

Vande Bharat Express extended to Narasapuram 2



Govt focuses on providing drinking water 3



India has too few diplomats: Argentine envoy 4



US airports among 40 targeted by shutdown-related flight cuts 9



Bowlers fire as India take 2-1 lead vs Australia 12



PIONEER IN SHORT

DELEGATES FROM 16 COUNTRIES EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE

Andhra Pradesh is gearing up for a significant advancement as it aims to become India's next major export hub. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Export Development Convention 2025 is set to take place on November 9-10 at Fairfield by Marriott in Visakhapatnam. Organised by the Andhra Pradesh MSME Development Corporation (APMSMEDC) and part of the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM) under...

FULL REPORT ON P2

MINISTER URGES CENTRE TO PURCHASE RAIN-HIT COTTON CROP

Minister K Atchannaidu addressed a letter to Union Textile Minister Giriraj Singh regarding the problems being faced by cotton farmers in the state. The letter highlighted that the cotton crops have been severely damaged due to cyclone, and farmers are being forced to sell cotton at prices lower than the minimum support price (MSP). It was mentioned that for the 2025-26 kharif...

FULL REPORT ON P3

TMC CADRES CONTROL BLOS IN BENGAL: OPPOSITION

Trinamool Congress cadres tended to take control of the Booth Level Officers (BLOs)—appointed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct special intensive revision of electoral rolls—booth after booth, constituency after constituency, while the booth level agents (BLAs) nominated by the Opposition parties, mainly the BJP and the Left, were forced to 'retire hurt'. Opposition parties cutting across party...

FULL REPORT ON P5

NZ HOLDS OUT WEST INDIES BY 3 RUNS IN 2ND T20

Mark Chapman blasted 78 from 28 balls including a half-century from only 19 deliveries as New Zealand beat the West Indies by three runs and leveled the series at 1-1 on Thursday. Chapman's assault saw New Zealand add 100 runs from the ninth to the 16th overs on the way to 207-5 after being sent in. The West Indies struggled at first against New Zealand's three-pronged spin attack and was 94-6 after 13 overs.

FULL REPORT ON P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY



THE CONGRESS PARTY DECEIVED THE PEOPLE OF TELANGANA. IT CAME TO POWER WITH A PROMISE TO IMPLEMENT SIX GUARANTEES. BUT DURING ITS TWO-YEAR RULE, THE PARTY HAS NOT IMPLEMENTED ANY OF THE ASSURANCES

— KISHAN REDDY, UNION MINISTER AND BJP SENIOR LEADER

PHASE 1 POLLS

Bihar records highest-ever turnout in its history

PNS ■ New Delhi

Bihar recorded its "highest-ever" voter turnout in the first phase of polling for the Assembly election on Thursday, with 64.66 per cent of an electorate of more than 3.75 crore turning up at polling stations to exercise their franchise.

In a statement issued here, the Election Commission (EC) said the first phase of the Bihar polls concluded peacefully, with the "highest-ever voter turnout of 64.66 per cent" recorded in the history of the state.

A total of 121 constituencies in 18 districts went to polls in the first phase, with an electorate of more than 3.75 crore. During the first Bihar Assembly polls in 1951-52, the recorded turnout was lowest in the state's history at 42.6 per cent.

The previous highest voter turnout in Bihar was recorded in 2000 at 62.57 per cent.

In the 2020 Assembly polls held under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, the polling percentage was 57.29.

In the first Lok Sabha polls in 1951-52, Bihar



voter turnout in the first phase of polling 64.66

recorded a voter turnout of 40.35 per cent -- the lowest.

In the 1998 parliamentary polls, the state recorded its highest ever turnout of 64.6 per cent. Officials said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar has congratulated the voters of Bihar for the historic voter turnout in the first phase of Assembly polls since 1951.

The CEC has also thanked the voters for expressing their complete



faith in the EC and turning out to vote in such large numbers with fervour and enthusiasm.

Kumar has also thanked the entire election machinery for working with full

transparency and dedication. More than four lakh polling-related staff had reached their respective polling stations by Wednesday night.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

SUSPECTED FOOD POISONING

300 students take ill in SRM University

- Though the incident took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, it was kept under wraps, officials said
- Guntur District Collector A Thameem Ansariya constituted an inquiry committee to go into the incident

PNS ■ Guntur

At least 300 students at SRM University took ill after consuming food and some were hospitalised. The incident happened on Tuesday and Wednesday, but it was kept under wraps. The officials were only informed about the incident on Thursday.

The district administration confirmed that the students were suffering from diarrhoea. Out of the university's total of over 6,000 students, 300 experienced episodes of vomiting and diarrhoea. Fortunately, all affected students are receiving treatment and are



reported to be out of danger. In response, Guntur District Collector A Thameem Ansariya has initiated an inquiry into the matter. Collector Ansariya has formed a committee comprising the Joint Director of the District Education Department, the District Health and Medical Officer, a Food Safety officer, the Mangalagiri Sub-Divisional Police Officer, and the District Civil Supplies Officer to investigate the suspected food poisoning incident. The inquiry will also look into whether the drinking water supplied to SRM University was contaminated.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Minister orders thorough inquiry into incident

PNS ■ Amaravati

Guntur District In-charge Minister and Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh, who is on a London tour, inquired about the incident at SRM University near Mangalagiri in Guntur district. He expressed anguish over hundreds of students falling ill due to food poisoning. He inquired about the reasons related to this incident.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Play significant role in politics: Jagan to students

PNS ■ Amaravati

YSRCP chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had taken undue credit in securing the Google Data centre in Visakhapatnam. He said that Naidu not only failed to do any good in the matter of medical colleges but also caused harm. He emphasised that the role of students in society is very crucial and advised them to play a significant role in politics to cleanse it.

Condemning the alleged privatisation of government medical colleges, Jagan Mohan Reddy said there were only 12 medical colleges in the state over a period of 96 years, but within five years of YSRCP rule, 17 more were established. Out of these 17, he said, seven were completed and three were operationalised, adding 2,550 MBBS seats.

CONTINUED ON >> P2



"Selling colleges is not a policy but plunder," Reddy said. As part of YSRCP's campaign against the alleged privatisation of government medical colleges, he added that a one-crore signature campaign and rallies will be held on November 12.

On Thursday, Jagan Mohan Reddy held a meeting with the state committee members, district presidents, and Assembly constituency presidents of the YSRCP student wing. During this meeting, he discussed various issues concerning students.

'Deliver data driven good governance with periodic goals'

PNS ■ Amaravati

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday directed officials to extend good governance to people by setting up short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, driven by data. The chief minister noted that this is the primary goal of the TDP-led NDA government, which formulated a vision plan accordingly.

"Extend good governance to people by formulating plans aligning to short-term, medium-term and long-term goals," Naidu said while addressing a meeting on data-driven governance at the Secretariat.

Delivering better services to people should be the primary goal of public representatives and officials, he said, calling for using the 'village secretariats' as a vision unit for its efficient use. Village secretariats are formed for effective imple-



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu holding a review meeting in Amaravati on Thursday

mentation of various government schemes at grassroots level. The CM called on officials to work in tandem with the goals of the 2047 vision document, and directed them to achieve results on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Naidu noted that the vision plan will be implemented by assigning a senior official for each district.

According to the CM, data driven governance has emerged as a crucial mechanism and noted that a Quantum Computer will be

unveiled next January in the greenfield capital city of Amaravati.

Based on interpreting data drawn from Real Time Governance System (RTGS), he said these insights will be relayed to respective departments for faster decision-making, adhering to these insights.

Similarly, Naidu observed that data pertaining to all departments will be saved in a data lake for informed decision making.

CONTINUED ON >> P2



Chief Secretary K Vijayanand and AP Green Hydrogen Valley Advisory Board Chairman VK Sarawat at the AP Green Hydrogen Valley Advisory Board in Amaravati on Thursday

Efforts in full swing to make AP a green hydrogen hub:CS

PNS ■ Amaravati

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand said that efforts are underway to make the state of Andhra Pradesh a green hydrogen hub. The first meeting of the Andhra Pradesh Green Hydrogen Valley Advisory Board was held at the Secretariat on Thursday.

At this meeting, the advisory committee discussed the steps being taken by the government for the production of green hydrogen in the State, the projects under-

taken in this regard and other issues. In particular, with the aim of making the State a leader in India in the production of green hydrogen by 2030, the AP Green Hydrogen Valley Declaration was announced and a special advisory committee was also formed.

The aim is to create a manufacturing capacity of 2 gigawatts of electrolyzer by 2027 and to produce about 1.5 million metric tons (MMTPA) of green hydrogen by 2029.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

Written communication for grounds of arrest mandatory: SC

PNS ■ New Delhi

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that every arrested person must be furnished with the grounds of arrest in writing and in a language they understand, irrespective of the nature of the offence or statute involved.

In the verdict that strengthens constitutional protection for personal liberty, the top court held that non-supply of grounds of arrest in writing to the arrestee before or immediately after arrest would not vitiate such arrest if the same is "supplied in writing within a reasonable time and in any case two hours before the production of the arrestee before the magistrate for remand pro-

ceedings".

A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih delivered the judgment in the Mihir Rajesh Shah vs State of Maharashtra case that arose from the high-profile Mumbai BMW hit-and-run incident of July 2024.

Justice Masih, writing a 52-page judgment for the bench, ruled that the constitutional mandate under Article 22(1) of the Constitution, which guarantees that an arrested person must be informed "as soon as may be" of the grounds of arrest, is not a procedural formality but a fundamental safeguard of personal liberty.

"This court believes that to achieve the intended objective of the constitutional



mandate of Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India, the grounds of arrest must be informed to the arrested person in each case without exception and the mode of the communication of such grounds must be in writing in the language he understands," the verdict said.

"The constitutional mandate of informing the

arrestee of the grounds of arrest is mandatory in all offences under all statutes, including offences under IPC 1860 (now BNS 2023)," it held.

"The grounds of arrest must be communicated in writing to the arrestee in the language he/she understands, and in case(s) where the arresting officer/person is unable to communicate

the grounds of arrest in writing on or soon after arrest, it be so done orally. The said grounds be communicated in writing within a reasonable time and in any case at least two hours prior to production of the arrestee for remand proceedings before the magistrate," it directed.

In case of non-compliance, the arrest and subsequent remand would be rendered illegal, and the person would be at liberty to be set free, it said. The top court directed its registry to send a copy of the judgment to all the registrars general of the high courts and the chief secretaries of all the states and Union territories. The verdict dealt with two issues, and the first one was "whether in every

case, even arising out of an offence under IPC now Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, would it be necessary to furnish grounds of arrest to an accused either before arrest or forthwith after arrest".

The second issue was whether, even in exceptional cases, where on account of certain exigencies, it would not be possible to furnish the grounds of arrest either before arrest or immediately after, the arrest would be vitiated.

Referring to earlier verdicts, it said, "Mere communication of the grounds in a language not understood by the person arrested does not fulfil the constitutional mandate under Article 22 of the Constitution of India.

Driver's quick action averts major mishap

PNS ■ Salur

A major accident was averted after an Odisha-bound government bus caught fire on Thursday morning while traversing through the Sunki Ghat road here in Parvathipuram Manyam district. All 10 passengers were safely evacuated, thanks to the swift action of the driver.

"The Odisha-bound RTC bus caught fire this morning while passing through the Sunki Ghat road. No injuries or casualties were reported," Parvathipuram Manyam district Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ankita Surana said.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

MSME EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CONVENTION

Delegates from 16 countries expected to participate

RAVI KUMAR BOPPANA
PNS ■ Amaravati/ Visakhapatnam

Andhra Pradesh is gearing up for a significant advancement as it aims to become India's next major export hub. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Export Development Convention 2025 is set to take place on November 9-10 at Fairfield by Marriott in Visakhapatnam. Organised by the Andhra Pradesh MSME Development Corporation (APMSMEDC) and part of the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme, this event promises to open new global trade opportunities for the state's micro,



small, and medium enterprises.

The two-day convention will witness the participation of 34 international buyers from 16 countries, including Russia, Sri Lanka, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Austria,

tronics, sanitaryware, agro machinery, IT services, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, textiles, and apparels. Designed as a strategic trade and networking platform, the convention will feature buyer sessions, pre-scheduled B2B meetings, and direct networking opportunities, allowing MSMEs to showcase their strengths and secure sustainable export partnerships. Participation is open to Udyam-registered, export-ready MSMEs from across Andhra Pradesh, short-listed through a transparent process to ensure equitable representation across sectors. The initiative aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a preferred global sourcing destination, while providing local

enterprises a platform to directly engage with buyers and expand their market access.

Emphasising the significance of the initiative, Minister for MSMEs, Kondapalli Srinivas, said the convention marks a major milestone under the RAMP Scheme, offering local entrepreneurs a direct gateway to international trade. He noted that the initiative reflects the visionary leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, whose guidance and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping Andhra Pradesh's MSME ecosystem through his "One Family One Entrepreneur (OFOE)" and "Swarna Andhra 2047" missions.

Vande Bharat Express extended to Narasapuram



PNS ■ Bhimavaram

Thanks to the relentless efforts made over the past few months by Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhupathiraj Srinivasa Varma, the first Vande Bharat Express service for the Narasapuram Parliamentary constituency is all set to become a reality. Until now, the Vande Bharat Express (Train Nos. 20677/20678) has been running between Chennai and Vijayawada. The Union Ministry of Railways has now issued orders to the South Central Railway (SCR) to extend this train up to Narasapuram.

In line with his election promise, Minister Srinivasa Varma held several meetings with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and senior railway officials, strongly presenting the need for a Vande Bharat service to Narasapuram. He coordinated with officials to resolve the technical issues involved in the extension. With this extension, travel facilities for the people of West Godavari and Konaseema districts are set to improve significantly. The train will

now halt at Gudivada and Bhimavaram Town stations en route to Narasapuram.

Train No. 20677 will run from MGR Chennai Central to Narasapuram. Train No. 20678 will operate in the reverse direction, from Narasapuram to MGR Chennai Central.

Train No. 20677 departs Chennai at 5:30 am, halts at Renigunta, Gudur, Nellore, Ongole, and Tenali, reaches Vijayawada at 11:45 am Gudivada at 12:34 pm., Bhimavaram Town at 1:29 pm, and arrives at Narasapuram at 2:10 pm.

Train No. 20678 departs Narasapuram at 2:50 pm, reaches Bhimavaram Town at 3:19 pm, Gudivada at 4:09 pm, Vijayawada at 4:50 pm, and finally reaches Chennai at 11:45 pm. The official inauguration date will soon be announced by the Railway Ministry.

People of Narasapuram and nearby areas have expressed joy and appreciation over the approval of the first Vande Bharat Express service to their region. They lauded Minister Srinivasa Varma for his dedicated efforts in bringing this prestigious train service to the Narasapuram area.

Both Cong, BRS neglected JH, slams Kishan Reddy

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Union Minister and BJP senior leader Kishan Reddy has stated that both Congress and BRS have done nothing for the development of the Jubilee Hills constituency.

Participating in a road show as part of an election campaign on Thursday, Kishan Reddy slammed the ruling Congress for not implementing the promises given to people. "The Congress party deceived the people of Telangana. It came to power with a promise to implement six guarantees. But during its two-year rule, the party has not implemented any of the assurances," Kishan said. The Chief Minister proudly said that the government is giving fine rice to people, but 80 per



cent of the rice quantity is being supplied by the central government, the union minister revealed in the campaign.

To substantiate his point and the facts regarding the fine rice supply, he posted a card on his social media account. He warned that the people would teach a lesson to the Congress

party for its Muslim appeasement. Coming down heavily on the BRS for neglecting the Jubilee Hills constituency during its rule, he alleged that the party is hoping to come to power in the guise of sympathy, warning that the voters are ready to teach a lesson to BRS in the coming elections.

Only one ophthalmologist for every 65,000 people: Survey

PNS ■ New Delhi

A survey by AIIMS, Delhi, revealed that on average, there is only one ophthalmologist available for every 65,000 people in the country. There are 20,944 ophthalmologists and 17,849 optometrists (primary eye care providers) working nationwide at secondary/tertiary level, while the Vision 2020 initiative set a target of 25,000 ophthalmologists and 48,000 hospital-based paramedics to be

achieved by 2020 for eliminating avoidable Blindness in India. The study led by Dr Praveen Vashist and his team from Dr Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences at AIIMS was performed to determine the human resources (HR) and infrastructure available for providing ophthalmic services from the existing secondary and tertiary level hospitals in India and to assess the achievement of targets related to HR and infrastructure as per

Vision 2020 norms. Dr Praveen Vashist, Professor and Officer In-Charge of Community Ophthalmology at RP Centre, said the study highlighted that the distribution of ophthalmological services in India is highly uneven. The situation is comparatively better in the states of South and West India, while there is a severe shortage of doctors in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Out of the 8,790

eyecare institutes enrolled as part of the study, 7901 institutes completed the questionnaire (response rate 89.9 per cent), he said. The eye institute population ratio for the entire country was one per 1,64,536 population, with better ratios in the Southern and Western states, compared to Northern, Eastern, and Northeastern states.

Among the nine union territories, the highest proportion of eye institutes was reported from

the Delhi National Capital Region, the study said. As far as ownership of eye institutes is concerned, nearly two-thirds of institutes (70.6 per cent) were in the private sector, followed by the public sector (15.6 per cent) and the NGO sector (13.8 per cent). The number of optometrists per ophthalmologist at secondary/tertiary levels was 0.85, meaning that for every ophthalmologist, there is not even one eye care professional who conducts

eye tests, diagnoses and treats certain eye diseases. The optometrist: ophthalmologist ratio ranged from 8.33 in the Andaman Nicobar Islands to 0.45 in Delhi, the study found. The ophthalmologist population ratio in the country was found to be 1:65,221. The number of ophthalmologists per million population was 15 for the country, ranging from the highest of 127 in Puducherry to the lowest two in Ladakh, it stated.



Police sensitise students on traffic rules, women's safety

PNS ■ Kakinada

Under the instruction from the Superintendent of Police Bindu Madhav, the traffic police held an awareness meeting for the students of Mahatma Gandhi Municipal Corporation High School here on Thursday and sensitised them on the traffic rules and regulations and helmet wearing. Traffic circle Inspectors N Ramesh and D Ramarao explained the students with the support of power point presentation on eve teasing, women safety and also the precautions to be taken against Cyber crimes. They advised the students against minor driving as it is an offence and also dangerous. Everyone who rides motorcycles should wear the helmet and they should explain to their family members also the importance of helmets and how they would protect in any road accidents. Triple riding and bike stunts are disastrous and claim pre-

cious lives hence keep away from such actions' they added. Further they explained to the students on how to cross the roads safely where there is no zebra crossing and also on the uses of traffic signals. The students cautioned not to travel in autos overloaded and also not to travel sitting in the backside and also sitting either side of the auto driver. The students further advised against Drunken driving and also rash driving. While creating awareness against Cyber crimes, the Traffic inspectors explained in detail on online cheating, fake loan apps, online job works and digital arrests. They made it clear that there was nothing like Digital arrest in Law as such not to get frightened if any one try to threaten them with digital arrest. Phone Calling of numbers 112, 1930, 1972 during emergencies and their uses was also explained to the students. EOM/tmr/1740 hrs

NTUK signs MoU with Skill DZire Technologies for skill development

PNS ■ Kakinada

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada (JNTUK) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hyderabad-based Skill DZire Technologies to promote skill enhancement and training opportunities for its students. The MoU was inked during a brief ceremony held at the Vice-Chancellor's chamber on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor Prof CSRK Prasad said the partnership would enable JNTUK students to gain hands-on training in various skill development programmes, internships, and self-learning courses. Under this collaboration, Skill DZire Technologies will offer training in computer and IT skills, as well as in electronics, electrical, mechanical, and civil engineering disciplines. The MoU was formally signed by Skill DZire Technologies Co-founder, Srikanth Muppala, and JNTUK Registrar, Prof R Srinivasarao.

President Droupadi Murmu to visit Tirumala on Nov 20

PNS ■ Tirupati

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams on Thursday said President Droupadi Murmu will embark on a two-day visit to the hill shrine of Sri Venkateswara Swamy here on November 20. Initially, the President will offer prayer at Sri Padmavati Ammavaru temple in Tiruchanoor on November 20 and later reach Tirumala. On November 21, Murmu will offer prayers in the hill shrine of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, said the temple body. During her two-day visit to the

pilgrim centre, the President will initially offer prayers at Sri Padmavati Ammavaru temple in Tiruchanoor on November 20 and later reach Tirumala," said an official release from the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). As per the temple tradition, the President will offer prayers in Sri Varaha Swamy temple on November 21 followed by prayers to Sri Venkateswara Swamy. TTD is the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara temple, the richest Hindu shrine in the world.

FROM PAGE - 1

Bihar records...

Mock polls were completed by 7 am on Thursday in the presence of more than 67,902 polling agents appointed by 1,314 contesting candidates and polling began peacefully at all 45,341 polling stations simultaneously. More than 90,000 'Jeevika Didis' (women volunteers), along with one central police personnel for each polling station, were deployed for the identification of 'purdahnashen' (burqa or ghunghat-clad) women.

300 students...

University officials stated that they provide purified drinking water through their own reverse osmosis (RO) water plant. A comprehensive investigation will determine the circumstances that led to the illness of over 300 students, and a report will be submitted to the Collector. In the meantime, students at SRM staged a protest against the management,

expressing their frustration over the food quality. They claimed that they were served meals made with stale eggs and vegetables.

Minister orders...

He suggested that Guntur District Collector order a thorough investigation into this incident. Minister Durgesh gave several suggestions via phone to the inquiry committee set up by the government.

Play significant...

Later, addressing the gathering, Jagan Mohan Reddy said, "A clean and transparent political system should begin with you. The seeds of good politics are sown during student life. You all belong to Gen-Z, and you are the guiding force for future generations. You should play a significant role in politics and ensure purity in society. This state belongs to all of us, and we all want it to prosper. Every student should reach a stage where they can earn a

livelihood. He further said that during YSRCP government's tenure, a significant changes was brought about in the education system.

Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday said his erstwhile YSRCP government stood by government school students by implementing reforms and initiatives, despite being aware that they "didn't have votes".

"Students may not have votes, yet we stood by them. That is real leadership," Jagan said, citing initiatives of his regime, such as English-medium education, TOEFL classes from third standard, distribution of Oxford dictionaries, tablets from eighth standard, and several others. These initiatives, he said, backed by 'Nadu-Nedu' (government schools renovation programme), 'Amma Vodi' (mother's lap scheme), 'Jagananna Gorumudda' (mid-day meal scheme for public school students), and others, ensured that no poor child dropped out.

Meanwhile, YSRCP leaders urged people to unite against

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's alleged "arrogant, anti-people and destructive governance."

'Deliver data...

He called for syncing police department data to the data lake.

The CM also directed officials to make efficient use of digilocker brought by the Centre about a decade ago.

Naidu alleged that there were several irregularities in the Excise Department during the previous YSRCP government, which are being 'remedied'.

Efforts in full swing...

It is happening. Speaking on this occasion, NITI Aayog member and AP Green Hydrogen Valley Advisory Board Chairman Dr VK Saraswat said that State is at the first place in the country in terms of biomass. He said that biomass is very useful for the production of green hydrogen, which will increase the income of

farmers and also increase employment opportunities. He said that there is a need to use green hydrogen in large quantities in local steel plants, fertiliser manufacturing industries and ports. He said that the Central Government is also ready to provide appropriate incentives to industries using green hydrogen under the National Hydrogen Mission.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Secretary and Co-Chairman of the AP Green Hydrogen Valley Advisory Board K Vijayanand said that the state government has recently made a Green Hydrogen Valley Declaration with the aim of making the State a green hydrogen hub. He explained that there are flourishing opportunities for solar, wind and pumped energy storage in AP. Similarly, 974 km having a long coastline is also a good opportunity for green hydrogen production.

He said that a pumped storage plant with a capacity of one gigawatt has already been set up in

Kurnool. A hydrogen hub is being created at "Pudimadaka" near Visakhapatnam by NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL). He said that efforts are being made to produce about 1,500 tons of "green hydrogen" per day with a renewable energy capacity of 20 GW with an investment of Rs. 1.85 lakh crore. He said that by producing "green hydrogen" domestically, there is a possibility of reducing foreign imports and increasing local consumption significantly. Similarly, CS Vijayanand said that AP will be more recognized as a state with abundant renewable energy resources.

AP Green Co-AGM Dr Ram Kumar said that the NPCL fertilizer factory in Kakinada has been converted into a 1 million tonne ammonia plant. Similarly, efforts are being made to make Kakinada a green hydrogen hub. He said that some MoUs related to green hydrogen production will be signed at the CII conference to be held in Visakhapatnam on

14th and 15th of this month.

Earlier, Member Secretary Prof. D Narayana Rao explained the opportunities for green hydrogen fuel production through a power point presentation about the AP Green Hydrogen Valley Declaration and its roadmap (2025-29). In this meeting, Advisory Board members Dr RK Malhotra, Dr Ashish Lele, Sujith Pillai, J K Srivastava and others made various suggestions on the steps to be taken for the production of hydrogen fuel. New Renewable Energy Development Corporation of AP (NERDCAP) VC and MD Dr Kamalakar Babu, State I&I Secretary Dr N Yuvraj, DM R. Panda and others participated in this meeting.

Driver's quick...

According to Surana, the driver of the bus reported that a spark in the engine likely caused the fire, possibly due to a short circuit, which is yet to be ascertained.

The bus was climbing uphill when it suddenly stopped. On checking the engine, the driver noticed sparks and immediately alerted the passengers, who quickly got down, she said.

Police said the driver's quick response helped avert a major mishap.

Fire tenders rushed to the spot and the blaze was doused shortly thereafter. A technical inspection is underway to determine the exact cause of the fire, said Surana.



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
PANCHAYATI RAJ
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Tender Notice No. 45-742/2025-25 Dt: 04.11.2025
Online tenders are invited for Supply 1301 HCR/MS with an Est. Cost. Rs. 9500.00 Lakhs sanctioned under PPS, AP/HRM, Govt of AP Circle, Vijayanagaram and the tenders will be available in website with Ref No.45-742/2025-25, Dt. 04.11.2025 in the following dates: 1) Availability of Bid Documents: dt: 11.11.2025, 11.00AM to Dt. 26.11.2025 up to 4.00 PM. 2) The Last date for receipt of bids: Dt. 11.11.2025, 11.00AM to Dt. 26.11.2025 up to 4.00 PM. 3) Technical Bid Opening Date & Time: At 5.00 PM on Dt. 26.11.2025. 4) Financial Bid Opening Date & Time: At 11.00AM on Dt. 27.11.2025. 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Officials told to bring Unified Act for administration of universities

PNS ■ Amaravati

Even after studying in engineering colleges for four years, many students are unable to achieve the minimum qualifications required for employment. However, if they take coaching for two to four months at Ameerpet in Hyderabad, jobs are guaranteed. This is a clear reflection of the state of the education system in the Telugu states.

However, the Andhra Pradesh government is making efforts to change this situation. As part of this, Education Minister N Lokesh has instructed the authorities concerned to prepare a Unified Act for the administration of universities. In this regard, a review meeting was conducted with the officials in Undavalli, focusing on higher education and intermediate education in the state.



The Andhra Pradesh government is introducing an AI-based skill portal with

advanced technology. The goal is to enhance the skills of the youth and provide job opportunities. Minister Lokesh mentioned that private colleges should be integrated with this skill

portal, and campus placements should be guaranteed. He also emphasised that colleges must take necessary steps to implement face recognition attendance systems.

He suggested that a robust student tracking system be developed from KG to PG. He also directed the authorities to take steps to improve the NIRF rankings. The Minister also discussed filling vacant teaching positions in government universities. During the meeting, he inquired about the campus recruitment process at universities, ITIs, and triple ITs. He issued instructions for the establishment of a student feedback mechanism in all universities, ensuring 100 per cent campus recruitment for students. Furthermore, he urged tracking of students enrolled in vocational courses and stressed that there should be a time limit for granting permissions to private colleges.

Minister urges Centre to purchase rain-hit cotton crop

PNS ■ Amaravati

Minister K Atchannaidu addressed a letter to Union Textile Minister Giriraj Singh regarding the problems being faced by cotton farmers in the state.

The letter highlighted that the cotton crops have been severely damaged due to cyclone, and farmers are being forced to sell cotton at prices lower than the minimum support price (MSP). It was mentioned that for the 2025-26 kharif season, cotton cultivation is expected to cover 4.56 lakh hectares, with an estimated production of 8 lakh metric tonnes.

The state government has already started cotton purchases digitally through the CM APP and the Aadhaar-based e-crop system. However, after integrating the Kapas Kisan App with the state's CM APP, technical issues have arisen, causing



difficulties for the farmers, as explained in the letter.

The letter requested that the synchronisation of farmer details between the Kapas Kisan App and CM APP be done in real-time. It also suggested mapping cotton purchasing points to nearby ginning mills so that farmers would not have to travel long distances. Furthermore, the letter urged that the authorities take steps to start L1, L2, and L3 ginning mills simulta-

neously to ease the burden on farmers. It was also requested to appoint a dedicated technical team for the Kapas Kisan App in Guntur.

The letter emphasised that cotton affected by rain or discoloured should be bought at the appropriate price, and called for immediate assistance from the central government to support farmers affected by natural disasters.

Govt focuses on providing drinking water

NaBFID is likely to sanction loan for potable water supply in backward areas in the State

PNS ■ Amaravati

The State government has intensified efforts to complete pending works under the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission to provide safe drinking water to every household through taps. As part of this, the state is ready to take a loan of Rs10,000 crore from the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID).

The State government representatives held discussions with bank officials to help speed up the process. The bank has agreed to provide the loan, with the amount being released in three installments. However, the proposals for this loan are still under review by the bank's

Technical Feasibility Committee. If approved, the loan may be sanctioned by the end of this month.

The funds for this project will be granted only after the approval of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the drinking water pipeline connection project. In the past, water was collected from borewells for drinking purposes. However, during the summer, when groundwater levels deplete, there are interruptions in water supply. The current government has identified this issue and has revised the plan to collect water from rivers and reservoirs, ensuring safe drinking water through pipelines for the entire year. A comprehensive project report (DPR) worth Rs 84,500 crores has



been prepared. NaBFID will provide the loan only after the Centre approves this DPR. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the Central government had initially approved

a Rs 27,000 crore project, but the previous government failed to complete it, according to officials. It claimed that the previous government had allocated only Rs

4,000 crore between 2019-2024. The works were also incomplete, leading to failure in providing drinking water supply.

In this context, the govern-

ment is focusing on completing the pending works. The aim is to fulfill the Central government's target of providing drinking water connections to every household. Of the Rs 23,000 crore worth of pending works, Rs 10,000 crore will be funded by the loan, and the remaining Rs 13,000 crore will be provided by the Central government.

The government is planning to complete the pending works over the next two to three years and provide tap connections to over 25 lakh households. Special attention is being given to backward districts like Srikakulam, Anakapalli, Palnadu, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Parvathipuram, Vijayanagaram, Kurnool, and Anantapur.

Rahul detonated 'high voltage hydrogen bomb on vote theft:' Sharmila

■ The APCC chief said the Congress party had collected 17.65 lakh signatures from citizens across all 175 Assembly constituencies in support of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi



APCC president YS Sharmila Reddy in Vijayawada on Thursday releasing a poster for a campaign against 'vote theft', to be launched in Andhra Pradesh

PNS ■ Vijayawada

APCC president YS Sharmila Reddy launched a direct attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Election Commission of India on Thursday, claiming they orchestrated a large-scale fake vote scam exposed by Rahul Gandhi. She positioned the Congress Party as the defender of electoral integrity.

Speaking to the media, Sharmila said Rahul Gandhi had "detonated a high-voltage hydrogen bomb" by revealing how 25 lakh bogus votes were created in Haryana to secure a BJP victory. She described it as "a theft of democracy" and alleged that the ECI colluded with the ruling party to manipulate voter rolls. Without these fake votes, she said, the Congress would have won the Assembly elections in Haryana with a comfortable majority.

Sharmila Reddy said, "The BJP came to power in Haryana with a slender

margin of only 1.18 lakh votes, a mere 0.7 per cent difference in vote share. In every eight votes in Haryana, one is fake. And this manipulation amounted to a daylight robbery of people's mandate."

She accused the Election Commission of abandoning its constitutional independence and turning into a puppet controlled by the BJP. "Where BJP needs votes, fake ones are added; where it does not, genuine votes are deleted. The Commission has forgotten its duty and moral responsibility, and is acting like another arm of the RSS," observed Sharmila.

She announced that under the "Vote Chor, Gaddi Chod" campaign, the Andhra Pradesh Congress had collected 17.65 lakh signatures from citizens across all 175 Assembly constituencies. And these signatures would be sent to Delhi to express solidarity with Rahul Gandhi's campaign against electoral fraud.

Collector leads drive to inspect midday meal implementation in schools

PNS ■ Bhimavaram

A district-wide inspection drive has infused new energy into the Dokka Seethamma Midday Meal Scheme, following the personal initiative of District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani, who is determined to ensure every child in government schools receives nutritious, hygienic, and balanced meals. Acting on her instructions, mandal-level special officers, Tahsildars, and MPDOs inspected schools across West Godavari on Thursday, checking food quality, interacting with students, and tasting meals themselves. Their reports confirmed that the programme is being imple-



District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani serving food to a students during inspection in a school in Bhimavaram on Thursday

mented effectively and with encouraging results across the district.

In Bhimavaram, District Collector Nagarani made a surprise visit to PSM Girls'

High School in Gunupudi, where she personally tasted the food served under the midday meal programme and expressed satisfaction over the

quality and hygiene standards. Sitting along with students and sharing their meal, The Collector exhorted the students to eat nutritious food daily and explained the importance of a balanced diet for their mental and physical growth.

She reminded students that regular consumption of eggs and pulses helps build strength and concentration, urging them to make the most of the improved menu introduced by the State Government, prepared with guidance from nutrition experts. Collector Nagarani said that good nutrition during school years lays the foundation for academic excellence and active participation

in sports and extracurricular activities.

Thursday's menu — vegetable pulao, potato kurma, boiled egg, and ragi malt — was served across all schools in the district. Students said they were enjoying the new, tastier dishes. Collector Nagarani emphasised that students should always eat the midday meal at school, as it offers a well-balanced combination of nutrients essential for healthy development. She also urged parents to motivate their children, especially girls, to eat at school every day and make use of the nutritious meal served under the government's flagship scheme.

The Collector also instructed school author-

ities to ensure that kitchens maintain strict cleanliness and food safety standards. She advised that food items should always be covered, utensils cleaned properly, and pest control measures taken to prevent contamination.

Across the district, inspections revealed a positive picture. Officials reported that schools are maintaining good standards of food quality, hygiene, and service discipline, reflecting the Collector's close monitoring and emphasis on accountability. Students were seen standing in neat queues, eating happily, and expressing satisfaction with the taste and variety of food.

Adulterated ghee seized in Pithapuram



PNS ■ Kakinada

Acting on a tip-off, police and revenue officials conducted a surprise raid on a residence at the Madhavanagar area in Pithapuram town on Thursday. During the operation, they seized 11 tins of adulterated ghee allegedly made using cow fat, which was reportedly being readied for illegal transportation to various locations across the district.

In addition to the ghee, officials also confiscated several drums of cow fat,

various chemicals, and equipment used in the preparation process.

The raid was carried out following a complaint lodged by Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) local president Duvva Venkateswera Rao, who alleged that the illicit production of ghee using cow fat had been continuing for some time. He further claimed that the adulterated product was being supplied to several temples, allegedly with the knowledge and support of certain vigilance officials.

New barrage on Tungabhadra between from Chikkalapervi to Kumbalanuru proposed

PNS ■ Amaravati

The Almatti Dam heightening project and the construction of a new barrage and bridge across the Tungabhadra River are making progress. Karnataka has brought forward these proposals and is seeking approval from the Andhra Pradesh government, stating that they will undertake the construction with their own funds. The new barrage and bridge are planned to be constructed from Chikkalapervi in Karnataka's Raichur district to Kumbalanuru in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district.

On this proposal, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Minister of Water Resources Nimmala Rama Naidu

received letters from Karnataka's Minister for Minor Irrigation NS Bosraju, outlining the project details and seeking Andhra Pradesh's approval. Karnataka has also stated that it will assign the responsibility for managing the proposed barrage to Andhra Pradesh. It is claimed that this project will make travel between the two states easier.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has given its approval for the construction of a road between Guthi in Andhra Pradesh and Manvi in Karnataka. The proposed road will pass through Pattikonda, Adoni, Madire, Halvi, and Kumbalanuru, leading up to Manvi. Karnataka has allocated funds for the construction of the barrage and bridge over



the Tungabhadra River in its 2024-25 budget. However, officials from Andhra Pradesh's Water Resources Department have raised strong objections to the construction of the barrage,

questioning how a barrage can be built without water allocation. They have also raised several other concerns.

Once the barrage and bridge are constructed, it is

estimated that 0.351 tmct of water could be stored in the Tungabhadra River. The project plans to install a total of 73 gates. When water flow in the river reduces, Karnataka proposes to open

seven gates to release water downstream. It is estimated that the project could make 168 tmct of water available annually.

Heavy rains have occurred in the upper regions of the Tungabhadra River, and it is estimated that the reservoir will have 168 tmct of water this year. In this context, engineers from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka held a meeting to discuss the situation.

Currently, the reservoir holds 80 tmct of water. Nearly 270 tmct of water have already reached the Tungabhadra project, of which 70 tmct have been released for irrigation.

Another 120 tmct has flowed through the river. As a result, the project currently holds 80 tmct of water.



IN FOCUS



BJP leaders and workers take part in a torch march on the eve of the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram' in Jaipur

India has too few diplomats: Argentine envoy

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA
■ New Delhi

India's global rise is not matched by the number of diplomats it has, Argentine Ambassador Mariano A. Caucino said on Thursday. Speaking at the Observer Research Foundation's (ORF) Diplomat Diaries series in the national Capital, he said India and Argentina have almost the same number of diplomats, though India's population is nearly 30 times larger.

"India has almost 1.5 billion people, and Argentina has less than 50 million. Yet we have the same number of diplomats," Caucino said at the Latin America Roundtable held at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre. "I heard that India is recruiting many new diplomats this year. That is good news," he added.

The session was moderated by Professor Harsh V Pant of ORF. It featured Argentine Ambassador Caucino and Chilean

Ambassador Juan Angulo. Both envoys spoke about their countries' growing ties with India and the region's changing role in global politics.

Ambassador Caucino said Latin American nations face a "paradox". Politically, the region belongs to the Western Hemisphere. But economically, it is now more connected to Asia.

"Our trade partners are mostly in Asia. India is already among the top ten," he said. "We share democratic values with the West, but our economic future lies in Asia," he added. He said India's economic growth has opened new areas of cooperation. "India is already the fifth-largest economy. It will soon be third. Many Indian companies are investing in Argentina's lithium and food sectors," he said. But he warned against depending only on natural resources. "Countries develop when they add value and invest in technology," he said.

Chilean Ambassador Juan



Chile Ambassador Juan Angulo, Ambassador Mariano A Caucino at the Diplomat Diaries series organised by the Observer Research Foundation in the national Capital on Thursday. The session was moderated by Professor Harsh V Pant of ORF and the topic of discussion was Latin America Roundtable

PIONEER PHOTO

Angulo said small economies like Chile must stay flexible. "We are takers of global rules, not makers," he said. "We cannot choose

sides in big power rivalries. We must adapt," Angulo remarked. He further said Chile is trying to add value to its exports and use tech-

nology to improve productivity. "We don't want to export raw rocks of lithium. We want to be part of the battery value chain," he

said. "In agriculture, we use artificial intelligence for packing and shipping. Innovation is the only way to compete," he added.

Angulo said Latin America remains a "zone of peace" but faces internal challenges. "There are no wars between our countries. But we have problems like crime, drugs, and weak institutions," he said. "People are also losing faith in democracy because it is not meeting their needs.

Caucino agreed that Latin America's political values remain democratic but said the region must do more to turn economic links into opportunities. "With India, our economies are complementary, not competitive," he said. The envoys said India's limited diplomatic presence makes it harder to engage with faraway regions like Latin America.

Many Indian missions in the region cover multiple countries. Ambassador Angulo summed it up: "The distance is large, but the opportunities are larger."

President to visit Angola, Botswana

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu will undertake a six-day visit to Angola and Botswana beginning Saturday with a broader aim to further expand India's development partnership with the African continent.

In the first leg of her trip, Murmu will visit Angola from November 8 to 11. From Angola, she will travel to Botswana, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "The President of India will be paying a state visit to Angola and Botswana from November 8 to 13. This will be the first-ever state visit by an Indian head of state to Angola and Botswana," Secretary (Economic Relations) in the MEA, Sudhakar Dalela, said. India's engagement with the African continent is growing and President Murmu's visit to the two nations should be seen in the larger context of India's priority in expanding the partnership with the African region, he said at a media



briefing. Dalela said India's trade with the African region is reaching almost \$100 billion.

"India's growing engagement with Africa is also in consonance with the government's priority of strengthening partnerships with countries in the Global South," he said. Dalela said President Murmu will hold bilateral talks with her Angolan counterpart and attend the 50th

anniversary celebrations of the African nation's independence.

She is also scheduled to address the Angolan parliament and interact with members of the Indian community in that country, he said. Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco is currently holding the chairship of the African Union, an influential bloc that comprises 55 African member states.

Nagrota by-polls: Omar's message lost as mic fails

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday failed to send a 'loud and clear' message to voters gathered at an election rally after the public address system went off, forcing him to abruptly wind up his speech in support of the party candidate ahead of the November 11 by-elections in the Nagrota Assembly constituency.

A large number of party leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and senior MLAs, addressed the meeting without facing any technical glitches. Ironically, when Omar started addressing the gathering, his mike abruptly went off.

Omar waited patiently for over two minutes, but when the sound engineers, working behind the stage, failed to rectify the glitch in time, Omar, apparently, lost his cool. He was also seen making gestures, pointing fingers towards the party organisers.



Sporting a Dogra turban, Omar stepped down without addressing the party supporters. However, before leaving, Omar made a passionate appeal to the voters to support the party's candidate on November 11 by turning up in large numbers at the polling booths. Omar refused to use the mike, offered to him by the party candidate standing next to him in front of the electorate.

This was Omar Abdullah's first election meeting in Jammu after completing one year in office. The Bharatiya Janta Party candidate Devyani Rana, daughter of deceased BJP MLA Devender Singh Rana, and Shamim Begum of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference are locked in a straight contest.

After Chief Minister Omar Abdullah received a rousing reception in Jammu on the

day of the reopening of the Durbar move offices, the provincial National Conference leaders extended an invitation to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to address an election meeting to boost the morale of party workers.

The Nagrota Assembly Constituency, represented by Devender Singh Rana in 2014, was won by the National Conference. Rana, a close aide of Omar Abdullah, was appointed Omar's political advisor between 2009-2011.

After quitting the National Conference in 2021, Rana joined the Bharatiya Janata Party. He won the Nagrota Assembly seat by a margin of over 30,000 votes, defeating his rival candidate of the National Conference in October 2024. Rana passed away after a brief illness last year. The National Conference leaders are hoping to make inroads in the Nagrota constituency and are seeking votes from the electorate to support the Omar Abdullah-led Government.

CAG approves centralised cadres to boost expertise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on Thursday announced the creation of two centralised cadres to build deeper professional expertise and further improve the quality of audit of central Government finances. The CAG has accorded in-principle approval for the creation of specialised cadres — Central Revenue Audit (CRA) Cadre and Central Expenditure Audit (CEA) Cadre — within the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, DAI (HR, IR, CDN) K Subramaniam said at a media briefing here. The scheme will be operationalised from January 1, 2026.

At present, the audit of central receipts and expenditure is undertaken by 9 Director General (Audit)/Principal Director (Audit) offices and exclusive offices with cadre control dispersed across multiple state civil audit offices and independent CCAs. Subramaniam said the centralisation will unify cadre management, consolidating multiple fragmented cadres into two specialised streams.

The new cadres will consolidate over 4,000 audit professionals at the senior audit officer and assistant audit officer levels. He further said the CRA cadre will promote specialisation in auditing government revenue collections, and the CEA cadre will focus on audit in government expenditure.

Explaining the benefits of centralisation, Subramaniam said specialisation in the cadre of CRA and CEA will lead to deeper domain expertise in revenue and

THE NEW CADRES WILL CONSOLIDATE OVER 4,000 AUDIT PROFESSIONALS AT THE SENIOR AUDIT OFFICER AND ASSISTANT AUDIT OFFICER LEVELS

expenditure audits. It will also reduce the number of cadre-controlling authorities from 16 for CRA and 19 for CEA to a single central authority for each vertical.

He said all-India transfer liability within larger, unified cadres enables transparent rotation and improves the likelihood of periodic postings near homes, while meeting organisational needs.

"Everybody would have 2-3 opportunities in life to be closer home or in a place which is proximate," Subramaniam said. To build domain expertise, two separate SAS examination streams will be introduced, one each for CRA and CEA. Officers in both cadres will be liable for all-India transfers with their respective domains. A transfer and posting board will be constituted to ensure transparent and equitable policies based on organisational needs and career progression considerations. The move is expected to professionalise auditing further and strengthen accountability in central government finances. Officers in the new cadres will receive specialised training tailored to revenue and expenditure audits, enhancing their technical skills. The consolidation will also help in faster decision-making and uniformity in audit practices across the country.

ED raids human hair export firms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In an export business of human hair to Tunisia and Italy. Enforcement Directorate carried out search operations at seven premises across Nagaland, Assam and Tamil Nadu, the agency said on Thursday. The raids were carried on October 4, for violations of the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999. The agency sleuth received information that Imsong Global Suppliers Co — based in Nagaland — claimed to be engaged in the export of human hair to entities based in Tunisia

and Italy received ₹50 crore foreign remittances suspiciously.

During the searches, crucial evidences, documents and digital devices relating to the foreign remittances received by the entity Imsong Global Suppliers Co have been seized. The company, despite considerable lapse of time, had failed to submit requisite export documentation such as shipping bills, export invoice copies amongst others to the authorised dealer bank within prescribed timelines. "Such non-compliance of export obligations and suppression of documentary evidences constitute con-

traventions of the provisions of the FEMA vis a vis several directions issued by RBI from time to time," the agency said. During investigation, it was found that the foreign remittances received by Imsong Global Suppliers Co. were further diverted to Inchem India Private Limited on the pretext of purchase of human hair.

The agency found that Inchem India Private Limited, which had remained dormant or inactive for a considerable period, was re-activated in 2015. This coincides precisely with the period when Imsong Global Trading Co commenced receipt of large foreign remit-

CAG to present transport report in next monsoon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) will submit its report on 'Multi-Modal Transport and Logistics Initiatives', being prepared in consultation with IIM Mumbai as knowledge partner, in Parliament in the next Monsoon session.

The CAG has constituted an Integrated Audit Group (IAG) to carry out coordinated audit work across various audit verticals, including railways, infrastructure, ports, ship-

ping, and waterways.

Giving details, ADAI (Railways) Pravir Pandey said the Railway Audit Wing is conducting the audit of 'Multi-Modal Transport and Logistics Initiatives', with particular emphasis on 'First Mile Last Mile' connectivity with logistics hubs and (Origin -Destination) O-D pairs in 2025-26.

He said the Indian Railways is undergoing a transformative phase, with significant investments and modernisation efforts to enhance its infrastructure, safety, mobility, customer satisfaction and commerce.

Rajinder, Sat Paul take oath as Rajya Sabha MPs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Newly elected members of the Rajya Sabha, Rajinder Gupta and Sat Paul Sharma, were administered the oath of office by Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Thursday. Gupta of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was elected an MP from Punjab.

Sharma of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took oath as an MP representing Jammu and Kashmir. Gupta took the oath at a brief function in Parliament House in Punjab, while Sharma did it in Hindi. Gupta, an industrialist, was nominated by the AAP, which is in power in Punjab.

Sharma is the president of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP. He is a chartered accountant by profession and has earlier served as a cabinet minister in the J-K government. He was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly from the Jammu West constituen-



Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan administers the oath to AAP leader Rajinder Gupta as an elected Member of the Rajya Sabha at Parliament House in New Delhi

PTI

cy in 2014, when he won by 51,000 votes, the biggest margin then.

BJP President JP Nadda and Union Minister Jitendra Singh were present at the swearing-in ceremony, besides the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir in-charge, Tarun Chugh. The families of both MPs were present at the oath-taking.

Gupta was elected unop-

posed to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab as he was the lone candidate in the fray. The AAP, which nominated Gupta as its candidate for the October 24 RS bypoll, enjoys an overwhelming majority with 93 members in the 117-member state assembly.

The seat fell vacant after AAP's Sanjeev Arora stepped down from the Upper House following his election to the

state assembly. He has since been inducted into the Punjab Cabinet.

Gupta, the chairman emeritus of Trident Group, recently resigned as vice-chairman of the state economic policy and planning board, and as chairperson of the Kali Devi temple advisory committee. Sharma won one of the four RS seats which went to polls in J-K.

2025 likely to be 2nd or 3rd hottest year on record:WMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said on Thursday that the 2025 is set to be either the second or third warmest one on record, with the alarming streak of exceptional temperatures continuing throughout the year so far. This will make the past 11 years, from 2015 to 2025, the warmest 11-year period in the 176-year observational record, with the past three years being the hottest on record.

According to WMO's "State of the Global Climate Update", the mean near-surface temperature from January to August 2025 was 1.42 degrees Celsius (±0.12) above the pre-industrial average.

The Paris Agreement, adopted by nearly 200 countries in 2015, aims to keep global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius and

pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Warming has already crossed 1.3 degrees Celsius and global emissions continue to rise. According to the WMO, 2024 was the hottest year on record and the first with a global average temperature 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

However, a permanent breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius limit under the Paris Agreement refers to long-term warming over a 20- or 30-year period, not a single year. The Berlin-based climate science and policy institute Climate Analytics, in a report published on Thursday, said the world will very likely reach 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming by the early 2030s.

The WMO report said the warming El Nino conditions that boosted global temperatures in 2023 and 2024 gave way to neutral or La Nina conditions in 2025.



Editor's
TAKE

New York elects hope over hate

Zohran Mamdani's election as New York mayor signals that the arc of democracy, however bent by demagogues, still leans towards justice, inclusion, and hope

In what can be termed a personal defeat for Donald Trump, Zohran Mamdani has been elected as New York City mayor. And the reason for this binary is simple: Mamdani stands for everything that Trump wants to dismantle – socialism, environment, migrants, fair trade, and, above all, ethics in public life. He has defeated a Trump-supported candidate and decimated his narrative of polarisation and the politics of fear, a victory of reason over rhetoric. Indeed, there are many firsts in his win - the 34-year-old socialist, son of Indian parents and born in Uganda, defeated the establishment's stalwart, Andrew Cuomo, and the right-wing provocateur, Curtis Sliwa, to become New York's first Muslim, first South Asian, first Africa-born, and youngest mayor in over a century.

Mamdani's meteoric rise from an obscure state assemblyman to the most prestigious post of New York City is not just a personal triumph; it is an ideological milestone. His victory represents a sharp rebuke to Trump-style politics - a politics built on division, spectacle, and the demonisation of the "other." At a time when Donald Trump continues to dominate America's conservative narrative with populist outrage and cultural onslaught, Mamdani's win shows that voters, at least in New York, are ready to turn the page towards empathy, inclusion, and economic fairness.

When Mamdani launched his campaign in late 2024, few took him seriously. Analysts dismissed him as a fringe socialist with radical ideas about housing and taxation. Yet, through persistence, creativity, and an authentic connection with working-class New Yorkers, Mamdani redefined what a grassroots movement could look like. His campaign was powered not by corporate donors but by volunteers, community organisers, and an entirely digital-first strategy. From witty TikTok videos to multilingual street interactions, he reached voters who had long been ignored – immigrants, tenants, gig workers, and young families crushed by Trumponomics. His policy proposals – from rent freezes and social housing to free buses, universal childcare, and a \$30 minimum wage - may sound radical, but resonated deeply in a city increasingly unaffordable to its own people. They reflected lived experience, not ideological abstraction. His empathy – born from proximity to struggle – infused his politics with rare moral clarity.

Yet his journey was far from smooth. His unapologetic Muslim identity, his vocal support for immigrant rights, and his criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza invited fierce backlash. Cuomo accused him of "fueling antisemitism," while Trump labelled him a "communist lunatic." But Mamdani's response was firm and dignified: he neither diluted his principles nor distanced himself from his roots. It reminds America that leadership can still be built on empathy rather than ego, and that politics can still be a moral pursuit, not a marketplace of outrage. No doubt Mamdani will face enormous tests. But for now, his win signals a larger message – reason will always prevail in the end, come what may!

The climate reality we cannot outrun

The absence of a unified climate law in India limits effective action, with the background of it being among the most vulnerable nations facing compound climate extremes such as landslides, floods, and heatwaves



PRIYANKA
CHATURVEDI

Every year, as winter arrives in Delhi, so does the inevitable reality of toxic haze, so does the discussion to prioritise healthy air. After huffing and puffing, literally and figuratively, for a few days, it is work as usual till the next Diwali/farm fire season.

The great Indian apathy to demand better governance continues. However, this is no more a seasonal nuisance but a major public health and policy crisis unfolding. For the crores of residents, breathing has become an act of endurance. The norm of pollution has disillusioned the citizens about the need for immediate action by their chosen representatives. While most cities would shut down at an AQI of over 500, Delhi continues to function as if the choking air were normal, with the Government even hosting fitness events amid it all.

Worse still, the Government's response only further enhances its wilful apathy, as rather than fighting pollution, it chooses to manipulate the data measuring it. The remarkable "triple-engine government" in Delhi has been accused of taking cosmetic measures, such as allegedly spraying water near AQI sensors, rather than tackling pollution at its source.

According to the data submitted to the Supreme Court, on Diwali, only 9 out of 37 sensors were functioning, even as authorities claimed to be monitoring air quality closely. Various examples will tell you that a call for a ban on anything seldom works, rather makes the proposition more interesting. Similar was the case of the firecracker ban, and once that was lifted by the highest court of the land under the label of 'green crackers', welcomed by the Government, the NCR saw the return of the fire-crackers with a vengeance.

Yes, of course, this isn't the only cause but one of the major causes of what makes the capital of the country choke with poisonous air. Then there is the elephant in the room-the stubble burning by farmers. Punjab alone has already recorded over 1,200 farm fires since September.

To add salt to the wound, when India's AQI scale has been capped at 500, international apps have shown readings over 1,000. While this is not new, it remains unaddressed by the Government, and much of the population remains unaware. Around such conditions, many parts of the city will adopt work-from-home policies, yet what about the citizens who cannot afford to work from home, nor afford to buy a purifier like the Chief Minister?

The new-age capitalism has brought along the need to buy clean air for survival.

This is no more a seasonal problem. According



THE UNITED STATES' RENEWED WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PARIS AGREEMENT UNDER TRUMP, THE ROLLBACK OF CLIMATE GRANTS, AND THE RETREAT OF MAJOR CORPORATIONS AND BANKS FROM CLIMATE ALLIANCES REFLECT A DANGEROUS TREND OF WILFUL DENIAL BY THOSE MOST RESPONSIBLE

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to the 2025 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, India now accounts for 26 per cent of global deaths caused by air pollution-over 17 lakh deaths annually-a 38 per cent rise since 2010. The very air that every single citizen of the country breathes is also what is slowly killing them.

Even still, the Environment and Health Ministries continue to deny any direct correlation between air pollution and mortality. This silence should itself be a clarion call for decisive and coordinated action.

Delhi's smog is a symptom of a deeper policy vacuum on pollution. On one hand, cities like Mumbai get away thanks to the sea winds, which also blow away accountability, against unchecked construction and industrial activity. On the other hand, northern cities dominate global pollution rankings in the top 50 of the world's most polluted cities.

This inaction is not India's alone; it mirrors a wider failure of global leadership. Even as India ranks 10th in the Climate Change Performance Index, global leadership continues to falter.

The United States' renewed withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under Trump, the rollback of climate grants, and the retreat of major corporations and banks from climate alliances reflect a dangerous trend of wilful denial by those most responsible. The developed world is not yet seeing the worst consequences of climate change, now endured by the Global South. Addressing this crisis requires not just short-term measures but systemic

reform. That is why, in 2021, I introduced the Climate Change Council Bill-a Private Member's Bill-to establish a comprehensive legal framework to guide India's response to climate change; a framework we currently lack. The absence of a unified climate law in India limits effective action, with the background of it being among the most vulnerable nations facing compound climate extremes such as landslides, floods, and heatwaves. By integrating environmental, ecological, and developmental aspects, the Bill seeks to ensure focused mechanisms for the assessment, adaptation, and mitigation of climate change impacts.

Still, policy cannot succeed without public will. These persisting conditions across various North Indian states will drive the majority of the public health emergencies not only for the present but for future generations as well. Every citizen, regardless of occupation or income, deserves the right to breathe clean air.

We must expand public transport; prioritise walking and cycling through safer streets; enforce vehicle and construction emission standards; and embed air quality goals into urban planning. Clean air must be a collective national guarantee. It is not a woke agenda, as many dismiss it, but an urgent health hazard agenda which needs to be tackled on a war footing. The citizens of India deserve better. When fate comes knocking, it will not distinguish between wealth and geography. By then, no nation will be immune to the consequences of its own-and our collective-inaction.

The Pioneer
SINCE 1865

Meditation: The mind's antidote to modern stress



RAJYOGI BRAHMA
KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

2ND OPINION
THE PIONEER

In the last about 50 years or more, it has been increasingly realised by medical professionals that many ailments are caused by stress or trauma, resulting in more and more deaths.

Isn't it surprising that a few years back, something like stress, about which we were not so serious, has today become a part of our everyday life? Today, there is a flood of literature available on stress-related diseases and their treatment, and it has become almost a fashion nowadays to talk or write on the effects of stress on modern men and women.

Although we all talk about stress, it often isn't clear what stress is really about. Even though WHO, in its well-

known definition of health, has taken into account the social, moral, and spiritual aspects of health, some very important aspects of stress have, up to now, been missed, overlooked, or at least underemphasised by doctors, social scientists, criminologists, administrators, historians, and others.

Many people feel that stress is something that happens to them during an event such as physical injury, emotional heartbreak, or some family feud, etc. Some people say that stress is a feeling experienced by our mind and body in response to an event like a terror attack, rail accident, or plane crash. However, experts believe that while stress does involve events and our responses to them, these are not the most important factors causing it. Our thoughts about the situations in which we find ourselves are more critical compared to other reasons mentioned above.

We need to understand that when something happens to us, we automatically evaluate the situation mentally and decide if it is really threatening to us, how we need to deal with the situation, and what skills we can use. So, if we feel that the demands of the situation outweigh the skills we have, then we treat the situation as stressful. On the other hand, if we feel that our coping skills outweigh the demands of the situation, then we don't see it as stressful. According to psychologists, stress in

small quantities is good and at times necessary because it motivates a person and helps him or her to become more productive. However, an excess of it, or a strong response to it, can be fatal. Hence, the way in which we deal with a stress-provoking event would determine its impact on our health.

The basic idea is to understand ourselves and our reactions towards stressful events, thereby learning to handle them more effectively. One should understand that stress management is not about avoiding or escaping the pressures and turbulence of modern living. No! In the actual sense, it is about learning to appreciate how the body reacts to external pressures and developing skills that enhance the body's adjustment.

The *Gita* states that man can be his own best friend or his own worst enemy. To be my best friend, I must spend time with myself – learning to love and respect myself so I can do the same for others. By watching what goes on in my mind, I can gently guide it back on the right track. If I allow negative or wasteful thoughts, meditation becomes difficult; but if I clear my mind and keep my thoughts positive, it's easier to experience peace. It isn't enough to just read about it – get up and start meditating today!

The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Delhi choking on neglected air

Apropos "Delhi's deadly air: A public health emergency" (Nov. 6), the capital's toxic air stands as a grim reminder of how environmental neglect can slowly suffocate a city's health and spirit. Each winter, Delhi turns into a gas chamber, yet the response remains disappointingly routine – a mix of temporary bans, political blame, and public resignation. The crisis is structural, not seasonal. Vehicular fumes, industrial emissions, and construction dust, coupled with weak enforcement and fragmented governance, have created a calamity that transcends class and geography. What worsens the situation is the erosion of accountability. Governments announce short-term plans; citizens complain but persist with polluting habits, and industries evade scrutiny. China's willingness to share its smog-control experience is instructive – proof that leadership, strict regulation, and civic participation can change the air we breathe. Beijing's example shows that progress follows when political will aligns with scientific planning.

Clean air must not remain a campaign slogan or seasonal privilege; it is a fundamental right defining the quality of life in any modern city. Delhi must commit to transparent, collective, and sustained action before its skyline becomes a permanent haze of indifference.

AVINASHIAPPAN MYILSAMI | TAMIL NADU

A victory beyond American borders

Zohran Mamdani's victory in New York represents far more than an electoral win; it is a triumph for the working class and a reminder that politics can still serve ordinary citizens. His immediate statement – "Let's get back to work today" – reflects commitment to building a city that is affordable and inclusive. At a time when chauvinism and racism dominate American discourse, Mamdani's success offers hope.

America has thrived on the contributions of immigrants, whose labour and creativity have shaped its cities and economy. Yet, this truth is often undermined. The Republicans continue to ignore these sacrifices, resorting instead to divisive rhetoric. Change, however, is constant and New York itself is living proof: a city built on the sweat, capital, and dreams of the masses. Its rewards must belong to everyone, not merely the super-rich.

Seeing a young leader of Indian origin succeed in American politics reinforces the belief that democracy thrives when diverse voices are heard. His victory symbolises justice, equality, and shared prosperity. Zohran Mamdani's victory in New York marks a defining moment for inclusive politics, celebrating working-class strength, immigrant contribution, and the enduring power of diversity in democracy.

K ANANTH RUPESH | ANDHRA PRADESH

Equality in compassionate job rules

Apropos the report, "HC bins petition of adopted son seeking job in KSRTC on compassionate grounds," the headline is misleading. The Karnataka High Court rejected the plea not because the petitioner was adopted, but because he applied five years after his foster father's death. Rules stipulate that an application must be made within a year. Even a biological son's plea would have been dismissed.

However, discrimination between adopted and biological children in compassionate appointments is unjust. If KSRTC's policy excludes adopted children, it is flawed and violates equality. The Court rightly ruled that there can be no distinction between adopted and biological offspring. Denying an adopted child such consideration defeats the purpose of adoption itself.

The Government should reconsider its rule limiting applications to one year from the employee's death. Earlier, minors could apply within a year of attaining majority, which was fairer. Compassionate appointments may not erase grief, but they can ease hardship. Restoring the earlier rule would be a humane gesture-better than distributing unsustainable freebies. Political parties must pledge to remove such inequities and uphold compassion in governance.

KV SEETHARAMAIAH | BENGALURU

INDIA'S YOUTH SUFFOCATING UNDER UNKEPT PROMISES AND INEQUALITY

The current regime in India has plunged the nation into a spiral of economic distress and social despair, with every section of society hit from all sides over the past decade. Students, youth, farmers, labourers, workers, shopkeepers, employees, and traders are struggling, and not a single section appears content with this Government amid rising prices, shrinking opportunities, and deepening inequality.

Inflation has skyrocketed, the rupee has lost its sheen, and the gulf between the rich and the poor has widened dangerously, making life increasingly difficult for the poor and middle-class families.

Unemployment has become a matter of grave concern. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy

(CMIE), India's unemployment rate climbed to 7.5 per cent in October 2025-the highest in the past six months.

Lakhs have lost jobs across sectors, including construction, IT, and banking.

More than 90 lakh people are jobless in the construction industry alone, while 25 lakh salaried positions have vanished. Such frightening figures have become routine, yet the Government seems unmoved.

It appears that those in power remain in constant election mode, crafting slogans instead of solutions. The time has come for citizens to question why leaders continue to campaign even as the nation gasps under the weight of unemployment and inequality

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Please send your letter to the info@dailypioneer.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

Hapless citizens, helpless Governments

In recent months, a series of fatal incidents across Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma, and Sri Lanka has exposed the fragility of their transportation systems. Overcrowded buses tumbling off narrow mountain roads, trains derailing due to outdated tracks, and air mishaps blamed on technical negligence have become grimly routine

FIRST
Column



PRASHANT TEWARI

Transportation is the lifeline of any nation, facilitating economic growth, social interaction, and national integration. From bustling highways to vital railway networks and expanding aviation routes, the efficiency and safety of transport systems determine a country's progress and global competitiveness. However, across much of Southeast Asia, this lifeline is fraying.

The region has witnessed an alarming rise in man-made transportation accidents on roads, rails, and in the air and water, underscoring deep-rooted systemic failures.

Despite repeated warnings from experts and recurring tragedies, safety remains a neglected priority. The real crisis lies not merely in poor infrastructure, but in governance deficits, corruption, and a culture of complacency that have made such disasters almost predictable.

Current Situation

India, with one of the world's largest road networks, records the highest number of road fatalities globally: a tragic distinction that reflects the dire state of safety enforcement. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, poorly maintained public buses and lax driving standards contribute to frequent road tragedies. In Nepal, a combination of treacherous terrain and vehicle overloading continues to claim lives. Even air safety, which demands the highest precision, has been compromised by negligence and inadequate oversight.

What ties these incidents together is not just infrastructural decay but institutional corruption.

Funds earmarked for road repairs, rail modernisation, and aviation safety audits are too often siphoned off by corrupt officials or misused due to poor planning. Substandard materials are used in construction projects, safety inspections are perfunctory or skipped altogether, and regulations exist more on paper than in practice.

At the state level, the rot runs deep. Many regional governments lack the political will or administrative capacity to enforce safety standards. The issuance of driving licences, for instance, is notoriously casual. In several countries, licences can be



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obtained without proper training or testing, sometimes through bribery or political influence. This results in untrained, reckless drivers operating vehicles on already hazardous roads—a recipe for tragedy.

Moreover, there is little to no culture of periodic vehicle inspection. Buses, trucks, and private vehicles continue to ply despite being mechanically unfit, emitting toxic fumes and posing constant danger to commuters. Corrupt local officials often overlook such violations in exchange for small bribes, perpetuating a cycle where accountability is absent and public safety is compromised.

The consequences of such governance

failures are devastating. Every day, citizens across the region risk their lives merely by commuting.

Road fatalities rob families of their breadwinners; rail and air disasters inflict collective trauma that scars entire communities. The loss is not merely statistical but deeply human: children orphaned, parents grieving, families shattered by entirely preventable tragedies.

The economic cost is equally severe. Repeated accidents deter investment, disrupt trade, and drain public resources on rescue operations and compensation. Yet, beyond economics, the larger tragedy lies in the erosion of public trust.

When citizens realise that their lives are endangered not by fate but by the corruption and indifference of those meant to protect them, faith in institutions collapses.

Call to Action

Governments across Southeast Asia must recognise that transportation safety is not a luxury; it is a fundamental right of every citizen. The first step towards reform lies in tackling corruption head-on.

Transparency in infrastructure spending must be made non-negotiable. Every rupee or taka allocated for road safety, railway upgrades, or aviation oversight must be accounted for and subject to public scrutiny.

Second, state governments must institutionalise rigorous and periodic inspections of vehicles, tracks, and aircraft. Independent safety commissions—insulated from political influence—should be empowered to enforce compliance and penalise violators.

Third, the process of issuing driving licences must be overhauled. Stringent testing standards, computerised assessments, and continuous driver education should replace the current system that too often rewards bribery and negligence. Road safety education, starting from schools, can help cultivate a culture of responsibility and awareness that endures over generations.

Finally, civil society and the media must play a proactive role in demanding accountability. Each preventable death on the road or in the air must be treated not as an isolated incident, but as evidence of systemic failure that demands redress.

Transportation should connect lives, not end them. The tragic frequency of man-made transportation disasters in Southeast Asia is a stark reminder that progress without integrity is hollow. Unless corruption is rooted out, regulations are enforced, and human life is valued above political expediency, the region will continue to pay a heavy price in blood and broken trust.

Governance, after all, is not measured by how quickly roads are built or airports inaugurated, but by how safely and honestly citizens are allowed to travel upon them.

Human life, and indeed all living life, must be treated as sacred by those in power. There has to be a limit to the suffering a society can endure before its conscience revolts. Yet, indifference has become our silent companion; we mourn briefly for the dead and then move on, believing tragedy belongs to someone else.

But fate has a cruel way of closing distances: it is someone else's loss today, it could be your loved one tomorrow. Those who sit in positions of authority must remember that no shield of privilege can protect them forever from the pain they choose to ignore.

When a life is lost to negligence, it is not just an accident; it is a moral failure of the entire system, a wound that bleeds into the collective soul of a nation.

Rethinking modern technology: When progress defies nature and dharma



ATUL SEHGAL

The technologies of modern times are full of gleam and glitter. They are declared to be the products of painstaking and pathbreaking research. They are touted to be the result of great discoveries of the scientific principles operating in the vast universe and revolutionary inventions based thereon. They are hailed as the harbingers of great beneficial changes in the lives of billions of humans inhabiting this planet Earth.

They are supposedly stated to be instruments of further economic development and growth of the 193 nations holding a population of 8 billion human beings in the world. But what if I were to tell you that most of the so-called modern technologies are crude, cruel, and inferior? What if I were to call them technologies based on incomplete or even, in some cases, incorrect understanding of material nature? What if we were told that almost all modern technologies in various domains of human endeavour are environment-polluting and nature-unfriendly? Furthermore, how will you take the insinuation that most of the above technologies are also devoid of human values?

They are, unfortunately.

We have to go to the fundamentals of material nature. We have to go to the original, time-less knowledge base provided in the Vedic scriptures by the omniscient, divine creator of the universe. All humans are His creation, and He handed down to the earliest humans at the dawn of creation, more than 1.96 billion years ago, all knowledge in coded and cryptic form. That fundamental knowledge is embodied in the universal, timeless, and cosmic scriptures called the Vedas.

It stands to reason that the master and creator of the universe knows best how humans created by Him should live and behave—what type of technologies they should develop and use for preserving peace, stability, and health. He provided to humans a set of coded principles or values called Dharma for assiduous adherence by humans. Dharma is the code of righteous living and includes, in its broad ambit, pure, unsullied, true knowledge which even covers all sciences and technologies. Let us see how today's technologies are harsh on all the primordial elements of Mother



Nature called out in Vedic scientific literature—air, earth, fire, water, and ether.

Today's surface transport vehicles are air-polluting and earth (soil)-polluting. These include automobiles and aeroplanes. Many parts and components of these vehicles, including electric batteries, are bio non-degradable after use. All modes of electricity generation—coal or diesel-based thermal, hydropower, nuclear power, and even solar and wind power—are not without well-known deleterious effects on the environment. Solar panels are largely bio non-degradable after a lifespan run of 25 years. Wind power turbines pose hazards to birds.

Chemical process industries are heavily air-polluting. Petroleum and petrochemical industries are both earth-polluting and air-polluting. Oil-digging and extraction activities create big holes below the earth which, apart from upsetting the proportion of natural substances underground, disturb the disposition of the earth's tectonic plates.

The baneful effects of the release of factory pollutants, even after treatment by chemicals, into rivers and seas contaminate natural water bodies, thus adversely affecting aquatic flora and fauna.

Continuous use of chemical fertilisers and genetically modified seeds is leading to erosion of soil fertility and undermining the intrinsic, natural quality and flavour of cereals, fruits, and vegetables.

Ether, the other prime element of Mother Nature, is being heavily defiled by electromagnetic radiation in the form of microwaves emanating from mobile telephony towers and other wireless communication equipment. This important aspect needs more elaboration. The microwaves are not low-frequency waves; they have a high frequency, falling between radio waves and infrared on the electromagnetic spectrum. They are of a frequency higher

than radio waves but lower compared to visible light. Microwaves have frequencies from approximately 300 MHz to 300 GHz and are used for applications like radar, cell phones, and cooking.

The content of microwaves in natural background radiation is being increased by extensive generation of microwave energy for these applications. This is disturbing the natural proportion of microwaves in the ethereal space and hence polluting it.

And global warming is eloquently exhibiting that our fancied technologies are vitiating the subtle primeval element of fire (Agni) of Mother Nature. The most recent technological wonders are computer hardware, computer software, and artificial intelligence.

These are primarily intended for increasing gross economic output or replacement of humans by machines or computing algorithms. This is going to exploit more and more of natural materials, including rare earth metals, and leave post-usage residual substances that are only partially recyclable, and their recycling processes are also environment-degrading.

We now come to human values that are supposed to go with technologies and their usage. A Vedic derivative text—Maha Upanishad—carries the message that the world is one family and all humans are connected through fraternal bonds, being children of the one creator.

This divine message indirectly conveys that humans, cutting across nations and continents, should treat other humans as members of one global family and design institutions, systems, and even technologies and technology-based processes accordingly.

Further, moderation (non-greed), compassion, honesty, and truthfulness are values that must be adhered to in both development and usage of technological implements. They should be conducive to equitable wealth creation and distribution. Simply stated, our technologies should not only be environment-friendly but also aligned with eternally relevant, divine human values. Our scientists, engineers, and, most of all, political leaders should become alive to the above stark truths and take corrective action before it is too late.

Let us not wait to face the powerful, retributive fury of Mother Nature, some of the milder symptoms of which are already being seen in the form of climate change, flooding of cities, cracking of roads, melting of snow peaks, violent landslides, and crumbling hillsides.

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SURYA SARATHI RAY

The Rajasthan government has chalked out a long-term plan to transform the state from a resource-driven economy to a \$4.3 trillion innovation-led powerhouse by 2047. According to the recently unveiled Developed Rajasthan @2047 vision document, the state, currently the seventh-largest economy with a Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of approximately \$197 billion, aims to increase the GSDP to \$350 billion by 2028-29 and, by 2047, reach an ambitious \$4.3 trillion.

The vision document has identified five sectors — manufacturing, renewable energy, mining, tourism, and services — to drive the economy forward. Aware that achieving the target will not be easy and will require a mix of industrial diversification, private investment, technology adoption, and policy reforms, the state has prioritised plans to create jobs, empower small businesses, and modernise industries. It proposes to turn the state into one of India's most investment-friendly destinations.

The vision document emphasises that "economic progress must reach people," signifying that growth would not be limited to big cities — rural clusters, small towns, and border districts will also become engines of opportunity. Rajasthan's economic blueprint puts technology and sustainability at its core. The government aims to make the state a hub for digital innovation and green manufacturing. From solar energy to hydrogen projects, renewable power will be the backbone of Rajasthan's future economy.

Rajasthan is already India's largest producer of cement, zinc, marble, and solar power. It now wants to move beyond raw production to value-added industries. MSMEs remain central to the plan and will be strengthened with easier financing, skill support, and e-market access. Technology and sustainability will be at the core of the transition.

In its efforts to ensure the ease of doing business, the state government is keen on simplifying clearances, digitising compliance, and reducing red tape.

The vision document predicts that by 2047, Rajasthan's young workforce will be among the most skilled in India. Training centres and industry-linked courses will prepare young people for modern sectors, including robotics, data analytics, clean technology, and digital marketing. Rajasthan is quietly scripting one of India's most remarkable green transformations. Under the

leadership of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, the state is positioning itself as the country's renewable energy capital — where solar fields stretch across the horizon and windmills turn the desert breeze into power. Special mention is deserved for the state's clean energy front.

With more than 300 days of sunshine each year and vast stretches of land ideal for clean energy projects, Rajasthan has a natural advantage. A shift is taking place — from being a producer of energy to building a green economy, where factories, farms, and cities all run on sustainable power. Guided by the Viksit Rajasthan @2047 roadmap, the Chief Minister aims to make Rajasthan a hub for solar, wind, and green hydrogen.

The plan focuses on expanding renewable energy capacity, encouraging private investment, and linking clean power to job creation and industrial development. From the blazing sun of the Thar to the corridors of Jaipur, Rajasthan's renewable revolution is gathering pace — turning sunlight into strength and vision into reality.

While solar parks are already lighting up homes across Bikaner, Jaisalmer, and Barmer, wind projects are also being scaled up in western districts, with hybrid systems combining both sources to ensure round-the-clock supply. By 2047, more than 70 per cent of the state's electricity is expected to come from renewables. The Bhajan Lal Sharma government is also steering Rajasthan towards the next frontier — green hydrogen.

With pilot projects underway in Jodhpur and Barmer, the state plans to produce clean hydrogen fuel using renewable electricity. Partnerships with private companies and global investors are in motion, positioning Rajasthan as a potential exporter of green fuels in the coming decade. By 2047, Rajasthan envisions itself not just as an energy supplier but as a model of sustainable living. The vision is to combine ecological balance with economic expansion — ensuring that development never comes at the cost of nature. Another defining feature of Sharma's plan is its emphasis on inclusivity.

The renewable energy push is reaching villages, where locals are being trained to manage small solar parks and microgrids. Women's cooperatives are adopting solar-powered equipment for irrigation and food processing. By 2047, Rajasthan aims to be not only a supplier of clean energy but also a model for how development and ecology can coexist. Under Bhajan Lal Sharma's leadership, the desert state is showing that sustainability is not a slogan — it is a strategy for growth.

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FROM THE

WORLD

PAKISTAN

TTP commander killed in Khyber

A commander belonging to the banned terror outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was killed on Thursday in a joint operation with the Counter Terrorism Department in the restive Khyber Pakhthunkhwa province of Pakistan on Thursday, police said. The intelligence-based operation in the Amberi Kalla area of Karak, in southern Khyber Pakhthunkhwa, turned into a fierce gun battle that lasted for nearly four hours leading to the death of Hakeem Nisar, the TTP commander. During the exchange of fire, three police personnel sustained injuries and were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Security officials described Hakeem Nisar as a high-value target involved in multiple acts of terrorism, including attacks on security forces and targeted killings in the region.

NEPAL

Border security stepped up

Nepal has stepped up security along its border with India in the wake of Assembly elections in Bihar, officials said on Thursday. Authorities from both countries increased surveillance at the Jatahi border checkpoint, which was closed during the day as part of intensified security, they said. The closure of the border and tightened security were aimed at checking any untoward incidents during the election, they added. Security personnel from Nepal and India have been engaged in patrolling the area. According to the Deputy Superintendent of Police of Dhanusha, Ganesh Bahadur Bam, Nepal Police personnel collaborated with India's SSB to reinforce border checks. The Indo-Nepal border in Dhanusha is being closely monitored.

Eight planes shot down during India-Pakistan conflict: Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New York

Known to make inconsistent comments, US President Donald Trump now claims that eight planes were shot down during the war between India and Pakistan in May, once again without specifying who they belonged to.

Addressing the America Business Forum in Miami, Florida, on Wednesday, President Trump, updated the number of planes downed between the two countries to eight from seven. Until now, the US President has been maintaining that seven planes were shot down during the conflict.

"Pakistan and India. I was in the midst of a trade deal with both of them, and then. I heard they were going to war. Seven planes were shot down, and the eighth was really badly wounded. Eight planes were shot down essentially," Trump said.

Trump also reiterated that India and Pakistan "made peace" after he threatened the two nuclear-armed neighbours with snapping trade deals if they continued their military conflict, a claim he has repeated several times since then.

"I said, this is war. 'I'm not going to make any trade deals with you guys unless you agree to peace'. The two nations said, 'No way. This has nothing to do.' I said, 'It has everything to do. You are nuclear powers. I'm not



President Donald Trump on stage after speaking at the America Business Forum

trading with you. We're not making any deals with you if you're at war with each other," Trump claimed.

"A day later, I get a call saying, 'We made peace'. They stopped. I said, 'Thank you. Let's do trade'. Isn't that great? Tariffs did that... Without tariffs, that would have never happened," Trump said amid applause.

He said that in eight months, he ended eight wars, including Kosovo and Serbia, and Congo and Rwanda, that were going on for a long time. Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire" after a

"long night" of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim over 60 times that he "helped settle" the tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

India has consistently denied any third-party intervention. India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

In his remarks in Miami, Trump went on to add that

he helped solve the conflict between Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and Cambodia and Thailand.

"All of them were in war... Some of the wars were 32 years old. One was 38 years old. I got some of these settled in an hour. No help from the United Nations at all," Trump said.

He added that around the world, America is making peace through strength "because they know they're not going to mess around with us. Nobody's going to mess around with us".

"All great economic deals, great for everybody," the US president said.

Pakistan, Afghanistan to resume talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Islamabad

Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban were set to resume peace talks in Istanbul on Thursday, aiming to tackle the issue of cross-border terrorism and avoid further escalation between the two sides.

Clashes broke out between the border troops on October 11, resulting in casualties on both sides. Pakistan claimed that at least 206 Afghan Taliban and 110 Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan operatives were killed, while Pakistan suffered the loss of 23 soldiers.

A ceasefire was agreed between the two sides on

October 15, which had been extended during the two rounds of talks held on October 19 in Doha and October 25 in Istanbul.

The temporary truce is still holding, but mutual acrimony is evident on social media and in the statements of officials from both sides.

The Istanbul talks were heading towards failure, but the situation was saved by Turkiye, and another round was agreed for which officials of the two countries have reached Istanbul.

For the third round, being facilitated jointly by Turkiye and Qatar, Pakistan's delegation is being led by Lt Gen Asim Malik, director general

of the Inter-Services Intelligence and national security advisor, and includes senior officials from the military, intelligence agencies, and the Foreign Office.

The Afghan Taliban's delegation includes General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) chief Abdul Haq Waseq, Deputy Interior Minister Rehmatullah Najib, Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen, Anas Haqqani, Qahar Balkhi, Zakir Jalali and Afghanistan's chargé d'affaires in Ankara. The talks are expected to continue for two days.

A joint statement was issued by the Turkish foreign ministry, following the last round of talks, stating that

"all parties have agreed on continuation of ceasefire" and "to put in place a monitoring and verification mechanism that will ensure maintenance of peace and impose a penalty on the violating party".

It also stated that "the principals" from both sides would reconvene in Istanbul on November 6 to discuss implementation.

Early this week, Pakistani military spokesman Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry accused Kabul of harbouring the TTP fighters, saying that stopping attacks from Afghan soil was a demand of Pakistan on which there would be no compromise.

Denmark eyes new law to protect citizens from AI deepfakes

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Copenhagen

In 2021, Danish video game live-streamer Marie Watson received an image of herself from an unknown Instagram account. She instantly recognised the holiday snap from her Instagram account, but something was different: Her clothing had been digitally removed to make her appear naked. It was a deepfake.

"It overwhelmed me so much," Watson recalled. "I just started bursting out in tears, because suddenly, I was there naked."

In the four years since her experience, deepfakes — highly realistic artificial intelligence-generated images, videos or audio of real people or events — have become not only easier to make worldwide but also look or sound exponentially more realistic. That's thanks to technological advances and the proliferation of generative AI tools, including video generation tools from OpenAI and Google.

These tools give millions of users the ability to easily spit out content, including for nefarious purposes that range from depicting celebrities Taylor Swift and Katy Perry to disrupting elections and humiliating teens and women. In response, Denmark is seeking to protect ordinary Danes, as well as performers and artists who might have their appearance or voice imitated and shared without their permission.

A bill that's expected to pass early next year would change copyright law by imposing a ban on the sharing of deepfakes to protect citizens' personal characteristics — such as their appearance or voice — from being imitated and shared online without their consent.

If enacted, Danish citizens would get the copyright over their own likeness. In theory, they then would be able to demand that online platforms take down content shared without their permission.

Cameroon's president Paul Biya sworn in again

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Yaounde (Cameroon)

Cameroon's long-time leader Paul Biya was sworn in on Thursday for a new seven-year term following his victory in last month's presidential election, which his opposition rival has described as "a constitutional coup." Speaking to Parliament, the world's oldest president promised to stay faithful to the confidence of the Cameroonian people and vowed to work for a "united, stable and prosperous" country.

The 92-year-old incumbent, who is Africa's second-longest serving leader, took the oath of office during a session of parliament in what residents describe as the heavily militarised and partially deserted capital, Yaounde.

Priscilla Ayimboh, a 40-year-old seamstress in Yaounde, doesn't see a new term for Biya as likely to change anything.

"I'm tired of Biya's rule and I no longer care whatever he does. It's a pity. I wonder what will become of Cameroon in the next seven

53.66 per cent of the vote, ahead of his former ally-turned-challenger Issa Tchiroma Bakary, who scored 35.19 per cent.

There were protests in several parts of Cameroon days after the October 19 vote, followed by a three-day lockdown this week after Tchiroma claimed victory and alleged vote tampering. The government has confirmed that at least five people were killed during the protests, although the opposition and civil society groups claim the figures are far higher.

Tchiroma insists Biya was awarded a "fraudulent" victory in the election.

"The will of the Cameroonian people was trampled that day, our sovereignty stolen in broad daylight," Tchiroma wrote on Wednesday night. "This is not democracy, it is electoral theft, a constitutional coup as blatant as it is shameful."

Biya came to power in 1982 following the resignation of Cameroon's first president and has ruled since following a 2008 constitutional amendment that abolished term



years: there are no roads, water, and jobs," she said.

Munjah Vitalis Fagha, a senior politics lecturer at Cameroon's University of Buea, told The Associated Press that Biya's inauguration was "taking place in a tense yet controlled political atmosphere, marked by deep divisions between the ruling elite and a growingly disillusioned populace."

Fagha added, "The ceremony occurs amid calls for political renewal, ongoing security challenges in the Anglophone regions, and widespread concerns over governance and succession."

Cameroon's top court on October 27 declared Biya the winner of the election, with

limits. His health has been a topic of speculation as he spends most of his time in Europe, leaving governance to key party officials and family members. He has led Cameroon longer than most of its citizens have been alive — over 70 per cent of the country's almost 30 million population is below the age of 35. If he serves his entire term, Biya will leave office nearly 100-years old.

The results of his nearly half-century in power have been mixed; armed insurgencies in both the north and west of the country, along with a stagnant economy, have left many young people disillusioned with the leader.

Typhoon Kalmaegi moves toward Vietnam

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Nha Trang (Vietnam)

Typhoon Kalmaegi headed toward Vietnam, with heavy rains battering the coast and strong winds uprooting trees ahead of expected landfall late on Thursday, forecasters said. Earlier, the typhoon left more than 100 people dead and dozens missing in the Philippines.

An unusually strong storm for the region in November, it was packing sustained wins of about 183 kph with gusts reaching up to 220 kph over the South China Sea as it approached Vietnam, said forecasters. It was likely to make landfall between Quang Ngai and Gia Lai provinces in central Vietnam, they said. Vietnam's central provinces are already reeling from floods due to record-breaking rains. Kalmaegi is forecast to dump more than 600 millimetres of rain in some areas.



Vehicles are stacked on top of each other due to flooding caused by Typhoon Kalmaegi in Liloan on Thursday

Bracing for Kalmaegi

In coastal cities like Danang, waves up to 3 metres high battered the coast and strong winds uprooted trees in Dak Lak province. Many homes in Quy Nhon, also a coastal city, were left without power for hours.

The country's financial hub, Ho Chi Minh City, faces a heightened risk of severe

floods. High tides were also expected on the Saigon River, and authorities warned up to 100 millimetres of expected rainfall could inundate low-lying areas.

Across the central Philippines, Kalmaegi killed at least 114 people and left 127 missing in what was the deadliest natural disaster to hit the country this year.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr declared a state of emergency on Thursday. After sowing death and destruction in the Philippines, especially in the hard-hit central province of Cebu, the tropical cyclone blew out of the archipelago on Wednesday into the South China Sea.

In Cebu's town of Liloan, Krizza Espira went to the mortuary on Thursday, where the bodies of her husband and three children, killed when their roof collapsed, were held ahead of a wake. She said four other of her family members — including her mother and aunt — remain missing. "I hope someone can help speed up the search," she said.

The typhoon displaced more than 560,000 villagers in the Philippines, including nearly 450,000 who were evacuated to emergency shelters, the Office of Civil Defense said.

Ukraine claims it has hit major Russian oil refinery with drones

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Kyiv

Ukrainian drones struck a major oil refinery in Russia's Volgograd region for the second time in almost three months, Ukraine's general staff said on Thursday. Russian officials did not confirm the attack, although the local governor said drones started a fire at an unspecified industrial facility in the region.

Ukraine's general staff said in a statement that the attack took place the previous day. The refinery is the largest producer of fuel and lubricants in Russia's Southern Federal District, processing more than 15 million tons of crude annually — about 5.6 per cent of the country's total refining capacity, according to Ukrainian officials.

Russia and Ukraine have traded almost daily assaults on each other's energy infrastructure as US-led diplomatic efforts to stop the nearly four-year war make no impact on the battlefield.

Ukraine's long-range drone strikes on Russian refineries aim to deprive Moscow of the oil export revenue it needs to pursue its full-scale invasion. Russia wants to cripple the Ukrainian power grid, seeking to deny civilians access to heat, light and running water in what Kyiv officials say is an attempt to "weaponise winter."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said foreign countries are helping Kyiv in its efforts to keep the power grid operating amid Russia's onslaught.

"Practically every day, our power engineers, repair brigades, and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine are carrying out restorations on-site after attacks: hits keep occurring across various points, especially in our communities, and especially near the Russian border and close to the front," Zelenskyy said late Wednesday. Ukraine, meanwhile, has attempted to strike targets on Russian soil with domestically developed long-range drones.

Ukrainian forces also struck three fuel lubricants facilities in the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula and a storage and assembly base for Russia's Shahed drones in an occupied area of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the general staff statement said.

Bangladesh artists perform in Karachi after 18 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Karachi

Bangladeshi artists returned to Pakistan after 18 years with their presence at the World Culture Festival being held, marking a renewed chapter in cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Bangladeshi artists, including a few Hindu performers, are participating at the Karachi Arts Council event, with one of them Shireen Jawad performing on Wednesday night.

Founder of Bangladesh Art Week, Neharika Mumtaz, who is leading the Bangladesh delegation here, said the invitation from the Arts Council to take part in the festival was a welcome opportunity. The opportunity for Bangladeshi artists in Pakistan after nearly 18 years.



Pope Leo meets Palestinian President Abbas

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Vatican City

Pope Leo XIV met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for the first time on Thursday, and the two men discussed the urgent need to provide assistance to civilians in Gaza and to pursue a two-State solution to end the conflict in the region. The meeting, which lasted about an hour and was described as "cordial" in a brief Vatican statement, comes nearly a month after the US-brokered ceasefire agreement came into effect in the Gaza Strip.

"During the cordial talks, it was recognised that there is an urgent need to provide assistance to the civilian population in Gaza," the Holy See said. Abbas was visiting the Vatican to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the "Comprehensive Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Palestine."



Pakistan minister visits office of Hafiz Saeed's banned JuD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Lahore

A Pakistani minister and close aide to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday visited the office of the Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML), a political face of Hafiz Saeed's banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD), in Punjab and met its leaders.

Minister of State for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhry visited the PMML House, Faisalabad, some 130 km from Lahore, where he was received by PMML leaders. His visit is seen as an "official patronage" of the Shehbaz regime to Saeed's political outfit. Saeed, the Mumbai attack mastermind, has been in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail since 2019 after he was convicted in multiple terror financing cases. In a statement, the PMML said that during the visit, Chaudhry held a detailed meeting with the party leadership.

US airports among 40 targeted by shutdown-related flight cuts

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Washington

Airports in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago along with hubs across the US are among the 40 that will see flights cut starting Friday due to the Government shutdown, according to a list distributed to the airlines and obtained by *The Associated Press*.

The Federal Aviation Administration announced Wednesday that it would reduce air traffic by 10 per cent across 40 "high-volume" markets to maintain travel safety as air traffic controllers exhibit signs of strain during the ongoing Government shutdown.

The airports impacted cover the busiest across the US — including Atlanta, Denver, Dallas, Orlando, Miami, and San Francisco. In some of the biggest cities — such as New York, Houston and Chicago — multiple airports will be affected.

The FAA is imposing the flight reductions to relieve pressure on air traffic controllers who are working without pay during the Government shutdown and have been increasingly calling off work. Controllers already have missed one paycheck and are scheduled to again receive nothing next week as the shutdown drags on and the financial pressure on them mounts.

The FAA has already been delaying flights at times when airports or its other facilities are short on controllers.



Airlines said they would try to minimize the impact on travellers. United Airlines said it would focus the cuts on smaller regional routes that use smaller planes like 737s.

Passengers should start to be notified about cancellations Thursday. The AAA recommended that travelers download their airline's app and turn on notifications. United Airlines and Delta Air Lines both said they will offer refunds to passengers who opt not to fly — even if they purchased tickets that aren't normally refundable.

Experts predict hundreds if not thousands of flights could be canceled. The cuts could represent as many as 1,800 flights and upwards of 268,000 seats combined, according to an estimate by aviation analytics firm Cirium. "I'm not aware in my 35-year history in the aviation market where we've had a

situation where we're taking these kinds of measures," Bedford said Wednesday. "We're in new territory in terms of Government shutdowns."

Air traffic controllers have been working unpaid since the shutdown began Oct. 1. Most work mandatory overtime six days a week, leaving little time for side jobs to help cover bills and other expenses unless they call out.

Mounting staffing pressures are forcing the agency to act, Bedford said.

"We can't ignore it," he said, adding that even if the shutdown ends before Friday, the FAA wouldn't automatically resume normal operations until staffing improves and stabilises. Bedford and Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Wednesday that they would meet with airline executives to figure out how to safely implement

the reductions. Major airlines, aviation unions and the broader travel industry have been urging Congress to end the shutdown, which on Wednesday became the longest on record.

The shutdown is putting unnecessary strain on the system and "forcing difficult operational decisions that disrupt travel and damage confidence in the US air travel experience," said US Travel Association President and CEO Geoff Freeman in a statement.

Duffy warned on Tuesday that there could be chaos in the skies if the shutdown drags on long enough for air traffic controllers to miss their second full paycheck next week. Duffy said some controllers can get by missing one paycheck, but not two or more. And he has said some controllers are even struggling to pay for transportation to work.

Indian-Americans hail new era in US politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New York

Members of the Indian-American diaspora have hailed the victory of New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, describing his win as historic and a sign that immigrant stories are now shaping the narrative in the US.

"Last night felt like the dawn of a new era. With Zohran Mamdani's historic win, in the same moment New York welcomes its first Indian-origin mayor, we are witnessing a shift in how this city understands identity, belonging, and power," Founder and CEO of NYC-based educational and cultural organisation The Culture Tree Anu Sehgal told PTI on Wednesday.

She said Mamdani's victory speech reflected a pro-immigrant conviction that New York is built by those who arrive, strive, and rise. "It was filled with cultural Easter eggs only our community would recognise... From quoting Nehru to closing to the beat of Dhoom," Sehgal said.

Acknowledging that challenges lie ahead, Sehgal said what is undeniable is that "South Asian and immigrant stories are no longer just part of the narrative, they are shaping it".

South Asian community leader and former Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County, Dilip Chauhan, congratulated Mamdani and said he was delighted to see a fellow South Asian American devoted to

public service and committed to his vision for the city. Chauhan, an early supporter of Mamdani, said the mayor-elect's victory reflected people's trust in his leadership.

"He inspires hope for a brighter future and stands as a role model for every immigrant. Wishing him all the best in continuing to serve and uplift our communities," Chauhan said.

Indian American Impact Fund, a community organisation, said the results of Tuesday's election "proved that whether it's city council, mayor, or statewide office, South Asian Americans are part of the political future of this country".

It said that 19 of its endorsed candidates across the US won elections, including Virginia's first-ever South Asian woman elected to statewide office, Lt Governor-elect Ghazala Hashmi, and New York's first South Asian mayor Zohran Mamdani. Other notable wins included the re-election of Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval and the election of Joe Khan as District Attorney of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Chintan Patel, Executive Director of the Indian American Impact Fund, congratulated all endorsed candidates who won and lauded those who ran for office.

"We can only ensure positive change happens by building community and being at the table where decisions are made," Patel said.

Trump says he will not attend G20 Summit in South Africa



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ New York

US President Donald Trump has said he will not attend the G20 Summit to be held in South Africa later this month, questioning the country's membership in the grouping of major economies.

South Africa, which assumed the year-long G20 Presidency on December 1, 2024, will host the Summit in Johannesburg from November 22 to 23, the first time the meeting of G20 leaders will be held on African soil.

"I am not going. We have a G20 meeting in South Africa. South Africa shouldn't even be in the Gs anymore because what's happened there is bad. I'm not going. I told them I'm not going. I'm not going to represent our country there. It shouldn't be there," Trump said while addressing the America Business Forum Miami in Florida on Wednesday.

The US will take over the G20 Presidency from South Africa on December 1, 2025, and will chair the grouping until November 30, 2026.

British Army chief meets Pakistani counterpart



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Islamabad

British Army chief Gen Charles Roland Vincent Walker on Thursday met his Pakistani counterpart Asim Munir and the two officers discussed ways to boost bilateral defence cooperation.

During the meeting at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, matters of mutual interest, regional security and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed, according to a statement by the Pakistan Army. The two sides also reiterated the need for continued collaboration to ensure peace and stability in the region.

General Walker appreciated the Pakistan Army's achievements and sacrifices in the fight against terrorism

and its efforts for regional peace and stability.

Earlier, upon arrival at GHQ, General Walker laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. He was presented with a guard of honour. The military officials of the two countries regularly interact with each other. Munir last met General Walker during his five-day official visit to the UK in February, where he delivered a keynote address at the annual 7th Regional Stabilisation Conference at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst.

In May 2024, then-CGS General Sir Patrick Sanders paid a visit to Pakistan, where he met Munir, with General Walker present as well as the CGS-designate. Munir and then-CGS General Sanders also met in May 2023 as the latter visited Rawalpindi.

Attackers board ship after firing grenades

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Dubai

Attackers firing machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades boarded a ship, en route to South Africa from India, off the coast of Somalia on Thursday, officials said, likely the latest assault by resurgent Somali pirates operating in the region.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre issued an alert over the attack, warning ships in the area. The private security firm Ambrey also said that an attack was underway, saying it targeted a Malta-flagged tanker heading from Sikka, India, to Durban, South Africa.

Ambrey added that it appeared to be an assault by Somali pirates, who have been reported as operating in the area in recent days and who seized an Iranian fishing boat to use as a base of operations. Iran has not acknowledged the fishing boat's seizure, called the Issamohamadi. Details of the attacked vessel correspond to the Hellas Aphrodite, which changed its track and slowed down at the time of the attack. The ship's owners and managers could not immediately be reached for comment.

Another maritime security firm, the Diaploous Group, said the attacked tanker had a crew of 24 mariners, all of whom reportedly locked themselves into the ship's citadel for safety during the attack. The vessel did not have an armed security team aboard it, the firm added. The European Union's Operation Atalanta,

a counter-piracy mission around the Horn of Africa, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. That EU force has responded to other recent pirate attacks in the area and had issued a recent alert to shippers that a pirate group was operating off Somalia and assaults were "almost certain" to happen.

Thursday's attack comes after another vessel, the Cayman Islands-flagged Stolt Sagaland, found itself targeted in a suspected pirate attack that included both its armed security force and the attackers shooting at each other, the EU force said. Piracy off the Somali coast peaked in 2011, when 237 attacks were reported. Somali piracy in the region in 2011 cost the world's economy some \$7 billion, with \$160 million paid out in ransoms, according to the Oceans Beyond Piracy monitoring group.

The threat was diminished by increased international naval patrols, a strengthening central government in Somalia, and other efforts. However, Somali pirate attacks have resumed at a greater pace over the last year, in part due to the insecurity caused by Yemen's Houthi rebels launching attacks in the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

In 2024, there were seven reported incidents off Somalia, according to the International Maritime Bureau. So far this year, multiple fishing boats have been seized by Somali pirates.

Israel identifies latest hostage remains as student

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Jerusalem

Israeli authorities confirmed on Thursday that the remains of a hostage returned the previous day from Gaza are of a Tanzanian agricultural student in Israel who was killed on October 7, 2023, in the Hamas-led attack that started the war.

The development was the latest step forward under the US-brokered ceasefire. The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the remains were identified as those of Joshua Loitub Mollel and that his family has been notified. Mollel, 21, had arrived at

kibbutz Nahal Oz only 19 days before the attack, after finishing agricultural college back home and looking to gain experience in Israel he could apply in Tanzania. He is survived by two parents and four siblings in Tanzania.

"Joshua's return offers some comfort to a family that has endured unbearable uncertainty for over two years," the Hostages and Missing Families Forum Headquarters said in a statement. There are now six bodies of hostages that remain in Gaza. Militants have released 22 bodies of hostages since the ceasefire began last month. Among the six bodies still in Gaza is

that of Sudthasak Rinthalak, agricultural worker from Thailand, the only non-Israeli.

Hamas returned 20 living hostages to Israel on October 13. The subsequent exchanges of the dead are the central component of the initial phase of the deal which requires Hamas return all hostage remains as quickly as possible. The exchanges have gone ahead even as Israel and Hamas have accused each other of breaching other terms of the agreement.

Israel has handed over 285 bodies, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which handles the exchanges.

Health officials in Gaza have said identifying the remains handed over by Israel is complicated by a lack of DNA testing kits. Israel has not disclosed how many bodies it is holding or where they were recovered, but has been returning 15 each time the remains of an Israeli hostage are returned from Gaza.

Hamas has said that recovering bodies is complicated by the widespread devastation in the coastal enclave and has returned one to three bodies every few days. Israel has pushed to speed up the returns and in certain cases has said the remains were not those of hostages.

Jewish community feels insecure in Singapore, says Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Singapore

Members of the Jewish community in Singapore have faced "unpleasant incidents, hostility, both online and offline", amid global tensions over the Israel-Hamas conflict, Minister for Home Affairs K Shanmugam said as a warning to a multi-ethnic society of over six million. Speaking at the Chessed-El Synagogue on Thursday during its 120th anniversary celebration, Shanmugam said Jewish residents now feel "less secure".

"I came here today because there has been feedback from the Jewish community about how reactions in Singapore. To events overseas have impacted the lives of some members of the Jewish community," the Channel News Asia quoted the Minister as saying.

Shanmugam, who is also Coordinating Minister for National Security, cited several recent incidents. In September, toilets in some international schools in Singapore were vandalised with anti-Israel vulgarities. Jewish students are enrolled in these schools, according to the Channel report.

Last month, a passing motorist shouted "free Palestine" at a member of the Jewish community who was wearing a skullcap, or kippah, on the way to the synagogue at Waterloo Street, a more than a century-old holy place for the Jews in the central business district of the prosperous city State.

"In Singapore, followers of any faith who wear visible markers of their religion. Should never be made to feel targeted based on their religion," said Shanmugam.

Bangladesh approves law prescribing death penalty for perpetrators of enforced disappearance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Dhaka

Bangladesh's interim Government on Thursday approved a draft ordinance prescribing the death penalty for perpetrators of "enforced disappearance", amid the ongoing trial of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 15 serving military officers over crimes against humanity.

"This is a landmark law. It will ensure that enforced disappearances never occur again in the country," press secretary of Chief Adviser Yunus, Shafiqul Alam, said at a press conference after the advisory council, effectively the cabinet, approved the draft.

He said the law criminalises the establishment of secret detention centres such as "so-called

Aynaghar" and obligates courts to conduct trials under the proposed law within 120 days of the filing of charges. After President Mohammad Shahabuddin's assent, the ordinance will likely be enforced in the case of 15 army officers, Hasina and several of her colleagues in the ousted Government, including the former police chief.

Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal's chief prosecutor on October 16 sought the death penalty for deposed premier Sheikh Hasina, alleging that she was the "mastermind and principal architect" behind the crimes against humanity committed during the mass protests last year.

Hasina, 78, faces multiple cases in Bangladesh after being ousted in August last year following the mass

student-led agitation in the country. According to a UN rights office report, up to 1,400 people were killed between July 15 and August 15 last year as Hasina's government ordered a security crackdown on protesters.

Hasina is facing the trial in absentia at Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) along with several ministers of her government, while 15 serving military officers also appeared on the dock from the cantonment, complying with the tribunal's arrest warrant.

The military officers' court appearance on October 22 came amid widespread speculation and unease over their trial in a civil court under a newly amended ICT-BD law instead of a military court under the Army Act.

The ICT-BD prosecutor earlier warned the army of

declaring 15 of their officers "fugitives" unless they were produced on the dock on the due date. The third amendment to the ICT-BD law, originally enacted to try hardened collaborators of Pakistani troops during the 1971 Liberation War, suggested that people charged under the law would be immediately disqualified to hold public offices and government services.

But the military officers charged under the law to be tried in the ICT-BD still hold their position, and the prosecution too called them as serving officers, creating a dilemma over their status.

Bangladesh army on Thursday said the government was yet to issue a clear directive regarding the job status of the officers, but added the issue demanded a legal explanation.



Police investigate swastikas painted with blood in Germany

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Hanau (Germany)

Police in Germany said on Thursday they were investigating the appearance of swastikas painted with human blood and smeared on dozens of cars, some mailboxes and building facades in the central town of Hanau. Police spokesman Thomas Leipold said officers were alerted Wednesday night when a man reported that he noticed the shape of a swastika applied in a reddish liquid on the hood of a parked car.

A special test quickly revealed that the substance was human blood. Police said that in total, almost 50 cars had been defaced in a similar way. "The background is completely unclear," Leipold said, adding that investigators did not know if specific cars, mailboxes and buildings were targeted or if the swastikas were applied randomly.



Indian envoy in Shanghai felicitates Raagi of Amritsar

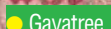
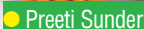
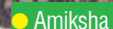
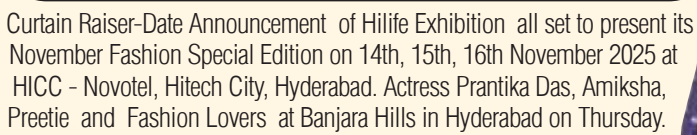
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

Consulate General of India in Shanghai, Pratik Mathur on Thursday met the visiting Raagi from Golden Temple in Amritsar, Bhai Maninder Singh ji and felicitated him. "CG Mathur met revered Bhai Maninder Singh ji, eminent Raagi from Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, on the auspicious occasion of Prakash Utsav of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji," the Consulate in Shanghai said in a post on X.

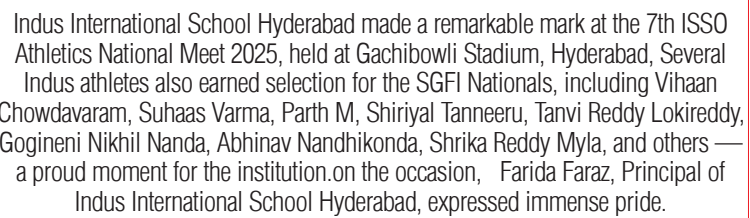
Raagi, a Sikh musician, performs kirtan or the devotional hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib.

"Warm exchange of greetings on #Gurupurab, reflecting on Guru ji's eternal message of Ek Onkar, equality, honest living and selfless service to humanity", Mathur said.

CG expressed deep gratitude for Bhai Sahib's visit to Shanghai and appreciated his global efforts.

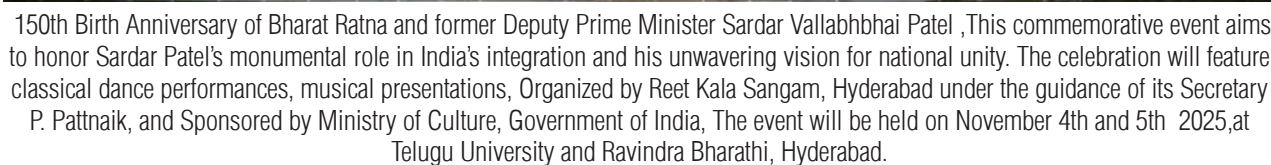


Photos by- SV Chary



Lloyds Offshore Global Services Pvt Ltd, the technology and innovation hub of Lloyds Banking Group, proudly announces a major milestone in its commitment to community welfare. On November 6, 2025, the organization set a new benchmark for corporate philanthropy by donating an unprecedented 100,000 kilograms (one lakh kg) of rice in a single day to multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across Hyderabad. Sirisha Voruganti, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Lloyds Technology Centre, commented on the achievement.

Jyotsna Kompalli, Program Director,
Tandanana - Annamacharya International Music
Competition 2025; Dr. Shoba Raju, Founder -
President, Dr. Nanda Kumar, Subba Rao,
Program Advisor, at a Press Conference being
hosted by Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini, Grand
Finale of TANDANANA - Annamacharya
International Music Competition 2025, celebrate
the timeless beauty of Indian devotional music
and the legacy of the great saint-composer, Sri
Tallapaka Annamacharya at Annamacharya
Bhavana Vahini, Annamayyapuram.



Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Ltd. (KAMAM) is pleased to announce the launch of the Kotak Rural Opportunities Fund, an open-ended equity scheme following Rural and allied theme. The scheme opens for public subscription from 6th November 2025 to 20th November 2025. The fund aims to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing predominantly in equity and equity-related securities of companies engaged in or benefiting from India's rural transformation. The benchmark index for the scheme will be the Nifty Rural Index (TRI) While launching the fund, Nilesh Shah, Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Ltd. said, "Rural India is no longer just about agriculture, it's the new growth frontier of Bharat. Arjun Khanna, Fund Manager, Kotak Rural Opportunities Fund said, "Our outlook on the rural theme is structurally. From financial inclusion to digital connectivity and local manufacturing, rural India is witnessing a transformation driven by opportunity, aspiration, and policy. Rising rural income growth and consumption are now integral to India's macro story. The Kotak Rural Opportunities Fund aims to help investors participate in this shift one that aligns with India's journey toward inclusive and balanced economic development."

BROOKFIELD ASSET MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCES LANDMARK \$12 BILLION

Brookfield Asset Management (NYSE: BAM, TSX: BAM) today announced its plan to invest \$12 billion in Andhra Pradesh's renewable energy sector over the next three years. This landmark commitment, one of the largest single overseas investments in India's green energy sector, underscores Brookfield's confidence in the state's growth potential and its long-term strategy for India. The investment is set to span the entire green energy value chain. Brookfield is exploring significant projects, including investments in Indosol's integrated manufacturing facility, Navayuga's renewable energy portfolio, and other large-scale manufacturing and green hydrogen projects. This comprehensive investment plan follows productive discussions between Andhra Pradesh IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh and Brookfield's global and India leadership, including Global President Connor Teskey and Managing Partners Nawal Saini, Ankur Gupta, and Arpit Agrawal. The planned investments in Andhra Pradesh are a cornerstone of Brookfield's broader strategy to significantly expand its India portfolio from its current \$30 billion to \$100 billion by 2030. In addition to the \$12 billion clean energy commitment, Brookfield is planning further substantial investments in Andhra Pradesh's real estate and hospitality sectors.

FUN

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AAAAHHH!
WHAT IS IT??
TELL ME!
TELL ME!

I'VE SAID TOO MUCH ALREADY.

3-14 WARREN

WE ALL HAVE OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS

MR. BURNS

SHELLY'S GREENHOUSE

KIDS-EITHER BUY A PLANT OR GO HOME! YOU'VE BEEN ON SAFARI FOR AN HOUR!

Guy Gardner
© 1998

HE WAS ALWAYS PAINFULLY GRAY.

DAVE COVERLY

OH... LIKE FACEBOOK?

GOOD HEALTH IS SIMPLY THE
SLOWEST RATE ONE CAN DIE

GINGERMEGGS.COM

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| 1 | | 8 | 6 | 5 | | 3 | 2 | |
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

1 Completely quiet
3 Scheme
7 Plenty
8 A covering for fried fish
10 Begged
13 Inquisitive
16 Middle
17 Closed
18 Utters aloud
19 One third of ninety

DOWN

1 Sprinkle this on food
2 Small
4 Overdue
5 Opposite of wide

6 A type of spear thrown by an athlete
9 A month
11 These tell the time
12 The writer of a book
14 Jealousy
15 Don't go away

SOLUTION 786

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | E | C | O | V | E | R | E | D |
| R | I | B | V | A | | | | |
| P | U | S | H | L | O | G | S | |
| T | O | V | E | R | E | L | E | C |
| J | U | R | V | C | I | N | E | M |
| A | A | | | | | | | |
| M | O | V | I | N | G | F | A | L |
| A | E | S | H | E | L | E | | |
| S | T | R | A | W | A | B | O | |
| S | E | E | L | E | N | | | |
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