



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (left) and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right) at the meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia Tuesday | AFP

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RUSSIA, U.S. TO NAME NEGOTIATORS TO END UKRAINE WAR, SANS KYIV

Russia and the United States will name teams to negotiate a path to ending the war in Ukraine, leaders of both nations said on Tuesday in Riyadh

WON'T ACCEPT OUTCOME OF TALKS: ZELENSKYY

No Ukrainian officials were present at the meeting. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy slammed his nation's exclusion from the Riyadh gathering, which lasted more than four hours. He said that any talks aimed at ending the Ukraine war should be "fair" and involve European countries, including Turkey — which had offered to host negotiations

NEED CONCESSIONS FROM ALL SIDES, SAYS U.S.

Beyond Ukraine, the meeting attended by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov focussed on improving relations between the two superpowers | P9
Rubio said ending Russia's war in Ukraine would need concessions from all sides and that Europe would be a part of the talks

\$52 bn

THE SIZE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR UKRAINE

After Modi, Amir talks, Qatar ties in strategic zone

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Qatar elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership on Tuesday, agreeing to double their annual trade from \$14 billion in five years and focusing on enhancing cooperation in energy, investments and the technology sector following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi hugs Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday

Both sides signed agreements and five memorandums of understanding (MOUs), including a revised double taxation avoidance pact. India already has strategic ties with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

"Had a very productive meeting with my brother, Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, earlier today. Under his leadership, Qatar has scaled new heights of progress. He is also committed to a strong India-Qatar friendship. This visit is even more special because we have elevated our ties to a Strategic Part-

nership," Modi said on X. "Trade, investment and energy were among the major topics of discussion between the two leaders today," said Arun Chatterjee, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Qatar is also a major investor in India, with the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) holding around \$1.5 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) across sectors like retail, power, IT, education, healthcare and affordable housing.

Both leaders identified a number of areas in which the QIA can increase investments.

CM vows to make Telangana the most cyber-secure state in India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

ASSERTING that his government aimed to make the state a cyber-secure business hub, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday stated that all required assistance and resources were being provided to cyber experts and IT companies to create an



ecosystem for developing cyber-security solutions.

Addressing SHIELD-2025, a conclave on cybersecurity organised at the HICC by the Telangana Cybersecurity Bureau, Cyberabad Police and the Society for Cyberabad Security Council, the chief minister reiterated that his government was committed to making Telangana

the No. 1 state in the country in terms of cybersecurity.

Stating that cybercriminals stole ₹22,812 crore across the country in the last year. "Cyber-crime poses a huge threat to the country's economy as well as citizens," Revanth stated, adding that fake news was another major threat these days. "Misinformation on social media is creating chaos in society," he said.

CONTINUED ON P3



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy interacts with delegates at SHIELD-2025, a conclave on cybersecurity at HICC in Hyderabad on Tuesday

Rahul, Tharoor thaw on TNIE col

PREETHA NAIR & K S SREEJITH @ New Delhi / T'Puram

AMID the row over Congress MP Shashi Tharoor's recent column in this newspaper backing the CPM-led Kerala government's development initiatives, senior leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday held a 30-minute one-on-one meeting with the four-time MP from Thiruvananthapuram, who has come under fire from the party's state unit.

Sources said the Congress' top leadership has decided to stand with Tharoor, who managed to convince Rahul about the facts in his column. Both leaders also agreed to meet more frequently.

This is the first such meeting between Rahul and Tharoor in about three years and is seen as



Rahul Gandhi Shashi Tharoor

a reconciliatory effort on the part of the central leadership.

"Tharoor has been trying for an appointment with Rahul ever since the latter contested for Congress president in 2022. It required a n article for that to happen," a close confidant of Tharoor said in half jest.

However, the development is seen as a blow to the state leadership. Leader of Opposition V D Satheeshan, his predecessor

Ramesh Chennithala, and senior leader K Muralidharan had buried their differences and united to condemn Tharoor.

Sources said Tharoor raised the issues of non-cooperation from the Kerala leadership and lack of inclusiveness in discussions at the national level.

Speaking to reporters later, AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Veugopal said all is well in the party and that Tharoor shares the party's views.

Tharoor declined to comment on his meeting with Rahul Gandhi. "It was a long-pending request I had made for a meeting to discuss various issues. Since it was a meeting where only the two of us were present throughout, it would not be appropriate for me to say anything more," he said.

Extradited middleman in Westland case gets bail

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to alleged middleman Christian Michel James in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland case being probed by the CBI.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed James was in custody for the past six years while the investigation in the matter by CBI was still underway.

James, however, cannot walk out of jail as he faces another money laundering case in the Delhi High Court.

"The petitioner was extradited in 2018 and has been in custody for more than 6 years. According to the CBI...the investigation is still on. We are inclined to grant bail," said the bench. It said given the speed, the trial would not conclude in 25 years.

The scam relates to irregularities in purchase of 12 VVIP helicopters from AgustaWestland. James is one among three middlemen in the case. Guido Haschke and Carlo Gerosa are the other two. The CBI chargesheet alleged a loss of ₹2,666 crore to the exchequer due to the deal signed on February 8, 2010.



SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN SAAT-2025

APPROVAL & RECOGNITION

PROGRAMMES OFFERED

B.TECH PROGRAMMES Civil Engineering Electrical Engineering Mechanical Engineering Electrical and Electronics Engineering Electronics and Communication Engineering Computer Science and Engineering Computer Science and Information Technology Computer Science and Engineering (AI and ML) Computer Science and Engineering (Cyber Security) Computer Science and Engineering (Data Science) Computer Science and Engineering (Internet of Things)	MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES BBA MBA Integrated MBA MBA (Hospital Administration) MBA (Artificial Intelligence and Data Science) M.Sc. PROGRAMMES Physics Chemistry Mathematics Biotechnology Integrated (M.Sc. Biotechnology) COMPUTER APPLICATIONS PROGRAMMES Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) Master of Computer Applications (MCA) PHARMACEUTICAL PROGRAMMES B.Pharm. M.Pharm.	LAW PROGRAMMES BA LLB (H) - Integrated Law BBA LLB (H) - Integrated Law LLB (H) - 3 Years Law LLM HOTEL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES BHMCT (Bachelor of Hotel Management & Catering Technology) MBA (Hospitality Management) NURSING PROGRAMMES B.Sc. (Nursing) (Basic) B.Sc. (Nursing) (Post Basic) M.Sc. (Nursing) AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMES B.Sc. (H) Agriculture M.Sc. Agriculture VETERINARY SCIENCE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROGRAMME Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc. & A.H.)
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 14th in University Category
 26th in Engineering Category
 21st in Medical Category
 09th in Dental Category
 09th in Law Category
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 64 in QS Southern Asia University Ranking
 278 in QS Asia University Ranking
 1201-1400 in QS World University Ranking
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Hyd pips Mumbai, records ₹1.15L cr in home sales in 2024, says CREDAI

North West contributes 64% & South West leads in pricing recording highest per sq ft value

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

THE Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with CRE Matrix, has released an in-depth analysis of the city's real estate landscape.

According to the report, Hyderabad North West remains the dominant residential market, contributing 64% of total sales value, with transactions amounting to ₹19,826 crore.

These in-depth insights underscore Hyderabad's robust growth trajectory, with investor confidence bolstered by rising co-working demand, declining office vacancy rates, and sustained momentum in housing.

Speaking on the city's housing market, V Rajashekar Reddy, president of CREDAI, noted a 17% rise in average ticket size and a 14% improvement in inventory absorption, indicating strong buyer confidence.



remains resilient and continues to attract strong investor and homebuyer interest. With 16,644 units sold in Q4 CY'24 and 11,081 new launches, the market remains dynamic and adaptive to evolving needs," said Bandari, general secretary, CREDAI Hyderabad.

Abhishek Kiran Gupta, CEO and co-founder, CRE Matrix, highlighted Hyderabad's impressive performance, stating that the city recorded new home sales worth ₹1.15 lakh crore in CY 2024, surpassing Mumbai's ₹1.05 lakh crore.

Hyderabad records 24% YoY surge in value of homes in Jan 2025

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

HYDERABAD'S real estate market continues to witness a strong shift towards premiumisation marked by increased sales of high-value homes with larger spaces and enhanced amenities.

The Hyderabad residential market spans four districts—Hyderabad, Medchal- Malkajgiri, Rangareddy and Sangareddy—and includes transactions from both primary and secondary real estate markets.

Properties priced under ₹50 lakh continued to dominate registrations. However, a strong shift towards premiumisation has emerged with homes priced at ₹1 crore and above increasing by 12% YoY in January 2025, reflecting a growing preference for high-value

properties. The majority of registered properties in Hyderabad fell within the 1,000 to 2,000 sq ft range, accounting for 69% of total registrations.

At the district level, Medchal-Malkajgiri led the market with 45% of property registrations, followed by Rangareddy at 41% and Hyderabad district contributed the remaining 14%.

The weighted average price of transacted residential properties rose by 3% YoY in January 2025. Notably, Medchal-Malkajgiri experienced the highest price appreciation at 11% YoY.

Beyond the bulk of transactions, homebuyers are increasingly investing in larger, ultra-luxury properties with premium amenities. The top five real estate deals in January 2025 involved properties exceeding 3,000 sq.ft and valued above ₹5.5 crore. Of these, three were in West Hyderabad, while two were in Central Hyderabad.

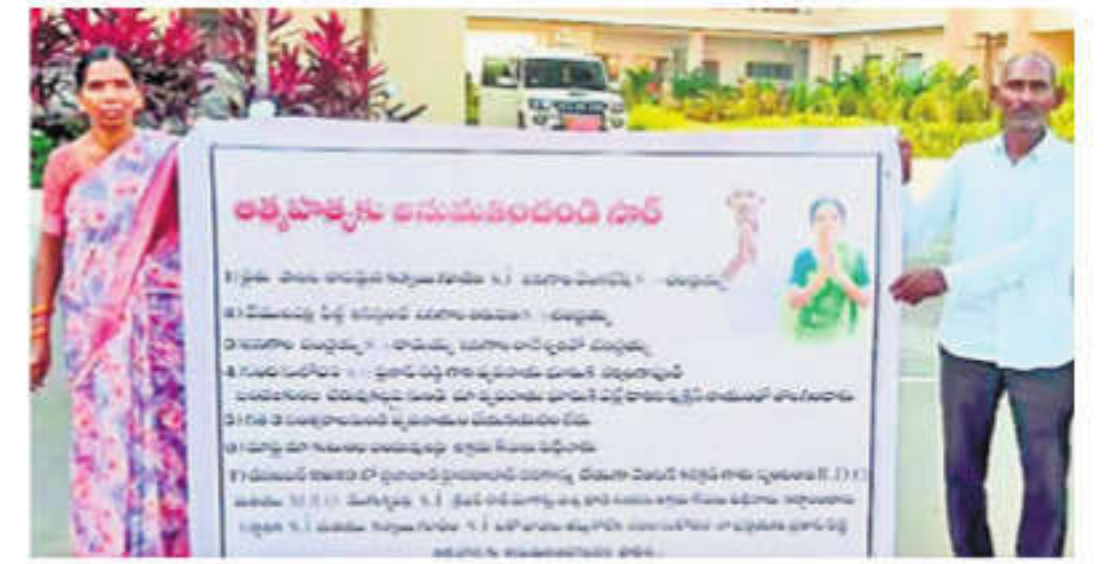
Alleging harassment by SI, couple seeks permission to die by suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhupalpally

ALLEGING harassment by a sub-inspector (SI) and obstruction of access to their farmland, an elderly farmer couple has sought permission to die by suicide in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district.

The couple, residents of Vemulapally village in Mogulapally mandal, accused SI E Venkatesh of Kannaigudem police station in Mulugu district of blocking their access to their agricultural land by closing the pathway for the past three years.

Sources said Sandi Sulochana and Pratap Reddy, who own 12 acres of land in the village, claimed that, despite multiple appeals to higher authorities in Hyderabad, no action had been taken.



A couple display a banner in front of the Bhupalpally Collectorate for permission to die by suicide due to alleged harassment by SI on Tuesday

gally registered cases against me," said Pratap. District Collector Rahul Sharma told TNIE that the issue stemmed from a private land dispute between two parties in the village.

According to available information, the disputed land is adjacent to property owned by

the SI. Following the couple's complaint, revenue officials inspected the site and confirmed the existence of a traditional pathway that farmers had used to access their fields.

Revenue officials attempted to mediate and urged the landowners to resolve the matter through discussion, but no agreement was reached.

HOLY MONTH OF RAMZAN

Muslim employees can leave office at 4 pm

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

THE state government has permitted all Muslim government employees, including teachers, contract, and outsourced staff in various corporations, boards, and public sector undertakings, to leave offices at 4 pm during Ramzan from March 2 to 31 to offer prayers.

However, BJP spokesperson NV Subash criticised the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government for allowing Muslims to leave work an hour early to break their fast during Ramzan.

Ponnam reviews preparations

Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Tuesday instructed officials to take all necessary steps to ensure better facilities for worshippers during the holy month of Ramzan.

them?" he asked. "The state government's move was not about inclusivity, it was about vote-bank politics," he alleged.

Advisory to manage rush at Sec'bad rly stn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

On the heels of the stampede at the New Delhi railway station, the South Central Railway (SCR) Tuesday released an advisory for crowd management at the Secunderabad railway station, which is currently being redeveloped.

As per the advisory, a new entrance has been opened at Gate No. 2 for Platform No. 1, along with a general booking counter and an enquiry counter. Moreover, a new waiting hall with an additional seating capacity of 500 can now accommodate 750 passengers, said the advisory.

The advisory added that since Gate No. 4 is closed, additional entrances have been provided at Gate No. 3 and 3B (opposite Swathi Hotel).

EXPRESS READ

JNTU-Hyderabad gets new vice-chancellor

Hyderabad: The state government has appointed T Kishen Kumar Reddy as the new vice-chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (JNTU-H) for a three-year term, as per a notification issued by Governor and JNTU-H Chancellor Jishnu Dev Varma.

GIRL KILLED IN STONE PELTING

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Sangareddy

A 16-year-old girl, Aliya Begum, died in a hospital after sustaining grievous injuries during a stone-pelting incident involving two brothers in Antaram village, Municipally mandal.

The case came to light on Monday evening following visits by Karwan MLA Kausar Mohiuddin of the AIMIM and MBT leaders to the grieving family.

According to DSP P Sattaiyah, the conflict erupted on February 11 when a man, the victim's father, allegedly ur-

nated near a house in Antaram village. Brothers Vijaya Reddy and Veera Reddy, residents of the house, confronted the man and attacked him with stones. Aliya intervened to protect her father during the assault but was critically injured in the ensuing stone pelting.



Authorities stated that vil-

lagers alerted the police to the incident. A postmortem was conducted, and the body was handed over to the family.

The two accused brothers were arrested and remanded to judicial custody. DSP Sattaiyah emphasised that timely disclosure of the attack could have enabled better medical intervention for Aliya.

Meanwhile, the MLA and MBT leaders demanded action against the accused and the establishment of a permanent police picket in the village to prevent such violence.

17 get life imprisonment in murder case 3 cops, 2 forest dept staffers held for taking bribe

ENS @ Nalgonda

THE Nalgonda district SC, ST Special Court on Tuesday sentenced 17 persons to life imprisonment for murdering a man with old enmity at Azhimpeta village. The incident occurred in 2017 when the victim, Batta Lingaiah, was attacked and killed due to an old enmity.

According to the police, Lingaiah had earlier been released on bail after being accused of causing the death of a person from the Yadava community.

Five granted lifer

In a separate case, ADJ-III cum Family Court Judge D Durga

Prasad sentenced a woman, her lover, and his friends to life imprisonment for murdering her husband, considering him an obstacle to their illicit relationship.

According to Nalgonda SP Sarat Chandra Pawar, the victim, Soma Keshavulu, lived with his wife, Swathi. She conspired with her lover, Dubba Pradeep, and his associates to kill her husband using a hammer.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad/ Khammam

THE Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday arrested three policemen—an inspector and two constables—of Malkhtal circle, Narayanpet, for demanding ₹40,000 bribe and accepting ₹20,000 from a complainant.

According to officials, the ac-

cusced officer, Gundemoni Chandra Shekar, demanded the amount for reducing the gravity of charges while filing chargesheet against the complainant in a rape case.



2 forest dept employees held for taking ₹30K bribe

In another case, two Forest department employees were arrested while accepting a ₹30,000 bribe in Yel-

landu of Bhadradri Kothagudem district on Tuesday.

According to officials, the accused — Komaram forest range officer Uday Kiran and forest guard Nunawath Harilal — had demanded ₹30,000 from the complainant to approve his application to transport clay from the forest area.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

19th February: Being an astrologer means that you're always being called on to explain yourself! I've been speaking to many journalists lately who get astrology confused with the occult - with ghosts, UFOs, magic and anything else which is unexplained.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)

You may make the most of friendly business trends and cash-in on current goodwill. You must believe that new opportunities are on the way and should act now to broaden your social contacts and encourage new connections.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)

As long as Venus is well-placed, you may expect plenty of action and enjoyable group activities. However, your social life will tend to focus on work.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Some happy surprises could affect money matters or home affairs. This looks like a fine time to stabilise and formalise domestic arrangements which, until now, may have been left up in the air.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

The whole mood of the day encourages formal settings, traditional behaviour and conservative values, so do try to fit in. It may even be fun to enter into the fantasy of living in a past age.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)

Your home and working life are well-stared, but you must be aware of an approaching financial crisis. Get your affairs in order and act now if there are any outstanding bills to pay or loans to call in.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)

The tension is now building up, as it does once or twice a month when the planets form certain intense patterns. You are now reaching a moment of decision and will at last be forced to get off the fence.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)

You may feel reasonably justified in expecting a response to a recent suggestion or, at the very least, an answer to an important question. However, planetary activity over the coming days may muddy the waters even further.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

For once you are trying to be rational while others are losing their heads. Any changes that you are anxious to put into effect may involve more people than you at first thought.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)

It is at the most trivial level that your grand plans are capable of coming unstuck. So, issues of principle are all very well, but you would be advised to focus on routine and mundane details.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)

Restless conditions could make it difficult to settle down, so it may be better to get around and explore fresh possibilities. Is there a legal complication to resolve? If so, get on to it without delay.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

Long-standing money problems may be coming home to roost. Yet, rather than feel sorry for yourself, or dwell on what might have been, adopt an attitude of business as usual and compensate for any losses.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20)

Whether your concerns are professional or strictly private, do not expect life to run smoothly today. Even if you do your best, someone else is bound to come along and stir it up.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9 and some cells filled in.

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-23 and some letters filled in.

CROSS WORD

ACROSS

- 1 Double double double (9)
8 Boredom shown by drunken nuisances (5)
9 Main source of nutrition (7)
10 One insect let out another (6)
11 Tools for regular travellers (6)
12 Double-crosser jailed more than once? (3-5)
15 Fought being made redundant (8)
18 Changes his wet flannels (6)
20 Sunlit cheek perhaps (6)
21 There's no straight solution to this (7)
22 Relative; pleasant, full of energy (5)
23 Aptitude acquired along the way (4,5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Decline, 4 Sects, 7 Nile, 8 Retreats, 10 Marsailles, 12 Tibbit, 13 Straws, 15 Altershawe, 18 Emanated, 19 Isle, 20 Seeps, 21 Dynasty.

DOWN

- 1 Buy and sell to perfection (5)
3 Annoyed at being removed from the board? (6)
4 Tread poets oft confused (8)
5 Run out on the sand (6)
6 Amenity switched to an unspecified date (3,4)
7 It provides liquor we imbibe at home with the papers (9)
11 Sort of respect in showing foresight (9)
12 Thwarted by interbreeding? (7)
16 Conjuring pilgrim? (6)
17 Aerial I'd put up on a post (6)
19 Levels up still heading south (5)

JUMBLE UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

Jumble puzzle grid with letters and words to be unscrambled: CNHEB, BRTIO, EBKORR, FLANIE.

Answers: SNACK, ADAGE, TOASTY, ZIPPER. The old photos of them opening Christmas gifts was from a -- PAST PRESENT DAY



HORNET HELPS COPS STING CYBERCROOKS, RECOVER BOOTY

CHITHALURI REVANTH @Hyderabad

CYBER fraudsters often use digital currency to launder money obtained from criminal activities. Many, including police officials, believe that once money was converted into cryptocurrency, it became untraceable...



tionally, 166 wallets have been identified on exchanges that have KYC verification," the representative told TNIE.

Hornet has also partnered with the ED, Kolkata Police and other state police forces to assist in crypto crime investigations.

A police official explained that once fiat currency is converted into cryptocurrency, it is laundered through multiple channels, making it extremely difficult to track.

Hornet founder & CEO Souvik Haldar told TNIE that the firm has partnered with Cyberabad commissionerate to investigate cryptocurrency-related crimes. "Even after fiat currency is converted into cryptocurrency, there is always an end-user. Our job is to identify the individuals behind these transactions using technology. While it is challenging, we have traced and resolved some cases," he said.

Haldar added that Hornet monitors the dark web to generate actionable intelligence, which aids law enforcement agencies in investigations. "There are pseudo-anonymous links to real-world identities. We can extract scientific reports from the blockchain, which helps track culprits," he explained.

Another Hornet representative revealed that the Cyberabad commissionerate procured this technology in September 2024 to trace cryptocurrency-related cases. "So far, two refund orders have been obtained from the court, 32 cases are in progress and one culprit has been arrested. A total of \$52,306.2 has been frozen in international crypto exchanges, while \$22,800.9 has been initiated for refund. Addi-

To boost cybersecurity, govt to partner with IIT, NALSAR and ISB: Shikha Goel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

TELANGANA Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) Director Shikha Goel announced on Tuesday that MoUs will be signed with IIT Hyderabad, NALSAR and ISB, the academic partners of SHIELD 2025, for future collaborations in cybersecurity research, policy reforms and skill development.

Welcoming officials from 14 states, Goel stated that in an era of rapid digital transformation, cybercrime has become a universal challenge impacting governments, businesses and individuals. The increasing threats posed by AI-driven deep fakes, financial frauds and identity theft necessitate a unified response from all stakeholders, she added.

"SHIELD 2025 is not just a conclave; it is a mission to bring

₹183 crore was refunded to 17,912 victims in 2024 alone in the state. In 2024, ₹22,812 crore was lost to cyber crimes in India. In 2024, a total of 1,20,869 citizens fell prey to cyber crimes in Telangana.

together the best minds to strengthen our collective defences. A key highlight of the conclave is the Technology Experience Zone, where AI-driven cybersecurity solutions and advanced investigative tools are being demonstrated. Cyber resilience is essential for MSMEs, startups and all businesses operating in the digital space," Goel stated.

She further announced collaborations with NALSAR to

explore legal reforms and with IIT Hyderabad to develop technological solutions to combat cybercrime. Additionally, TGCSB is in the process of entering into an MoU with Google to enhance cybersecurity capabilities.

To bolster Telangana's cybersecurity landscape, the Cyber Fusion Centre (CFC) was inaugurated and will serve as a central hub for cyber operations. Additionally, a Child Protection Unit (CPU) was launched in collaboration with India Child Protection (ICP) unit in Delhi to combat Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) activities more actively.

She also highlighted the growing threats of AI-driven cybercrime, deep fakes and financial frauds, stressing the urgency of proactive countermeasures to address these evolving challenges.

Cybersecurity policy soon: Min

FROM PAGE 1

Appealing to one and all to share the cyber helpline number '1930' which works 24x7, the chief minister pointed out that Telangana was among a few states that have established a fully functional Cybersecurity Bureau and a dedicated cyber-crime helpline. He recalled that the government opened seven dedicated cyber-crime police stations last year.

"Let us all work together to make Telangana a cybersecure state. This cybersecurity conference is significant," the chief minister said.

Revanth continued: "Telangana is at the forefront of controlling cybercrime in the country. There is a need to strengthen the cybercrime wing further. Prevention of crime should be given priority."

Referring to the scourge of fake news on social media, he stressed the need to curb economic crimes and fake news.

Meanwhile, IT Minister D Sridhar Babu revealed that the government was planning to unveil a cybersecurity policy soon. "As per Data Protection Act guidelines, we will introduce a new cybersecurity policy," he disclosed.



T-HUB INKS MoU WITH BRAZIL'S GOIAS

ENS@Hyderabad

T-Hub on Tuesday signed an MoU with Brazil's Goias Hub to set up international start-ups in partnership.

The partnership agreement was clinched after Goias representatives met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and IT Minister D Sridhar Babu at HICC. Later, T-Hub Foundation CEO Sujith and Goias State Science Technology and Innovation Secretary Jose Frederico Lyra Neto signed the MoU.

According to the MoU, Telangana startups will get opportunities to work in Brazil,

and Brazilian startups can launch their operations in Telangana.

The governments of Brazil and Telangana will cooperate in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, IT, agri-tech, health-care, biotech and mining.

Along with market access, the two organisations — T-Hub and Goias — will work together on key issues such as capacity-building, incubation, technology sharing and improving investment opportunities. This agreement will strengthen ties between India and Brazil and help develop the startup ecosystem, an official release said.



EXPRESS READ

All GHMC standing panel nominations deemed valid

Hyderabad: All 17 corporators who filed nominations for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) standing committee have been deemed valid. GHMC Commissioner K Ilambarathi scrutinised the nominations on Tuesday in the presence of GHMC officials and others. The last date for withdrawing nominations is February 21. The list of contesting candidates will be published after 3 pm on February 21.

Girl electrocuted while parents away at work

A 17-year-old girl died of electrocution after coming in contact with the live extension wire of a washing machine. Her parents, both daily wage labourers, had gone to work when the incident occurred. On Monday, while removing the machine's plug, she accidentally touched a frayed live wire, which resulted in her instant death. Her parents reached home and discovered her body lying on the floor.

MSMEs most vulnerable to cyberfraud, says DGP

DGP Dr Jitender on Tuesday said that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the most vulnerable targets of cyber fraud. He stated that cybercriminals are adopting new technologies, including AI, deepfake, and advanced phishing techniques, to exploit vulnerabilities. "Technology is at the forefront of modern policing. Cybersecurity is not just about protection but also about prevention and resilience," he said.

'Complete land acquisition for Amberpet flyover'

Hyderabad: GHMC Commissioner K Ilambarathi on Tuesday instructed the officials concerned to complete the land acquisition process for the flyover from Golnaka to Amberpet. He inspected the site on Tuesday and directed B&B officials to expedite the works. The 1.5 km, four-lane flyover will improve traffic flow and likely reduce travel time for commuters entering the city from Warangal Highway.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT. Collector/ Joint Collector/ Special Collector(LA)/SDC(LA) FORM-VI. PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION. Gazette No.06/2025 Dated: 13.02.2025. No.F/769/2025 Dated: 12.02.2025. File No.G/201/2025 Dated: 13.02.2025. Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Collector that a total of Ac. 2.17 gts. land is required in the Thiraspally Village, Utkoor Mandal, Narayanpet District for public purpose...

V.O. CHIDAMBARANAR PORT AUTHORITY (AN AUTONOMOUS BODY UNDER MoPSW, GoI) GAD-EST10ESTC(EST)/29/2024-GADsRS(6321) Date: 19.02.2025. V.O.Chidambaranar Port Authority invites applications for the following positions on contractual basis:-

V.O.CHIDAMBARANAR PORT AUTHORITY CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT TUTICORIN-628 004. NOTICE INVITING TENDER. S. No. Name of the work. Estimated cost Put to tender value (Amount in INR). Cost of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Amount in INR). Online Tender opening date.

FORM NO. NCLT. 3A Advertisement detailing petition [see rule 35] Company Petition No.2 of 2025 Notice of Petition. A Petition under Section 61(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2013, for consolidation of share capital was presented by M/s. Bharat Biotech International Limited on the 24th day of January 2025, and the said petition is fixed for hearing before Hyderabad (Court-2) Bench of National Company Law Tribunal on 19.03.2025.

KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd (A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking), Sankaranguangalam, Kollam 691583. Phone: 0476-2651215 to 217, E-Mail: mdg@kmmll.com. TENDER NOTICE. For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmmll.com

Vodafone Idea Next-Gen Solutions Limited (formerly Vodafone m-pesa Limited) Regd. Off.: 10th Floor, Birla Centurion, Century Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400 030. PUBLIC NOTICE. Notice is hereby given that Vodafone m-pesa Limited has changed its name to Vodafone Idea Next-Gen Solutions Limited with effect from 31 December 2024.

REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE Medical College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram - 695 011 e-mail: webmaster@rcctvm.gov.in, www.rcctvm.gov.in Ph 04712442541. MCC/35/2025-E2-GAD 14.02.2025. FOR EXISTING VACANCY DIRECTOR on Permanent Basis. Regional Cancer Centre is an autonomous institution under the Health & Family Welfare Department of Government of Kerala.

OPPORTUNITIES General. गणितीय विज्ञान संस्थान, चेन्नई THE INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES, CHENNAI (Department of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India). काली/February 17, 2025. विज्ञान संस्था / Advt No.01-R/IMSc/2025. इ.स.स. पुणे लक्ष्मी कर्मलिये केन्द्र के अन्तर्गत के अधिकांश पदों के प्रारम्भिक प्रक्रियाओं को पूरा के लिए अर्जित करने वाले उम्मीदवारों के लिए सूचना जारी है।

SBI State Bank of India Central Recruitment & Promotion Department Corporate Centre, Mumbai Phone: 022-22820427. Recruitment of Specialist Cadre Officers on Contractual Basis. Applications are invited from eligible Indian citizens for the following post on Contractual basis:

MLC ELECTION

CONG OR BJP, WHICH PARTY WILL BENEFIT FROM BRS NO-SHOW?

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY
@Hyderabad

AS the Karimnagar-Adilabad-Medak-Nizamabad graduates' constituency MLC poll campaign in North Telangana gathers, the leaders of both the Congress and BJP are on the edge, not knowing which way the cookie will crumble.

The candidates of the two national parties are grappling with each other for victory while the BRS has opted out of the contest.

Though the BRS is not contesting the election, its leaders, including former ministers, were active in voter enrolment across their respective districts. Sources indicated that nearly one lakh new voter enrolments were facilitated by senior BRS leaders.

This raises crucial questions: Which way will these graduate voters lean? Which party will benefit, and which will face setback? These factors are causing anxiety within the BJP and Congress circles.

The Congress has accused BRS of indirectly supporting the BJP by abstaining from the contest, while BJP leaders see a secret understanding between the Congress and the pink party to influence the election outcome. These accusations have fuelled heated exchanges between the two national parties.

Contrasting campaigns

On the BJP front, top leaders, including Union Coal & Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy and MoS for Home Affairs Bandi

Sanjay Kumar, along with MPs Dharmapuri Arvind, Eatala Rajender, G Nagesh and M Raghunandan Rao, have intensified their campaign. They are actively engaging with graduate voters to rally support for their candidate, C Anji Reddy.

In contrast, the Congress campaign appears to lack momentum. While a minister has been touring the constituency to introduce the party's candidate, V Narendra Reddy, most MLAs have remained passive. This has raised concerns within the Congress camp about their ability to retain the seat.

Independents' threat

Adding to the complexity, independent candidates are gaining traction, particularly among Backward Class (BC) voters. The BC associations have urged voters to support a BC candidate, and Prasanna Hari Krishna, a retired lecturer who took voluntary retirement, is emerging as a strong contender with support from youth groups and BC organisations.

Interestingly, both the BJP and Congress have fielded candidates from the Reddy community, sparking debate whether they should support a Reddy. The key question remains: Can the ruling Congress hold onto the seat amid challenges from BJP and independent candidates?

With the election campaign gaining momentum, the battle for the North Telangana graduates' MLC seat is acquiring all the trappings of a high-stakes contest with unpredictable outcomes.

Frame rules after consulting all stakeholders, says Ponguleti

ENS @Hyderabad

REVENUE Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Tuesday directed the Revenue department officials to hold wild consultations with various stakeholders, including intellectuals and political parties, in framing guidelines under the newly passed Bhu Bharati Act, 2024.

Speaking at a workshop on guidelines for the land administration, the minister said that the officials should take into account people's aspirations and needs while framing the rules. Stating that an exercise akin to drafting the Bhu Bharati Act, 2024 is needed in framing the rules, he said that the new rules should facilitate in finding permanent solution to all the issues.

He said that there should not be any scope for even a small mistake in the new rules.

Term of panel on SCs extended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

THE state government on Tuesday extended the term to March 11 of the Justice Shameem Akter Commission to study the suggestions and objections received from various quarters on SC sub-categorisation.

SC Development principal secretary N Sridhar issued orders to this effect.

Following the Supreme Court judgement on SC sub-categorisation, the state government

appointed the commission to conduct a detailed study on this matter for 60 days. The commission assumed charge on November 11, 2024, and was granted a one-month extension on January 11. The one-man panel had already submitted its report to the government, which had presented it in the Assembly. After a debate in the Assembly, various political parties and associations, including Madiga Reservation Porata

Samithi president Manda Krishna Madiga, raised a few objections and offered suggestions. Recently, Manda Krishna also met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and gave details regarding the grouping of castes and proposed reservations. With this, the government has decided to extend the term of the commission to conduct a detailed study by taking into consideration the objections and suggestions.

Siddipet BRS cadre tense over tapgate investigation

P KRISHNA @Siddipet

TENSION prevails in the BRS circles in Siddipet Assembly constituency as the pink party cadre are in the grip of fear over the ongoing probe into the phone-tapping case. While some party workers fear that they may be summoned for questioning in the case filed by

Congress leader G Chakradhar Goud, the others are spending sleepless nights over the possibility of them being taken into custody by the police.

It may be mentioned here that Chakradhar filed a police case, claiming that 16 phones belonging to him and his family members were tapped when the BRS was in power at the

best of Siddipet MLA and former minister T Harish Rao. The Congress leader demanded that Harish Rao's personal assistant Seshu be arrested in this case.

Panjagutta police have already arrested Bhavani Communications owner T Santosh Kumar, his car driver Bandi Parsharamulu and former

Aarogyasri employee T Vamshi Krishna. Chakradhar, who has been trying to project himself as the only leader who takes on Hairsh Rao in the constituency, demanding that all those involved in the case be arrested at the earliest. This development and the recent arrest of three accused persons are keeping the BRS workers on tenterhooks.

Bhatti promises sufficient budgetary allocation for Aarogyasri



Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha during a pre-budget meeting with the Medical & Health department officials

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

STATING that the government is giving priority to health sector, Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday promised to allocate sufficient funds for implementation of Aarogyasri scheme in 2025-26 Budget.

Vikramarka held a pre-Budget meeting with Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha and officials of Health, Science and Technology departments.

During the meeting, the deputy CM instructed the officials to utilise funds being provided by the Union government under Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The minister also said that the construction of medical colleges and government hospitals will be completed within the next one year.

He stated that the government is intending to set up science and technology planetariums in districts. Accusing the previous BRS government of

neglecting the Drug and Food Safety Authority and Medical Education Wing, the deputy CM said that the government is making efforts to strengthen both the bodies.

Special Chief Secretary of Finance Department K Ramakrishna Rao, Principal Secretary of Health Department Christina Z Chongthu, Principal Secretary of Science and Technology department Ahmed Nadeem were present at the meeting.

Uttam raises concern over NDSA's KLIS probe taking too much time

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

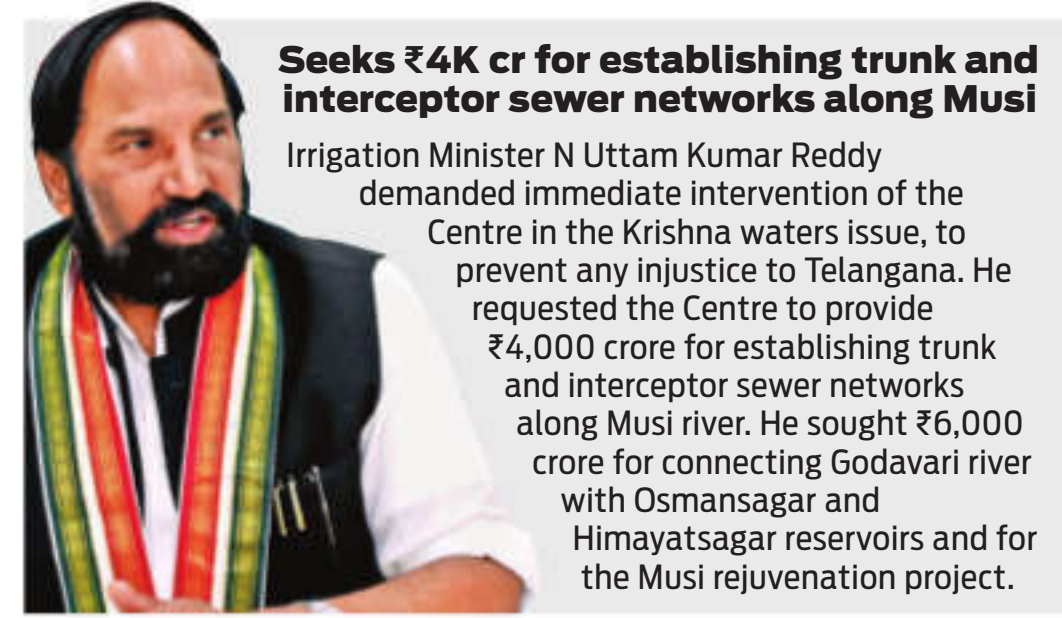
IRRIGATION Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday urged the Union government to ensure that the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) completes its inquiry and submits its report on Kaleshwaram project at the earliest.

Participating in the second All India State Water Ministers' conference, organised by Ministry of Jal Shakti in Udaipur, Rajasthan, Uttam said the NDSA investigation has been going on for several months for now and requested the Union ministry to intervene and see that the NDSA completes its inquiry at the earliest.

He demanded immediate intervention of the Centre in the Krishna river water issue, to prevent any injustice to Telangana.

The minister requested the Union government to allot ₹4,000 crore for establishing trunk and interceptor sewer networks along Musi river.

He sought ₹6,000 crore for connecting Godavari river with Osmansagar and Himayatsa-



Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy demanded immediate intervention of the Centre in the Krishna waters issue, to prevent any injustice to Telangana. He requested the Centre to provide ₹4,000 crore for establishing trunk and interceptor sewer networks along Musi river. He sought ₹6,000 crore for connecting Godavari river with Osmansagar and Himayatsagar reservoirs and for the Musi rejuvenation project.

gar reservoirs on Musi and also for the Musi rejuvenation project. He demanded low-cost, long tenure funding for ongoing irrigation projects in Telangana and the de-sedimentation and desilting of all projects in the state by the Centre.

Expressing apprehension that the Krishna river water may be illegally diverted by the Andhra Pradesh government from the fore shore of Srisailem project, the minister urged the Centre to prevent the same. He said that the telemetry instruments be installed on Krishna river.

Now, Jupally accuses IAS officers of non-cooperation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

DAYS after Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy stressed the need for civil servants to change their "attitude", Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Tuesday alleged that several IAS officers were not cooperating with the government in conduct of day-to-day works.

Addressing the media at the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) office on the Assembly premises, the minister said that some files were being kept pending for months together. "Why should files be kept pending for years? There is a need for

reforms in governance. Certainly, our government will not keep quiet," he said.

Referring to BRS working president KT Rama Rao criticising the Congress government, he said: "KTR should be ashamed... he is accusing the Congress government of delaying payments to sarpanches. It was the then BRS government which kept bills pending for years."

The minister, meanwhile, said that the people of Telangana defeated BRS in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections and they are now waiting to give a similar verdict in the upcoming local body elections.

BJP creating communal rift over caste survey: Shabbir

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad

MOHAMMED Ali Shabbir, Advisor to Chief Minister, on Tuesday accused the BJP leaders of distorting facts to create communal divisions and provoke non-Muslim OBCs against the Congress government.

Addressing a press conference at the Gandhi Bhavan, he said that the BJP leaders are falsely accusing the Congress government of rendering injustice to OBCs by including Muslims in the OBC category in the recent Socio-Economic, Education, Employment, Political and Caste Survey.

"The BJP-led government at the Centre and in several states also classified Muslim communities as OBCs," he claimed.

Shabbir Ali slammed Union Coal & Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy, MoS for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar and Rajya Sabha MP K Laxman, stating that their claims were factually incorrect.

He said that the BJP leaders are trying to create a divide among the people by twisting facts. He challenged the BJP leaders to remove Muslims from OBC category in Gujarat.

Shabbir Ali backed his argument with historical reports and government records proving that multiple commissions had recognised Muslim backward communities as OBCs long before the Congress government came to power in Telangana.

Stating that various commissions appointed by the Union government have recognised Muslims as OBCs, he said that he would send copies of these reports to BJP leaders by post or email. He said BJP was deliberately creating fear among non-Muslim OBCs, falsely claiming that Muslim reservations were undermining their interests.



The BJP-led government at the Centre and in several states also classified Muslim communities as OBCs. Mohammed Ali Shabbir, Advisor to Chief Minister

Justice League Nagam seeks quashing of FIR in election case

STATING that the charges against him are baseless, former minister Nagam Janardhan Reddy has moved the Telangana High Court seeking quashing of the proceedings against him in connection with FIR No. 455/2023 registered under Section 188 of the IPC and pending before the judicial first-class magistrate, Nagarkurnool.

The FIR was lodged against Janardhan Reddy and another person during the 2023 Assembly elections based on a complaint filed by K Nageshwar Rao, a member of the flying squad on election duty. The complainant claimed that on November 26, 2023, he observed the former minister addressing a gathering of around 250-300 people at the Ambedkar statue in Sripuram village, without prior permission. The court is expected to hear the plea in a day or two.

RR collector told to probe transfer of assigned land

JUSTICE CV Bhaskar Reddy of the Telangana High Court has permitted the petitioners to submit a representation to the collector of Rangareddy district regarding the alleged illegal transfer of assigned land.

The court directed the district collector to conduct an inquiry into the issue and, if the land in question is found to be assigned land, initiate

appropriate action under the Telangana Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977.

Additionally, the collector has been instructed to register criminal cases against those involved in the illegal sale and registration of the land within three months from the date of receiving the petitioners' application.

The case revolves around a

parcel of land measuring 33.5 guntas in Sy.No.176/23, situated at Aziznagar, Moinabad mandal of Rangareddy district.

The land was originally assigned to one Antharam Laxmaiah, the husband of the main petitioner, E Nagamma, and the father of the other three petitioners, as well as respondents Antharam Darshan and D Vijaya.

Senior advocate Pasnooru collapses in HC, dies

Senior advocate Venu Gopal Rao Pasnooru passed away on Tuesday after collapsing in the Telangana High Court due to a heart attack. The veteran lawyer was arguing a case when he collapsed. He was rushed to a private hospital, but could not be revived.

As a mark of respect, almost all benches of the high court stopped adjudication of cases for the day. Several members of the legal fraternity visited the hospital to pay their respects. Acting Chief Justice Sujoy Paul is-



sued oral orders directing that no adverse orders be passed in the cases listed for the day. The mortal remains of Pasnooru were kept at the Global Hospital, awaiting the arrival of his daughter from the US.

Tapgate accused asked to move lower court for bail

REFUSING to issue any specific direction to the magistrate, Justice B Vijaysen Reddy of the Telangana High Court on Tuesday directed the petitioners - Accused Nos. 4 and 5 in the sensational phone-tapping case - to argue the case on its merits before the lower court. Justice Reddy was adjudicating a lunch motion writ petition filed by Thodupunoori Santosh Kumar and Bandi Parsharamulu, against whom FIR No. 1205 of 2024 was registered with the Panjagutta police station on December 1, 2024.

Former minister T Harish Rao is Accused No. 1 in the case while former DCP P Radhakrishnan is Accused No. 2. Both of them have been granted interim protection from arrest by the High Court. The petitioners, through their counsel, alleged before the court that the police deliberately arrested them without prior notice. They also alleged that the police subjected them and their family members to harassment under the guise of investigation, frequently summoning them to the police station, forcing them to sign blank papers, and using abusive language against them, leading to severe mental distress.

Govt forms advisory panel for TGDPS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

THE state government constituted a 10-member advisory committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka for Telangana Development Planning Society (TGDPS).

Principal Secretary of Planning Department Sandeep Kumar Sultania issued orders to this effect on Tuesday. Professors Kancha Ilaiah, Shantha Sinha, Himanshu Bhukya, Purushottam Reddy, economic expert Sukhadeo Thorat, social activist Nikhil Dey and All India Professionals' Congress chairman Praveen Chakravarty were appointed as members of the committee.

By TG Naidu

Espionage: NIA arrests 2 from Karwar, Ankola

Accused leaked crucial information related to Kadamba Naval Base to agents from Pak

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @Karwar/Ankola



NIA sleuths with Akshay Naik and Vethan Tandel in Karwar on Tuesday.

SLEUTHS of National Investigation Agency (NIA) raided two houses in Karwar and Ankola taluks on Tuesday morning and arrested two persons for espionage and leaking crucial information related to the Kadamba Naval Base to agents from Pakistan.

The accused, identified as Akshay Naik and Vethan Tandel, passed information, including photographs of warships and aircraft carriers, to the agents. They were taken to the NIA headquarters in Hyderabad for further investigation.

After two years of investigation, the sleuths cracked the

espionage case where the duo, who were working on a contract basis at the naval base, were found sending crucial information to their handlers. Naik and Tandel were produced before a court in Karwar for transit warrant before taking them to Hyderabad.

Both were taken into custody

for interrogation a few months ago by NIA sleuths after a case was registered on June 5, 2023, in Hyderabad.

A few arrests made in Mumbai and other places revealed that some employees of Shivam Marine Corporation and Ultra Marine Corporation, which supply skilled workers to the naval base, were sending information and photographs of the base to the agents of the enemy country. Naik and Tandel used to send pictures and other information to the accused arrested by NIA sleuths.

Six NIA sleuths arrived in Karwar on Monday night. With the help of local police, they raided the houses of Naik and Tandel at Kalmeshwar village

in Ankola taluk and Mudgha village near Amdhalli.

The sources revealed that incriminating information, photographs and electronic gadgets were recovered from them. The duo were interrogated in August 2024 for leaking information to agents from Pakistan. They were paid Rs 5,000 a month for eight months. Naik and Tandel's involvement was revealed by Deepak, who was arrested by NIA sleuths in Vishakapatnam sometime ago.

Naik and Tandel were summoned to Hyderabad for interrogation. After an inquiry, the NIA took their mobile phones and other gadgets and let them go. The NIA kept a close watch on their movements since then.

HYDRAA finds water at 4 feet depth during Bathukamma Kunta revival

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hyderabad



HYDRAA, which undertook the excavation of Bathukamma Kunta in Amberpet for rejuvenation, has uncovered hidden water sources as water began oozing out during the excavation process on Tuesday. Over the years, a major portion of the lake has shrunk due to encroachments by land grabbers.

As part of its lake restoration initiative, HYDRAA began excavation work and shortly after the digging commenced, water started gushing out once knee-deep soil was removed. Locals believe that if all the waste and debris dumped in the lake for decades are cleared, full rejuvenation can be carried out.

Meanwhile, some social media posts have claimed that the excavation damaged underground pipelines. However, HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath dismissed these claims,

stating that misinformation was being spread. HMWSSB has also confirmed that the excavation did not affect any water pipelines.

"I am still unsure, as I could hardly believe water was found just four feet below the ground. If true, this would be a miracle. Regardless, HYDRAA has now taken on the critical task of lake rejuvenation. HYDRAA is not just about demolitions. It is committed to the constructive work of protecting and restoring

water bodies," Ranganath stated.

HYDRAA has undertaken lake rejuvenation efforts at six locations while also removing encroachments. These lakes include Bathukamma Kunta (Amberpet), Bumrukha Dawala (Old City), Thammidi Kunta (behind N Convention), Sunnam Cheruvu (Guttala Begumpet, Madhapur), Nalla Cheruvu (Kukatpally) and Pedda Cheruvu (on the Uppal-Warangal Highway).

HC directs police to give nod for Shivaji Jayanti fete

T G NAIDU @Hyderabad

THE Telangana High Court, on Tuesday, directed the Hyderabad police to accord permission for the celebration of Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti on February 19.

Justice B Vijaysen Reddy issued the direction while hearing a petition filed through a lunch motion by Nitin Nandkar, president of Veer Shivaji Sena and BJYM, Golconda, Hyderabad.

The petitioner approached the HC seeking intervention after the CP, Hyderabad, DCP (East Zone), and ACP (Sultan Bazar) failed to act upon their application dated February 17, requesting permission for the event.

Justice Vijaysen Reddy also instructed the petitioner to ensure that the event is conducted in a peaceful manner.

Tiger pugmarks spotted, high alert in Bhupalpally

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bhupalpally



THE Mahadevpur forest officials sounded a high alert in the Palgula forest area and put their entire staff on vigil after pugmarks of a tiger were spotted on the outskirts of Palgula village, Mahadevpur mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Tuesday.

The villagers who spotted the pugmarks immediately informed the Mahadevpur forest officials. Speaking to TNE, Mahadevpur Forest Range Officer (FRO) R Ravi said, "Four teams have been deployed to track the movement of the big cat in the forest area. Following the analysis of the pugmarks, we found that the tiger is moving towards the Mahadevpur forest area."

He added that the Forest department is also taking measures

to safeguard the tiger from poachers and has alerted the staff to identify and remove electric fencing or trenches near water bodies immediately for the safety of the animal.

Camera traps were installed to capture the movement of the tiger. Meanwhile, the Gram Panchayat (GP) officials have been making announcements in their villages, asking people to be cautious and not venture alone into the forest area. The villagers are in a grip of fear and are scared to even step out of their houses.

Missing woman found murdered

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Medak

THE body of a 45-year-old woman who went missing on February 6 was found burnt in a forest area near Kondapur on Tuesday. She was allegedly murdered by a 40-year-old man, Yuser alias Durgaiyah, with whom she was having an affair.

According to Medak police, the deceased was identified as Renuka.

Police said that Renuka stopped meeting Durgaiyah after being chided by family members. Irrate over this, the accused on February 6 took her to the forest area, consumed alcohol with her, stabbed her to death and burnt the body.

Following Renuka's disappearance, her son lodged a complaint. Based on the call data of the deceased, police suspected Durgaiyah's role and interrogated him. The accused admitted to his crimes and was sent to judicial remand.

NMDC chief: Mining sector is backbone of economic progress

ENS @Hyderabad

NATIONAL Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) Director (Commercial) V Suresh stated that the country's mining sector is the backbone of economic progress and would be pivotal in achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Addressing a meeting organised by the Mining Engineers' Association of India (MEAI), Hyderabad Chapter, on 'Mining the Minerals: Way Forward Towards Atmanirbhar Viksit Bharat 2047', on Tuesday, he said sustainable mining, technological innovation, skill development, policy reforms and

global partnerships would define the future of the industry.

The event, held in Hyderabad from February 17 to 18, discussed the impact of the MMDR Act, amendments in royalty structures, mining of minor minerals, and policy reforms shaping the sector's future.

The NMDC director (technical) Vinay Kumar stressed the need for policy reforms, increased exploration, sustainable mining, decarbonisation and attracting young talent in the mining sector.

SCCL chairman and managing director N Balram said that the country's mining industry must evolve with innovation.

EXPRESS READ

Two TGSRTC buses catch fire, no casualties

Hyderabad: Two parked Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) buses caught fire in Kishaiguda depot on Tuesday evening. No casualties were reported and the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Depot manager Krishna told TNE that the top of one bus was completely burnt as it was made of Plaster of Paris and two seats were burnt in another. He said the fire started in one bus and spread to another, which was adjacent to it. "Upon being alerted, we moved the bus away before the fire tenders reached the spot and doused the fire." Technical teams will visit on Wednesday to determine the cause of the fire, the official added.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
NOTIFICATION No.57/EE/C14/GHMC/KZ/2024-25
Inviting tenders for "Beautification of Gun Park Junction by installation of dynamic water fountain with digital mechanism under Goshamahal Circle-14, GHMC".

ANDHRA PRADESH FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
Head Office: 3rd Floor, P.V.S. Land Mark, Near APIC Towers, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, AP-522503

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website : www.pspcl.in

MAHARASHTRA SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
"Krupanidhi", 9 Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400001

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
e-TENDER NOTICE
199 to 220/CGM/EF/ Revenue Circle/SFR/ Covers/2024-2025

BEEDI LEAVES SALE NOTICE
Ref.No.0P.001/BL/2025 Season/1395, Date: 17.02.2025
Sale of about 13,500 S.Bs of Beedi leaves of 2025 season grouped into (11) units, pertaining to the Rajahmundry circle of A.P. Forest Department, proposed to be held through "e-Tender cum e-Auction" through "Konugolu" a Govt. of Andhra Pradesh e-portal

IDFC First Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC09792

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA.
At : Ichhapur, Post: Shree Baladevew, Email: ervsskendorapara@gmail.com

ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (APCRDA)
E PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
S.No. NIT No. Name of the Work

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
The Medical Superintendent & Head of Department, AGMC & GBP Hospital, Agartala invites e-Tender from Original Equipment Manufacturers/ Authorized Dealer for "Procurement of Machinery and Equipments for use in AICU, under the dept. of Anaesthesia, AGMC & GBP Hospital Agartala, West Tripura" subject to certain terms & conditions through E-Procurement website of Government of Tripura, https://tripuratenders.gov.in

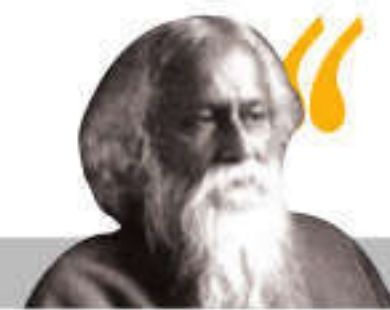
PUBLIC NOTICE
GOLD AUCTION/CUM INVITATION NOTICE
The Below mentioned borrower has been issued notices to pay the outstanding amount towards the credit facility against Gold ornaments availed by him from IDFC FIRST Bank Limited. Since the borrower has failed to repay the dues under the facility, we are constrained to conduct an auction of the pledged Gold ornaments on 27/02/2025.

0-1501:
1. The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Kendrapara on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage bid in DOUBLE cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes in Kendrapara District.

WHEN YOU REACH THE END OF YOUR ROPE, TIE A KNOT IN IT AND HANG ON
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

RAIPUR DISTRICT URBAN PUBLIC SERVICE SOCIETY
e-Procurement Tender Notice
Main Portal: http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in
NIT NO: 2019/RDUPSS/CITYBUS/2025 RAIPUR DATED: 17-02-2025

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560 001.
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My countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them a country is greater than the ideals of humanity

Rabindranath Tagore

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Rammath Goenka

WELFARE SCHEMES ARE NECESSARY, BUT THEY NEED FUNDING PLANS

THE Supreme Court's remark that the handouts announced liberally during elections could be creating "a class of parasites" was an unkind cut made while hearing a case about providing shelter to the homeless. The backdrop was the competitive populism practised by every political party in India today. Caught in the middle of populist politics and conservative economics are crores of Indians still in the throes of poverty, for whom the so-called freebies are a much-needed lifeline.

It's true that political parties have been tripping over each other to offer newer 'guarantees' to grab votes—cash transfers, free foodgrains and farm subsidies among them. The central government runs one of the largest schemes, giving 81 crore people free grains under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, a Covid-era scheme extended till December 2028. All state governments offer welfare schemes of one shape or another. According to a recent report from a private bank, a fifth of India's adult women are now eligible for the cash transfers offered by various state governments.

It's also true that at stake is taxpayers' money, which is spread thin to keep the schemes going and the politicians in business. But a cash-for-votes model can dent both democracy and development. Such largesse is seen going against the belief in ambition, enterprise and competition, and fostering resentment against the 'brother's keeper' philosophy. But in truth, hardly anyone turns down the opportunity to work and earn a dignified keep, as MGNREGA has proved. The Supreme Court had sought to know how long such freebies could be sustained and if jobs could be provided; it is soon due to hear related petitions.

Competitive populism may be endemic in an elections-only democracy, but it's not sustainable. Voters must demand sound financial plans from populist politicians to avoid thrusting their future generations into tougher economic realities. How to fund development and welfare should be made clear first; and taxation cannot be the only way. Crores of Indians face various levels of poverty. So it's the welfare state's responsibility to explain how it will provide for all that has been promised.

EXPAND REVENUE BASE BEYOND MINING ROYALTY

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's first full budget does not carry screaming announcements. Instead, it adopts a pragmatic approach that bets big on infrastructure to push growth, while not losing sight of the social sectors. The ₹2.90-lakh-crore budget for 2025-26 presented by Majhi, also the state's finance minister, gives due weight to agriculture with a 12 percent jump in allocation focusing on cold storage chains, crop diversification, irrigation and research. Health and education have received necessary provisions, while the government's flagship Subhadra scheme, under which women get yearly cash transfers of ₹10,000 for five years, has been given more heft. A whopping ₹13,000 crore for decongesting Bhubaneswar and setting up a mega metropolitan region over 7,500 sq km are also welcome decisions. The budget also had its share of welfarism, as it unfurled 16 new schemes.

The proposals make a compelling pitch to build industrial corridors, and develop ports and expressways that can address regional disparity, a crucial aspect ignored for long. In its allocation of ₹62,206 crore, the Majhi government has thrown its weight behind infrastructure development in both urban and rural areas. A string of road projects that link ports to the hinterland, a push for new port projects, and ₹6,500 crore for developing 3,000 km of roads to industrial and mineral belts will go a long way in supporting industry and trade. "These transformative infrastructure projects will fuel industrial expansion, trade and employment, bringing us closer to our vision of a prosperous and self-reliant Odisha," Majhi said in his speech. He backed it with a capital outlay of ₹65,012 crore—more than 6 percent of the state gross domestic product, a high proportion among the major states.

The CM has adopted a balanced approach to development while sticking to a moderate rise in outlay, since slow spending is a concern. Given the state's own non-tax revenues of ₹60,000 crore, 80 percent of which comes from mining royalties, there is a cushion on the credit side that the government enjoys. However, the vision for having a \$500-billion economy by 2036 will require the Majhi government to expand its revenue base, spend much more and then use the capacity created. The bolder decisions await round the corner.

QUICK TAKE

DO UNTO OTHERS

A 20-year-old Nepali student's death by suicide at KIIT Bhubaneswar should worry us for several reasons. Among them are Indian institutions' continuing inability to deal with harassment allegations in time and the shadow the tragedy casts on India-Nepal relations. But as we keenly watch lakhs of Indian students going abroad every year, we miss the tens of thousands who make the reverse journey—a stream that Prakriti Lamsal had joined. The latest government numbers show more than 46,000 foreign students were studying in India in 2021-22, with Nepalis forming the largest cohort. We must accord them the safety and courtesy that we demand of our children abroad.

EARNING from the mistakes made during the era of the League of Nations, the global community came together at the end of the Second World War for yet another experiment—the United Nations. However, the term 'global governance' truly acquired more profound dimensions after a wave of economic reforms washed over the world. Remarkably, the processes of economic and political liberalisation walked hand-in-hand.

It entailed an acceptance of the rules of a free-market economy, the evolution of and adherence to global benchmarking mechanisms, and recognising the inevitability of the institutionalisation of global governance without undermining the cultural sensibilities of every nation. But though it promised a level playing field, globalisation didn't mean a one-size-fits-all approach.

Yet, to a great extent, at least some features of the LPG trio—liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation—have now become irreversible. The free-market economy has, understandably, impacted the development economy too. Meanwhile, the four Ts of travel, trade, technology and trends in lifestyles have changed to large degrees. The remarkable ease of travel that globalisation has brought into other spheres is important, even if not always welcome.

At the same time, we need to appreciate the emergence and importance of agencies and organisations that are into setting global benchmarks of economic and social development on the basis of their own measuring rods. They routinely undertake studies and surveys that are evolved later as globally-followed indexes and reports. However, the yardsticks applied by most such agencies are based on Western needs and approaches.

While one can't deny the importance of greater consumption in market economies, justice is not done to those who adhere to the principles of sustainable consumption. People in the eastern world believe in *aparigraha*, or non-possession, which is diametrically opposite to the most influential thoughts in the western world. Hence, those shaping the ground rules of global governance have to take into account the difference in human values adhered to not just by one part of the world.

Here comes into the play what could perhaps be rightly described as globalised nationalism. Such a framework

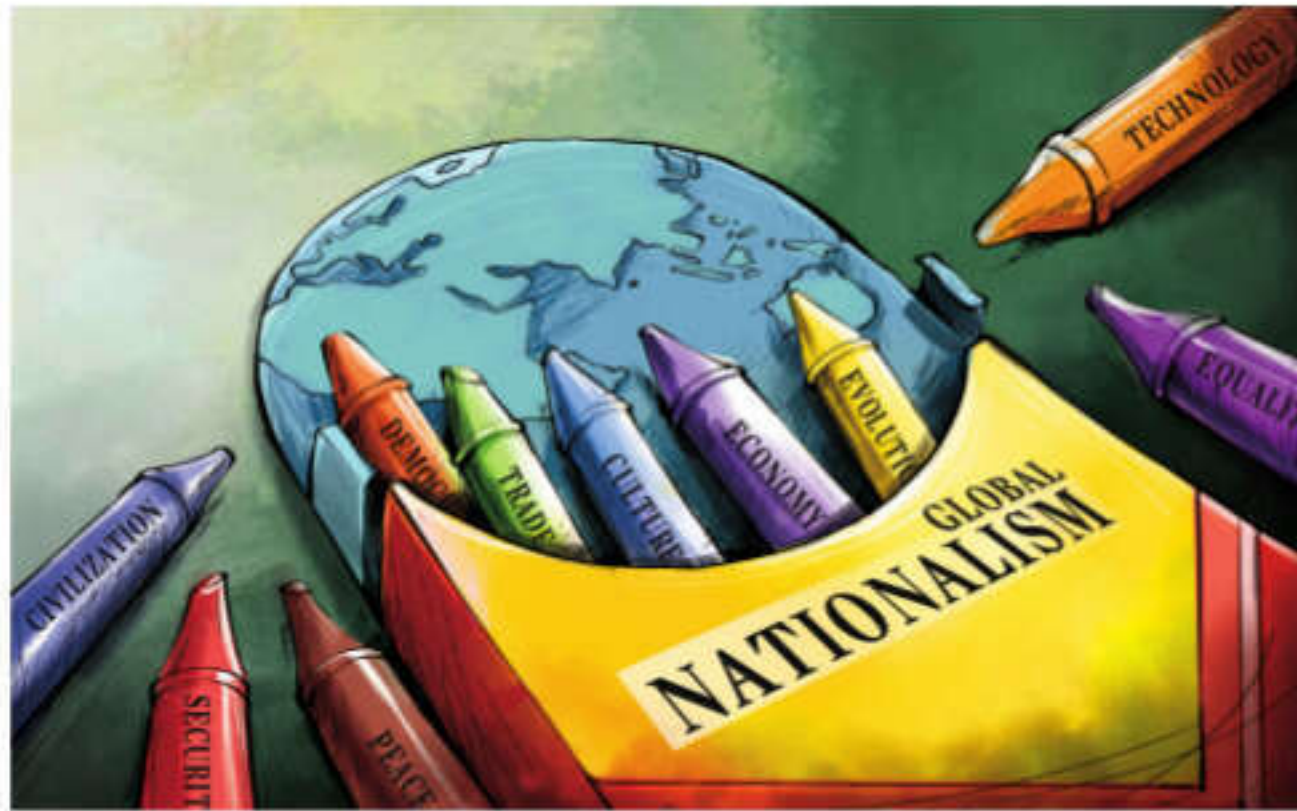
As global governance faces another existential crisis, we must learn from past mistakes and shun uniform prescriptions for all. Celebration of diversity could make us a closer-knit global family

LIVING IN AN ERA OF GLOBALISED NATIONALISM

VINAY SAHASRABUDDHE



Senior BJP leader



MANDAR PARODIKAR

is needed because it's patently unreasonable to envision global progress in the current paradigm without compromising national identity. It would recognise that while every society is a part of the global community, protecting and preserving their unique cultural and civilisational identities is, essentially, a part of human rights.

This is because the beauty of the world—not just India—is in its diversity. It is diversity that brings vibrancy and colourfulness. Painting all canvases with the same brush is in no way different from being insensitive and undemocratic. Thomas Friedman's book, *The World is Flat*, explains the inevitability of globalisation while rightly commending mechanisms providing a level play-

ing field for all in the comity of nations. But, this flattening of the world in the cultural context will be detrimental to basic human values. 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' would not be effective in regions where apples are not grown. From culinary traditions to music, dance and even fine arts and aesthetics, the global community cannot be governed with a uniform approach.

Here comes the importance of spiritual or cultural democracy. For truly peaceful co-existence, the global community would do better if proactive efforts are made for globalisation of this spiritual democracy. Without universal acceptance and adherence to the principles of democracy in spiritual matters; conflicts arising out of monopolistic ap-

RETURN OF LUDDITE FEARS IN AI ERA

IN 1811, armed with hammers and desperation, a band of English textile workers stormed factories to smash the mechanised looms that threatened their livelihoods. These 'Luddites' weren't resisting technology itself—they were fighting an economic shift that had no place for them. Fast forward two centuries: the anxiety remains, though the machines have changed.

In 2016, when AlphaGo dismantled world champion Lee Sedol at the ancient game of Go—long thought to be beyond machine capabilities—tech writer Kevin Kelly issued a chilling prediction: "Before AI, a job was safe if it required intelligence. Now, those are the first to go." The Economic Survey 2024-25 wrestles with this same conundrum: will artificial intelligence be a force for empowerment or an architect of obsolescence?

The survey dedicates a chapter to the impact of AI on employment, portraying it as both a challenge and an opportunity. However, the analysis is rooted in theoretical optimism, assuming that institutional mechanisms will adequately mitigate disruptions. While acknowledging risks such as job displacement, inequality and the concentration of AI benefits among a few firms, the survey provides solutions that may downplay the account for the scale and speed of AI-driven changes.

Today, AI is not only taking over repetitive jobs, but also jobs that require critical thinking. In healthcare, AI systems like DeepMind can diagnose diseases from medical images more accurately than radiologists. In criminal justice, tools like COMPAS assess recidivism risk more consistently than judges. In education, AI-driven platforms like DreamBox and Khan Academy tailor learning experiences to individual students. And so on.

The penetration of AI into India's job market is expected to induce significant structural shifts, particularly in labour-intensive service sectors. An IIM Ahmedabad survey reveals that 68 percent of white-collar professionals anticipate their roles being partially or fully automated within five years, while 40 percent foresee skill obsolescence. McKinsey Global Institute estimates that up to 30 percent of work hours in Europe and the US could be automated by 2030, suggesting similar trends in India's IT and process outsourcing industries, which employ 5.4 million people.

ADITYA SINHA



Public policy professional

Job losses in IT services and customer support could exacerbate unemployment, given that services contribute half of India's GDP and remain the largest employer outside agriculture. But adoption is already accelerating, as evidenced by PhonePe's 60 percent reduction in customer support staff and ICICI Bank's AI-led automation of credit underwriting and risk modelling.



WIMEDIA COMMONS

We shouldn't be like Luddites—loom-breakers in 19th-century England who feared job losses from steam-powered machines—as artificial intelligence promises to automate millions of jobs including some high-skill ones. The Economic Survey provides a framework for AI integration. It's time to act on it

The survey provides a framework for AI integration, emphasising skilling, education and institutional reforms to mitigate labour displacement and enhance productivity. It rightly argues that AI should be a labour-augmenting force rather than a substitute, particularly in high-demand service sectors.

By shifting the focus from narrow AI-specific training to foundational skills like critical thinking, adaptability and creativity, the survey recognises the long-term importance of a dynamic and resilient workforce. It also highlights the need for demand-driven skilling ecosystems, ensuring that automation-induced job losses are balanced by employment creation in emerging roles. The assumption that India has "time

to build institutions" before AI-driven disruptions become widespread is problematic. AI's rapid adoption, particularly in services-heavy economies like India, will likely outstrip the pace at which enabling, insuring and stewarding institutions can be established and made effective. Institutional reforms—especially those aimed at skilling, reskilling, and establishing safety nets—historically take years, if not decades, to show measurable impact, whereas AI-driven automation is advancing at an exponential rate, driven by market forces, global competition and cost-cutting imperatives. Unlike previous industrial revolutions, where technology complemented human labour before displacing it, AI directly substitutes white-collar cognitive and decision-making tasks, meaning that job losses will not be confined to low-skill workers alone.

India's existing institutional shortcomings exacerbate this challenge. The Kausal Vikas Yojana, the country's primary skilling programme, has not been as successful as it should have been due to weak industry linkages, poor quality training and a lack of alignment with market demands. Expecting a rapid institutional pivot towards AI-specific upskilling is unrealistic, given limited fiscal space, administrative inefficiencies and the decentralised nature of education.

The sectoral composition of the labour market accelerates the risk. The IT and outsourcing sector is particularly vulnerable to large-scale automation as AI models begin to handle customer service, data processing and even software development. Unlike manufacturing, which required massive capital investments and physical infrastructure, AI adoption is software-based and can be implemented rapidly. The outsourcing sector in the Philippines is already seeing significant AI-driven job losses, and India will not be immune.

Unlike past transitions, AI adoption will be sudden and widespread, leaving little room for reactive policymaking. So it requires proactive action now. (Views are personal) (On X @adityasinha004)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Deportation fallout

Ref: *Dilemma of desperate deportees* (Feb 18). Emigrants taking the 'donkey route' abroad underscores the lengths they will go for a better life. It's a remark on how little this country has to offer to them. It's devastating for those who have worked so hard to build a life abroad. It also poses a question: should we deport immigrants who have lived in a different land for 20+ years, and worked just as hard for the country like other citizens? **Kavya V, email**

Cautionary tale

The experience of these deported migrants should serve as a cautionary tale to unemployed Indian youth about the consequences of illegal emigration. The central government should examine the root causes of this growing trend, particularly the role of severe unemployment in India and devise an appropriate rehab-cum-resettlement plan for these deportees. **NR Jagannath, Bengaluru**

Sports bias

Ref: *Sinner's 3-month ban comes under scanner* (Feb 18). Bias in the sports field would be a direct threat to athletes' opportunities. These cases should be handled with equal priority to ensure that young sports enthusiasts are not discouraged. **Karthikey S Kaimal, Kottayam**

Campus complaint

Ref: *Unrest in KIIT varsity over Nepali student's suicide* (Feb 18). The tragic death of Prakriti Lamsal, a Nepali student at KIIT University, not only disturbs the academic environment on campus but also threatens the friendly ties between India and Nepal. Urgent action is needed to ensure justice for the victim and prevent more such occurrences. **Aman Giri, Bhubaneswar**

Congress stance

Ref: *Case against Pak national linked to Gogoi's wife* (Feb 18). The Assam police's case against a Pakistani national believed to have close links with Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's wife Elizabeth Coburn is worrying. The Congress must clarify its stance, since the party's pro-Pak and China stand is unmissable. **K V Raghuram, Wayanad**

Skill gap

With Karnataka reducing base job targets, there are fewer traditional roles on offer. While automation promises efficiency, are we truly prepared for the workforce shift it demands? The question isn't just about job loss, but whether AI is widening the skill gap faster than we can bridge it. **Shalivya Budhiraja, Bengaluru**

Inquiry into station stampede on fast track, report soon: Rlys

Seeks to clarify that RPF report is from a single officer and doesn't represent a formal probe

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE investigation into the stampede at New Delhi Railway Station last Saturday is progressing rapidly, with a special inquiry team of two members reviewing statements from hundreds of people, including railway employees from various departments, according to officials in the railway ministry. Sources say the team is on track to finalise the investigation report at the earliest.

The Ministry of Railways is reportedly preparing to take stern punitive action against those found responsible for the incident, regardless of their rank following the inquiry committee report.

Officials stressed on prioritising accountability in the aftermath of the tragedy. However, a Railway Protection Force (RPF) officer report that surfaced in the media on Monday has caused ripples within the railway administration and contradicted claims made by top-ranking officials regarding the stampede.

The report flags lapses in crowd control on Saturday, con-



tributing to the tragedy.

Speaking to this newspaper on Tuesday, a senior official said the RPF report came from a single officer and did not represent a formal inquiry.

"The investigation into the stampede is moving quickly. The inquiry team, consisting of two members are expected to complete the report soon," he said, pleading anonymity.

A senior ministry official added that nearly 100 railway employees and others have re-

corded their statements since the inquiry began. "Notices have been issued to several more individuals and railway staff, including RPF members, to provide their testimonies, said the official.

Speaking to this newspaper on Monday, a top-ranking official from the ministry had emphasised, "Taking any action before the report of the inquiry committee, and without allowing those found responsible to respond, would not be in keeping with natural

Over 1.16 cr travellers between Feb 11 & 18

The ongoing Maha Kumbh has resulted in an unprecedented number of passengers travelling by rail, surpassing previous records. The Indian Railways faces significant challenges in managing the massive influx, especially from the Hindi heartlands. Over 1.16 crore passengers have travelled from Prayagraj to various destinations between February 11 and 18, with regular and special trains making 2,578 trips.

justice". Around 300 railway staff members from across departments were on duty on the day of the stampede.

The railway inquiry team is believed to have started recording the statements of all those on duty on platforms 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, in addition to porters, vendors, and others on the day the stampede occurred. The inquiry is expected to continue gathering vital information to determine the stampede's exact cause and make recommendations to ensure such incidents do not recur.

Rahul slams midnight call on CEC, says 'disrespectful'

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A day after PM Narendra Modi-led committee picked Gyanesh Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday slammed the decision saying that it was "disrespectful" for the PM and the home minister to have made a midnight decision when the composition of the committee and the process is being challenged in the Supreme Court. Gandhi and Amit Shah are members of the selection committee.

The fundamental aspect of an independent Election Commission free from executive interference is the process of choosing ECs and CECs, Gandhi said in his dissent note, which was shared on 'X'.

During the panel meeting on Monday, Gandhi pushed for the postponement of the decision on the CEC till the SC hearing on a petition challenging the constitution of the selection panel. The SC is set to hear the case on Wednesday.

In his dissent note, the Congress leader said that by violating the SC order and removing the Chief Justice of India from the committee, the government



Plea challenging CEC appointment in SC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would on February 19 take up on "priority basis" the pleas against the appointments of the CEC and ECs under the 2023 law. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh was told by an NGO that the government excluded the CJ and made a "mockery of democracy".

has exacerbated the concerns of voters over the integrity of the electoral process.

He said that in a judgment on March 2, 2023, the constitutional bench of the SC ordered that the appointment of the CEC and ECs should be undertaken by a committee comprising the PM, LoP, and the CJI. "The Supreme Court judgment reflected the larger concern among voters over the integrity of our electoral process. This is also reflected in surveys that show a continuing decline in the trust of voters in poll process and its institutions," he said.

Soon after the SC order, the Centre notified legislation in August 2023 that bypassed the spirit and the letter of the SC's order, he pointed out. The removal of the CJI is in violation

of the letter and spirit of the SC order, he said.

Kumar is the first CEC to be appointed under the provisions of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

The government order was challenged by a PIL. The SC has indicated its intention to take up the matter on February 19, 2025, less than 48 hours away, he said in the note.

Gandhi said that while speaking in the Constituent Assembly in June 1949 to discuss the setting up of an independent Election Commission, Dr B R Ambedkar warned about executive interference in democracy and the affairs of the Election Commission.

CBI dismantles global cybercrime network targeting Germans since '21

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

AS part of its ongoing Operation Chakra-IV, officials said on Tuesday that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in close coordination with German authorities, has dismantled a sophisticated virtual asset-supported cybercrime network in India and abroad that has been targeting German nationals since 2021.

The CBI's international operation division registered a case on February 12, 2025, against Rahul Shaw, Shubham Sharma, Rajeev Budhiraja and unknown others under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the IT Act 2000 to launch the investigation.

A senior CBI official said, "Following the registration of the case, agency sleuths swiftly conducted extensive searches at multiple locations associated with the accused, yielding incriminating evidence." The raids were at six locations across Delhi, Kolkata and Siliguri between February 14 and 17, and revealed that the transnational cyber-enabled financial crime network was channelling the proceeds of crime through virtual assets, he added.

As part of the investigation, the CBI arrested Rahul Shaw from Siliguri. A key accused in the case, he was produced before a special court here. "Dur-

OPERATION CHAKRA-IV

The syndicate has been targeting German nationals since 2021



The syndicate duped German nationals worth Euro 646,032

The CBI registered FIR on February 12, 2025 against accused Rahul Shaw, Shubham Sharma, Rajeev Budhiraja under various sections of the IPC and the IT Act

Raids were conducted at six locations across Delhi, Kolkata and Siliguri between February 14 and 17. 24 hard disks of computer systems used by the accused persons seized

ing raids conducted at his residential premises, the CBI sleuths recovered seven mobile phones, one laptop and incriminating documents pertaining to crime," the official said.

"The CBI has also unearthed an illegal 'Call Centre' being operated by Shaw and other accused at Webel IT Park, Matigara, Darjeeling and dismantled the same," the official said. During the raid, 24 hard disks of computer of the accused, containing digital evidence, were recovered from the illegal call centre, the official added.

The officials said that investigating the case to find a broader network based on international leads is ongoing and is in close coordination with foreign law enforcement agencies.

The official alleged that dur-

ing 2021-2022, the accused conspired to target German victims by gaining unauthorised remote access to their computer systems and bank accounts under the pretext of offering tech support. "They falsely informed the Germany-based victims that their bank accounts had been compromised. Claiming that their funds were at risk, the accused allegedly manipulated the victims into transferring Euro 646,032 to cryptocurrency wallets controlled by them," they said.

The agency has initiated 'Operation Chakra-IV' to combat and dismantle organised cyber-enabled financial crime networks through a globally coordinated law enforcement response leveraging INTERPOL channels.

SC takes 'dirty mind, pervert' jibe at Youtuber

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a major relief to social media influencer and YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed that no coercive action be taken against him regarding his alleged obscene remarks made on a YouTube show 'India's Got Latent'. However, the court reprimanded him for his inappropriate remarks.

A two-judge bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh passed the order on Allahbadia's plea.

"Arrest of petitioner (Allahbadia) be stayed in all the FIRs registered against him. There will be no further FIR be registered. He can approach the local police of Maharashtra and Assam for protection of life and liberty in case of any threat. He should deposit his passport with the Thane police. He cannot leave the country without the prior permission of the Supreme Court," the court said. Allahbadia is facing legal scrutiny for his alleged obscene remarks -- on controversial comments on parents and sex made on social media -- in his YouTube show 'India's Got Latent'.

During the course of the hearing, advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, appearing for Allahbadia, said that this plea was for clubbing of FIRs. The petitioner (Allahbadia) has received many death threats. First in Maharashtra, then As-

ALSO IN TOP COURT

SC flags 'vacuum' in online content

The Supreme Court on Tuesday flagged the "vacuum" in law when it comes to sharing of content on platforms such as YouTube and said "all kinds of things were going on". A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh referred to a case of YouTubers where the Centre was also a party.

'Courts can modify arbitral awards'

The courts empowered to set aside arbitral awards under the 1996 law on arbitration and conciliation, could have the power to modify these decisions, a petitioner argued in the Supreme Court. A five-judge bench is hearing whether courts could modify arbitral awards under the provisions of a 1996 law.

sam, now Jaipur. "The offence is old Section 153-A (Promoting hatred) of the IPC," he said and sought a direction to club the FIRs registered against him across India. The apex court described Allahbadia's controversial remark as "condemnable, reprehensible and dirty."

"In the name of free speech, no one has the licence to speak whatever they want against the norms of the society. People cannot misuse free speech rights. We will do something on this issue," it said.

After listening to Chandrachud, Justice Kant asked him, what were the parameters of obscenity/vulgarity? "If this is not obscenity in this country, then what is it? See the language you are using! You have got licence to speak all kind of (language)!. This type of condem-

nable behavior...it's not a question of an individual's morality. He is insulting parents also! There is something dirty in this person's mind that has been spread through this program," the bench observed.

Questioning the conduct of Allahbadia, the judge went on to observe that "somebody thinks that because I have become so and so popular, I can speak any kind of words and take entire society for granted... you tell us anyone in the world who would like such words!"

The court added, "The words you have chosen, parents will be ashamed, sisters will be ashamed. Entire society will feel ashamed. The pervert mind. The perversion you and your henchmen have exhibited! We have judicial system, bound by rule of law."

Underwater explorations at Dwarka after 20 yrs

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

AFTER two decades, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has resumed underwater explorations off the coast of Dwarka in Gujarat. The Additional Director General-Archaeology (ADG-A) of the Survey Professor Alok Tripathi is leading a team of five archaeologists who are working on the project. For the first time, the exploration team comprises women archaeologists.

The fresh attempt to study underwater archeology in the state assumes significance as PM Narendra Modi had gone scuba diving off the Panchkui beach coast to perform prayers at ancient Dwarka city belonging to Lord Krishna, which is submerged in the waters, in February last year.

Tripathi told this newspaper that explorations would be conducted in a phased manner. In the first phase, locations are being identified for the research. "Based on findings, further activities will be planned and scope of explorations will be expanded," he said.

The ASI has accorded per-



Women archaeologists part of 5-member team

The Archaeological Survey of India has resumed underwater explorations off the coast of Dwarka in Gujarat. Led by ADG-A Alok Tripathi, a team of five archaeologists is working on the project. For the first time, the exploration team comprises women archaeologists.

mission for a year to undertake investigation. The other team members of the ASI are Director (Excavations and Explorations) HK Nayak, Assistant Superintendent Archaeologist Aparajita Sharma, Poonam Vind, and Rajkumari Barbina.

Maritime archaeology and cultural heritage

The underwater investigations mark a step in ASI's mission to safeguard the country's rich cultural heritage and will be a milestone in maritime archaeology studies, officials said, adding that training for young professionals keen on underwater archeology will be conducted.

The project began on Monday. "The team identified an area off the Gomati creek for the initial investigation. The team dived to understand bathymetry of the area and other remains of archaeological interest," said officials.

The officials, privy to the project, said that underwater exploration in Dwarka is part of the renewed Underwater Archaeology Wing of ASI, which has recently been revived to undertake offshore surveys in Dwarka and Bet Dwarka. The unit has been at the forefront of underwater archaeological research since the 1980s.

Since 2001, the wing has been conducting explorations at different sites such as Bangaram Island (Lakshadweep), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Dwarka (Gujarat), Loktak Lake (Manipur), and Elephanta Island (Maharashtra). Archaeologists have also collaborated with the Indian Navy and other government organisations for the study and protection of underwater cultural heritage.

Tripathi, an expert in underwater archeology, especially in the excavation and surveying of archaeological materials submerged underwater, has planned to rope in young archeologists for the project. In 2023, Tripathi led the survey of the Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi after the Supreme Court order. Tripathi also served as the head

2/3rd of world population lacks access to medical O₂, mostly in poor nations

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

FIVE billion people, or nearly two-third of the world's population, lack access to medical oxygen, with highest inequities in low- and middle-income countries, said a latest Lancet Commission report.

The report, published in the Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security, said that 82% of patients worldwide requiring medical oxygen live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and nearly 70% concentrated in south and east Asia, the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa.

The report is the world's first estimate of how unequally medical oxygen is distributed, gaps in coverage of patients in need, along with costs required to bridge these gaps.

Medical oxygen is essential in a healthcare system for treating patients, including those of surgery, asthma, trauma and maternal and child care. It is also critical to a country's pandemic preparedness by helping

WHAT LANCET SAYS

- 82% of patients live in low- and middle-income countries, and nearly 70% concentrated in south and east Asia, the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa
- World's first estimate of how unequally medical oxygen is distributed
- Critical to pandemic preparedness by helping prevent a repeat of COVID oxygen shortages
- Patients include those with acute medical and surgical conditions, and long-term oxygen needs due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- 1 in 3 receive oxygen due to gaps in service contact, readiness, provision and quality

prevent a repeat of COVID-19 oxygen shortages and the mass fatalities that resulted, said a team of researchers.

The patients include those with acute medical and surgical conditions, and long-term oxygen needs due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

However, less than one in three people needing oxygen for medical or surgical conditions receive oxygen due to gaps in service contact, readiness, provision and quality, leaving almost 70% of the patients without coverage. The gaps are even higher in regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa (91%) and South Asia (78%), the authors said.

In a case study accompanying the report, the authors described the scenario of medical oxygen in India, especially as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The pandemic had a catastrophic effect not just because of the rates of contagion and the virulence of the disease but also because of the drastic scarcity in life-saving resources such as medical oxygen," the team from One Health Trust, India, wrote.

They added with hospitals largely relying on third-party vendors for their oxygen demand, the surge in demand during the pandemic led to black-marketing.

CASH SEIZURE

Two people were taken into custody after ₹3.36 crore were recovered from their vehicle in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, police officials said. The Kashmir-bound vehicle was coming from Delhi.

3 HURT AS SUV RAMS INTO THEM IN THANE DISTRICT



INDIA	Max	Min	Mumbai	Max	Min
Ahmedabad	32	21	Mumbai	34	25
Bhopal	29	16	Panaji	34	24
Jaipur	27	17	Patna	28	18
Amritsar	26	12	Lucknow	30	14
Chennai	31	24	Port Blair	30	23
Kolkata	31	22	Imphal	24	12
Srinagar	11	-01	Chandigarh	27	12

BJP makes clean sweep in Gujarat civic body elections

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

THE BJP has secured a landslide victory in Gujarat's civic body elections, clinching 1,315 seats in 66 municipalities and sweeping the Taluka panchayat and Junagadh Municipal Corporation elections.

The Congress could make do with 252 seats in the municipal polls, with Independents securing 126, followed by the AAP with 13, the BSP with 11, and others with four.

In the Taluka polls, the BJP bagged 55 seats to the Congress' 17, Independents getting six. The trend continued in Junagadh, where the BJP secured a sweeping 44 seats, leaving Congress with just 11. Junagadh, the only municipal corporation in these polls, has seen BJP's dominance since 2004, except for a brief Congress victory.

The election process concluded on February 16, recording an average voter turnout of 57%. However, voter enthusiasm varied widely, with Chorwad Municipality emerging as a standout, posting a record 76% turnout—the highest in



the state. Of the 1,844 municipal seats, 167 were uncontested, leaving 4,374 candidates vying for the remaining 1,677 seats. Notably, BJP dominated the uncontested tally, securing 162 seats unopposed, while Congress won just one, and four seats went to other parties.

The BJP swept Valsad, Pardi, and Dharampur municipalities but faced resistance from rebels, with four independents winning in Dharampur. BJP secured 34 of 37 seats in Valsad, while Congress won just one.

In a significant political shift, the SP has clinched power in Ranavav and Kutiyana, marking its emergence in Gujarat's Porbandar district. This victory underscores the party's growing influence in the region, reshaping the political landscape.

Fadnavis warns of action on Maha leaks

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has issued a warning to his cabinet colleagues against the unauthorized leaking of cabinet meeting agendas to the media.

He expressed his disappointment over this ongoing issue and said that appropriate actions would be taken against those responsible.

Fadnavis emphasized, "Ministers have taken an oath of secrecy. Leaking information before the meetings is a clear violation of that oath. Additionally, the media should refrain from prioritizing TRP ratings and increasing newspaper circulation by publishing cabinet decisions before they are officially made."

Sources indicate that the CM is particularly unhappy with alliance ministers, especially those from the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, for their tendency to engage with the media and share internal details and meeting agendas.

A senior NCP leader, said, "Between 2014 and 2019, when Fadnavis was the Chief Minister, the Shiv Sena was a united alliance partner of the BJP, and Fadnavis had a strong grip on the government."

BJP sees red as Mamata takes 'Mrityu Kumbh' jibe

Claims TMC chief is 'nervous' about her fate in 2026 assembly polls

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR AND SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ New Delhi

WEST Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee criticised the Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday for lack of planning at the Maha Kumbh, saying the spiritual gathering in Prayagraj has turned into "Mrityu Kumbh". The BJP brushed aside the criticism, claiming she is "nervous" about her fate in the 2026 assembly elections after seeing Arvind Kejriwal's "complete decimation" in Delhi.

Banerjee launched a broadside against the BJP in the ongoing assembly session over various issues but reserved the Kumbh arrangements for special attention.

She said: "This is 'Mrityu Kumbh'. I respect Maha Kumbh, and I respect the holy Ganga Maa. But there is no planning. How many people have been recovered? There are food and lodging arrangements for the VIPs, and systems are available to get camps (tents) for as high as ₹1 lakh. There are no arrangements for the poor, and a stampede-like situation arose in Kumbh Mela."



The BJP in West Bengal reacted sharply to Mamata's remark. Party leader Suwendu Adhikari appealed to the Hindu and saint community to strongly protest the CM's statement. He said, "I appeal to the Hindu and Saint communities to register a strong protest. A little while ago, on the Floor of the House (State Assembly), Mamata Banerjee said that this is not Maha Kumbh but 'Mrityu Kumbh'. Raise your voice against this attack on Hindu, on Maha Kumbh."

Banerjee and Adhikari exchanged barbs throughout the day. He led BJP legislators for a sit-in protest in the assembly premises earlier in the day, pro-

testing alleged appeasement politics by her government.

The chief minister accused the state BJP of using religion to serve its political interests and condemned charges that she was acting like a member of the Muslim League.

In New Delhi, Amit Malviya, co-in-charge of West Bengal BJP and head of BJP's IT cell, condemned her "uncalled-for attack". He described her remark as a 'sign of her imminent defeat' in the 2026 Assembly elections: "She is nervous after Arvind Kejriwal's complete decimation in Delhi. Last time, like Kejriwal, she lost her elections in Nandigram. This time, she fears the worst."

In a veiled criticism, Malviya accused her of being under the influence of Firhad Hakim, a known supporter of Dawat-e-Islam. He claimed, "Mamata Banerjee has again shown her deep contempt for Bharat's culture and religious traditions. By calling the sacred Maha-kumbh 'Mrityu-Kumbh'. She has deliberately attacked one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimages, which millions have attended for centuries".

Juvenile tried as adult, gets 20-yr jail in rape case

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

A special POC SO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act) court, on Monday, sentenced a juvenile to 20 years of imprisonment in connection with his involvement in the rape of the three-year old girl.

The court also imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh on the convict saying that the penalty amount would go to the survivor. Special POC SO court judge Vijendra Tripathi clarified that if the convict failed to deposited the penalty, he would have to serve three additional months in jail.

At the time of crime, the accused was 17 years of age. However, considering the crime as heinous, the Juvenile Justice Board formed a panel under the POC SO Act to ascertain if the accused was mentally mature to understand the consequences of the crime he was committing. The panel submitted its report on November 11, 2019 saying the juvenile had the understanding of the severity of the criminal offence but he was oblivious of the consequences.

The Juvenile Justice Board then referred the matter to the POC SO court for trial of the accused considering him as major. The trial was conducted in the POC SO court and on the basis of evidence, it convicted the accused for the offences of rape.

HC okays conduct trial run of Union Carbide toxic waste disposal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

THE Madhya Pradesh High Court on Tuesday allowed the state government to carry out a trial run of the disposal of 40-year-old chemical waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in Pithampur area of Dhar district.

The trial run will start at the treatment-storage-disposal facility (TSDF) February 27.

The division bench headed by the Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, comprising Justice Vivek Jain, allowed the state government on Tuesday, to conduct the trial run of disposing the hazardous waste at the TSDF in Pithampur (Dhar) in three phases, starting on February 27. The government on Tuesday filed a compliance report sought by the court in January about the steps taken for creating public awareness about the waste disposal process, he said.

"The affidavit detailed about the comprehensive public awareness campaign carried out by the authorities (in Pithampur and neighbouring Indore) in the six weeks' time granted by the HC during the previous hearing to dispel the false information spread about the planned incineration of the



waste in Pithampur," state's advocate general Prashant Singh. "Total 30 metric tons waste will be incinerated in three phases. In the first phase, the waste will be disposed of at 135kg per hour feed rate, followed by 180kg per hour feed rate in the second phase and the final phase will see disposal of waste at feed rate of 270kg per hour," he added.

Results of the trial runs will be submitted to the Central Pollution Control Board, which will then prescribe the 'feed rate' at which disposal of the remaining waste should be carried out, he said.

Locals in Pithampur are fiercely opposed to the planned disposal, in their region, of the waste linked to the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy which killed more than 5,000 people.

BUDGET SESSION

Guv addresses joint session of both UP Houses

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

MENTIONING Mahakumbh and describing it as an event 'that embodies the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat,' UP Governor Anandiben Patel, while addressing the joint session of state legislature marking the commencement of budget session, said that the event had set new benchmarks in ensuring cleanliness, security, and management.

The state budget will be presented on Thursday, February 20 and the session will conclude on March 5. "Mahakumbh 2025 is a unique blend of faith and modernity, showcasing both tradition and progress," said the Governor amid the slogans of 'Rajyapal go back' by the opposition benches.

He highlighted that Mahakumbh 2025 represented unity in diversity and promoted equality and harmony, reinforcing the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. So far, over 55 crore devotees had taken a holy dip at Sangam.

Laying stress on the significance of law and order as the most essential component of a civilized society, the Governor underscored the state government's commitment to maintaining peace and stability.

Court to UCC petitioner: 'You are brazenly living together without marriage'

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

THE Nainital High Court has questioned a petition challenging the mandatory registration of live-in relationships under the newly implemented Uniform Civil Code (UCC) asking how does it this requirement invade privacy when "you are brazenly living together without marriage".

A bench comprising Chief Justice G. Narendar and Justice Alok Mehra, while hearing a petition asked, "The state government has not prohibited cohabitation. How can privacy be infringed upon when individuals choose to live together outside of marriage? What is the underlying issue? Whose privacy is truly at stake here?"

The Chief Justice further observed, Your neighbour knows, society knows, and the world knows. So where is the privacy you are talking about? Are you secretly living in some secluded cave? You are living among civil society, shamelessly cohabiting without marriage. So what privacy is being violated?"

He stressed that the state is not prohibiting live-in relationships but merely imposing a condition for registration. The court's remark on Mon-



day has come as a significant relief to the state government, which has been under scrutiny after seven writ petitions were filed challenging the UCC subsequent to its implementation on January 27.

Legal experts view this as a positive development for the Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama's administration.

Advocate Abhijay Negi, representing the petitioner, emphasized the right to privacy while referencing a SC ruling from 2017. He argued, "My client's right to privacy is being violated as he does not wish to disclose or register his live-in relationship with his partner."

The bench dismissed the petitioner's arguments, stating, "The UCC does not mandate any declaration. It merely calls for individuals to register such relationships."

Schools teaching not to 'believe in Constitution' triggers J'khand uproar

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

IN a shocking revelation, it has come to light that some schools run by villagers in the Maoist-infested areas in Jharkhand are reportedly teaching students to disregard the Indian Constitution.

These schools are located in Kurunga, Muhiya, and Bargari, as well as other villages in the Arki Block of Khunti.

According to locals, these educational institutional do not adhere to any specific syllabus and lack dedicated classrooms. All children, regardless of age, study together in structure made of bamboo and iron sheets from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

More than 500 students regularly attend these schools without any access to books or notebooks. Interestingly, their parents do not believe in the Indian constitution and identify themselves as part of the "AC Kutumb family".

Hailing from the tribal community, they do not possess any government documents as proof of identity. Several fami-



lies in the Kurunga, Muchia and Bargadi villages are associated with this movement.

They consider Kunwar Kesari Singh of Gujarat to be their 'Sarkar' (government) and do not follow the country's laws. After Kesari Singh's death, his son Ravindra Gaamith manages the "AC Bharat Sarkar" and "misleads" the tribals of Khunti by encouraging them to boycott the government by running AC Kutumb school in the region, sources say.

Surendra Singh Munda, a Rozgar Sevak in Arki Block, said,

"These villagers of Kurunga, Muchia and Bargadi are being misled due to non-implementation of Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act)."

He went on to say that under the influence of Gujarat's Kesari family, these people have become anti-constitutional.

Local residents claim that the situation has arisen due to a lack of schools in the region and demanded that the schools closed in the name of a merger, be reopened.

49% of Himachal prone to landslides: IIT-R

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

FORTY-nine per cent of Himachal Pradesh is prone to medium-risk and 40 per cent to high-risk landslides, floods and avalanches, according to a recent study by the Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar.

The conclusions were presented at the Indian Cryosphere Meet (ICM) held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, last week, attended by 80 glaciologists, researchers, scientists, and other experts from around the world.

The IIT is now conducting similar studies in the north-east, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand, adding another criterion to examine GOLF (Glacier Lake Outburst Flood). MTech scholar Daishisha Lawphniaw conducted this study under the guidance of Reet Kamal Tiwari is an associate professor at IIT, Ropar, using GIS-based mapping, the study classified hazard-prone regions.

Tiwari said, "The state's upper reaches are more prone to avalanches, whereas the middle and lower parts of the state are more prone to flood and



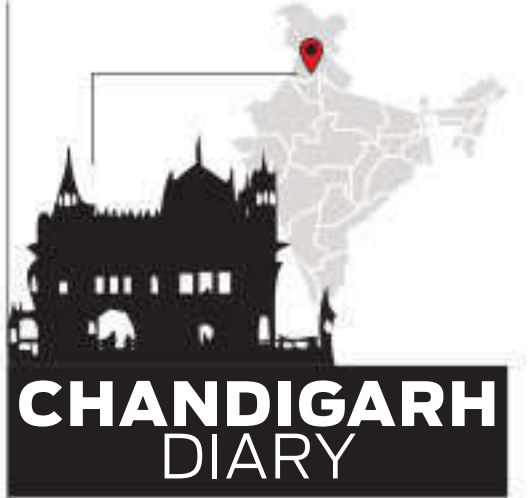
landslides. We are also planning to include forest fires in the upcoming studies."

The study stated that high-altitude areas in Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti districts are highly prone to avalanches, while Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Chamba districts are prone to flood and landslides.

The study highlights that steep mountain slopes and elevations above 3,000 meters are at the highest risk. Higher-altitude regions with slopes be-

tween 16.8 degrees and 41.5 degrees are more likely to experience both avalanches and landslides. "Areas with mean slopes ranging from 5.9 degrees to 16.44 degrees and mean elevations up to 1600 meters are predominantly prone to both landslides and floods, whereas the combined occurrence of avalanches and landslides is most likely in regions with slopes of 16.86 degrees to 41.54 degrees at higher elevations," states the study.

The study adds, "In the mul-



CHANDIGARH DIARY HARPREET BAJWA Our correspondent in Chandigarh hsbajwa73@gmail.com

Sukhbir Badal's daughter gets married

Former Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal's eldest daughter, Harkirat Kaur, got married to Abu Dhabi-based businessman Tejveer Singh Toor on February 12 in the national capital. The wedding festivities began on February 10 with sangeet ceremony at The Trident, Gurugram, where Bollywood singer Mika Singh performed. Several politicians attended the events, including Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, LoP in the Punjab assembly Partap Singh Bajwa, J&K CM Omar Abdullah, his father Farooq Abdullah, and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.



Punjab police reshuffle on the horizon

Following a meeting between Punjab AAP MLAs and party chief Arvind Kejriwal last week, and in light of the AAP government's defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections, a significant reshuffle within the Punjab police is anticipated. Amid the alleged power struggle within party leadership, control over the state police is often viewed as a crucial indicator of who holds power. During a meeting with police officials CM Bhagwant Mann cautioned SSPs and Police Commissioners to improve their performance or face consequences, emphasizing concerns over "false" FIRs being filed in certain districts.

I take I-T raids in my stride, says Cong MLA

Congress MLA from Kapurthala, Rana Gurjit Singh, who is also a prominent industrialist, stated that he has taken the recent Income Tax (IT) raids conducted at 35 of his premises—including his homes and offices—in stride. A flamboyant Rana remarked that such actions are common for individuals with businesses exceeding Rs 5,000 crore. "The raids are a sign that the business is doing well. My business is doing well. My business significantly expanded following IT raids in 2017. It is commonly believed that the house subjected to raids is bound to prosper," he said, while praising the IT officials for being thoroughly professionals.



ON A WING AND A PRAYER AS DELTA FLIPS

Video of a Delta Airline plane upside down at Toronto Pearson Int'l Airport on Tuesday. The jet landed amid strong winds and snow, leading to it crashing and flipping over. Its right wing was missing. All 80 on board survived

US, Russia explore thaw, ways to end Ukraine war

RIYADH

RUSSIA and the US agreed on Tuesday to start working toward ending the war in Ukraine and improving their diplomatic and economic ties, the two countries' top diplomats said after talks that reflected an extraordinary about-face in US foreign policy under President Donald Trump.



US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, left, and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrive for the meeting on Tuesday | AP

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the two sides agreed broadly to pursue three goals: to restore staffing at their respective embassies in Washington and Moscow, to create a high-level team to support Ukraine peace talks and to explore closer relations and economic cooperation.

the beginning of a conversation, and more work needs to be done.

Lavrov echoed Rubio's remarks and told reporters that "the conversation was very useful."

"We not only listened, but also heard each other," he said. Trump's national security ad-

viser, Michael Waltz, and special Mideast envoy Steven Witkoff joined Rubio at the table, along with Lavrov and Russian President Vladimir Putin's foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov.

No Ukrainian officials were present at the meeting, which came as the beleaguered country is slowly but steadily losing

ground against more numerous Russian troops in a grinding war that began nearly three years ago.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country would not accept any outcome from the talks since Kyiv didn't take part, and he postponed his own trip to the kingdom scheduled for Wednesday.

European allies have also expressed concerns that they are being sidelined.

Ties between Russia and the US have fallen to their lowest level in decades in recent years — a rift that has been widening ever since Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and only worsened after Moscow's full-scale invasion.

The US, along with European nations, imposed a raft of sanctions on Russia in an effort to damage its economy. And embassies in Washington and Mos-

cow have been hit hard by expulsions of large numbers of diplomats, as well as other restrictions.

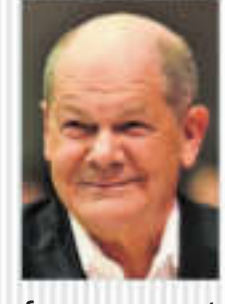
Rubio said Tuesday that ending the war in Ukraine could "unlock the door" for "incredible opportunities that exist to partner with the Russians geographically on issues of common interest and, frankly, economically on issues that hopefully will be good for the world and also improve our relations in the long term."

His comments were further evidence of the remarkable US reversal on Russia after years in which Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, led international efforts to isolate Moscow.

Tuesday's meeting was meant to pave the way for a summit between Trump and Putin. After the talks ended, Ushakov and Waltz said no date has been set yet. AP

OLAF SCHOLZ

The 66-year-old has been Germany's chancellor since December 2021. The centre-left Social Democrat has a



wealth of government experience, having previously served as Hamburg's mayor and as German labour and finance minister.

As chancellor, he launched an effort to modernise Germany's military after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and made Germany Ukraine's second-biggest weapons supplier. He prevented an energy crunch

ALICE WEIDEL

The 46-year-old is making the first bid of the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, or

AfD, for the country's top job. An economist by training, Weidel joined the party shortly after it was founded in 2013.

She has been co-leader of her party's parliamentary group since the party first won seats in the national legislature in 2017. She has been a co-leader of the party itself since 2022. In Dec, she was nominated as the candidate for chancellor

Election race for Germany's next chancellor heats up

Four candidates are in fray for Sunday's election in Germany, where dissatisfaction with living standards, housing crisis and migration are key poll issues

FRIEDRICH MERZ

Germany's 69-year-old opposition leader has been the front-runner in the election

campaign, with his centre-right Union bloc leading polls. He became the leader of his Christian Democratic Union party after Chancellor Angela Merkel stepped down

ROBERT HABECK

The 55-year-old is the candidate of environmentalist Greens. He's also Germany's current vice

chancellor and the economy and climate minister, with responsibility for energy issues. As co-leader of the Greens from 2018-2022, he presided over a rise in the party's popularity

HAMAS TO FREE SIX HOSTAGES ON SATURDAY AS PART OF TRUCE PLAN

JERUSALEM

HAMAS said on Tuesday that it would hand over all six living Israeli hostages due for release under the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire this week, as well as the bodies of four dead captives.

Hamas "decided to release on Saturday, February 22, the remaining living (Israeli) prisoners whose release was agreed in the first phase, numbering six", the group's top negotiator Khalil al-Hayya

said in a televised address.

The group had also "decided to hand over four bodies on Thursday... and the enemy will release the corresponding prisoners", Hayya said.

Israel subsequently confirmed the arrangements, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office saying that during indirect negotiations in Cairo, "agreements were reached" for the six living hostages to be released on Saturday. AFP

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

On behalf of the PRESIDENT OF INDIA, Principal Chief Material Manager invites E-Auction for the sale of scrap items (Ferrous/Non-Ferrous/Miscellaneous and Others), online through the website www.ireps.gov.in, E-Auction dates are given below:

DATE OF E-AUCTION: 07.04.2025, 15.04.2025, 23.04.2025, 02.05.2025, 12.05.2025, 20.05.2025, 28.05.2025, 05.06.2025, 13.06.2025, 23.06.2025.

The quantity indicated in the e-auction catalogue is only approximate. E-auction catalogue can be viewed on our website www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in or www.ireps.gov.in, before 7 days (Seven days) from the date of E-auction. Dy.CMM-D

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED

Notice Inviting Bid

1. BID FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 220/132 KV, 1X160 MVA, 132/33 KV, 1X40/50 MVA TRANSFORMER & 25 MVAR REACTOR SUB STATION AT LOHAWAT (DIST- JODHPUR) ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED 220 KV BAY WORK AT 220 KV GSS BADI SID AND 132 BAY WORK AT EXISTING 132KV GSS LOHAWAT AND MATORA INCLUDING SURVEY, SUPPLY OF ALL EQUIPMENTS/ MATERIALS (WITHOUT TRANSFORMER), ERECTION (INCLUDING CIVIL WORKS), TESTING AND COMMISSIONING (TURNKEY PROJECT) AGAINST SPECIFICATION NO. RVPN/EHV/BN-9019002446 & UBN: VFN2425WLB03005 ARE INVITED FROM INTERESTED BIDDERS UP TO 04:00 PM ON 27.03.2025.

Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state; and http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpnl departmental website. Superintending Engineer, Raj Samad/C/24/11866 RVPN/TR-6224/2025 (Contracts-II), Jaipur

IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING WINSTON CHURCHILL

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD

Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. - PR 18/2025

With reference to Tender Notice No. - PR 18/2025 issued in various newspapers on 21st January, 2025 for "Setup and Operate Online Examination Centre on Revenue Sharing Model at Block C, Babu Pariksha Parisar, Kumhrar, Patna, changes have been made in Tender Schedule. The last date of submission of bid is 22.02.2025 till 14:00 Hrs.

All other terms & conditions remain same. Kindly refer e-procurement website https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in for further information. Secretary

CHANGE OF NAME

I, LEENA AV spouse of Service No NTR-16703L Lt Col MANOJ KV, R/o.Kottara Veetil, Weavers Street, Payyanur, Kannur, Kerala-670307 have changed my name from LEENA AV to LEENA MANOJ vide affidavit dt:18-2-2025 before CVN Ramakrishna, Advocate and Notary, Secunderabad.

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Tender Notice No.: TRD-KGP-W-2024-25-14RT, Dated: 17.02.2025. For and on behalf of President of India, the Sr. DEE/ TRD, South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-Tender for the following work before 15.00 hrs. on the date mentioned against item and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. Description of work: Provision of 25KV/Auxiliary Transformer in connection with Kharagpur-Bhadrak Section automatic Signalling work and Preparation & supply of Appendix-"G" of station working rules (SWR), Provision of Sectioning/Schematic Diagram Board and Sigma Board in connection with Kharagpur-Bhadrak section automatic signalling work. Tender Value: ₹ 2,29,18,234.60. EMD: ₹ 2,64,600. Cost of tender document: Nil. Date of opening: 13.03.2025. Completion Period: 18 (Eighteen) months. Date of submission: Upto 15.00 hrs. of 13.03.2025. Interested tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details, description, specification of the tender and submit their bids online. In no case manual tender for this work will be accepted. Note: Prospective bidders may regularly visit www.ireps.gov.in to participate in all tenders. (PR-1148)

CHANGE OF NAME & D.O.B.

I, Ex. No. 128707-T POAF, GANGIREDDY TIRUPATHI, R/o. H.No. 2-123/3B, Chennur, Dist: Mancherial, change of my daughter name G.SHRADHA, DOB: 13-01-2008 to GANGI REDDY SHRADHA, DOB: 13-01-2008, vide Affidavit and Notary B.Prem Singh, Notary, Date: 18-02-2025.

INDULGE

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001) Corporate Identity Number : U40109PB2010SGC033813, Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646117606)

Tender Inquiry No. 38/M/IC/TGP-134(XI)/O&M/GHTP/2025

Dy. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Mtc, Circle-I/GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites E-tender for the work of Routine, Preventive, Breakdown Maintenance and overhauling jobs (Mechanical jobs) of Boiler Feed Pumps, Condensate Extraction Pumps, CW Pumps, Vacuum Pumps, Turbine Aux, Cooling Water Pumps, BACW Pumps, Boiler fill Pumps, Hotwell Make Up Pumps, Stator Water Make Up Pumps, ACW Pumps, SDCMOW Pumps, TGDMCW Pumps, TG Cycle Make Up Pumps etc. of 2X210MW and 2X250MW Units of Gurgaon Harbind Thermal Plant (GHTP), Lehra Mohabbat monthly lump sum basis for period of one year at GHTP. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 19-02-2025 from 16.00 hrs. onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

146/GHTP-14/25-2/18/2025 76155/12/3918/2023/41772

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Corporate Office: " CHOLA CREST " C 54 & 55, Super B - 4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600032 Branch Office: G2.No.1-8-384/385, Gaura Grand, 3rd Floor, S.P. Road, Rasoolpura, Secunderabad - 500003. Contact: Mr. Kotagiri Srikanth, Mob. No.9490209711.

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower / Co-Borrower/ Mortgagee (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited the same shall be offered hereafter as Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis through E-Auction.

It is hereby informed to General public that we are going to conduct public E-Auction through website https://bankauctions.in/.

Table with columns: Account No. and Name of borrower/co-borrower, Date & Amount as per Demand Notice U/s 13(2), Descriptions of the property, Reserve Price, Earnest Money Deposit, Bid Increment Amount, E-Auction Date and Time, EMD Submission Last Date Inspection Date.

1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website https://bankauctions.in/ and https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notices For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may contact Mr. Muhammed Rahees - 81240 00030, Ms. A. Closure, Mr. Jaya Prakash Reddy, Cell No. 8142000064, Email: info@bankauctions.in.

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit: https://bankauctions.in/andhttps://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-noticesto take part in e-auction.. THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

Date:19.02.2025, Place:Hyderabad Sd/- Authorised Officer, M/s. Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER (MSME), NEW DELHI Notice Inviting Expression of Interest (Eoi) for Empanelment of Implementing Agencies for FY 2025-26

Office of the Development Commissioner (MSME) invites applications from eligible Implementing Agencies (IAs) for their empanelment to organize training programs under the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP) for FY 2025-26, as per the scheme guidelines (can be downloaded from the portal https://dcmsme.gov.in/ESDP-Guidelines-new-01-04-2022.pdf).

The Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP) aims to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship by providing technical and managerial training. It focuses on skill enhancement, capacity building for MSMEs, fostering innovation, and generating employment. The programme ensures inclusive growth, targeting youth, women, and disadvantaged groups to drive economic development through technical upskilling and business innovation.

Eligibility Criteria for Empanelment: Proven experience in organizing skill development and entrepreneurship programmes. Adequate infrastructure and resources to conduct high-quality training. Willingness to adopt digital platforms for monitoring and evaluation.

Who Can Apply: Institutions: IITs, IIMs, NITs, Technology Centers (TCs), Tool Rooms, Central Autonomous body under the Ministry of Education (MoE) Government of India, and Institutes from Central and State Government departments and organizations etc.

How to Apply: Interested organizations can submit their application in the prescribed format (can be downloaded from the official website at www.dcmsme.gov.in) along with supporting documents through email to esdp.div@dcmsme.gov.in, latest by 20th March, 2025. Applicants must include detailed proposals specifying the geographical coverage of the training programs and the areas of specialization for advanced courses. Furthermore, the distribution of the ESDP programmes to the Implementing Agencies will be based on the mandate to ensure a balanced distribution and maintain the prescribed ratio of various scheme components.

For More Details, Visit: www.dcmsme.gov.in or contact the following address: Joint Director (ESDP) O/o DC (MSME), Room No.731, A-Wing, 7th Floor, Nirman Bhawan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi - 110011, Email: esdp.div@dcmsme.gov.in

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE No: LGD/L/09/2024-25/OT Dated: 17.02.2025

Dy.CEE/LGDS acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No LGD/L/09/2024-25/OT-E-TENDER-closing date 11.03.2025 at 11:00 hrs.

Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards earned money (Bid Security) shall be deposited either in cash through e-payment gateway or submitted as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents. The Bank Guarantee bond shall be as per Annexure-VI and shall be valid for a period of 60 days beyond the bid validity period. The original Bank Guarantee should be delivered in person to the official nominated as indicated in the tender document within 5 working days of deadline of submission of bids. Non submission of scanned copy of B.G. with the bid on e-tendering portal (IREPS) and/or non-submission of original B.G. within the specified period shall lead to summary rejection of bid.

1.Tender No.: LGD/L/09/2024-25/OT Description of work : Provision of Flameless cooking in Non-AC RA coaches at Carriage Workshop, Lallaguda. Advertised value : (₹) 4484780/- (forty four lakhs eighty four thousand seven hundred eighty - Rupees only) Bid Security : (₹) 89,700/- Period of Completion: 24. Months from the date of issue of letter of acceptance Date of Closing : 11.03.2025 at 11:00 hrs.

Website Particulars: www.ireps.gov.in Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen.: Office of the Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Carriage Workshop, Lallaguda, Secunderabad-500017.

For further Tender conditions/details (available in the tender documents) and for downloading of tender documents, corrigendum, please visit our website https://www.ireps.gov.in/. Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, CWS Lallaguda Secunderabad

Open e-Tender Notice No. B/E/EGS/13/2024-25 Dt. 18.02.2025

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites e-Tender for the following works up to 15-00 hours on the date mentioned below:

1. Tender No.: B/E/29/IEGS/36/24-25 Dt.18.02.2025 Name of work : BZA division:- Replacement & Up gradation of existing defective Junction Boxes with Thermoplastic Polycarbonate Junction boxes over BZA Division. Period of completion: 6 Months Tender value: (₹) 55,92,800/- E.M.D./Bid Security: (₹) 1,11,900/- Cost of Tender document : NIL Date of closing: 12.03.2025

1) The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website "www.ireps.gov.in" before the date of tender closing to note any changes/corrigenda for any tender.

Divisional Railway Manager A0232 (Electrical), Vijayawada.

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at https://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in



Mittal offloads ₹8,500 cr worth of shares in Airtel

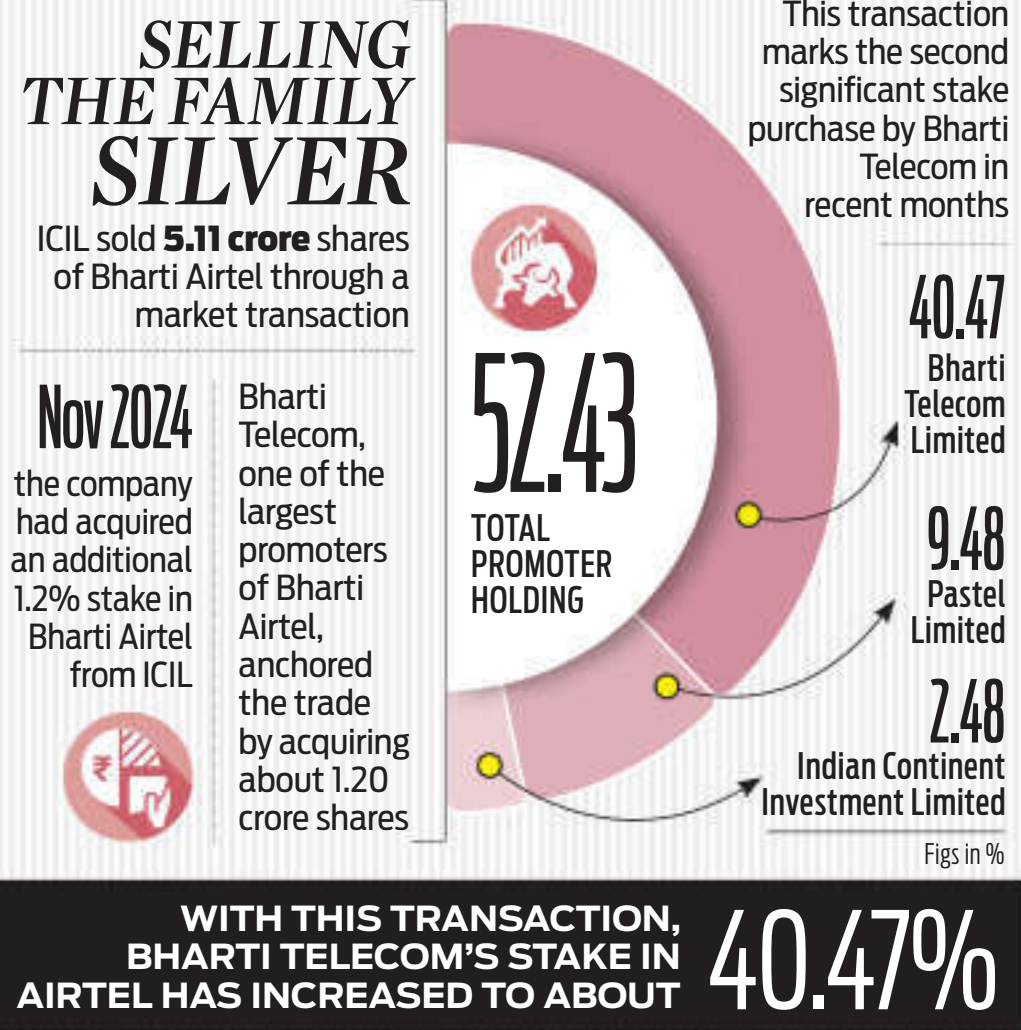
Promoter group firm ICIL has sold 5.1 cr shares of 2nd largest telcom co

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL-backed Indian Continent Investment Limited (ICIL) offloaded ₹8,500 crore worth of shares in Bharti Airtel on Tuesday.

As per a statement by the company, ICIL sold 5.11 crore shares of Bharti Airtel through a block deal. Bharti Telecom, one of the largest promoters of Bharti Airtel, acquired 1.20 crore of those shares worth ₹2,000 crore. As per information available on exchanges, foreign investors bought shares worth Rs 5,581 crore, while domestic investors acquired shares worth ₹754 crore. GQG Partners through its different funds acquired around ₹4,000 crore worth of shares, the largest among the FIIs. Vanguard International Value Fund acquired shares worth ₹282 crore and WhiteOak India Equity Fund bought ₹134 crore shares.

Prior to the transaction, ICIL held 3.31% in Airtel. "Indian Continent Investment Limited (ICIL), a promoter-group entity of Bharti Airtel, has today sold 0.84% shareholding (5.11 crore shares) in Airtel via a market transaction, for an aggregate amount of Rs 8,485.11 crore," Airtel said on Tuesday in an exchange filing. It said Bharti Telecom anchored the trade by acquiring 1.20 crore shares (24% of ICIL's sale of today), helping overall book to be allocated to key marquee long only names, both global and domestic. This transaction marks the



second significant stake purchased by Bharti Telecom in recent months. In November 2024, the company had acquired 1.2% stake in Bharti Airtel from ICIL. With this latest transaction, Bharti Telecom's stake in Airtel has increased to about 40.47%. The company said this reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening its position as the principal vehicle to hold a controlling stake in Airtel, while maintaining a prudent leverage profile.

"With this, Bharti Telecom holds 40.47% of Airtel, reinforcing its intent of strength-

ening its position as principal vehicle to hold controlling stake in Airtel, remaining focused on gradually raising its stake while maintaining a leverage profile as it does so," said the company.

ICIL is owned by Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Airtel, and his family. The company serves as an investment arm of Mittal family, holding major stakes in various companies, including Airtel. Share prices of Airtel closed at ₹1,669.50, down ₹6.05 or 0.36% from its previous closing price.

Elon Musk-led Tesla starts hiring in India

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

US-based electric vehicle (EV) giant Tesla has initiated hiring in India, posting 13 job openings and reigniting hopes of its long-awaited entry into the Indian car market. This move follows CEO Elon Musk's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter's visit to the United States last week.

As per job listings by Tesla on LinkedIn, at least five roles, including service technicians and advisory positions, are available in Mumbai and Delhi. The remaining openings such as customer engagement managers and delivery operations specialists, are based in

Mumbai. Tesla has been exploring opportunities in India for years but has hesitated due to concerns over high import duties. To address this, India reduced import duties on electric vehicles last year.

Tesla's potential entry into the Indian market comes at a time for the country's electric vehicle (EV) sector. In 2024, India's EV market reached nearly 1 lakh units, and it is witnessing a surge in new launches from major players like Mahindra

& Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai. With these new models and the government's strong push toward electrification, electric car volumes are expected to double by the end of the next financial year. For Tesla, the small yet rapidly growing Indian EV market could provide a major opportunity to compete with Chinese EV manufacturers, particularly BYD, which has surpassed Tesla in terms of sales volume. In

2024, Tesla experienced its first annual decline in vehicle deliveries, dropping from 1.81 million in 2023 to 1.79 million.

According to industry sources, Tesla is expected to begin its India operations by importing entry-level models here before making any formal investment announcements.

As per the new EV policy, introduced in March 2024, completely built-up (CBU) electric cars with a minimum cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value of \$35,000 can now be imported at a reduced duty of 15% for five years. Previously, CBU vehicles priced above \$40,000 faced a 100% duty, while those below \$40,000 were subject to a 70% tax.



Policy changes viewed as signal for Tesla's entry

The policy changes were viewed as a green light for Tesla's entry into Indian market. Rumours suggested Tesla planned to send a team to scout locations for a proposed \$2-3 billion EV manufacturing plant.

Registration of 19 foreign VC investors nixed

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

MARKET regulator Sebi has cancelled registration of as many as 19 foreign venture capital investors, all of them defunct in their respective jurisdictions, for not meeting the regulatory requirements here including not even once filing the quarterly reports.

Six of these 19 funds had never filed the quarterly reports that they are required to under the norms, since their registration way back in 2013, the Sebi said in an order passed on Tuesday. The regulator also has found that they were not operating from their registered addresses and all of them became defunct between 2013 and 2023 in their respective jurisdictions-- Mauritius, Singapore and Cyprus. Among the 19 names are Axis Capital Mauritius, Axis India Infrastructure Holdings, Blackstone Capital Partners Singapore VI and Blackstone Family Investment Partnership Singapore VI.

BSNL turnaround in third quarter because of accounting changes

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

STATE-owned BSNL's turnaround story is more an accounting changes than operational improvement.

The company reported ₹271 crore profits in the third quarter, first time in 17 years. In the previous quarter, the company had posted a loss of ₹1,267 crore.

According to detailed financial results released on Tuesday, the depreciation and amortisation cost of the company dropped 44% in the third quarter of the current financial year to ₹814 crore against ₹1,443 crore in the previous year.

Depreciation and amortisation costs are shown as expenses in the profit and loss statement of a company.

The reason for the sharp fall is that the company during the third quarter changed the method of amortisation of spectrum fees from Straight Line Method (SLM) to the Unit



Based Amortization Method (UBAM) with effect from the beginning of the current financial year (2024-25). This change of method has resulted in a decline in value of the amortisation cost.

Additionally, the employee cost also came down by ₹276 crore, or 13.7%, to ₹1,735 crore in the quarter ended December 31, 2024, compared to ₹2,011 crore in the same quarter of the previous year.

According to the auditor's report, the obligation of the company for employee retire-

ment benefits is short-funded by Rs 414 crore towards gratuity and by ₹122 crore towards leave encashment.

The telecom service provider also cut down its net loss for the nine-month period ending 31 December 2024. The company's net loss decreased from ₹4,522 crore in the same period of the previous year to ₹2,527 crore, representing a reduction of ₹1,995 crore or 44.1%.

The company has reported a 9.3% year-on-year growth in revenue in the October-December quarter.

However, 20 circles have turned EBITDA positive in the third quarter of the current financial year; when compared to 12 Circles last December Quarter. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) will prioritise the rapid expansion of its 4G and 5G networks to enhance service quality and increase network reach, providing customers with faster and more reliable connectivity.

Unemployment rate flat at 6.4% in Oct-Dec

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

THE unemployment rate in urban areas remained unchanged at 6.4% in the third quarter (October-December) of this fiscal year compared to the previous quarter. However, on a y-o-y basis, it slightly dipped from 6.5% in the December quarter of FY24 to 6.4%, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data released on Tuesday.

While the male unemployment rate rose to 5.8% in the December quarter from 5.7% in the last quarter (5.8% in Q3FY24), the female unemployment rate in urban areas fell to 8.1% in December quarter from 8.4% in Q2 and 8.6% in Q3FY24.

The data showed that the labour force participation rate (LFPR) in urban areas has increased from 49.9% during October - December, 2023 to 50.4% in the October - December 2024 quarter. But remained unchanged sequentially. During the same period, the male LFPR was 75.4% in October - December 2024 (compared to 74.1% year-ago), and for females, LFPR was 25.2% during this period (compared to 25% year-ago). LFPR is the percentage of people in the labour force, who are working or seeking or available for work.

ASIANOMICS
SRI LANKA
BUDGET PROJECTS 5% ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2025

The Sri Lankan economy is expected to grow at 5% in 2025, President Anura Dissanayake said on Monday while presenting the budget for this year. This is the first full-year budget presented by the National People's Power government, which came to power in November last year. Introducing the budget, Dissanayake said a budget is a "reflection of the government's approach to building the economy and overall policy." He asserted that all fiscal measures would be directed towards the commencement of repaying external debt from 2028. Last year, under then-president Ranil Wickremesinghe, Sri Lanka received capital grace periods on bilateral loan payments until 2028. Dissanayake said a budget deficit of 6.7% of the GDP or SLR 2.2 trillion was expected in 2025, down from the last year's 6.8%.

SINGAPORE
PROJECTS 1-3% ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2025

The economy of Singapore is likely to grow between 1% and 3% in 2025, while inflation is likely to average 1.5% to 2.5%. Prime Minister Lawrence Wong announced on Tuesday delivering the country's 2025 Budget in parliament. Wong, serves as finance minister, said Singapore faces greater global uncertainty and downside risks in the next phase of growth. He said global pressures would weigh on economic prospects, and as a small and open economy, Singapore would feel the impact, leading to a more moderate outlook for 2025. The growth forecast aligns with the Ministry of Trade and Industry's earlier projections. In 2024, Singapore's economy expanded by 4.4%, accelerating from the 1.8% growth recorded in 2023, as per data released by the Ministry of Trade and Industry on Friday.

THAILAND
SEES WEAKER-THAN-EXPECTED ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2024

The economic growth of Thailand was weaker-than-expected in 2024 and continued to lag its neighbours as it faces a year fraught with risks from global trade policy hurdles and sluggish domestic demand. The Southeast Asia's second-largest economy grew 2.5% last year, the National Economic and Social Development Council said on Monday. That was slower than the median estimate for a 2.7% gain in a Bloomberg News survey although it picked up from a revised 2% expansion in 2023. Gross domestic product rose 3.2% in the three months through December from a year earlier, against a 3.8% forecast by economists. On quarter, the economy grew 0.4% from the July-September period compared with a median estimate for a 0.5% rise.

Top 500 private cos' valuation bigger than GDP

BEN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

THE top 500 private sector companies are bigger than the national GDP commanding a cumulative value of ₹324 lakh crore or \$3.8 trillion in 2024, while the economy was only \$3.5 trillion in 2023, as per a calculation by a private agency.

According to Hurun India's most valuable private sector companies' list for 2024 released on Tuesday, these 500 companies' value grew 40% over 2023 to \$3.8 trillion and their valuation is not just bigger than our national GDP but is also bigger than the combined GDP values of the UAE, Indonesia, and Spain.

The report said the qualification threshold for the list was ₹9,580 crore, which is a 43% increase from the 2023 threshold of ₹6,700 crore. For the first time, all the companies in the 2024 list are worth at least \$1 billion despite a steeply depreciated rupee.

"The companies from the 2024 list make up the backbone of the country's private sector, wielding significant economic



influence. Between them, they have a cumulative valuation of \$3.8 trillion, which is higher than the national GDP, and employ 8.4 million. If you want to understand how the economy is developing, understanding the stories behind the 2024 most valuable companies list, is a great place to start with." Anas Rahman Junaid, founder and chief researcher at Hurun India, told reporters here while releasing the list.

With a value of ₹17.52 lakh crore, which is more than 12% over 2023 valuation, Mukesh Ambani-controlled Reliance Industries is the country's most

valuable company, followed by Tata Consultancy Services at ₹16.1 lakh crore, up 30%, and HDFC Bank at ₹14.2 lakh crore, up 26%, he said.

The next in the list are Bharti Airtel (₹9.74 lakh crore), ICICI Bank (₹9.30 lakh crore), Infosys (₹7.99 lakh crore), ITC (₹5.80 lakh crore), L&T (₹5.42 lakh crore) and NSE (₹4.7 lakh crore). Among the other notable gainers in the list are Motilal Oswal Financial Services that lead the 2024 list as the fastest-growing company with a value growth of 297%, followed by Inox Wind and Zepto, both nearly tripling their valuations over the year.

Nearly 60% of the companies in the list don't appear in the Fortune India 500, which is ranked by revenue. The Hurun list prioritises future profit potential over current sales and doesn't include state-owned enterprises. If included over 100 state-owned companies could have made into the list such as SBI which is valued over ₹7.7 trillion LIC, NTPC, ONGC etc.

Infosys K'taka's most valuable co in Hurun list

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

IT services company Infosys leads as Karnataka's most valuable company with a valuation of ₹7.99 lakh crore, followed by Wipro (₹3,18,270 cr) and Titan (₹3,07,780 cr). Food and grocery delivery platform Swiggy ranks fourth with a valuation of ₹1,20,320 crore, followed by brokerage platform Zerodha (₹87,750 cr) in the 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500.

Burgundy Private, Axis Bank's Private Banking Business, and Hurun India, launched the fourth edition of the list of India's 500 most valuable companies on Tuesday. The list features 45 companies from Karnataka with 21 of them being start-ups. The total value of the top 10 companies from Karnataka increased by 35% to ₹19.1 lakh crore.

SEASONAL BUSINESSES

Cos gear up for early summer onset, expect robust demand

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

WITH temperatures already soaring in February, especially in Northern India, companies manufacturing and selling air conditioners, refrigerators and ice cream are anticipating another summer of robust demand. Delhi recorded the second-hottest day of the season on Monday, with a maximum temperature of 29 degrees Celsius, 4.6 degrees above normal.

"With the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting rising temperatures, we at Voltas anticipate a significant increase in demand for cooling solutions like air conditioners and refrigerators due to the early ar-

rival of summer," Pradeep Bakshi, Managing Director & CEO of Voltas Limited told TNIE.

Bakshi added that to address the demand, particularly from Tier-II and Tier-III markets, Voltas is expanding its manufacturing capabilities and offering a wide range of products across the cooling categories. In FY24, the Tata Group company sold over 2 million units of air conditioners, reflecting a 35% growth and maintained its leadership position.

Industry figures estimate that total AC sales in India stood at about 13.5 million units in 2024, an increase from 11 million units sold in 2023. The refrigerator segment is



also said to have grown in double digits last year.

"This year, we plan to surpass this number (2 million AC) as well. The early onset of elevated temperatures, coupled with the expected income tax relief and a slower inflation rate, is likely to fuel con-

sumer spending on durable goods, including cooling appliances," stated Bakshi.

The increase in the pace of electrification and rising disposable income is also supporting growth of consumer durable goods.

Mohit Khattar, chief executive officer of Graviss Foods (Baskin Robbins), said that they are witnessing an exciting shift with ice cream demand growing earlier than usual this year. "Changing weather patterns, evolving consumer habits, and an increasing inclination toward indulgence and comfort foods have contributed to this trend," stated Khattar.

He added that 2024 was a milestone year for them, as

they opened the 1000th store in India and the subcontinent. "With 120 new stores opened overall in FY24-25 and a laser focus on innovation and premiumization, we are likely to continue to out-pace the market in terms of demand growth for our brand," said Khattar.

In general, with rising temperatures, Khattar said that they expect a surge in footfall across their stores across India and also higher online orders via Q-commerce and e-commerce platforms.

When the heat is not intense, especially until early April, Baskin Robbins expects the walk-in business to be strong and expects online business to surge as the heat intensity increases, he added.

Govt to compensate OMCs for LPG under-recoveries

Relief for OMCs

PETROLEUM Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has indicated that the government will compensate oil marketing companies (OMCs) for LPG under-recoveries, says a Singapore-based research firm, Nomura.

This move is expected to provide relief to OMCs, which have been bearing the burden of subsidised LPG prices. As per Nomura, the minister acknowledged that the Budget did not include compensation towards LPG under-recoveries. However, he hinted at alternate mechanisms, such as supplementary grants, to cover these under-recoveries. The under-recovery burden for OMCs is substantial, with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) facing ₹14,330 crore, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) facing ₹7,600 crore, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) facing ₹7,230 crore. For FY26, the LPG subsidy has been budgeted at ₹14,700 crore, up from ₹11,900 crore in FY25BE.





India's bowling coach Morne Morkel has left for his home in South Africa due to a family emergency. Morkel, who was appointed for the job in September last year, had travelled to Dubai with the Indian team on Saturday, and also attended the side's first practice session ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy beginning on Wednesday.

Shubman Gill (India)
Seven hundreds and 15 half-centuries in an eye-popping average of 60 and a fabulous strike-rate of 101 plus tells us that Gill has aced this format in the 50 ODIs that he has played. This is the format where he is possibly going to be the man, who would take over the baton from the peerless Virat Kohli. With Kohli and skipper Rohit Sharma, the two legends still around to guide him, this tournament could catapult Gill, transforming him from a superstar to a megastar.

Salman Ali Agha (Pakistan)
An average of 45 plus is good without being exceptional but all those who have seen Salman Ali Agha bat recently will vouch that the 31-year-old Lahori is finally coming into his own. If the short tri-series was a trailer, then there are bigger things to come from his willow. He is a clean hitter and has a lot of time to play the pacers. The manner in which he controlled the proceedings in a 350-plus chase against South Africa was exceptional.

THE CHAMPIONS TROPHY IS EXPECTED TO BE A BATTERS' TOURNAMENT. HERE ARE SOME OF THE NAMES THAT COULD BE THE GAMECHANGERS FOR THEIR TEAMS

THE FAMOUS FIVE

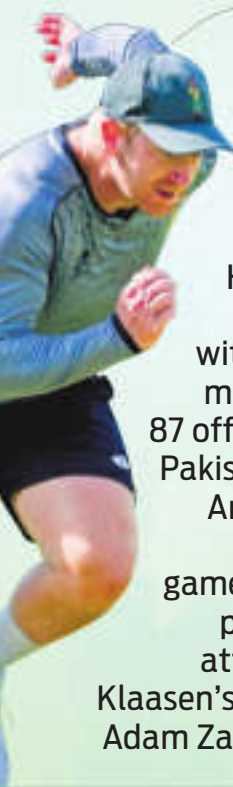
Heinrich Klaassen (South Africa)
Whether it is T20 or ODI format, when one speaks about game-changers, it is very difficult to leave out Heinrich Klaassen, who can send the ball soaring into orbit without much ado. He played one match in the tri-series but scored 87 off 56 balls, punishing a top-class Pakistan attack with minimum fuss. An impressive average of 44 plus and a strike-rate of 117.44 in 58 games signify solidity. He is another player, who understands how to attack on sub-continental tracks. Klaassen's battle against Adil Rashid and Adam Zampa would be worth watching.

Travis Head (Australia)
The last couple of years have been like a dream for the South Australian and ideally he would never like that to end. He has been India's nemesis for sometime now in the knock-outs and the highway like tracks in Pakistan will be the kind of surfaces where he can murder the bowling at his own will. The Indian fans know that November 19, 2023 still hurts and Head has the ability to make the opposition's heart bleed.

Devon Conway (New Zealand)
Conway's ODI career has been a short one with only 33 matches but in a short time, he has shown that he can take the game away in a flash with his ability to find the gaps at will. He is a superb batter against spinners and whether Pakistan or Dubai, the frequency of tours be it playing T20 league cricket or international games, makes him a good reader of the Asian conditions. If Conway gets going, half of New Zealand's job is done.



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CONUNDRUM OF KEEPING FAITH

While Rahul seems first-choice keeper, having Pant on bench leaves India with selection headache

GOMESH S @ Chennai

"THAT'S the way cricket is meant to be played. I know a lot of people talk about it, but that's the way we've got to play the game and that's the way cricket should be played." That is what India head coach Gautam Gambhir had to say when asked about the team management's fixation on having a left-right combination in the middle at any point in time.

India had just beaten England 3-0 in the ODI series and were on a high, but there were enough questions to be asked about some of the decisions made by Gambhir and his staff. One among them, and perhaps the most important one was his push to have a left-right combination in the middle.

Among other things, it has also led to a discussion on who should don the gloves for India. KL Rahul or Rishabh Pant?



Captain Rohit Sharma had made it clear that Rahul is the first-choice keeper considering the performance he has shown every time he got the chance, especially during Pant's long injury layoff. Barring the final where he went into a shell, Rahul had a stellar World Cup and is among the top middle-order keeper-batters in the world. Since the 2019 ODI WC, Rahul has 1419 runs in 36 innings at 52.55 average and 92.56 strike rate. He is third on the list of middle-order keeper-batters in

this period. He, followed by Shai Hope, are the only two to average over 50 with minimum of 1000 runs in this phase.

It comes as no surprise that Rohit wants to start with Rahul as first-choice keeper. However, playing Rahul in combination with the approach of having a leftie in the middle means that he is batting at No 6 or lower. The top four is set in stone with Rohit, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer. India have been promoting Axar Patel, who to his credit has delivered when

ever he came up, but this means Rahul perhaps bats one position too low. In the four innings he has batted at No 6, Rahul scored 43 runs at 10.75. The sample size might not be much but it underlines a possible issue.

Meanwhile, Pant has had a bit of on and off ODI career as well. Despite being around for seven years, he has played only 31 games batting in only 27. Since 2019 WC, he has batted only 18 times in 21 matches while averaging 37.88 at 110.08 SR. The numbers might not say

much, but one could argue that just when it seemed like Pant was making an impact in the format, he had an unfortunate layoff and hasn't been able to comeback since.

Playing him would automatically free up the middle-order push for Axar. In fact, he can even be moved up if needed based on situation, especially against spinners. Pant strikes at 107.81 against spin while averaging 36.77. In contrast, Rahul averages 54 with a SR of 89.08 against spin. That being said, as things stand, Rahul still seems to be the first choice and it all might come down to how the pitches behave in Dubai. Because, if Rahul is not able to keep the momentum going India have a problem. And come the crunch game, both captain and the coach would want to have the best possible option for the particular opponents and conditions on the given day.

Rizwan urges Pakistan to enjoy tournament

AGENCIES @ Karachi

PAKISTAN skipper Mohammad Rizwan said on Tuesday the Champions Trophy would be a "historic occasion" for the country, a day before the hosts kick the tournament off against New Zealand. The Champions Trophy is the first major cricket event hosted by Pakistan in nearly three decades and is regarded as second only to the World Cup in the one-day game.

"A global event has come to Pakistan after 29 years so I think the whole nation should enjoy this historic occasion," Rizwan told a news conference on the eve of the tournament, which runs until March 9. Pakistan had been due to host the tournament in 2008 but was thrown into cricketing isolation by a security crisis as violence spilled over from the long-running war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Islamist gunmen then attacked a bus carrying Sri Lanka's team in Lahore the follow-

GROUP A: Bangladesh, India, New Zealand, Pakistan

GROUP B: Afghanistan, Australia, England, South Africa

FIXTURES: Feb 19: PAK vs NZ, Karachi; Feb 20: BAN vs IND, Dubai; Feb 21: AFG vs SA, Karachi; Feb 22: AUS vs ENG, Lahore; Feb 23: PAK v IND, Dubai; Feb 24: BAN vs NZ, Rawalpindi; Feb 25: AUS vs SA, Rawalpindi; Feb 26: AFG vs ENG, Lahore; Feb 27: PAK v BAN, Rawalpindi; Feb 28: AFG v AUS, Lahore; Mar 1: SA v ENG, Karachi; Mar 2: NZ v IND, Dubai; Knock outs: Mar 4: SF2, Dubai (If India qualify); Mar 5: SF2, Lahore; Final: Mar 9: Lahore/Dubai.

MATCHES START 2.30PM IST

ing year, wounding several players and killing eight policemen and civilians. However, major teams have toured Pakistan in the past five years as security improved, opening the way for the cricket-mad nation to stage the tournament.

EXPRESS READ

USA defend lowest ODI total vs Oman

AL AMARAT (MUSCAT): The USA on Tuesday successfully defended the lowest-ever total of 122 in a non-curtailed ODI match to beat Oman by 57 runs in their Cricket World Cup League 2 match. It is the lowest successfully defended totals in men's ODIs & excluding matches with a revised target or reduced overs.

Big setback for IOA, WFI from Delhi HC

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court questioned the IOA over its failure to abide by an order regarding the re-constitution of an ad-hoc panel for running the affairs of the Wrestling Federation of India. The court, last year, restored the mandate of ad-hoc panel, constituted for running the WFI's affairs.

Sciver-Brunt, Matthews guide Mumbai home

ENS @ Chennai

ALL-ROUND Nat Sciver-Brunt rose to the occasion as Mumbai Indians registered a clinical five-wicket win against Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League on Tuesday. Sciver-Brunt took 2/26 with the ball before smashing a 39-ball 57 in the chase.

Earlier, opting to field first Mumbai ran through Gujarat top-order reducing them to 16/3 first and then 28/4 shortly after. Deandra Dottin tried to play a rescue act, but she fell soon. It was Harleen Deol's 32 (31) and Kashvee Gautam's 20 (15) that took Gujarat to 120 in 20 overs. Sciver-Brunt and Amelia Kerr took two wickets each while Hayley Matthews scalped 3/16.



During the chase, Matthews and Yastika Bhatia got out early and so did Harmanpreet Kaur. But Sciver-Brunt and Kerr ensured there was no further collapse. They took the team to 100/4 before Kerr fell. Sciver-Brunt too got out to Priya Mishra but Sajana Sajeevan and G Kamalini took MI across the line. **Brief scores:** GG 120 in 20 ovs (Harleen Deol 32; Hayley Matthews 3/16) lost to MI 122/5 in 16.1 ovs (Sciver-Brunt 57).

Barcelona back to top of La Liga with 1-0 win

AP @ Barcelona

BARCELONA returned to the top of the Spanish league on goal difference after Robert Lewandowski's first-half penalty secured a 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano. The Catalan club on Monday took advantage of weekend slip-ups by Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid to move onto 51 points, the same as Madrid and a point clear of Atletico. Madrid drew 1-1 at Osasuna and Atletico was held by the same score by Celta Vigo.

Barcelona took the lead after 27 minutes when Pathe Ciss brought down Inigo Martinez in the box, and a penalty was awarded after a video review. Lewandowski sent the keeper the wrong way from the spot.

Time for Pathak to emerge from the shadows of legend Sreejesh

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Bhubaneswar

AFTER putting on his helmet and exchanging fist-bumps with a couple of the Indian players, Krishan Pathak began the slightly long, lonely walk to position himself under the sticks. The men's hockey team wears an assured look about itself these days, there's a sense of optimism about the team and there's an identity about the Men In Blue (coach Craig Fulton's famed 'defend to win').

It's the effect of at least medalling or outright winning each of their last three major events (back-to-back Asian Champions Trophy winners in 2023 and 2024 and bronze at the Paris Games last July-August). One area of the field, though, that will face some scrutiny is the identity of the first choice custodian heading into the World Cup year in 2026. It's a very natural process within a side when a stalwart retires after some 330 international caps, numerous international awards and a cupboard full of shiny medals.

This is not to say that Pathak hasn't been groomed for the role. One of Graham Reid's legacies was to introduce rolling subs for goal-keepers. So, even though Sreejesh used to start a majority of games, Pathak used to get a fair taste of the action (it's how he has 120+ caps since making his debut for the senior side just before the pandemic). Even if the 27-year-old was actively involved in an equitable job share, the man from Kerala was the defacto No. 1 (Sreejesh travelled to Paris as the only goalkeeper, with Pathak a reserve).

Sreejesh himself had spoken about its merits. "It's always good to share the field with the second goalkeeper," he had told this daily in 2023. "When I started it was always about the first goalkeeper. The entire tournament, he would be playing and the second goalkeeper would be sitting on the bench. The chances of a goalkeeper getting injured have increased



After deputising for PR Sreejesh for a long time, Krishan Pathak has the chance to become the national team's custodian | HOCKEY INDIA

BOTH INDIAN TEAMS LOSE

These are early days in the Indian leg of the Pro League but both teams' inconsistencies shown through. After the women's team lost to Spain by the odd goal in a seven-goal thriller, the men's team, facing Germany for the first time since their last four clash in Paris, also went down. Without the services of Harmanpreet Singh and Hardik Singh (both nursing injuries), they struggled at times, especially to control the midfield. The hosts also missed the skipper's drag-flicking expertise as they passed up 10 penalty corners (to be fair, the visitors also missed a fair few set-pieces). But it didn't bother the world champions as they outplayed the World No. 5 in all departments. After Germany scored a well-worked fourth goal, fans streamed outside the premises. By the time Fulton's wards had succumbed to one of their heaviest defeats at this Stadium, they had well and truly lost the midfield battle.

so much so make sure the second goalkeeper is getting sufficient match time... giving them enough opportunities gives them more experience. It gives them more confidence."

Now? It's time for the man from Kapurthala in Punjab to emerge from the shadows and showcase the kind of confidence Sreejesh was talking about. Fulton has also been a big fan of Reid's job share so he has continued that tradition of rotating the men under the sticks — against Germany on Tuesday, Suraj Karkera got his chance in two of the four quarters.

It comes down to the preference of the team management in that some have clearly defined starting keeper and substitute keeper. At the other end of the spectrum, sides like India have rotational custodians. The natural next question, then, may be to ask if India can take two keepers, why is it important to have a well defined No. 1? From a big picture perspective — the LA Olympics

where sides are allowed only 16 players and only one keeper as part of the playing contingent — planning has to start now.

And games like one on Tuesday are what will inform Fulton & Co about whether Pathak, or Karkera, will be the answer for the 'who after Sreejesh?' question.

Cheered on by a decently-sized crowd at the Kalinga Stadium on a school night, both keepers pulled off good saves but Pathak also had a moment to forget. He saved smartly to keep out a German shot in the first quarter but completely lost sight of where the rebound had gone. His natural response was to challenge a visiting stick but the rebound was safely tucked into an unguarded net. It was one of those 'he could have done better' moments. As the side's elder custodian, it would have rankled. The good thing, though, was that he picked himself up and produced one smart save in the third quarter.

RANJI TROPHY

Azharudeen's ton extends Kerala's advantage

AGENCIES @ Ahmedabad

MOHAMMED Azharudeen's dogged 149 not out, his first hundred in red ball cricket in seven years, took Kerala to a commanding 418 for seven at stumps on day two of their Ranji Trophy semifinal against Gujarat here on Tuesday.

Kerala, who have not gone past the semifinals in the premier domestic red ball event, had resumed the day at 206 for four. Skipper Sachin Baby, who was on 69 overnight, did not trouble the scorers on the following day as he was removed by left-arm pacer Arzan Nagwaswalla on the second ball of the day.

A 149-run stand between Azharudeen and Salman Nizar (52 off 202) followed, taking Kerala past the 350-run mark. On day three, Kerala would like to bat as long as possible and then aim for the all-important first-innings lead over the home team on a flat track. Azharudeen, who was on 30 overnight, carried his bat though the day



Mohammed Azharudeen walks back to the pavilion after the day's play | KCA

with his unbeaten 149 coming off 303 balls. His gritty effort comprised 17 fours with majority of his boundaries coming on the off-side.

Remarkably, it was the 30-year-old's second first-class hundred and first after seven years, having made his Ranji debut back in November 2015. Nagwaswalla was the pick of Gujarat bowlers on Tuesday and has taken three wickets

thus far. The left-arm pacer had got rid of Ahammed Imran (24) towards close of play as he frustrated the hosts with a 40-run stand with Azharudeen.

Parth puts Vidarbha in control against Mumbai

NAGPUR: Left-arm spinner Parth Rekhade struck thrice in an over as Mumbai slipped to a precarious 188 for 7 in reply to Vidarbha's first innings total

of 383, trailing by 195 runs at stumps on Day Two of their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Tuesday. Mumbai opener Akash Anand was battling at one end, unbeaten on 67, with the last recognised batter, Tanush Kotian, on 5 not out at the other, as their title defence came under intense pressure from a disciplined and persistent Vidarbha side on their home ground at the VCA Stadium here.

Mumbai were steady at 113 for two at one stage but Rekhade, playing only his second First-Class match, ripped open the Ranji champions' batting line-up, first with an innocuous delivery which claimed the prized scalp of Ajinkya Rahane in the 41st over.

Brief scores: Kerala 418/7 in 177 overs (Mohammed Azharudeen 149 not out; Arzan Nagwaswalla 3/64) vs Gujarat; Vidarbha 383 in 107.5 overs (Dhruv Shorey 74, Danish Malewar 79, Yash Rathod 54; Shivam Dube 5/49, Shams Mulani 2/62) lead Mumbai 188/7 in 59 overs (Akash Anand 67*; Yash Thakur 2/56, Parth Rekhade 3/16) by 195 runs.

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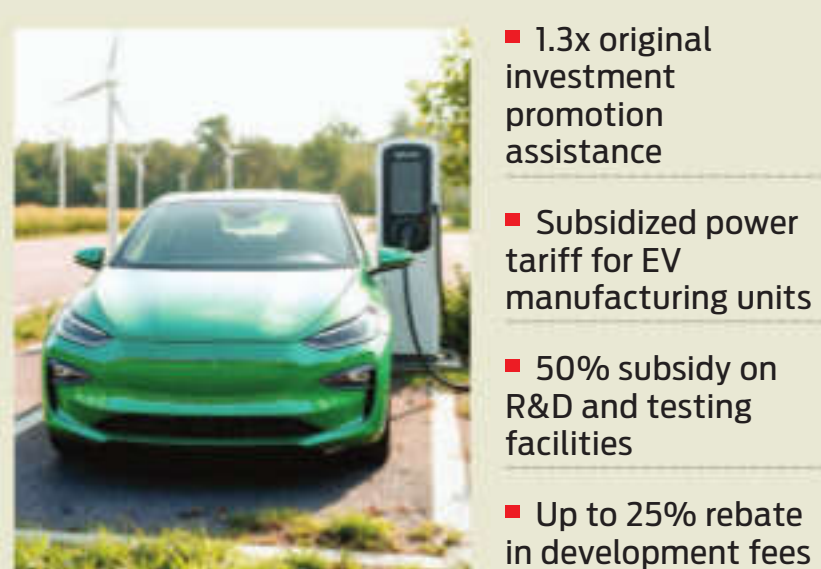
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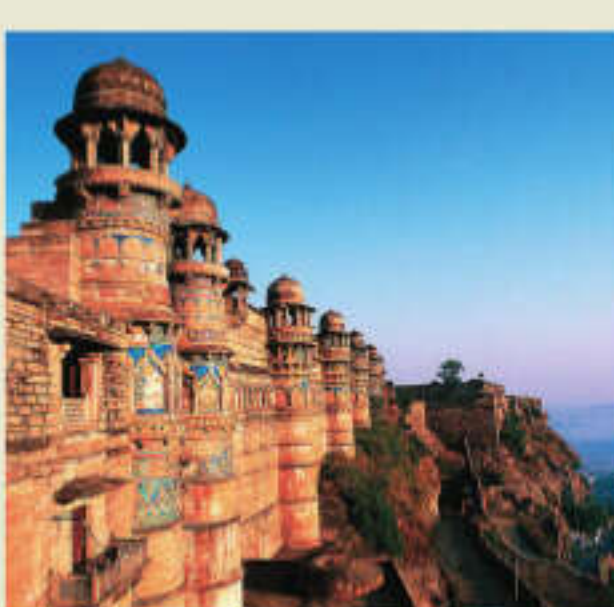
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DAY'S DIARY

Sounds recorded

On this day in 1878, Thomas Edison was awarded US Patent for his invention the phonograph, the first machine that could record sound

PLAN AND PROGRESS

Edison was working on a machine that would transcribe telegraphic messages through indentations on paper tape, which could later be sent over the telegraph repeatedly



SPEED WORK

Edison gave a sketch of the machine to his mechanic, John Kruesi, to build, which Kruesi supposedly did within 30 hours and Edison immediately tested it



BELL'S RIVAL

The next critical improvement in recording technology came from Alexander Graham Bell, Edison's rival in the telephone race

'Youngsters are not interested in Hindi'

PG 4

'BRAHMA ANANDAM HAS GREAT EMOTIONAL DEPTH'

Brahmanandam starrer *Brahma Anandam* has taken Tollywood by storm. *CE* speaks to director RVS Nikhil, who tells us what it is like donning the directorial hat



INTERVIEW

SHREYA VERONICA

THE talk of the town is the movie *Brahma Anandam* — after all, features the king of comedy, Brahmanandam, and his son Raja Goutham in the lead roles. Though the star power is undeniably massive in this comedy-drama, what makes this movie a true hit is the vision and direction. The person behind this is director RVS Nikhil, who has an exclusive conversation with *CE* about his journey, his experience on working with the legend, and more.

Excerpts

How was it working with the king of comedy?

It was actually overwhelming and surreal — the beauty of Brahmanandam *garu* is that he understands how the person in front of him is feeling and tries to push them forward and motivates them. Whenever I was a little stressed and began to over-



think, I used to get his support. Working with him was easy.

What can we see in this film?

The film itself is not about Brahmanandam *garu*; rather, the protagonist is named Brahmanandam, and his grandfather is Anand Murthy.

Everyone talks about Brahmanandam's comedy but he is a fantastic actor in every way. When he gets emotional in the film, we get emotional too. The fun is already there because he stars in it, but the film also has strong emotional depth. The characters are very natural and the fun is organic. You will want to cry at the end of the movie!

Tell us about your journey as

a director.

My career started with a small film for Usha Kiran Movies. After that, I worked in TV serials as co-director and director. I was an associate director for RGV (Ram Gopal Varma) *garu*. Working with him helped me understand that every filmmaker needs an individual personality and every movie has to be a fresh piece. I am very happy; as a writer, I am proud of myself, and as a director, I am super satisfied.

If given a chance, would you choose anything over being a writer and director?

It is tough to do so; the writer saves the director and the director complements the writer. Both are very important for me.

Who has inspired you to be what you are right now?

Honestly, I don't know who has inspired me. When I was around seven years old, I just wanted to get into movies and don't know why. When I was 9, I decided that I wanted to become a director.

Has it been difficult for you to work in this industry?

There are struggles and hardships but I don't think they are painful. They are needed for a person to become strong. If struggles weren't a part of my life, I don't think I would be where I am or that I could have handled a huge cast. Hardships shaped my mindset and made me stronger.

Who is the best person that you have worked with?

For the movie *Brahma Anandam*, the best person to work with was everyone! Whether it was Raja Goutham *garu*, Venela Kishore *garu*, or Brahmanandam *garu*, they all had a big impact on me and made me stronger. All of them acted well and helped me too. Kishore was a delight to work with and always partook in constructive discussions. In fact, people have been there with me all along, like Sandeep, who is a director of photography, and Srujan, who is the music director of the movie.

Was there ever a time you felt like giving up?

That feeling was never there in my life because I love what I do.

NITIKA KRISHNA

WHAT kind of comedy do you like? Light-hearted? Dark? Deadpan? What sort of comedy does your mother, father, sibling, or friend gravitate towards? Well, none of this matters when you all are in front of Prashasti Singh — this talented comedienne of *Ladies Up*, *Comedy Premium League*, and *Comicistaan* fame will make sure each one of you laugh your guts out from the very moment she walks onto the stage. She speaks from the heart and comically tells you about her life, which is oh so relatable! After her show *Divine Feminine* in KLN Prasad Auditorium - FTCCI, Red Hills, the versatile comic from Uttar Pradesh spoke to *CE* about her journey, comedy, and more.

Excerpts

How was it performing in Hyderabad?

I absolutely love Hyderabad, and the audience here was wonderful and comedy-loving. In fact, my tech career started here. So, the city has a very special place in my heart. During my time here, I indulged in all sorts of delicious dishes including *biryani*. But I think *haleem* is my ultimate favourite!

How did your love for comedy start?

The plan was to study engineering at a good college, do an MBA at a good college, and then work. And I did — but during my corporate life, I had this constant urge to get on stage. Comedy happened accidentally; when I was working in Mumbai after my MBA, I started taking *improv* classes and discovered this whole ecosystem of comedy. Mumbai is the kind of city where you can finish your day job and head out to do open mics, which is what I did!

But comedy was never the 'plan'. When they came hunting for talent for *Comicistaan*, I auditioned for it. I thought that even if I was selected, I wouldn't be able to go because I had a job. But I got selected and my employers gave me a two-month sabbatical. In those two months, I realised that this is something I really loved doing.

After the shoot was over, I went back to work. For the next six months, things were difficult because I knew I wanted to quit but couldn't muster the courage...I was raised to believe that job security is paramount. But my company was extremely understanding; they said that I should experiment with comedy if I wanted to and in the worst case, their doors would always be open for me. That

'I DON'T TIE MYSELF TO ONE LANGUAGE'



am not able to do that, I have failed at my purpose. I suppose that my experiences also deeply resonate with people. When I do a set on being an unmarried woman in my 30s, women in the audience with similar experiences perhaps relate to me and feel lighter.

There is this notion that 'women are not funny'. What are your thoughts?

We live in a society which is biased against women; this notion perhaps comes from people who do not follow comedy or watch much comedy at all. Even the idea of a woman talking is 'annoying' to such people. This mindset will take time to change; all we can do is keep chugging and not caring about those opinions!

There were many women comics before me who paved the way. From an industry point of view, I've been blessed to have supportive people around me. When I was starting out, there were many ladies' open mics, so that really upped my confidence level.

Who are your comedic inspirations?

This question gets more difficult to answer as the years go by. But I would say American comedian Ali Wong — she's unapologetic, and no matter who watches her comedy, they find it funny because she does it so well. What I take away from her comedy is that you can be completely yourself but be absolutely entertaining at the same time.

If not a comedian, what would you be?

Oh, I have never said this out in public before...a dancer! Even now when I see a performance, I say, 'Oh my god, I want to be her in my next life.'

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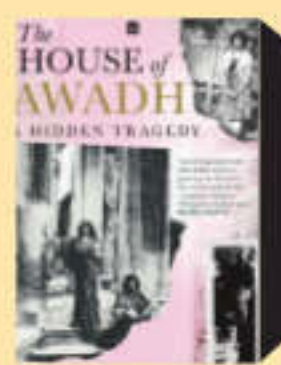
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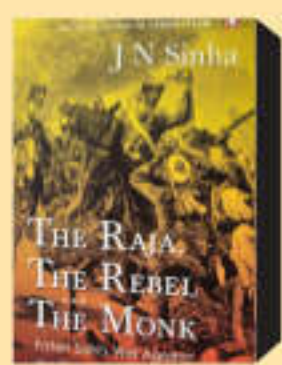
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The House of Awadh

by Aletta Andre and Abhimanyu Kumar

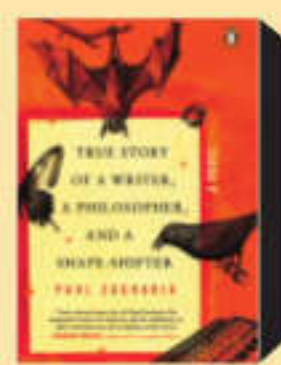
The House of Awadh is a thriller-like investigation of the Malcha Mahal royal family—the self-proclaimed descendants of the House of Awadh.



The Raja, the Rebel and the Monk

by J N Sinha

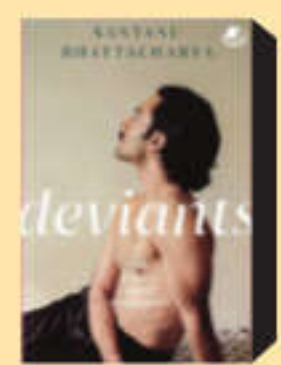
It delves into the life of Maharaja Fateh Bahadur Sahi, a formidable 18th-century Indian king who led a 30-year guerrilla war against the British East India Company.



True Story Of Writer Philosopher And Shape-Shifter: A Novel

by Paul Zacharia

Lord Spider, celebrated author of popular fiction; J L Pillai, eminent executioner and voyeur; Rosi, Spider's wife and freelance philosopher. When they get together to write an essay on 'Compassion' for the revolutionary party, the art of lying reaches its outrageous zenith. So does story-telling.



Deviants

by Santanu Bhattacharya

A bold and electrifying story of a family in which three generations of gay men in India fight for love and dignity against the currents of their times.



SUMMER DELIGHT

People flock to watermelon stalls for a refreshing escape from the sweltering sun in Hyderabad | VINAY MADAPU

QUICKFIX

CHAAS (BUTTERMILK)

INGREDIENTS

- Thick curd (yogurt): 1 cup
- Chilled water: 2 cups
- Roasted cumin powder: ½ tsp
- Black salt (or regular salt): ½ tsp
- A few fresh mint leaves (optional, but highly recommended)
- A pinch of chaat masala (for an extra kick)
- Ice cubes (as needed)

METHOD

- Mix the curd and chilled water until smooth and frothy in a blender or hand whisk.
- Add roasted cumin powder, black salt, and chaat masala, then blend again.
- Tear a few mint leaves and stir them in for freshness.
- Pour into a glass, add ice cubes, and serve immediately.



Contributed by Muskaan Chhajed, Hyderabad

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Appliance
 The Thermocool HITEK Cooler is designed for superior cooling with its 50L tank capacity and heavy-duty motor, ensuring a powerful air throw for maximum comfort. Its energy-efficient performance and low noise operation make it perfect for both home and office use.
 WHERE: <https://thermocool.co.in/product/hitek-air-cooler/>

Fragrance
 Nisara Perfumes' exclusive Women's Perfume Gift Set features four luxurious fragrances—Midnight Tease, Girl Power, Vanilla Rush, and Miss Gorgeous—this set is perfect for expressing elegance, romance, and empowerment.
 WHERE: <https://www.nisarabeauty.com/collections/edp-gift-sets/products/women-perfume-gift-set-4-15ml>

Gifting
 Experience timeless sophistication with the Signature Femme Gift Set, a luxurious trio designed for the modern woman.
 WHERE: <https://neeshperumes.com/products/signature-femme-gift-set?variant=44724153483514>

Make-up
 Get ready to meet your new glow-to-essential: Maybelline New York's SunKisser Highlighter & Blush. This innovative 2-in-1 marvel brings together the radiance of a highlighter and the warmth of a blush, designed to make multitasking effortless.
 WHERE: www.maybelline.com

Footwear
 Designed for ultimate comfort and effortless style, our men's sneakers are perfect for lounging or on-the-go moments. Featuring soft, cushioned soles and durable materials, they provide excellent warmth and support.
 WHERE: <https://cantabilshop.com/products/men-lace-up-red-self-design-casual-sneaker>

Kitchen
 Experience the royal touch with Hamdard Saffron, a Grade 1 quality marvel packed with wellness benefits. This exquisite spice is a rich source for antioxidant and potent anti-inflammatory qualities.
 WHERE: <https://myhamdardstore.com/>

Gadget
 Nirvana by boAt, the premium audio experience from boAt, has teamed up with visionary designer Dhruv Kapoor to introduce the exclusive 'Flaming Hearts' collection. This limited-edition range brings together music and fashion, showcasing a bold collection of TWS and headphones that symbolise love, passion, and unrestrained self-expression.
 WHERE: <https://>

Accessories
 Solasta by Asort is a Men's Black-Brown Dual Colour One-Fold Wallet. Designed for the modern man, this wallet is a blend of sophistication and functionality, making it the perfect accessory for everyday use.
 WHERE: <https://asort.com/>

Theatre
 "Gela Madhav Kunikade" is an immensely popular Marathi comedy that has been a favourite among audiences with its clever dialogue and sharp comedic timing.
 WHEN: Feb 21, 7 pm
 WHERE: Ravindra Bharathi, Lakdikapul

Comedy
 Aakash Mehta Lives, a stand-up comedy show will be held.
 WHEN: Feb 23, 7:30 pm
 WHERE: The Comedy Theatre, Gachibowli

Neena Wilson
 Public speaking coach & corporate trainer

How to get children interested in public speaking

Public speaking is the art of persuading and connecting with any audience. Here's how you can get started:

Select a story: Choose a story with a clear moral/message. Ensure your children understand and connect with the lesson, as this helps them speak with conviction. Help them memorise the story thoroughly—a well-prepared child is a confident one.

Add 'magic': Gestures, voice modulation, and stage presence turn a simple story into an engaging performance.

ASK AN EXPERT

Practice, practice, practice: To help your child overcome stage fright, start with recorded practice sessions. Watching themselves perform allows them to see their progress. Create a supportive environment by organising a family gathering where they can perform and receive positive reinforcement.

Read and mirror: Reading books across different genres helps children expand their vocabulary and imagination. Since children mirror adult behaviour, lead by example—read regularly and discuss stories together.

Build a community: Children love and thrive as a group. Create playdates/book clubs/venues or collaborate with libraries, schools, social groups where kids can learn.

FITBIT

KUNDALINI CIRCLES

(SEATED TORSO CIRCLES)

This pose, commonly known as Sufi Grinds and traditionally practised in Kundalini Yoga, is a simple seated torso movement. As the name suggests this practice is done by rotating the upper body (torso) in both clockwise and anticlockwise directions coordinating with the breath. It helps warm up the hips and spine, engaging the core and abdominal muscles.

STEPS

- Start in a comfortable seat on the pillow/blanket or on the floor in Sukhasana. The legs are crossed, shoulders rolled back, the chest open, palms resting on the knees, and the chin slightly in.
- Settle down the body, finding the straight line with the back erect and natural lift in the heart.
- Inhale, place your hands on the respective knees. Exhale, bring the torso to a forward bend from the hips. The back forms a 60-degree angle, and the chin is slightly tucked in, extending the back of the neck.
- Inhale, begin a slow clockwise movement of the torso from the right towards the left. While in the flow, press the palms on the legs but not too hard. Exhale, go forward, inhale, and come back to the centre.
- Go in slow rhythmic circles, first in a clockwise direction and then in an anticlockwise direction. Repeat the Kundalini Circles six times in each round or as per capacity.
- To release, inhale, come back to the centre, and sit upright in Easy Pose.
- Release and relax in Sukhasana Variation Arms Knees.

BENEFITS

- Practise at the beginning of a yoga sequence to warm up the muscles of the back, hips, and shoulders.
- Prepares the back, hips, and shoulders for easier movements.
- Included as a part of preparatory poses for the mentioned body areas.
- Strengthen muscles, including the pelvic floor, gluteus maximus, and psoas.
- Keeps the side abdominal muscles active and energised.
- It is part of the kriya practice, coordinating the breath work with the movements of the torso, energising the body and mind.
- Flow of prana moves upwards through the chakras.
- Stimulates the related organs improving better digestion, lesser pains during menstruation.
- Keeps the body free of toxins, flushing them out.
- If a student isn't able to perform Chakki Chalanasana, it can be a good substitute for the same.
- It is a quick solution to reduce accumulated tension.

LIMITATIONS

- Students who have had surgery in abdominal organs, pelvic floor, or lower back, should practise after taking the advice of a yoga expert.
- Those who have severe conditions like blood pressure, a history of heart ailments, are recovering from a herniated disc should take it slow.
- Those who are unable to sit on the floor, can use a blanket, pillow or cushion. While it is a safe practice for senior citizens and pregnant women, the grinding or circular movements of the torso should be slow.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

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ARTCORNER



STRINGS DETACHED
 Kochi-based businessman and artist Pranab Moozhayil's pencil sketch titled 'Thinking Out of the Box' is a take on human imagination and perceptions

WEDNESDAY
19.02.2025

Hale & Heartly



BATTLING THE CYTOKINE STORM

THOUGH A RATHER RARE CONDITION, HYPERCYTOKINEMIA, OR EXTRA CYTOKINE RELEASE SYNDROME, IS SOMETHING TO WATCH OUT FOR. EXPERTS BREAK IT DOWN

NITIKA KRISHNA

THINK of it this way — the human body is a kingdom which is healthy, prosperous and functions peacefully. Every once in a while, invaders from the pathogen kingdom attack the body. But the human kingdom has a strong army — the immune system — which defeats these germ foes. However, an army cannot win every battle, can it? Sometimes, there is an error in judgement, and too many good soldiers — named cytokines — are sent to battle. What follows is utter chaos, called hypercytokinemia.

What are cytokines?

“Simply put, cytokines are small proteins which tell the immune cells to go and kill the bacteria or virus that enters the body,” said Dr Saadvik Raghuram Y, HOD, medical oncology and haematology at Arête Hospitals in Gachibowli.

Defining hypercytokinemia

Also called the ‘cytokine storm’, hypercytokinemia is a condition where too many cytokines are released. “They over-trigger the immune system. It’s like a war — if the opposite side has 10,000 soldiers, why would you send far more than that?” he quipped.

What triggers the condition?

Dr Rajesh Vukkala, chief consultant - internal medicine, Renova Hospitals, Sanathnagar, said that viral infections can trigger hypercytokinemia. “The usual effects of an infection are sore throats, cold, or fevers. But some people are more likely to develop a toxic reaction to the illness, like the release of extra cytokines,” he explained.

But why is this so? The senior doctor added that each person naturally has a different immune response, pointing out, “Someone with more allergies or a person with a family history of autoimmune diseases has a higher chance of developing this condition.”

But immunotherapy drugs, such as the chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy — a cancer treatment that uses a patient’s own modified T cells to fight cancer — are the main cause of hypercytokinemia. “It is used to treat patients with leukemia and lymphoma. A patient may start to have fever, chills, and fatigue. As doctors, we first start treatment for the infection but constantly stay suspicious,” said Dr Saadvik.

Domino effect

Hypercytokinemia causes inflammation, which damages the organs. “In this condition, the immune system randomly

attacks anything and everything in an uncontrolled manner,” noted Dr Rajesh.

Dr Saadvik stated that the condition can affect any organ, but explained its impact on the lungs, heart, and brain.

◆ **Lungs:** The immune system attacks the lung cells, causing the lung tissue to get inflamed. One can feel sharp pains in the chest and also suffer from pulmonary edema, where too much fluid accumulates in the lungs. The patient can also get acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

◆ **Heart:** The immune system attacks the heart muscles, causing tachycardia, where the heart rate is faster than 100 beats per minute. Main functions such as pumping blood and maintaining blood pressure are affected. The blood pressure starts to drop, which is called hypotension, and the heart stops.

◆ **Brain:** The immune system attacks the neuronal cells. One may have simple symptoms like headaches but can also experience delirium or confusion. Dizziness, fits, and unconsciousness are also effects.

Treatment

Drugs like tocilizumab target specific cytokines, while high doses of corticosteroids — anti-inflammatory drugs — are also administered. Symptom-based treatments are given to patients as well, added Dr Rajesh.

Although hypercytokinemia cannot be prevented, doctors maintain a high level of clinical suspicion and take precautions. “If we are giving cancer patients CAR T-cell therapy in the morning, we make sure we have tocilizumab and corticosteroids on hand. This is because symptoms can start to show up as early as the same evening,” noted Dr Saadvik.

How to identify hypercytokinemia?

The tricky part about this condition is that its symptoms aren’t very different from those that point to a regular, seasonal illness — cough, fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, headaches, and so on. But both experts advised vigilance. Dr Rajesh said, “If a paracetamol just doesn’t cure your fever, head to your doctor. Being cautious is the best thing you can do.”



Dr Rajesh Vukkala



Dr Saadvik Raghuram Y

VENNAPUSALA RAMYA

IMAGINE juggling work and pregnancy at the same time — women can pull off anything, right? While we cheer you on, there’s an important factor to watch out for to ensure a safe pregnancy: gestational diabetes, a condition that affects many during pregnancy. To help you stay informed and healthy, *CE* reached out to a city-based expert for dietary recommendations to prevent gestational diabetes.

Dr Dipika Narayan, diabetologist at GVK Health Hub, explains, “Pregnancy is a remarkable journey, but it also brings significant hormonal shifts. While these changes are essential, they can sometimes lead to Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM), making it particularly challenging for working women balancing careers and pregnancies.”

GDM develops when the body struggles to produce enough insulin to meet the increased demands of pregnancy. Hormones like progesterone, growth hormone, and placental lactogen — vital for a healthy pregnancy — can induce insulin resistance. If the pancreas can’t keep up, GDM occurs.

“Although GDM typically resolves after childbirth, it poses health risks for both mother and baby. Women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) or a history of obesity or diabetes are more susceptible to developing GDM,” warns Dr Prinka Bajaj, senior consultant fertility specialist at Oasis Fertility.

Dr Dipika adds that untreated GDM can increase the risk of preeclampsia, macrosomia (larger-than-average baby), and delivery complications. It may also heighten the child’s risk of developing diabetes later in life.

According to Dr Prinka Bajaj, common symptoms of GDM include increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision, and sugar in the urine. Early testing is recommended, especially for women with PCOS. Managing GDM requires a healthy diet, regular physical activity, and monitoring blood glucose levels, all of which also contribute to improved fertility and overall well-being.

Diet and lifestyle strategies play a key role in reducing the risk of GDM. Dr Dipika explains that every pregnancy is unique, and what works for one woman may not work for another. Personalised

Busy woman’s guide to preventing gestational diabetes

advice from a healthcare provider or registered dietitian is essential. However, some general guidelines can empower working women to take control of their health.

Dr Dipika’s dietary power moves

◆ **Smart food choices:** Prioritise low to medium glycemic index (GI) foods. These release sugar slowly and steadily into the bloodstream, preventing spikes. Think vibrant fruits and vegetables, hearty whole grains, and protein-rich pulses (like lentils and chickpeas).

◆ **Mealtime mastery:** Aim for three balanced meals a day and resist the urge to skip meals, especially when work gets hectic. Pack healthy snacks like apples, pears, or a handful of almonds to keep your blood sugar stable throughout the day.

◆ **Snack smart:** Keep healthy snacks readily available. This prevents impulsive, less healthy choices when hunger strikes.

◆ **Limit the temptations:** Minimise processed foods, sugary drinks, and baked goods. These are often high in sugar and low in nutritional value.

◆ **Portion control:** Be mind-

ful of portion sizes. Even healthy foods can contribute to excessive weight gain if eaten in large quantities.

◆ **Frequent fuelling:** Eating small, frequent meals every 3-4 hours helps keep blood sugar levels even.

◆ **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. It’s essential for overall health and can also help manage blood sugar.

Beyond the plate

◆ **Move more:** Incorporate regular physical activity into your routine. Even 30 minutes of brisk walking or prenatal yoga daily can make a big difference in blood sugar control. If you have a desk job, take short breaks to stretch and move around.

◆ **Monitor and manage:** Regular blood sugar monitoring is vital, especially if you’ve been diagnosed with GDM. Work closely with your healthcare provider to manage your blood sugar levels effectively. Some women can manage GDM with diet and exercise alone, while others may require medication.

Pregnancy can be demanding, especially for working women. By making informed choices about your diet and lifestyle, you can significantly reduce your risk of GDM and ensure a healthier pregnancy for yourself and your baby.

KNOW YOUR RISK

HISTORY OF GDM IN A PREVIOUS PREGNANCY

PREDIABETES (HBA1C GREATER THAN 5.7%)

FAMILY HISTORY OF DIABETES (FIRST-DEGREE RELATIVES)

PRE-PREGNANCY BMI GREATER THAN 30 KG/M²

POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME (PCOS)

OLDER MATERNAL AGE (OVER 35 YEARS)

PREVIOUS BIRTH OF A LARGE BABY (OVER 4 KG)



HYDERABAD DIGEST



Special menstrual health awareness event organised at a city college

St Francis College for Women, Begumpet, witnessed a unique event related to menstrual health and periods taboo, breaking the awkward silence around them. ‘Glow Flow’ was a period awareness event that ditched the hush-hush and brought bold, unapologetic conversations to the forefront. It was organised by Marham - Resonating Resilience, in collaboration with Educator Anchal Aggarwal and WICCI Holistic Child Development Council.



First Bharat Gaurav train to Chardham

This special tourist train covers Haridwar, Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. The 16-day all-inclusive Indian Railways special train package tour begins on May 8 and bookings are open. This package includes sightseeing, transfers, and hotel accommodation where a night stay is provided. It offers South Indian food throughout the tour, both on-board and off-board.

Stonecraft Group launches Woods Indresham

Stonecraft Group, a leading developer of integrated biophilic real estate, has announced the launch of Woods Indresham, a nature-inspired plotted development in Patancheru. This well-planned project is spread across 32 acres and offers 305 premium plots, sized from 267 to 587 sq yards.



Pranava's One Hyderabad unveils its Phase-2

Hyderabad’s skyline is set to witness another skyscraper from the developers of the Central Business District’s (CBD) tallest building, Pranava Group, the Pranava’s One Hyderabad Phase-2 at Somajiguda. Spanning across a prime acre of land, this iconic project will feature 95 ultra-luxurious residences with never-before-seen innovations and amenities designed to redefine modern urban living.



Mukunda Jewellers opens new outlet

The launch of a new outlet of Mukunda Jewellers at Suchitra marks a significant milestone of expanding the brand with the opening of biggest ever jewellery mart and first ever factory outlet.

PropGo dominates West Hyderabad’s luxury market

The real estate market in Hyderabad’s western corridor has seen a significant rise in demand, particularly in the luxury residential segment. PropGo has emerged as a key player, securing 25% of all residential flat sales in Nanakramguda, Narsingi, Kokapet, and Neopolis — areas that have become the epicentre of upscale living.

Welspun Foundation launches a new programme

The Welspun Foundation marked a significant milestone with the successful launch of its Employment-Linked Skill Development Programme through the vibrant Kaushal Mela, held at the Dilskh Nagar Project Centre.



PMS Tirumalgi holds spectacular school carnival

The much-awaited school carnival, ‘Retro Rendezvous’, took place at Pallavi Model School, Tirumalgi, creating an unforgettable experience for students, teachers, and parents. The event, brimming with nostalgia and creativity, celebrated the vibrant past while offering a modern twist to traditional carnival fun.

SHREYA VERONICA

SUMMER is fast approaching — this means we can indulge in sorbets, take cold showers, and enjoy the cooling effects of ACs. Typically, winter has been seen as a season of gloom and sickness. But it is important to note that letting go of your health this summer can cause something awfully serious — dehydration. With this in mind, the Healing Foundation held a workshop called ‘Decoding Dehydration: Silent and Diarrheal’. After the session, Dr B Ravinder Reddy, senior consultant and gastroenterologist surgeon, spoke to *CE* about silent dehydration.

Excerpts

Tell us about the workshop. How are you planning to create awareness on dehydration?

The main objective is to circulate knowledge on silent dehydration among both people and health professionals. In medical terms, it is called subclinical dehydration. In this illness, there is a suboptimal level of fluids, electrolytes, and to a certain extent, energy. This results in lethargy.

In fact, this illness is quite common, and more so in individuals with diabetes and hypertension. People who are on medication for high BP have increased urine output, which is basically high water loss. The kidneys are bound to have some defects, so they function rather suboptimally. People lose more water without their knowledge.



BEATING SILENT DEHYDRATION

water, while those in a tropical region should have more. If they have any illness, they should increase their water intake. In other words, at least take three to four water breaks and make sure you drink plenty of water.

The other aspect of this silent dehydration is that pure water may not be sufficient. Some individuals also need electrolytes because when they sweat, they lose electrolytes subclinically. This can happen even without sweating. The solution here is to eat fruits, which contain adequate amounts of calories and fluids. Most vegetables have water, calories, and electrolytes too. ORS is good for severe dehydration.

What are the other things one should be aware of this summer?

In light of global warming and extreme temperatures, it is im-

portant to be mindful of your fluid intake. A marker for hydration levels is the colour of your urine; light yellow implies a good level of hydration while a darker one hints at dehydration. Clear urine means overhydration. Fruits, vegetables, and adequate water — these are ways to protect yourself.



Dr B Ravinder Reddy

'YOUNGSTERS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN HINDI ANYMORE'

Neena Gupta, along with Mihir Ahuja, discusses their upcoming film *Hindi-Vindi*, her greediness to work in films, and more



SHREYAS PANDE

In *Hindi-Vindi*, Mihir Ahuja plays a young musician living in Australia who has lost touch with his mother tongue — Hindi. So, when he gets on a call with his grandmother (Neena Gupta) back home in India, the two cannot communicate with each other; he doesn't know Hindi, and she cannot speak English. In a bid to speak with her, he decides to learn Hindi. Although the film talks about

the Indian diaspora, exploring the loss of language in the new generation, there is much to resonate for those living in Northern India as well. A lot of Hindi-Urdu words are not heard in Bollywood films today. Neena feels that society is changing in a way that is affecting the films as well. "People in Mumbai don't read in Hindi as much, they prefer reading in English," she says.

Neena adds that the younger generation is drifting away from the language due to social

media. "They have a different lingo altogether. For instance, I have never really understood what LOL means," she quips. This generation gap is also at the centre of Sydney-based director Ali Sayed's *Hindi-Vindi*, which is set to be released in Australia on February 27. In the film, Mihir, known for his role in Zoya Akhtar's *The Archies* (2023), carries a seamless Australian English accent. He had to take training for over four months to understand the distinct pronunciation. When he went to Australia for the shoot,

he would walk around and observe how people spoke. "If I had doubts about certain words, I would ask them to read it for me," he recalls. His character in the film has difficulty speaking Hindi — however, in real life, Mihir speaks the language fairly well. "I am from Jamsheerpur and although my family is Punjabi, we speak Hindi at home. I also read some Hindi literature in school which helped a lot too," he says.

According to Neena, it is only in the metropolitan cities that the local languages are not engaged with prominently. "If you go to Kerala, people there read and write in Malayalam. And their literature is so rich," she says. The actor recently starred in the Malayalam series *1000 Babies* and during the shoot, she faced difficulty conversing with her cook, who only spoke and understood Malayalam. "She didn't know Hindi at all; not even what *haldi* (turmeric) and *namak* (salt) are. And I don't know Malayalam at all," Neena says. That's when technology came in handy. She used her phone to translate it to her. "I would say my cooking instructions in Hindi to the phone and make her read the Malayalam trans-

lation," she smiles.

A similar moment takes place in the film, where Neena's character is trying to learn English with her phone, which irks her grandson. Neena has played the role of a mother and grandmother before in films like *Badhaai Ho* (2018), *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* (2020) and *Uunchai* (2022), among others. How does she make a similar character appear different in each film? "Once I wear my costumes, read my dialogues and get convinced about what I am saying, it automatically becomes different. All I need then is concentration, which is the most difficult thing to do on a set," she says. It is also learning a new dialect for a certain character that helps her differentiate. For instance, her character in the comedy-drama series *Panchayat* speaks Hindi with an earthen flair. "I always joke about it that by the time I finish one season, I get so consumed in the language but then it gets over too soon," says Neena.

Post-2017 was a career resurgence for the actor, who had not been getting much work before. That changed with *Badhaai Ho* as she went on to star in more films and shows over the years. However, Neena feels there's a lot more to do and that she is greedy for roles. "I am enjoying the work I am doing. It saves me from getting old," she says. The actor wants to do a comedy film soon. "I also want to do some action with a mix of romance," she concludes.



SKN clarifies on 'Telugu girls' comment

TELOGU producer Sreenivasa Kumar, also known as SKN, has addressed the controversy surrounding his recent remarks at the *Return of the Dragon* pre-release event. On Tuesday, he took to X to clarify his stance after his statement sparked debate online.

"To clarify, I have introduced eight talented individuals to the industry so far. I introduced Telugu actresses like Reshma and Anandi (*Ee Rojullo*), Manasa (*Romance*), Priyanka Jawalkar (*Taxi-wala*), Vaishnavi (*Baby*), Haarika (new untitled film with Santosh Sobhan), Aishwarya (new film), and Kushitha (*3 Roses* sequel). I am set to introduce 25 more talented Telugu girls across 4-5 different crafts in cinema through my upcoming films.

Eighty per cent of the films I backed featured Telugu actresses, unlike any other producer. I took it upon myself as a mission to encourage Telugu talent. Please take my statement as fun banter only; don't make it a controversy. Don't spread misinformation," SKN said in a clarification video.

At the event on Sunday, while welcoming actor Kayadu Lohar, SKN had stated, "Welcome to Telugu. We encourage non-Telugu-speaking heroines rather than Telugu-speaking heroines." He further added, "I learnt what happens if we encourage Telugu-speaking girls as heroines."

The producer's comment quickly raised eyebrows with many netizens believing that he was taking a dig at actor Vaishnavi Chaitanya, whom he introduced in *Baby*.



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