your mind—you never know, it might just change your life."



Ahead of the Red Lorry Film Festival, renowned filmmaker **Vikramaditya Motwane** gets in a chat with *The Pioneer* sharing his feelings on film festivals and speaks about his latest venture, *Black Warrant*

MAKING A NEW ERA IN INDIA'S INSURANCE

Bajaj Finserv's acquisition of Allianz's stake in Bajaj Allianz marks a defining moment in India's insurance industry. Bajaj Allianz, which began as a joint venture with Allianz in 2001, has grown into one of India's finest insurance companies over the past two decades. "With the Indian financial services and insurance sector presenting immense opportunities, both partners aspired to shape their own future. Since a company cannot have two captains steering the same ship, we made an amicable decision to acquire Allianz's 26% stake for Rs 24,000 crore. This is the largest cheque written in the history of the Indian insurance sector and one of the biggest transactions in the NBFC space," shares Sanjiv Bajaj, Bajaj Finserv Chairman & Managing Director. Sanjiv emphasised that the move aligns with Bajaj Finserv's vision of building world-class companies from India, for India. "Today, we have built a financial services business with a valuation exceeding Rs 10 lakh crore, starting from a market capitalization of just Rs 2,000 crore in 2007. If someone had invested Rs 1 crore back then, it would have grown 400 times today. This phenomenal growth is a testament to India's potential, the resilience of our team, and the power of long-term vision." Looking ahead, Bajaj highlighted the immense opportunities in India's financial services industry over the next decade.

"With rising incomes, increasing insurance penetration, and rapid digital adoption, the sector is set to expand significantly. India is poised to become one of the world's largest insurance markets, driven by a growing middle class, an aspirational young population, and a regulatory framework that fosters innovation and growth. Bajaj Finserv is committed to playing a pivotal role in this transformation—offering best-in-class products, leveraging cutting-edge technology, and driving financial inclusion at scale." Bajaj credited a strong work ethic as a key driver of long-term success. "At Bajaj, we believe in discipline, hard work, and relentless execution. Success is not about clocking in and out—it requires dedication, ownership and the willingness to go beyond the conventional 40-hour work week. Our leadership and teams put in the time and effort necessary to build something truly remarkable." Looking to the future, Bajaj stressed the importance of innovation, customer-centric solutions, and leveraging technology to stay ahead in an evolving financial landscape. "Success is never the result of just one individual. It takes a strong team, a clear vision and relentless execution. For aspiring entrepreneurs, my advice is to chase unique ideas, stay passionate and build teams that share the same vision. Challenges are inevitable, but perseverance and the right mindset create lasting businesses."

Is face oil right for you?

Face oils are an increasingly popular trend that has swept over the skincare industry. Because of their capacity to nourish and revitalise the face, they are now a common addition to skincare regimens. However, what are the benefits and when is the ideal moment to incorporate them into your skincare routine? Let's explore

WHAT IS FACE OIL?

Face oils are powerful mixtures of plant-based oils that provide your skin with protection, hydration, and nourishment. Face oils concentrate on retaining moisture and supplying vital nutrients, in contrast to water-based moisturizers. Here's how they make a difference:

Hydration & moisturisation: By creating a barrier that protects the skin's surface, face oils help to hold onto moisture. They are therefore particularly helpful for people with dry or dehydrated skin.

Nourishment: Premium face oils contain a variety of nutrients that improve skin suppleness and promote a natural, luminous glow, as well as important vitamins A, C and E.

Protection: The abundance of antioxidants found in many facial oils helps shield the skin from damage caused by free radicals, which can be brought on by pollution, UV rays and daily stress.

Balance oil production: Contrary to popular assumption, face oils can help those with oily or acne-prone skin by regulating sebum production.

Reducing inflammation: Oils with anti-inflammatory qualities, such as rosehip and chamomile, are well-known for their ability to reduce skin redness, irritation and sensitivity.



THE RIGHT AGE TO START USING FACE OIL

There isn't a fixed age to start using face oils, it's more about listening to your skin and its unique needs. However, here are some general guidelines:

• In your 20s:

This is a good time to start using face oils. Use mild oils, such as grapeseed or jojoba, to stay hydrated and avoid premature aging.

• In Your 30s:

At this stage, skin starts to lose elasticity. It is better to incorporate anti-aging oils like rosehip or argan to address fine lines and dullness.

• In Your 40s and beyond:

Matured skin which needs extra care, Opt for richer oils like marula or avocado to deeply nourish and restore elasticity.

SIGNS IT'S TIME TO ADD FACE OIL TO YOUR ROUTINE

- Your skin feels tight or dry despite using moisturisers.
- You notice dullness or lack of radiance.
- You want to prevent or address early signs of aging.
- Your skin needs extra protection during harsh weather conditions.

Face oils are a versatile and powerful addition to your skincare routine, offering hydration, nourishment and protection. Whether you're in your 20s looking to maintain healthy skin or in your 40s seeking deep hydration, there's a face oil for everyone. Choose the right one for your skin type and concerns and enjoy the benefits of glowing, nourished skin!

(The author, **Ritika Jayaswal**, is the founder and CEO, at **Nourish Mantra**.)

Preeti Agarwal
SAMANA College of Design Studies (SCDS), in collaboration with Vibgyor Entertainments & Events, has launched India's first-ever Mother & Child Fashion Event, featuring the India Teens Fashion League (ITFL) and the Mrs. India Beauty Pageant 2025. This groundbreaking event is set to revolutionize the fashion industry by offering a unique platform where both mothers and their children can participate together on a national stage. Conceptualized and launched by a visionary team from Hyderabad, the initiative is now expanding across India, providing families with an exceptional opportunity to share the runway and showcase their confidence, style, and individuality.

Manoj

Sucharitha

Shanchal

A state-of-the-art veterinary multi-specialty hospital, Pet First, has opened its doors in Narsingi, Kokapet, Hyderabad, with the goal of providing top-tier medical care for pets. The inauguration event was graced by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Tummala Nageswar Rao, and Jupally Krishna Rao, as well as MLAs Madan Mohan Rao, Vivek, Prem Sagar Rao, Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, Murali Nayak, and Arekapudi Gandhi. MLC Aamir Ali, former Indian cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin, and Padmaja, the Founder and Managing Director of Pet First, also attended the event.



Miss Universe 2024, Victoria Kjaer Theilving, is currently on a seven-day visit to India, where she highlighted India's growing influence in the global fashion industry. During a press conference on Wednesday, the crown for Miss Universe India 2025 was unveiled, marking a significant moment in Indian pageant history. This crown, set to be the most expensive ever created for an Indian pageant, will be adorned with priceless diamonds and jewels. The press conference was attended by Miss Universe 2024, Victoria Kjaer Theilving, Miss Universe India Rhea Singha, and Director of Miss Universe India, Nikhil Anand. Victoria Kjaer's visit aims to promote cultural exchange and showcase Indian culture on the global stage.

GMMCO India inaugurates service and supply hub

GMMCO India, a CK Birla company, has officially inaugurated its fully operational service and supply hub at Butibori and Hingna in Nagpur. The state-of-the-art facilities feature world-class repair, rebuild, and parts distribution hubs, providing comprehensive support to customers across India, with a special focus on Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Goa. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India. Spanning 14 acres, the Butibori and Hingna facilities are strategically located to offer advanced service infrastructure, extensive component and machine rebuilding capabilities, and a high-efficiency parts warehouse—making them a one-stop solution for all customer needs.

#CompleteTheRoutine with mouthwash

On the occasion of World Oral Health Day, LISTERINE, hosted "Listerine Labs". The immersive event highlighted the importance of holistic oral care by using a daily mouthwash and showcased Listerine's pioneering legacy in mouthwash research and development for the last 145 years. The Listerine Labs event saw a host of interactive demos and scientific immersions around oral care including 'What remains in your mouth even after brushing,' a 'Mouthwash customisation' station as well as a showcase of the brand's advanced product innovations which promise to help remove 99.9% of germs, protect from cavities by strengthening enamel and reduce plaque, thus providing science-backed efficacy. The experiential event was attended by leading health influencers. The event also saw an engaging panel discussion with members from the Indian Dental Association (IDA) including Dr. Ashok Dhole - Secretary General IDA HO, Dr. Deepak Muchhala - Treasurer IDA HO, Dr. Sanjay Joshi - Joint Secretary IDA HO and the Kenvue R&D team on the importance of oral care and the role of mouthwash as part of an overall oral care regimen.

Mallareddy University's Annual Unity Day 2025, a highly anticipated event held every year, became even more special this time with the presence of actors Vijay Deverakonda and Nithiin. The celebration took place at the Mallareddy Cricket Ground in Suraram, drawing a large crowd of enthusiastic university students. The event was also attended by distinguished guests, including Mallareddy University Founder and Chairman C.H. Mallareddy, Mallareddy Vishwavidyapeeth Chairman Dr. Bhadrareddy and Mallareddy Vishwavidyapeeth Vice Chairman Dr. C.H. Preethi Reddy.

Quest for Gen Z Chief Gaming Officer

iQOO, a high-performance smartphone brand, is on the hunt for its Chief Gaming Officer (CGO) for 2025 to co-create its smartphones, lead the brand's eSports vision, and actively engage with India's top eSports gamers. The opportunity offers young gaming enthusiasts, under the age of 25, a chance to turn their passion into a fulfilling and rewarding career. The CGO will gain access to iQOO's latest products and represent the brand at major gaming events across the world. iQOO's Chief Gaming Officer (CGO) will join forces with the leadership team at iQOO and work closely with the community, exchanging gaming insights, including gameplay, gaming style, presentation, and game interpretations. iQOO is also offering a total sum of INR 10,00,000/- to its CGO.

Tata Hitachi launches EX 350LC Prime

Tata Hitachi proudly launched its latest innovation, the EX 350LC Prime Excavator. This New addition to the Tata Hitachi's portfolio sets a benchmark in the Construction Equipment Industry with its advanced features and enhanced performance capabilities. The EX 350LC Prime Excavator embodies Tata Hitachi's commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions that cater to the evolving needs of the industry. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and engineered for optimal efficiency, the EX350 LC Prime, promises unparalleled productivity and reliability on the job site. The launch took place at JRC Conventions, Jubilee Hills, Nare Road, Film Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, in the presence of esteemed Customers, Senior Management of Tata Hitachi and RECON Technologies.

In observance of World Head Injury Awareness Day on March 20th, 2025, Arete Hospitals launched a community initiative titled "Heads Up for Safety - Wear a Helmet, Save a Life." The campaign is designed to promote road safety and raise awareness about head injury prevention, emphasizing the importance of wearing helmets as a simple yet effective measure to prevent traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) caused by road accidents.

FUN

ARCHIE

DAD, CAN I HAVE AN ADVANCE ON MY--
NO!
AND NO, NO, NO AND NO!
WELL?
NOT ONLY DID I NOT GET AN ADVANCE ON MY ALLOWANCE, I GOT AN ADVANCE ON HIS TURN-DOVNS!
OK, YOU'VE ALL READ THE CHAPTER, SO WHO CAN TELL ME WHAT'S IMPORTANT ABOUT THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON?
ANYONE?
CALVIN, HON ABOUT YOU?
HARD TO SAY, MA'AM. I THINK MY CEREBELLUM JUST FUSED.

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

LOOK AT THIS
A THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE GUY WHO OWNS THE PIZZA PARLOR
SENT FROM HIS VILLA IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE!
THE VILLA THAT GARFIELD BUILT

REALITY CHECK

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PLAY-BY-PLAY:
I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY CAN ACCOUNT FOR THAT POOR PERFORMANCE PETE BUT HOPEFULLY THEY CAN PICK THINGS UP IN THE 2ND MOVEMENT--
I AGREE--FRANK--AND WAS IT JUST ME, OR DID THE VIOLIN KEEP COMING IN WAY TOO LATE? LET'S GO UPSTAIRS--
I SHOULD'VE HAD EATEN THE WHOLE HAMSTER WHEEL. MY STOMACH'S BEEN CHAUNING ALL MORNING.

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

I'M GOING TO CATCH A WHALE TODAY!
NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN A WHALE IN OLD HICKORY LAKE! EVER!
AND NO ONE WILL AFTER TODAY, BECAUSE I WILL HAVE CAUGHT HIM!
DO BARBERS GET FRINGE BRANITS?
GINGER, NO!
YUP... HOMEWORK.

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

GINGER MEGGS

ACROSS

- A written communication
- Refuse to follow an order
- Touch lips with someone
- Pointy part of a church roof
- Repaired
- A sale where people make bids for things
- A restaurant employee
- Poke with a finger
- Factual
- An animal with a shell
- Mix up with a spoon
- Very impolite
- A university award

DOWN

- Enjoy
- Very thin, soft paper
- Broad

SOLUTION

M	O	U	S	T	A	C	H	E
E	N	J	O	I	S	E		
L	I	G	H	T	S	A	N	P
E	A	S	E	R	T			
P	A	R	T	I	C			
A	C	R	O	S	E			
R	Z	E	P	E	T			
D	R	O	V	E	A	I	D	
N	C	L	I	E				
L	E	T	T	E	R	B	O	R

VAISHNAVI CHAITANYA RESPONDS TO SKN'S REMARKS ABOUT TELUGU ACTRESSES

HE DIDN'T NAME ANY-ONE. IF YOU CHECK HIS COMMENTS, YOU'LL SEE THAT HE DIDN'T MENTION ANYONE'S NAME. MORE THAN THAT, HE RELEASED ANOTHER VIDEO TO CLARIFY HIS REMARKS. HE DIDN'T POINT ME OUT IN EITHER HIS REMARKS OR THE VIDEO

— Vaishnavi Chaitanya



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Siddhu Jonnalagadda and Vaishnavi Chaitanya are playing the leads in their upcoming film *Jack - Konchem Krack*. A song from the film, titled *Kiss Song*, was released on Thursday at an event in Hyderabad. Bommarillu Bhaskar is the director, and BVSN Prasad is the producer. The film is set to release on April 10. "Every person has a goal in life, but the way we approach our work and the reasons behind what we do are equally important. Some people do things differently, and when we see such a person, we call them a 'crack', which is why we chose this title," said Siddhu about his role. When asked about being remembered as *DJ Tillyu* and how people might perceive this new film, Siddhu responded, "Every film is different and the audience wants entertainment, which I am providing. Generally, we, the filmmakers, think too much about a film because we watch it a hundred times, but the audience watches it only once. So, it all depends on how we provide good entertainment." Siddhu, who is also a writer, contributed to the story. "I liked the way Bhaskar narrated my character, and I definitely shared my inputs for the improvisation as a writer," he said. He added that the story was entirely written by Bhaskar, and he didn't contribute to it in that sense. When asked further, Siddhu commented, "For this film, Vaishnavi Chaitanya, who is also known for her role in *Baby*, is the backbone. She plays a dual role and one of her characters speaks with a Telangana accent. When she spoke the dialect, I wanted to reciprocate with the same accent, but I told myself that I play a different character, so I speak in neutral Telugu." Bommarillu Bhaskar, who has been out of the limelight after delivering some flops, was questioned about why Siddhu chose to work with him. "It's not about hit or flop, but I look at their signature and unique style. If you look at Bhaskar's films like *Bommarillu*, *Parugu*, *Orange*, or any of his other films, he has a



unique voice and always comes up with fresh concepts, which is why I agreed to do this film," said Siddhu. He added that he adapted Bhaskar's style for this film. Producer SKN was a few days ago in the news for his remarks about Telugu actresses, which were reported to be indirectly directed at Vaishnavi Chaitanya. SKN had produced the film *Baby*, in which Vaishnavi was the female lead. The film was a massive hit and Vaishnavi received critical acclaim for her performance. When Vaishnavi was asked about SKN's comments, she clarified, "He didn't name anyone. If you check his comments, you'll see that he didn't mention anyone's name. More than that, he released another video to clarify his remarks. He didn't point me out in either his remarks or the video." She further added, "I'm very grateful to SKN and the director for giving me a chance in the film *Baby*." When asked about a project that was supposed to be made with the same producers and Anand Deverakonda as the lead actor, Vaishnavi said, "Unfortunately, the project didn't move forward. However, I'm looking forward to working with them again in the future. I had a great experience working with them."



Ram foregoes remuneration for upcoming project

Ram Pothineni is currently working on a film with director P Mahesh Babu, who is known for *Miss Shetty Mr Polishetty*. The unit recently returned after a long and hectic schedule in Rajahmundry. Bhagyashri Borse plays the female lead, while Rao Ramesh, Rahul Ramakrishna and others are playing important roles. The film is being produced by the prominent production house Mythri Movie Makers.

Ram Pothineni has experienced consecutive flops with his films. After *iSmart Shankar*, which was released in 2019, Ram hasn't seen a hit, despite doing several films, including *Skanda* with Boyapati Sreenu and *Double iSmart*

with Puri Jagannadh. His career is currently in a rough patch and at this time, Mythri Movie Makers is producing this untitled film with P Mahesh Babu as the director.

According to a source, Ram is not taking any remuneration for this film, as he wanted to complete the shoot first. "Once the film is completed, Ram requested the rights to a particular area, which the producers agreed to," said the source.

On the other hand, he is reportedly working hard for this film and the source revealed that it is a period drama. "The story revolves around a cinema hall that the protagonist wants to build for his favorite hero," the source added.

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA'S TEAM CLARIFIES HIS STAND ON BETTING APP CONTROVERSY

Vijay Deverakonda has found himself in the spotlight after Telangana police filed a case against him for promoting a betting application on social media. In response, his team has now issued a clarification, asserting that the actor only endorsed legally recognised betting platforms. His team emphasised that Deverakonda had entered into an official contract as a brand ambassador strictly for skill-based games. They pointed out that the Supreme Court of India has legally recognised games like online rummy as games of skill rather than gambling. "The endorsement was limited to regions and territories where online skill-based games are legally permitted," his team explained. They further clarified that the actor's legal team and agencies conduct thorough reviews before entering any agreements. Deverakonda's endorsement was for the skill-based gaming platform A23, which was legally vetted before he associated with it. Moreover, his team revealed that his contract with the brand ended in 2023 and he is no longer affiliated with it.



Ram Gopal Varma's *Saaree* explores the dangers of digital intimacy

Controversial filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma is back with a psychological thriller titled *Saaree*. Featuring Sathya Yadu and Aradhya Devi in the lead roles, the film is directed by Giri Krishna Kamal, with the story provided by RGV himself. Produced by businessman Ravishankar Varma, the film is set for release on April 4, with its trailer launching on Thursday in Hyderabad. Speaking about the film's theme, RGV explained, "When we communicate in person, we connect better. But through social media apps like WhatsApp, where we don't see the other person directly, we tend to develop emotional intimacy much faster. We end up sharing personal matters, which can lead to various psychological consequences." He added that *Saaree*



explores these issues in depth. "This is a serious subject, and the film delves into the consequences of digital intimacy. I wrote the story myself and Giri Krishna Kamal has done a great job directing it." Regarding the casting, RGV shared that he discovered Aradhya through a reel of hers wearing a saree and was impressed by her

performance. He also praised Sathya for his acting skills, stating that the film features some intense performances. Although he refrained from calling the film a message-driven project, RGV expressed hope that it would make young women more cautious about their interactions online. When asked about political and legal issues surrounding theaters in Andhra Pradesh, he remarked, "Politics and films are separate. I don't foresee any trouble in getting *Saaree* released in Andhra Pradesh."

Addressing the controversy over actors promoting betting apps, he stated, "Authorities should educate actors about which endorsements are legally permissible. Taking sudden actions against them is not the right approach."



Dil Raju ropes in *Marco* director Haneef Adeni for a Pan-India action drama

Malayalam film *Marco* has been a massive success, with director Haneef Adeni receiving widespread acclaim for his gripping storytelling and intense action sequences. Now, the director has been roped in by Dil Raju Productions, the banner founded by Dil Raju's daughter Hanshitha Reddy and nephew Harshith Reddy, for an ambitious Pan-India film. The pro-

duction house, known for its critically acclaimed and commercially successful film *Balagam*, is set to back this high-budget multi-starrer.

Haneef Adeni, who delivered the action-packed *Marco*, is now gearing up to bring his signature high-impact storytelling to Telugu cinema. While details about the film remain under wraps, it is expected to be a large-scale production that

will captivate audiences across India.

The collaboration brings together three unique forces in filmmaking, promising an exciting project that is set to make waves in the industry. Sunita Tati of Guru Films is also associated with the project, adding to the anticipation. Further details, including the cast and title, will be announced soon.

Chatha Pacha: Ring of Rowdies delivers a spectacle like never before

Reel World Entertainment is making a bold entry into Malayalam cinema with *Chatha Pacha: Ring of Rowdies*, a WWE-inspired action spectacle that promises to push the boundaries of the industry.

At the helm of this ambitious project is Adhvaith Nayar, the nephew of legendary actor Mohanlal, who makes his directorial debut with this high-octane entertainer. Having trained under cinematic stalwarts like Jeethu Joseph, Rajeev Ravi and Mohanlal himself, Adhvaith brings a fresh, fearless vision to the screen. Blending electrifying wrestling sequences, sharp humour and a compelling under-

dog narrative, *Chatha Pacha: Ring of Rowdies* is set to deliver a cinematic experience unlike anything seen before in Malayalam cinema.

At its core, *Chatha Pacha: Ring of Rowdies* is a tale of misfits, ex-convicts, and outcasts who attempt to rebuild their lives by forming an underground wrestling club in Fort Kochi. What starts as a small, makeshift fight club soon evolves into a spectacle, drawing huge crowds and turning the fighters into local icons. Inspired by their childhood WWE heroes, they create larger-than-life personas, develop intense rivalries, and put on electrifying matches. But as old ene-



mies resurface, personal grudges intensify and authorities begin to close in, the battle extends beyond the ring, turning into a fight for survival. With adrenaline-

pumping action, hilarious moments, and an emotional core, the film is a tribute to the spirit of sports entertainment and the power of brotherhood.

Backed by Reel World Entertainment, the film is a collaboration between Transworld Group, led by Ramesh & Ritesh Ramakrishnan, and Lensman Group, spearheaded by Shihan Shoukath. The production is strengthened by the expertise of industry veterans George Sebastian and Sunil Singh, known for their work with Mammooty Kampany, ensuring a large-scale cinematic experience.

One of the biggest highlights of *Chatha Pacha: Ring of Rowdies* is the musical collaboration with the legendary trio Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, marking their first-ever Malayalam film.

With their track record of delivering iconic soundtracks, their presence adds an entirely new dimension to the movie's musical landscape. The film's lyrics will be penned by Vinayak Sasikumar, whose work has made a significant impact in the industry.

The film boasts a stellar cast featuring Arjun Ashokan, known for his performances in *Romancham* and *Brahmayugam*, Roshan Mathew, who has gained recognition in both Malayalam and Bollywood with films like *Moothon*, *Darlings* and *Choked* and Ishan Shoukath, fresh off his debut in the Rs 125-crore blockbuster *Marco*.

BCCI lifts saliva ban in IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The BCCI on Thursday lifted the ban on use of saliva on the ball in the upcoming Indian Premier League after a majority of captains agreed to its proposal, making it the first major cricket competition to do away with the restriction that was a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken at the captains' meeting in Mumbai ahead of the league starting on Saturday.

"The saliva ban has been lifted. Majority of captains were in favour of the move. Some had reservations about the re-introduction, some sat on the fence but majority of them supported the move," a top BCCI official said.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had banned the age-old practice of applying saliva to shine the ball as a precautionary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which health practitioners advocated strict hygiene protocols and physical distancing.

In 2022, the world body made the ban permanent. The IPL too included the ICC ban in its playing conditions in the aftermath of the pandemic but its guidelines are outside the purview of the sport's governing body.

With the development on Thursday, the IPL became the first major cricketing event to re-introduce saliva's use after the pandemic. The captains meeting, which was scheduled to begin at 12.30 pm in Mumbai, did not start on time due to a delay in arrival of a few team officials at the BCCI



office. Now that the ban is revoked in the IPL, the ICC too might review its stance on the subject.

On the sidelines of the ICC Champions Trophy, senior India pacer Mohammed Shami had spoken about the need to use saliva on the ball in what has become a predominantly batters' game.

The likes of Vernon Philander and Tim Southee had backed Shami's call.

"We keep appealing that we should be allowed to use saliva so that we can bring reverse swing back into the game and it becomes interesting," Shami had said during the 50-over event in Dubai, where India emerged victorious.

Also on the agenda of captains' meeting was the contentious Impact Player rule which the BCCI had already extended till at least 2027.

The likes of Rohit Sharma and more

recently Hardik Pandya have expressed their reservations on the playing strategy.

"While a few have raised objections on the Impact Player rule, it has benefitted uncapped batters and bowlers who otherwise won't get to play," the official said.

DRS extended to height and off-side wides The BCCI also approved the use of DRS for height wides and wides outside the off-stump.

"Hawk eye and ball tracking will be used to decide on the height wides and wides outside the off-stump," the official added.

It was also decided that one ball would be changed in the second innings of an evening game after the 11th over due to dew.

"This is not a rule change, it's just an understanding for this year between teams and umpires. The changed ball will have wear and tear," an official said.

2028 games to be catalyst for rebuild: LA Olympics head Casey Wasserman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Costa Navarino

After deadly fires devastated much of Los Angeles, organisers of the 2028 Olympics told the IOC on Thursday how the city will rebuild with help from the Games. Count on Kendrick Lamar, too, to be part of "the greatest show on earth" in three years.

"The rebirth, the rebuild, maybe reimagining LA 2.0 and the Olympics as a catalyst for all those things we think is really part of our ethos," organising committee chairman Casey Wasserman said.

"You can't have a natural disaster at that scale in a city as big and as important as Los Angeles and not have it be part of your core philosophy going forward," he said in an interview before giving sports leaders an update at the International Olympic Committee's annual meeting.

Lamar would be a globally popular part of the opening ceremony on July 14, 2028, after his stunning halftime show at the Super Bowl last month.

"Fortunately in my day job I represent Kendrick Lamar," said Wasserman, who heads an international talent and promotions agency. "He is truly an LA icon so I think it would be a pretty fair bet that Kendrick will be involved in the Olympics in Los Angeles in some way."

The wildfires in January have reset the daily life and global perception of the city. "Everyone loves a comeback story,"

Wasserman told IOC members on Thursday. Olympic venues and operational plans escaped serious damage.

"From purely an Olympics perspective we got very lucky. That's not the most important thing," Wasserman told the AP on Wednesday. "What's important is helping people get back into their homes, get back settled, get back with their lives."

You can't have a natural disaster at that scale in a city as big and as important as LA and not have it be part of your core philosophy going forward

— CASEY WASSERMAN, CHAIRMAN

Olympic athlete visas another expected challenge for LA organisers is ensuring athletes, officials and fans from every Olympic team feel welcome and safe going to the United States in what shapes to be a turbulent future for the world.

"Irrespective of politics today, America will be open and accepting to all 209 countries for the Olympics," Wasserman said. "LA is the most diverse city in the history of humanity and we will welcome the people from around the world and give them all a great time."

Updating IOC and sports leaders on Thursday, Wasserman said his team made "significant strides" with President Donald Trump's administration, which has security obligations for the Olympics and subsequent Paralympics.

"I have met with President Trump and his team both prior to his inauguration and again last month," the LA Olympics leader said. "We have a regular cadence across all federal agencies with leadership from the president to make sure that these Games deliver for all our constituents."

The US Visa programme and current restrictions for more than 40 countries who should compete in LA was the subject of a sharp question from IOC member Ingmar de Vos, the equestrian official who leads the collective group of Summer Games sports bodies. De Vos cited a "red list" ban on travel to the US from 11 countries. "I don't anticipate any, any problems from any countries to come and participate," Wasserman replied, noting the US State Department has a "fully staffed desk" to help prepare.

"In my many conversations with President Trump and Secretary (Marco) Rubio they understand the scale and complexity required to deliver these Games, the access required for not just athletes but for delegations, and the incredibly short time frame on which to do those."

Wasserman insisted "with all due respect to FIFA," visa issues for the Olympics are more complicated than for the World Cup in men's soccer which the U.S. is co-hosting next year with Canada and Mexico.

His audience included IOC member Gianni Infantino, the FIFA president who has closely aligned himself with Trump.

Ex-F1 team owner Eddie Jordan passes away at 76

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Shanghai

Ex-Formula 1 team owner and media personality Eddie Jordan has died, according to a statement by his family. He was 76.

Often known simply as "EJ," he ran his own Jordan team in the 1990s and 2000s in F1. His humor, strong opinions and often extravagant dress sense made Jordan a popular pundit on TV after selling the team in 2005.

Jordan was undergoing treatment for what he had called "quite aggressive" cancer of the bladder and prostate which spread to his spine and pelvis.

The family statement, published by rugby club London Irish, where Jordan was a patron, said he "passed away peacefully with family by his side in Cape Town" early Thursday. "EJ brought an abundance of charisma, energy and Irish charm everywhere he went. We all have a huge hole

missing without his presence. He will be missed by so many people, but he leaves us with tonnes of great memories to keep us smiling through our sorrow."

F1 president and chief executive Stefano Domenicali, who was a senior Ferrari employee when Jordan owned his team, said Jordan was "a protagonist of an era of F1 and he will be deeply missed."

"With his inexhaustible energy he always knew how to make people smile, remaining genuine and brilliant at all times."

Irish businessman Jordan operated his own racing team in lower-level series before moving up to F1 in 1991, giving future seven-time champion Michael Schumacher his first race that year.

Jordan gave Schumacher his break in F1 because his regular driver Bertrand Gachot was sentenced to prison for assaulting a London taxi driver. The then-22-year-old Schumacher was with the team for only a

single race before Benetton signed him in controversial circumstances.

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of Eddie Jordan. Eddie was a great individual, who for decades always brought a smile to the entire F1 paddock," said Flavio Briatore, who then ran Benetton and became a close friend of Jordan, and is now executive adviser at Alpine.

"I have fond memories of the time spent on and off the track with Eddie, and his presence across the entire F1 world will be greatly missed."

Other Jordan drivers over the years included Damon Hill, who won the 1996 championship with Williams and gave Jordan its first win in torrential rain in 1998, future Ferrari driver Rubens Barrichello, and Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who was third in the championship for Jordan in 1999.

Jordan Grand Prix won four races before Jordan sold the team in 2005.

Following more sales and name changes since then, the team competes as Aston Martin.

"Eddie Jordan was one of the all-time motorsport greats. He was a one-off, a wonderful human being, and a charismatic leader who founded this team and took it to F1 in 1991," Aston Martin team principal Andy Cowell said in a statement.

"His vision laid the foundations for us and he leaves a lasting legacy for the entire motorsport community."

Jordan also acted as the manager for car design great Adrian Newey when he left Red Bull for Aston Martin last year.

When he revealed his cancer diagnosis last year, Jordan used it as an opportunity to urge listeners of his podcast to follow up on any health concerns.

"This is a little message to everybody listening to this, don't waste or put it off," he said. "Go and get tested, because in life you have got chances."

Riyan Parag to lead RR in first three IPL games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Rising star Riyan Parag will lead Rajasthan Royals (RR) in their first three IPL games as regular captain Sanju Samson has been told to avoid wicket-keeping duties by the BCCI due to a finger surgery, which means that he will only be available as a batter in these games.

Samson's finger was fractured after a Jofra Archer delivery hit him during the T20 International against England in Mumbai, following which he had to undergo a minor surgery last month.

While he has been cleared to bat, it is understood that medical and sports science teams at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru have told to give his fingers some more rest before he starts keeping wickets. Therefore, the 23-year-old Parag will have the distinction of being one of the youngest captains in IPL.

Bonus points system to be pondered over for World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is likely to ponder over a new bonus points system during its board meeting in April which could give more weightage to victories against higher-ranked teams during the next World Test Championship cycle.

The 2025-27 WTC cycle will begin with India's five-match away Test series against England in June.

As per the prevailing rules, the team winning by the smallest margin or by an innings gets 12 points, six points for a tie and four points for a draw.

But this could see a change as the global governing body, as per a report in Telegraph, is considering awarding bonus points for innings victories or for a win above a certain big margin such as 100 runs.

"In fact, issues such as giving bonus points for innings wins etc has been in

continuous discussion from the beginning of the WTC, as many teams felt that due weight is not getting for wins against big teams," a source close to the development said.

"So, such topics have been a part of discussions, and this could again come up

As per the prevailing rules, the team winning by the smallest margin or by an innings gets 12 points, six points for a tie and four points for a draw

for deliberations," he said.

But this could now change as the ICC might bring in bonus points for landslide wins, and extra points could be given to victories over frontline teams such as India, Australia and England, as per their rankings.

"Yeah, it's a good move if it really happens. The teams will be more motivated to go for results, as we could see some

exciting games," a former India player told PTI on condition of anonymity.

The ICC is also mulling giving extra points for wins away from home. "Yeah, it will be a motivating factor for, you know, those 'smaller' teams, Look, when New Zealand beat India last year, it was a historic win for them as not many teams came here and beat us. But they did not get any extra points for it."

"While winning away from home in itself can act as a motivating factor, now the teams will have that carrot in front of them extra points, if it really happens," he added.

Other than this, the ICC board meeting might also consider the two-tier Test system, which is vocally supported by Cricket Australia.

"It needs a lot of discussion before putting into practice as some teams might feel deprived of regular chances to play against strong teams like India or Australia" the player added.



Chahal, Dhanashree granted divorce

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

A family court here on Thursday allowed the joint plea filed by cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal and his estranged wife seeking divorce by mutual consent.

The estranged couple appeared before the family court in Bandra.

Chahal's advocate Nitin Gupta said the family court has granted decree on the joint petition filed by Chahal and Verma for divorce by mutual consent.

The court noted that the parties have complied with the consent terms.

"The family court has accepted the joint petition filed by Chahal and Verma seeking divorce by mutual consent," Gupta said. Chahal and Verma got married in December 2020. As per their petition, they separated in June 2022.

On February 5, they filed a joint petition before the family court seeking divorce by mutual consent.

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday requested the family court to decide the divorce plea by Thursday, considering the fact that Chahal would not be available later as he is participating in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament.

The IPL T20 cricket tournament is scheduled to start from March 22. Chahal is part of the Punjab Kings team. The HC on Wednesday also waived the six-month cooling period stipulated

for every couple after filing of the divorce plea under the Hindu Marriage Act.

The cricketer and Verma had filed a joint petition before the HC, seeking that the cooling-off period be waived in their case as they have applied for divorce by mutual consent.

The petition, filed through advocate Nitin Gupta, had also prayed for a direction to the family court to decide the divorce petition expeditiously.

The couple challenged the family court order of February 20 refusing to waive the cooling-off period.

Under the Hindu Marriage Act, a couple has to undergo six-month cooling-off period before divorce is granted. The objective is to provide time for exploring the possibility of reconciliation.

The family court had refused to waive the cooling-off period on the ground that there was only partial compliance with the consent terms which required Chahal to pay ₹4.75 Crore to Dhanashree.

He had paid ₹2.37 Crore, the family court noted. It also cited a report of a marriage counsellor which said there was only partial compliance with the mediation efforts.

But the high court on Wednesday held that there was compliance with the consent terms, as they provided for the payment of the second installment of permanent alimony only after the decree of divorce was obtained.

England coach Thomas Tuchel takes tips from NBA as its World Cup quest begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Manchester

There was outcry in the English media: In its bid to end its decades-long wait for a trophy, England's national team turned to a German.

The Daily Mail published a back page headline declaring it a "dark day for England" when it emerged Thomas Tuchel, a serial-winning coach with Paris Saint-Germain, Chelsea and Bayern Munich, would lead the national team into the 2026 World Cup. "I'm sorry, I have a German passport," he said when unveiled by the English Football Association last October.

Tuchel has an easy charm and sharp sense of humor. He will likely need both in the role.

Mission impossible?

For England's men, their one and only major trophy was the 1966 World Cup. Tuchel's predecessor, Gareth Southgate, came closest to ending that drought by leading England to the final of back-to-back European Championships and the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup.

Southgate was credited with making fans fall back in love with the national team, yet at last year's Euros he had to contend with fierce criticism from the terraces, with some venting their fury by throwing plastic beer cups in his direction when he went to applaud them after one match.

That was despite England advancing to the knockout stage as group winner. It went on to reach the Euros final, where it lost 2-1 to Spain, with the winning goal coming in the 86th minute.

No other England manager reached the final of two major tournaments, yet Southgate was still considered by some to be a failure. No wonder he's opted against giving advice to Tuchel.

"I've already decided, I think the best way I can help the next England manager is to stay out of the way," Southgate said.

"I've had my time, I loved it, I'm not missing too much of it at the moment, but I think it's important I stay out of the way and allow Thomas to do his job."

In a hurry

Tuchel is a man in a rush. He is contracted until the World Cup and charged with the responsibility of leading a talented squad to glory.

He is not hiding from that fact.

"He said the goal is to put another star on the jersey," said defender Dan Burn, referring to the one star above England's badge that represents its World Cup win in 1966.

In his first meeting with his players this week ahead of World Cup qualifiers against Albania on Friday and Latvia on Monday, Tuchel informed them they only had 24 training days ahead of the tourna-



ment in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Put in those terms, it is a paltry amount of time to get his vision across in comparison to the daily routine of working with players at club level.

Serial winner

Just as well then that Tuchel has experience making a near immediate impact.

In late January 2021, he took over a Chelsea team that was ninth in the Premier League. By May, he'd turned that

team into Champions League winners.

He also won back-to-back French league titles at PSG and the German title at Bayern. "He was very sure. It was almost like he knew... He believed in his own ideas (and) when you have someone who believes in what they want, you believe it as well," England midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White said of Tuchel's team address this week.

NBA style

Southgate was credited with creating a club-like atmosphere within the national team working hard to ensure there were no divisions carried over from club rivalries and improving the relationship with the media, which had been fractious in the past. Tuchel, too, wants to create a "brotherhood."

"He spoke about in the NBA that the best teams historically are normally the teams who are high-fiving, picking each other up and have a lot of those interactions," Burn said.

Veteran midfielder Jordan Henderson has been recalled for his "leadership" qualities after losing his place following a move to Saudi Arabia in 2023.

Playing for Ajax in the Netherlands now, he was reportedly the first player to arrive at England's Burton training headquarters. "Football in general, but maybe even more international football,

is about team spirit, it is about building a team that loves to play with each other that transports the spirit to the fans, to the nation, to the country and it is about building a brotherhood," Tuchel said.

Nationality debate

Criticism of Tuchel's appointment came despite him being England's third foreign manager after the late Sven-Goran Eriksson, a Swede, and Italian Fabio Capello.

Tuchel has done well to ease any tensions with his jovial manner when interacting with the media — many of whom he worked with during his time at Chelsea.

Asked by a German journalist to answer a question in his native language, he declined.

"I would like to do it just in English out of respect of where we are," he said.

He was asked by another journalist what the response was when he called Henderson and said: "Hi, this is Thomas Tuchel..."

(He said) Hi, I'm Jordan... "he replied to laughs from the assembled media. "I did not call him from an unknown number."

That sense of humor is likely to endear him to fans but, ultimately, it is results on the field that will count if he is to finally end England's trophy drought. That drought will reach 60 years by the time next year's World Cup rolls around.