



THE Hans India



India mau Malaysia by 315 runs
Abhigyan Kundu's record 209 not out and an excellent return of 5/22 from Deepesh Devendran set up a massive 315-run victory for India against Malaysia in their U-19 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday. **P10**

Can CBI contain cybercrime effectively?
The Supreme Court's decision comes as a whiff of fresh air to the countless victims of cyber frauds. It is heartening that courts, when necessary, take responsible and appropriate decisions on key public issues — decisions that governments. **P6**

Rupee falls 23 paise to settle at fresh record low of 91.01/\$
The rupee fell 23 paise against the greenback to settle at a new all-time low of 91.01 (provisional) on Tuesday, as the government in the Rajya Sabha attributed the sliding value of domestic currency to widening trade deficit and the ongoing. **P11**

"Chikiri Chikiri" Sets the Internet Ablaze, Crosses a Century in Telugu Alone
Mega Power Star Ram Charan has once again showcased his immense star power. The first song from his upcoming film, 'Peddi', titled "Chikiri Chikiri", is creating waves online. What began as a high-energy launch has now turned into a massive. **P12**

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Will remain CM till high command wishes: Siddaramaiah

BELAGAVI: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday reiterated that he will remain as the chief minister as long as the Congress high command wants him to continue. He also said that his party has got a mandate for five years to rule and will also come back to power after 2028 assembly elections. "I am saying this very clearly. We have high command. We abide by their decision. Whatever high command says is ultimate," Siddaramaiah told the Assembly.

The leadership issue popped up in the Assembly during the question hour. Congress MLA from Kunigal, H D Ranganath, alleged that the farmers in his constituency were not getting short-term loan from the District Central Cooperative Bank (DCC Bank) whereas farmers from neighbouring Madhugiri constituency got short term loans worth Rs 100 crore.

Ranganath, who is loyal to Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and wants to see him as the next CM, alleged that the farmers of his constituency are being discriminated against. K N Rajanna, who is considered to be a Siddaramaiah loyalist, represents the Madhugiri segment. Replying to Ranganath, Siddaramaiah assured him that if there was any discrimination then he would rectify it. "Hope Ranganath trusts me," the CM said. The Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, R Ashoka, quipped that the discrimination appeared to be intentional. The CM retorted, "Don't add fuel to the fire. Opposition is meant for adding fuel." Ashoka replied, "It means there is fire. Ranganath is performing poojas to see that D K Shivakumar becomes CM." Ashoka also said it does not matter if the Opposition is adding fuel, but the concerning matter is that the ruling Congress MLAs are involved in creating unrest. Siddaramaiah reprimanded Ashoka, saying that he should keep quiet when the ruling MLAs are silent. Ashoka said, "They are not quiet sir. They are doing poojas every day. They want to see Shivakumar as CM. I am reading it in the newspapers every day." To this Siddaramaiah said, "Even if you try to instigate, no one from our side will react... All 140 MLAs are standing in unison."

Delhi Environment Minister apologises for air pollution

- The national capital's air quality saw some improvement on Tuesday morning, with an AQI of 377 as against 498 a day ago; announces stricter curbs to Tackle Air Pollution from Dec 18

- Taking a jibe at AAP leaders who staged a protest at Delhi Secretariat on Tuesday over the pollution issue, Sirsa said they had failed to take effective steps to tackle the crisis

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Tuesday apologised for the air pollution crisis in the national capital and acknowledged its impact on children's health. He asserted that it was

the result of the policies pursued by the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

Addressing a press conference, Sirsa said the current government was making sustained efforts to bring down pollution levels. "I apologise to the people of Delhi for the rising air



pollution. We are working consistently to reduce it day by day," he said, adding that no government can completely control pollution levels within nine to ten months.

Taking a jibe at AAP leaders who staged a protest at Delhi Secretariat on Tuesday over the pollution issue, Sirsa said they had failed to take effective steps to tackle the crisis.

The national capital's air quality saw some improvement on Tuesday morning, with an AQI of 377 as against 498 a day ago, even as smog blanketed the city, shivering at 8.3 degrees

Celsius during the morning hours, reducing visibility.

Amid rising air pollution levels in the national capital, the Delhi government has announced a series of stricter measures that will come into effect from Thursday, December 18. Sirsa said vehicles without a valid Pollution Under Control certificate will not be allowed to refuel at petrol pumps. He urged residents to ensure their vehicles have a valid PUC certificate by Wednesday to avoid inconvenience.

The government has also imposed a ban on the entry of trucks carrying construction material into

Delhi from Thursday. Officials said strict action will be taken against violators, and such vehicles will be seized. In addition, private vehicles entering Delhi from outside the city that do not meet BS-6 emission standards will face action, with authorities set to seize non-compliant vehicles.

Sirsa said the government is committed to providing clean air to Delhi's residents and is taking tough steps to address the pollution crisis. He appealed to the public to cooperate with the measures, stressing that collective effort is essential to improve air quality in the capital.



Relief for Gandhis; ED's National Herald chargesheet rejected

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

A court in Delhi on Tuesday refused to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's money laundering charge against Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and five others in the National Herald case.

The ED said it would file an appeal against the court order.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne noted the chargesheet filed in the case is based on an investigation into a complaint by a private person and not on an FIR of a predicate offence. Its cognisance is impermissible in law, the judge said.

Reading out the operative part from the order, the judge said the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing has already lodged an FIR in the case, and hence it will be premature to adjudicate on ED's arguments in the case



based on merits.

The ED has accused Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, as well as late party leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, along with Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and a private company, Young Indian, of conspiracy and money laundering.

It has been alleged that they acquired properties worth approximately Rs 2,000 crore belonging to Associated Journals Limited (AJL), which publishes the National Herald newspaper.

The investigation agency further alleged that the Gandhis held the majority 76 per cent shares in Young Indian, which "fraudulently" usurped the assets of AJL in exchange for a Rs 90 crore loan.

G RAM G Bill introduced in LS amid objections by Oppn

- Firstly, the process of renaming schemes costs a lot of money to the country, so I don't understand why they are doing it: Priyanka Gandhi

- Second, MGNREGA guaranteed 100 days of employment to the poorest of the poor, but the new bill will weaken this right under MGNREGA

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, that seeks to replace the existing rural employment law MGNREGA, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday amid strong objections by the opposition to the "removal" of Mahatma Gan-



dhi's name from it.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while introducing the bill, said the government not only believes in Mahatma Gandhi but also follows his principles. "The (Narendra) Modi govt has done more for rural development than previous governments," he said.

Opposition members strongly opposed the proposed legislation at the introduction stage and

pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny. The MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi of the Congress, strongly objected to the "removal" of Mahatma Gandhi's name.

The opposition members also came to the Well of the House, holding up photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, expressing their disapproval of the "removal" of the name of the Father of the Nation. According to a copy of

SC mulls pan-India guidelines to prevent road accidents on NHs

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court mulled formulating pan-India guidelines to prevent road accidents, such as a recent one in Rajasthan's Phalodi that claimed 15 lives, on expressways and national highways. A bench of Justices J K Maheswari and Vijay Bishnoi flagged the construction of illegal "dhabas" on both sides

of national highways and expressways as a possible cause of road accidents and asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared in the matter for the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), to submit the statutory rules and regulations for initiating action against these eateries. The court also sought to know

about the action taken so far, which authority is responsible for initiating it and which bodies are not implementing the provisions.

"After discussion between amicus and solicitor general, issues resolved by them, which may be helpful for issuance of the guidelines, also to be produced. In the meantime, parties are at liberty to exchange Google images, which may be helpful in resolving the real problem," the court ordered.



Delhi govt reaffirms support for children under PM CARES scheme

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday interacted with children registered under the PM CARES for Children scheme at a programme held at the Delhi Secretariat. The interaction was organised to ensure continued support, protection, and sensitive care for children who lost their parents, legal guardians, or adoptive parents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the interaction, the chief minister spoke with the children about their education, health, housing, and emotional well-being. She assured them of all possible assistance and said the Delhi government views these chil-

- During the interaction, the CM spoke with the children about their education, health, housing, and emotional well-being

- As a gesture of affection, the CM distributed chocolates to the children and introduced each child to the respective DMs



dren not merely as beneficiaries of a welfare scheme, but as members of its extended family who deserve care, security,

and dignity.

As a gesture of affection, the chief minister distributed chocolates to the children and

introduced each child to the respective district magistrate. The initiative was aimed at reassuring the children that the administration is standing by them at every level. Senior officials, including the divisional commissioner, the secretary and director of the Women and Child Development Department, and all district magistrates, were present at the event.

The chief minister reiterated the Delhi government's commitment to the effective implementation of all provisions under the PM CARES for Children scheme and said the government is prepared to further strengthen the support system wherever required. She emphasised that the objective is not limited to

providing immediate assistance, but to guide these children towards a secure, dignified, and self-reliant future.

She also said the scheme is being effectively implemented in Delhi, with district magistrates appointed as nodal officers to act as guardians and ensure continuous monitoring and care. During the programme, children were provided with the mobile numbers of their respective district magistrates so they could reach out directly in case of any concern.

The PM CARES for Children scheme was launched on May 29, 2021, to support children who lost their parents or guardians during the Covid-19 pandemic that began in 2020.

In touching gesture, Jordanian Crown Prince drives Modi

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

JORDANIAN Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II on Tuesday personally drove Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Jordan Museum here, in a special gesture reflecting the warmth of ties between India and the Arab nation.

The Crown Prince is a 42nd-generation direct descendant of Prophet Mohammad.

Modi arrived in Jordan's capital Amman on Monday on a two-day visit at the invitation of King Abdullah II. Jordan is the first leg of the Prime Minister's four-day, three-nation tour,

which will also take him to Ethiopia and Oman.

The Jordan Museum, located in the Ras al-Ein district of Amman, is the country's largest museum and showcases some of its most significant archaeological and historical artefacts.

Built in 2014, the museum traces the civilisational journey of the region from prehistoric times to the present day.

The museum's collection includes animal bones dating back 1.5 million years and the 9,000-year-old Ain Ghazal lime plaster statues, considered among the world's oldest ever made.

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IN BRIEF



Cong MLA raises 'Vote Chori' issue in Assembly, Oppn opposes debate

BELAGAVI: Congress MLA B R Patil on Tuesday tried to raise the issue of alleged "vote theft" in the Karnataka Assembly, claiming that attempts were made to prevent his election as the legislator. The MLA from Aland assembly constituency in Kalaburagi wanted a discussion, but the opposition objected to it, saying that until the Special Investigation Team submits its report on 'Vote Chori', a discussion cannot take place.

"There were attempts to stop me from entering the Assembly. The Special Investigation Team has identified the accused in the 'vote chori' scam," the Aland MLA said in the House. Minister Priyank Kharge supported Patil, saying the MLA should be given a chance. "He should be given a chance to speak. There were attempts to steal votes for Rs 70 per vote."

BJP MLA V Sunil Kumar objected to the demand, saying, "Let the Home Minister table the SIT report on 'Vote Chori' as well as Dharmasthala. Then only the discussion on this topic can happen." The issue of vote theft was raised by Leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, who alleged that attempts were made to delete over 5,000 votes in the Aland assembly segment.

The SIT has so far arrested one person from West Bengal for trying to delete votes using an application 'OTP Bazaar'. The SIT has also filed a charge sheet in this case, naming the BJP candidate Subhash Guttadar, his son Harshanand Guttadar, Adya and four others in this case.

Separate nodal officer in all dists to prevent female foeticides

BELAGAVI : Accepting that the female foeticide has not stopped in the state, Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Tuesday said that the government is taking strict measures to prevent it. The minister said the government is appointing separate nodal officers in all districts and tightening measures to prevent foeticide, which he called a "social evil". He also assured that the government will consider strengthening legislation to control such activities. The minister was responding to a question by BJP MLC C T Ravi in the Legislative Council. "Female foeticides have certainly not stopped. If you look at the sex ratio, there is a lot of difference. I accept that this is happening," Rao said. "Foeticides are not happening under pressure; voluntarily, it is happening, for not wanting a girl child."

These things are happening based on the sex determination of the foetus at some hospitals. Sex determination is illegal, but with the advancement in technology, portable ultrasound machines have been developed, which can be easily carried anywhere, and scans and tests can be done.

This needs to be controlled. We will bring it to the notice of the central government," he said.

In some districts and in a few hospitals, a higher number of male child births is happening.

It is found with the help of intelligence input, the minister said.

Man arrested for attempt to grab 532 acres of govt, forest land: Khandre

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BELAGAVI

FOREST, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B. Khandre said that police have taken into custody MB Nemanna Gowda alias MB Manmatha for allegedly attempting to illegally acquire large tracts of forest and government land at Kengeri B.M. Kaval using forged documents.

Addressing the media,

Khandre said the accused had submitted fake documents and obtained court orders in an attempt to grab 532 acres of forest and government land, of which 482 acres fall under forest land. He added that Manmatha had previously made a similar attempt to claim ownership over 512 acres and 26 guntas of forest and government land by producing false records.

Khandre said that follow-

ing these attempts, the Assistant Conservator of Forests had lodged a complaint at the Mudigere Circle Police Station on November 28, after which the local Tahsildar also filed a complaint. Based on these complaints, police registered an FIR and have now taken the accused into custody.

He expressed confidence that the investigation would reveal the full conspiracy behind the attempted land

grab, including identifying all individuals involved in facilitating the illegal claim over valuable forest and government land.

The Minister said he had observed that some officials and government advocates were directly or indirectly assisting land grabbers attempting to illegally acquire forest land worth thousands of crores of rupees.

In this regard, he has written to the Chief Min-

ister, seeking a CID probe or a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to thoroughly investigate the matter.

Khandre issued a stern warning, stating that any attempt to encroach upon forest land through forged documents will not be tolerated.

"As Forest Minister, I will not allow anyone to grab forest land. This should serve as a warning to all," he said.



Congress will certainly return to power in 2028: Sidda

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BELAGAVI

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday asserted that the Congress will return to power in Karnataka in 2028 with the people's mandate, just as it did in 2023, and said the BJP would continue to remain in the Opposition.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly at Suvarna Soudha while responding to questions raised by the Opposition, the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the Congress government enjoys the support of 140 MLAs and that there was no need for the Opposition to create unnecessary speculation.

Referring to a popular proverb, Siddaramaiah remarked that the role of the Opposition seemed to be adding salt to a burning wound. He said that despite repeated provocations, none of the ruling party legislators would be swayed. "The people have blessed me to serve as Chief Minister for five years. We have the strength of 140 MLAs, and the Opposition need not indulge in sour commentary," he said.

The Chief Minister said the Congress government clearly understands the pulse of the people. "Just



as the people blessed us in 2023, they will do so again in 2028. The people of Karnataka will never bring the BJP to power," he asserted.

Siddaramaiah alleged that although the BJP has ruled the state twice, it never came to power with a clear popular mandate. He claimed that in 2008 and 2018, the BJP formed the government through defections under 'Operation Kamala' and entered power through the back door rather than through people's blessings. He said this clearly showed that the people of the state do not favour the BJP.

Recalling the post-2018 political developments, Siddaramaiah said the Congress had formed a coalition government with the JD(S) in 2019 with the intention of preventing the BJP from coming to power, but the BJP questioned even that alliance. The Chief Minister said that while the Congress follows the final word of its high command, the BJP has failed to arrive at a consensus even in the selection of its party president. He alleged that frustration and jealousy were evident within the BJP ranks.

"We will provide a stable government for five years

and face the next election confidently. In 2013 and again in 2023, the people gave Congress a mandate. The BJP has never received such a mandate and will not receive it in the future either," Siddaramaiah said, adding that the BJP would continue to sit in the Opposition.

Quoting poet Kanakadasa, he said leadership was not about individuals but collective responsibility. "This is not my government, it is our government. I am the Chief Minister now and will remain so until the high command decides otherwise," he concluded.

Raichur residents oppose hi-tech slaughterhouse near residential hub

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAICHUR

THE construction of a hi-tech slaughterhouse on the outskirts of Raichur city by the district administration and the municipal corporation has triggered strong opposition from local residents, who have demanded that the project be shifted to an alternative location.

The slaughterhouse is being built on five acres of government land in Survey No. 95/1 of Yeramarus Ward No. 33. Locals argue that the selected site is surrounded by densely populated residential layouts and important public institutions, making it unsuitable for such a facility. Schools, colleges, hostels, religious centres and newly developed housing layouts are located in the immediate vicinity. In addition, construction of the Raichur airport is progressing nearby, turning the area into a prime development zone.

Residents fear that the slaughterhouse will adversely affect public health, hygiene and the environment in the long run. More than 300 families currently reside in the KIADB Housing Layout alone, while several new layouts are also coming up in the area. Locals have expressed concern that waste and odour from the slaughterhouse could create serious problems in the future, despite assurances of modern technology.

"This is a rapidly developing residential area. Establishing a slaughterhouse here is unscientific and insensitive to the needs of residents and students," said local residents, adding that the project should be relocated immediately. They also pointed out that the site lies close to institutions such as the Morarji Desai Residential School, Abdul Kalam Residential Hostel, boys' and girls' hostels, and multiple religious centres.

Interestingly, the slaughterhouse was earlier proposed to be constructed on Ashapur Road. However, due to various reasons, the



project was shifted to the Yeramarus Camp area, a decision that residents have termed arbitrary and illogical.

Meanwhile, the district administration has defended the project. Deputy Commissioner Nitish K. said the proposal for a modern slaughterhouse was submitted to the Central government to replace the existing unhygienic facility near Mavinakere. The Centre has sanctioned Rs 9 crore for the project, which is being constructed using advanced technology.

According to the administration, the new facility will ensure scientific processing of meat without releasing waste into the environment. Meat processed at the slaughterhouse is expected to be exported to cities such as Mumbai and Hyderabad, and even overseas. Officials also claim that the project will generate employment opportunities for local residents and provide quality meat at affordable prices.

The Deputy Commissioner further stated that the existing slaughterhouse near Mavinakere is functioning under poor sanitary conditions, with waste reportedly being discharged into the lake, in violation of Supreme Court guidelines. The new hi-tech facility, he said, is aimed at addressing these concerns. Despite these assurances, residents remain unconvinced and continue to press for relocation, setting the stage for a growing confrontation between the administration and the local community.

Four key bills on urban governance, transport and public trusts tabled in Assembly

BELAGAVI

THE Karnataka government on Tuesday tabled four bills in the state Assembly, aiming to modify administrative structures and enhance various authorities across the state.

The Bombay Public Trust (Karnataka Amendment) Bill was introduced to appoint the regional commissioner of the Belagavi region as its Charity Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned as the Joint Charity Commissioner and the

jurisdictional Assistant Commissioners and Tehsildars as the Deputy Charity Commissioner and Assistant Charity Commissioner.

The Karnataka State Road Safety Authority (Amendment) Bill was presented in the House to omit the upper limit in levy and collection of one-time cess at the time of vehicle registration.

Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Heritage Area Development Authority (second amendment) Bill was introduced to include the Director of the

Town and Country Planning Department and the Chief Town Planner of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) as members of the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Heritage Area Development Authority.

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) (Amendment) Bill was introduced to make provisions to include the mayors and the commissioners of the newly formed five municipal corporations in Bengaluru.

Assembly clears second amendment to Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BELAGAVI

THE Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Tuesday passed the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill (Second Amendment), 2024, paving the way for key changes in the composition of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Presenting the amendment in the Assembly, Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar said the revision was necessary to correct omissions and ensure proper representation of elected representatives residing within the Bruhat

Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits.

Shivakumar explained that certain areas falling under the constituencies of Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty and Chikkaballapur MP Dr K Sudhakar have now been brought under the BBMP jurisdiction. However, several public representatives residing within the civic body's limits were not included in the GBA member list. The amendment seeks to include local body representatives and Members of the Legislative Council in the authority.

He further said that since the Chief Minister serves as the head of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the Chief Secretary and the

Additional Chief Secretary of the Urban Development Department have been included as members.

In addition, the Finance Department Secretary will also be part of the authority.

These gaps were noticed during the first GBA meeting, which opposition members had not attended due to political reasons, prompting the government to introduce the amendment, he said.

During the debate, BJP MLA Suresh Kumar raised concerns over the provision of nominated members,

pointing out that with 369 elected BBMP councillors already in place, adding nominated members— at the ratio of one per

20,000 residents—could create confusion and raise questions about the structure's appropriateness.

Responding to the concern, Shivakumar clarified that the Greater Bengaluru Authority is not an elected body but a state-level administrative institution. He said elections would be held within six months whenever new areas are merged into the BBMP.

Until then, nominated representation was proposed to ensure transitional governance. However, accepting the opposition's suggestion, he announced that the government would drop the provision for nominated members.

Request made to BCCI to hold IPL's opening match in Bengaluru: Venkatesh Prasad

MYSURU

BENGALURU is likely to host the opening match of this year's Indian Premier League (IPL), with the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) formally requesting the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to conduct the marquee fixture in the city.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on December 12 had announced that cricket matches will be allowed at Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy Stadium with safety measures.

"We've allowed cricket matches to be held at the stadium, taking necessary precautions to ensure safety and maintain Bengaluru's reputation," Shivakumar said.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru on Tuesday, KSCA

President and former Indian pacer Venkatesh Prasad said discussions have already been held with the BCCI on hosting the IPL opener in Bengaluru.

The BCCI was also actively considering the proposal, Prasad added. Traditionally, the IPL opening match is held at the home ground of the team that won the trophy in the previous season.

However, Prasad said certain issues that arose during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) victory celebrations had led to confusion earlier. Following the KSCA elections, he said the cricket association had held discussions with the state government to ensure smooth conduct of the matches.

"The Chief Minister (Siddaramaiah) and the Deputy Chief Minister (D.K. Shiva-



kumar) have already given a green signal for hosting the tournament. I have also spoken to the Home Minister over the phone. The date for this year's IPL opening

match will be finalised soon," Prasad said.

He added that Bengaluru would continue to host IPL, international matches and games across all formats.

Prasad also said star cricketer Virat Kohli would be visiting Bengaluru for the Vijay Hazare Trophy matches.

He noted that Bengaluru has three stadiums, includ-

ing the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, and a decision on the venue for the matches is yet to be taken. He also said discussions are underway to develop an international standard cricket stadium in Mysuru. Referring to the past three years, Prasad acknowledged that the cricket association had faced internal issues, but assured that his team would resolve all pending matters and prioritise the promotion of quality cricket.

Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar had said, "Home Minister G. Parameshwara has been tasked with overseeing the arrangements, and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) President Venkatesh Prasad and police officials will discuss the details." Shivakumar emphasised that the decision was made to uphold Bengal-

uru's reputation and prevent any untoward incidents. The decision follows suspension of cricket matches at the stadium after 11 people died in a stampede during an RCB victory celebration in July this year.

The Chinnaswamy Stadium had also lost the opportunity to hold a Women's World Cup match due to security concerns. The stadium has not hosted any matches since the stampede on June 4, in which 11 people were killed.

The announcement came after KSCA President Venkatesh Prasad and other office-bearers met Deputy CM Shivakumar in Belagavi. They had also met the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and had submitted a request for the resumption of cricket matches.



Govt neglecting farmers amid political instability: BJP MP in RS

NEW DELHI: BJP MP Irranna Kadadi on Tuesday accused the Karnataka government of neglecting farmers and failing to set up procurement centres, leading to economic distress and suicides in the agrarian community. Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, the Karnataka MP said while the Centre has fixed a minimum support price for 23 crops, it is the responsibility of state governments to establish procurement centres when prices fall below MSP.

"During the kharif season in Karnataka, maize, and different pulses were sown in 48.7 lakh hectare. However, due to extreme drought and floods, 10 lakh hectares of crops were damaged. This has led to severe economic hardship for farmers," Kadadi said. He said the state has failed to help farmers by setting up the required procurement centres. "In just two years, 2,809 farmers have committed suicide. This is a very sad situation," the MP said. Kadadi alleged that instead of helping farmers, the government has been discussing change of chief minister every day. In the absence of the state government's initiative, farmers have sold their crops at lesser rates and incurred economic losses, he said.

The BJP MP urged the central government to help farmers through procurement by the National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed). He noted that the Centre implements the price support scheme and price deficiency scheme for the benefit of farmers. "Considering it as a very special situation for the farmers of Karnataka, I urge the central government to help the farmers," Kadadi said.

Paragon footwear redefines in-store experience

BENGALURU: Paragon Footwear, one of India's leading footwear brands, today announced the launch of its next-generation retail store format with the opening of its first outlet at Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore. This marks a strategic step to strengthen its direct-to-consumer presence, enhance the in-store shopping experience, and capture the fast-growing Gen Z and young urban consumer segment. The rollout, starting mid-December 2025, aligns with Paragon's broader premiumisation and market expansion strategy, aimed at driving higher per-store revenue, enhancing brand equity, and deepening engagement with younger audiences. The new stores are designed as lifestyle experience hubs, blending comfort, style, and community. This reflects Paragon's shift from a legacy retail presence to a brand-led experiential ecosystem.

Sona Valliappa Group launches India's first integrated campus

BENGALURU: 105-year old Sona Valliappa Group, South India's leading name in education and business, today unveiled the logo for Sona Centre for Advanced Learning & Entrepreneurship (SCALE). It will be a first-of-its-kind integrated campus housing companies and colleges to promote skilling, innovation, and entrepreneurship. SCALE will develop future-ready talent for emerging industries, and evolving requirements of Global Capability Centres (GCCs). Thyagu Valliappa, Founder of SCALE, and a 4th generation entrepreneur, made the announcement at Sona Towers which hosted India's first GCC by Texas Instruments in the 1980s. Senior industry leaders and policy stakeholders were also present during the event.

Namma Bengaluru

Hotel balcony fall case

Action to be taken if evidence is found against police, says DCP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

WHITEFIELD Division Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) K. Parashurama on Tuesday said that strict action would be initiated if credible evidence emerges against police personnel in connection with the incident in which a young woman suffered serious injuries after falling from a hotel balcony during a party.

Addressing the media, the DCP said a case has already been registered against the hotel management based on a complaint filed by the injured woman's father, and a detailed investigation is under way. "If there is any proof that police personnel acted improperly, including allegations of demanding money or intimidation, the department will not hesitate to take action," he said. According to police, Hoysala patrol per-



sonnel received a call from a hotel located in AECS Layout in the early hours of Sunday. Acting on the information, the police reached the hotel around 5.30 am. At the time,

eight people—four men and four women—were partying in a room on the fourth floor, reportedly consuming alcohol and playing loud music.

The DCP said police personnel, with body-worn cameras switched on, questioned the group, verified their identity cards and addresses, and issued appropriate instructions. While two youths were being taken to the reception as part of routine procedure to close the

complaint, a young woman reportedly went towards the balcony for reasons that are still unclear and fell onto the compound below.

The woman sustained serious injuries after landing on sharp iron grills installed along the compound wall. She was immediately shifted to a nearby private hospital by her friends with assistance from the police. Her condition remains critical, and she is undergoing treatment.

The DCP also stated that action has been initiated against the hotel for operating without proper permission from the civic authorities. He added that although allegations surfaced in the media claiming police demanded money, a review of body-worn camera footage found no such evidence. "If anyone provides documentary or video proof supporting these allegations, we will examine it thoroughly," he said.

Rising concern over teenage pregnancies in state

The Women and Child Welfare department has informed that 2,320 cases related to pregnancy among minor girls have been registered with Child Welfare Committees in the last three years

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

CASES of underage girls becoming pregnant are steadily increasing in Karnataka, raising serious concern among authorities, child rights activists and health experts. Whether due to emotional vulnerability, lack of legal awareness, or social pressures, teenage pregnancies are emerging as a worrying trend across the state.

According to official data, 2,320 minor girls have become pregnant over the past three years. By the end of October this year alone, 749 cases of teenage pregnancy had already been reported. Officials point out that exposure to sexually explicit content through films, web series and social media reels is influencing adolescents at an impressionable age. Easy access to such content on mobile phones, combined with limited supervision and awareness, is reportedly drawing minors into premature relationships, often



with serious consequences.

Authorities note that some young men exploit this vulnerability, leading to pregnancies among underage girls. Although cases are registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, a growing number of families opt for informal settlements at an early stage. Fear of social stigma, concerns about family reputation, and difficulties in securing strong evidence have resulted in compromises, allowing several accused persons to escape punishment.

The Women and Child Welfare Department has informed that 2,320 cases

related to pregnancy among minor girls have been registered with Child Welfare Committees in the last three years. Of these, 729 cases were reported from districts including Bengaluru, Mysuru, Chitradurga, Gadag and Kolar. In response to the rising numbers, the state government amended the Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006, during the last monsoon session of the legislature. The amendment empowers authorities to initiate action not only against child marriages but also against engagements involving minors. The department has also begun capacity-building training

programmes for officials at district and taluk levels to prevent such cases.

For immediate intervention, the Child Helpline 1098 continues to function round the clock. Officials say that whenever a distress call is received, concerned agencies act promptly to rescue and protect the child. Each district has functional Child Welfare Committees, Child Welfare Institutions, Child Special Police Units and District Child Protection Units to ensure safety, care and rehabilitation.

Victims are allowed to stay in care homes until they attain the age of 18 and are provided support up to 23 years, the department said. Financial assistance includes a one-time medical aid of Rs 6,000, monthly educational support of Rs 4,000 under the sponsorship scheme until 18 years of age, and health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year for both the victim and the newborn under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

LoP to head a meeting on Jalahalli underpass project: Shivakumar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

DEPUTY Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday said that a meeting would be convened under the chairmanship of the Leader of the Opposition to review the progress of the Jalahalli underpass project, with the participation of concerned legislators and officials.

Replying to a question raised by BJP MLA Muniraj during the Question Hour in the Leg-islative Assembly, Shivakumar provided details of the project and the issues surround-ing compensation and land acquisition.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the underpass project had been awarded to PGB, a contracting firm, in 2021 at an estimated cost of Rs 57 crore. Compensation had already been paid to 48 property owners, amounting to Rs 85 crore. He said the total estimated cost for land acquisition stood at Rs 139 crore.

He added that 26 property owners were yet to hand over their land, for which compensation of Rs 53 crore was pending.

The compensation could be provided either in the form of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) or monetary payment. Shiva-



kumar said that if MLA Muniraj held discussions with the remaining landowners, the issue could be resolved and work could commence. He noted that Jalahalli was a major traffic congestion zone and said the demands of the affected property owners were reasonable.

During the discussion, BJP MLA Munirathna raised concerns about several flyover projects being stalled in his constituency and urged the Deputy Chief Minister to convene a meeting of all MLAs to address their grievances. Responding to this, Shivakumar said he was answering the specific question raised by Muniraj and advised Munirathna to raise his concerns separately on the floor of the House, assuring that he would respond accordingly.

Responding to a question by MLA ST Somashekar re-

garding delays in white-topping work on Holiday Village Road, Shivakumar said constituencies such as Bommanahalli, Bengaluru South and Yeshwanthpur were large and complex. He said he had personally visited the work site in Somashekar's constituency and that the project had been awarded to Ocean Construction.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the delay was due to utility-related issues, including the shifting of BWSSB infrastructure and power lines. While stating that blacklisting contractors was not difficult, he emphasised that completing the work was the priority.

He as-sured the House that special attention was being given to Somashekar's constituency and that he would personally speak to the contractor to expedite the work.

Disproportionate assets case: Lokayukta raids several places in five districts

BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Lokayukta conducted raids at multiple locations across Karnataka on Tuesday, targeting several government officials in connection with allegations of possessing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income. Sources confirmed that an officer flushed down Rs 50,000 cash during the raids.

The raids were carried out simultaneously in Dharwad, Shivamogga, Mandya, Chikkamagaluru and Bengaluru. Lokayukta personnel searched residences, offices and other premises linked to the officials and reportedly seized important documents from some locations.

In Dharwad, the Lokayukta raided the residence of a Joint Director of the Belagavi Agriculture Department, located in the Silver Arcade locality. Searches were conducted at three places associated with him,



including his private office in Rani Chennamma Nagar and a farmhouse near Yerikoppa village.

According to sources, the officer allegedly panicked on seeing the Lokayukta officials and flushed around Rs 50,000 in cash down the toilet. He reportedly kept the Lokayukta police waiting outside his house for nearly half an hour before opening the door.

In another case, the Lokayukta carried out raids at multiple premises belonging to an Executive Engineer in the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department, following allegations of disproportionate assets.

Simultaneous searches were conducted at his houses in Basavanagudi and Kengeri in Bengaluru, his office in Shivamogga, and his residence in Sakharayapatna in Chikkamagaluru district. Officials reportedly found documents indicating assets exceeding his known sources of income during the operation.

In Mandya, the Lokayukta also conducted raids against the Panchayat Raj Engineering Department (PREDD) Superintendent. Searches were carried out simultaneously at his residence in Mandya, his in-laws' house in Maddur, and his office. The action was reportedly initiated following multiple complaints from the public against him.

Further investigation is underway,

and the Lokayukta is expected to assess the seized documents and materials before proceeding with the next course of action.

It can be recalled that on November 7, Karnataka Lokayukta raided six Bengaluru RTOs and uncovered large-scale irregularities. The Karnataka Lokayukta conducted surprise raids across six Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) in Bengaluru following several complaints from the public. The raided locations included Yeshwanthpur, Rajajinagar, Jayanagar, Yelahanka, Kasturinagar and K.R. Puram.

Karnataka Lokayukta sleuths conducted raids at 10 locations across the state on November 25, targeting government officers accused of amassing Disproportionate Assets beyond their known sources of income. The raids are being carried out in Mandya, Bidar, Mysuru, Dharwad, Haveri, Bengaluru, Shivamogga and Davanagere districts.

Drivers' Union stages protest against BIAL over pick-up zones, parking fees

BENGALURU

MEMBERS of the Karnataka Drivers' Union on Tuesday staged a protest condemning the recent change in pick-up locations at Kempegowda International Airport here. The protest was held near the Sadahalli Gate toll plaza near the airport under the leadership of G Narayanaswamy, founder and state president of the union.

Police resorted to mild lathi charge as protesters attempted to block other taxis from entering the airport premises. The protesters alleged that the revised pick-up arrangements at the airport have caused inconvenience to drivers as well as passengers, leading to congestion and operational difficulties.

THE REVISED PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS AT THE AIRPORT HAVE CAUSED INCONVENIENCE TO DRIVERS AS WELL AS PASSENGERS IT IS ALLEGED, LEADING TO CONGESTION AND OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

They also criticised the parking fee structure, claiming it places an unfair financial burden on drivers who depend on airport trips for their livelihood. However, the Kempegowda International Airport, which is operated by Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) said in a statement on Tuesday that the new pick-up measures are designed to create a safer, smoother, and more predictable experience for passengers.

"At BLR Airport, passenger safety and convenience are our top priorities. With daily passenger and vehicle volumes continuing to rise,



it became necessary to bring greater discipline and clarity to arrival pick-up areas to

prevent congestion, unsafe halts, and confusion at the kerbside," it said in a state-

ment.

According to the BIAL statement, private vehicles

have a dedicated pick-up lane with a generous free time window, while commercial vehicles operate from designated parking and supervised pick-up zones to ensure orderly movement. "These systems are standard practice at leading global airports. This is not about enforcement or revenue generation. Our focus is on behaviour change, safety, and ensuring that pick-up zones remain available for genuine, quick boarding. We have rolled this out with extensive on-ground guidance, signage, and coordination with cab operators," the statement added.

According to BIAL officials, as per the new lane segregation system, entry to the designated arrival pick-up zone in T1 and T2 will be free for all private cars (white board), however, there will be a charge for misusing or overstaying inside the zone beyond the prescribed time limits.

"The airport will give eight minutes (much higher than international standards) of free use of the zone for all the users, beyond which there will be Rs 150 charges for overstay from 8-13 minutes and Rs 300 charges for 13-18 minutes. Any vehicle overstaying beyond 18 minutes will be towed to the nearest police station, and applicable fines and towing charges will be levied, it had stated.



Officials in RR dist gear up for last phase of polling today

Collector C Narayan Reddy asks officials to be vigilant; ensure poll arrangements

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN
RANGAREDDY

FOLLOWING the two phases of polling for the gram panchayat elections, the district administration has geared up for the third and last phase scheduled on December 17 in the remaining seven mandals---Abdullapurmet, Ibrahimpatnam, Yacharam, Manchal, Madgul, Maheshwaram and Kandukur. All the mandals are a part of two revenue divisions---Ibrahimpatnam and Kandukur.

A total of 174 gram panchayats and 1,598 wards were identified in the last phase for which 1,612 polling stations were established; polling will be held on Wednesday.

Collector C Narayana Reddy, who is also a district election officer, wants officials drafted for duty should perform tasks cautiously and leave no scope for any folly.

Reddy, accompanied



by RDO Ibrahimpatnam Ananth Reddy, visited Manchal mandal to take stock of the arrangements for the polling. He inspected the distribution centre at Dhan Reddy Function Hall and went round the room to check the distribution of election material to officials.

While examining the ballot papers and polling boxes, the collector asked officials to keep the material ready

at each station. "Deficiencies in the process should be reported immediately," he said.

According to officials, some gram panchayats witnessed unanimous election of sarpanchs and ward members. The polling process was successfully completed in 14 mandals in the last two phases. With the completion of the third round of polling the entire election process will end.



SEC SETS STAGE FOR FINAL PHASE OF SARPANCH POLLS

- Polling in 3,752 villages, 28,410 wards
- 53 lakh voters to cast votes
- 12,652 sarpanch, 75,725 ward candidates
- 7 am - 1 pm polling; counting from 2 pm
- 4,502 ROs, 77,618 polling staff
- 3,547 stations webcasted; 43,856 ballot boxes

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE third and final phase of the sarpanch elections will be held on Wednesday. The State Election Commission (SEC) has made all necessary arrangements for the polling in this final phase.



The final phase elections will be held for 4,159 villages across 182 mandals. According to the SEC, the notified numbers of wards are 36,452, and there are 36,483 polling

stations. The total number of voters is 53,06,402, comprising 26,01,861 male voters, 27,04,394 female voters and 140 others. In 11 villages and 116 wards, nominations

were not filed due to various reasons.

However, elections were declared unanimous in 394 villages, and the elections were stayed in two villages

and 18 wards. With these developments, the elections will be held on Wednesday for 3,752 villages and 28,410 wards.

The number of candidates contesting for sarpanch posts in the final phase stands at 12,652, and the number of candidates contesting for ward members is 75,725.

The SEC has appointed 4,502 Returning Officers (ROs) for these elections and 77,618 polling personnel. The number of Micro Observers appointed is 2,489 (for all three phases), and 3,547 polling stations have been identified for webcasting. A total of 43,856 ballot boxes will be utilised.

The polling will be held from 7 am to 1 pm, and the counting of votes will commence immediately after, from 2 pm.

BRS netas minted money instead of serving people, fumes Srinivas



HANS NEWS SERVICES
HYDERABAD

GOVERNMENT Whip Adi Srinivas stated that the people gave power to the BRS party for 10 years, however, the BRS leaders

earned farmhouses instead of serving the public.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday at the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) Media Hall, Adi Srinivas found fault with the criticism raised by BRS Working

President K T Rama Rao and said that K T Rama Rao is 'daydreaming'.

"In the Sarpanch elections, the Congress party won over 5,500 Sarpanch seats in two phases. The Congress party secured 65 per cent of the seats. It is absurd that K T Rama Rao is holding a victory celebration for an election held in just one mandal in Sircilla. K T Rama Rao is resorting to gimmicks to create an impact in the other mandals," Srinivas ridiculed.

"Even if I lose in Vemulawada, I will stand by the people and fight for them. In Vemulawada, I have become a voice that questions the authorities. Even though I won for the first time, I am undertaking development programmes worth hundreds of crores in Vemulawada. I brought a yarn depot to Vemulawada," he said.

- While the Maoists had reached a secret location in the Sirpur (U) area for shelter, the police surrounded the forest area arrested them
- Due to intense crackdown in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, the Maoists took refuge in the Kumram Bheem forests, which they consider a shelter zone

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ASIFABAD

DISTRICT police on Monday night took 15 Maoists into custody in the Kumram Bheem Asifabad district when the outlaws were hiding in the forest to take shelter from police onslaught going on in other States.

Based on concrete information that the Maoists had reached a secret location in the Sirpur (U) area for shel-

ter, the police surrounded the forest area without anyone's knowledge. It is reported that ASP Chittaranjan took them into custody. Due to intense crackdown in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, the Maoists had arrived here to take refuge in the Kumram Bheem forests, which they consider a shelter zone. Based on information from the police intelligence department, and on the orders of SP Nitika Pant, ASP Chittaranjan and



special party police reportedly surrounded the Sirpur (U) forests. They secretly located the Maoist hideout on Monday night. The police were successful in taking the Maoists into custody without any loss of life. It is learned that among those ap-

prehended by the police are Maoist party State committee secretary Chokka Rao and 15 other Maoists. Of these, 9 are women and 7 are men. Four of them are DCM members.

An AK-47, 2 pistols, and material related to landmines were reportedly recovered

from the Maoists. Although there are reports that those who were apprehended have been shifted to the DGP's office, the police have not yet officially confirmed taking the Maoists into custody, which is giving rise to several suspicions.

Stray dog attacks Class 3 student

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WANAPARTHY

PANIC gripped Kadukuntla village in Wanaparthy mandal on Tuesday after a stray dog attacked a young schoolboy, once

again highlighting the growing menace of stray dogs in rural and urban areas.

The victim, Vikranth, a Class 3 student, was standing near the gate of his house when a stray street dog suddenly pounced

on him and bit him, causing injuries. Alarmed by the boy's cries, local residents rushed to the spot and chased the dog. In the ensuing commotion, the dog was caught and killed by the villagers. The injured child was

immediately shifted to the Wanaparthy Area Hospital, where doctors are providing treatment. His condition is reported to be stable. Residents expressed serious concern over the increasing number of stray dogs roam-

ing freely in villages and towns. They alleged that the dogs are frequently attempting to attack pedestrians, creating fear among the public, especially children and the elderly. Villagers urged the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to control the stray dog population and prevent such incidents from recurring.

Trade unions vent ire against Centre over MGNREGA; protests on Dec 22

Demonstrations across the country to highlight inadequate funding, payment delays, and weakening of workers' rights

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI

TRADE unions and workers' organisations across the country have announced nationwide protests on 22 December 2025, to defend the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and safeguard workers' rights. The call for action comes amid growing concerns over the weakening of social security measures and the need to protect the livelihood of millions of rural and urban workers.

According to organisers, the protests will highlight issues such as inadequate budgetary allocations for MGNREGA, delays in wage payments, and attempts to dilute the scheme's provisions. They argue that MGN-



REGA has been a lifeline for rural households, ensuring guaranteed employment and providing economic stability, particularly during times of distress. The demonstrations will also focus on broader workers' rights, including demands for fair

wages, social security, and protection against precarious employment.

Leaders of the movement stated that the protests would be held in all states, with participation from farmers' groups, rural workers, and urban labour

unions. They emphasised that the Central Government must recognise the importance of MGNREGA not only as a poverty alleviation programme but also as a tool for strengthening grassroots democracy and empowering marginalised

communities.

The unions have urged the government to increase funding for the scheme, ensure timely disbursement of wages, and expand its scope to meet the rising demand for employment. They also called for stronger enforcement of labour laws to safeguard workers in both the organised and unorganised sectors.

Organisers expressed confidence that the 22 December protests would send a strong message to policymakers about the need to prioritise workers' welfare and uphold the constitutional commitment to social justice. They reiterated that defending MGNREGA is essential for protecting the rights and dignity of millions of working people across India.

MLA's inspection exposes large-scale irregularities in cooperative stores

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

WARANGAL West MLA Nayini Rajender on Tuesday conducted a surprise inspection at the office of the Co-operative Stores Ltd, Kalpalatha Super Bazaar, at Rangampeta. Soon after arrival, he expressed strong displeasure over the absence of staff in the office.

Although the register showed seven staff members, only three were present; only two were found to be on duty. Subsequently, he thoroughly examined the office records, registers and income and expenditure documents.

He observed that the institution was still being run like a puppet by the previous management; financial irregularities had taken place in membership registration. The fee collected for membership registration were diverted through improper channels, with no supporting evidence available.



It was found that members of the super bazaar managing committee had been using diesel and petrol for their personal purposes for the past three years without permission; diesel bills had still not been paid. In the petrol bunk run under the co-operative institution, the register showed salaries of ₹10,000 per month were being drawn in the names of 10 employees, but their signatures were missing.

After the inspection, the MLA informed the DC over phone and instructed that the registers be immediately seized. Following this, the

RDO rushed to the super bazaar office and examined the records. Naini said irregularities at super bazaar had been coming to his notice for a long time. He stated that after formation of the Congress government, steps are being taken to prevent corruption in every sector; the concerned officials were instructed to immediately conduct an inquiry into the scam that took place. The government would support the employees working in the society so that they do not face any difficulties. He directed officials to take immediate action against those found guilty.

Integrated township by TTD for devotees to come up near Alipiri



TTD chairman B R Naidu speaking to the media in Tirumala on Tuesday. EO Anil Kumar Singhal and Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary are seen.



TTD chairman B R Naidu and EO Anil Kumar Singhal at the trust board meeting in Tirumala on Tuesday

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board has taken an important decision to improve facilities for devotees by approving the construction of an integrated township near Alipiri in Tirupati. The project will come up on 20 acres and will serve as a base camp to meet the growing accommodation needs of devotees.

The decision was taken at the TTD Board meeting held in Tirumala on Tuesday under the chairmanship of B R Naidu. The board approved town planning proposals and the appointment of an architect. Executive Officer AK Singhal, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, JEO V Veerabrahmam and other members attended the meeting.

The township will be developed at the TTD-run SV

- TTD trust board approves the new facility in 20 acre to meet growing accommodation needs
- Sri Venkateswara temple to be constructed at Bandra in Mumbai with Rs 14.4 cr
- TTD junior colleges will have midday meal for day scholars
- Sri Padmavathi children's heart centre to get state-of-the-art facilities with Rs 48 cr granta

Institute of Traditional Sculpture and Architecture, which has about 35 acre land. As part of the plan, transport facilities will be arranged from the township using RTC buses and other modes. Since the site is very close to the Alipiri footpath, it will be convenient for devotees who wish to trek to Tirumala. However, the Institute of Sculpture may be shifted to another location.

TTD chairman B R Naidu said the board approved the construction of a Sri Venkateswara temple at Bandra in Mumbai at an estimated cost of Rs 14.40 crore. It was also decided to rename roads and

major junctions in Tirumala after figures associated with Lord Venkateswara, Vaishnava traditions, the Alwars and Annamacharya.

An expert committee has been formed to finalise the names. A separate wing will be created for the protection and conservation of ancient and heritage structures in Tirumala and along the footpaths, with experienced officers to oversee the work.

The board cleared a plan to grow sacred and divine trees over 100 acres at Palamaner to supply wood for temple chariots and flagpoles. An additional Rs 48 crore was

sanctioned to strengthen advanced medical facilities at the Sri Padmavathi Children's Heart Centre in Tirupati.

Based on recommendations of the Education Sub-Committee, the board approved the introduction of digital classrooms, CCTV cameras, computers, software and staff in 31 TTD-run educational institutions. A new comprehensive policy for the construction and management of donor cottages will also be introduced.

For Sri Siddheswara Swamy temple at Talakona, Rs 14.10 crore was sanctioned for the second phase of renovation works, in addition to Rs 4 crore approved earlier. Hostel accommodation at Sri Padmavathi Women's Degree College in Tirupati will be expanded by adding 270 seats to the existing strength of 2,100.

The board decided to continue TTD's responsibility for road maintenance,

repairs and street lighting in Tirupati. It also resolved to seek government approval to create 18 new Potu Supervisor posts at Srivari Potu. As a welfare measure, the board approved providing midday meals to day scholars of SV Junior College and SPW Junior College, on the lines of the state government's scheme. It also cleared the construction of a pilgrim accommodation complex at the Sri Veer-anjaneya Swamy temple in Kondagattu, Jagtial district.

In another major decision, the board approved salary hikes for 62 archakas, parisharakas, potu workers and prasadam distributors working in TTD-associated temples. Archakas' salaries will be increased from Rs 25,000 to Rs 45,000, parisharakas from Rs 23,140 to Rs 30,000, potu workers from Rs 24,279 to Rs 30,000, and prasadam distributors from Rs 23,640 to Rs 30,000.

Minister vows support to beleaguered aquaculture

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

STATING that the aquaculture sector has become a key pillar of Andhra Pradesh's economy, minister for agriculture and fisheries K Atchannaidu said the coalition government is extending full support for the development of aquaculture with the prime objective of increasing farmers' income.

The minister was the chief guest at the oath-taking ceremony of the governing body members of the Andhra Pradesh State Aquaculture Development Authority, held at the fisheries department office at Penamaluru near here on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering, Atchannaidu said the prevailing conditions in the global market and the tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump have impacted aquaculture farmers. He added that the state government is taking measures in coordination with the Central government to overcome these challenges.

He stressed the need for extensive promotion of the quality and credibility of Andhra Pradesh shrimp across the country and globally. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, he said, is continuously striving to explore new markets, boost exports and ensure remunerative prices for farmers. Emphasising quality consciousness, the Minister said farmers would receive better prices only by maintaining high standards.

Atchannaidu noted that Andhra Pradesh contributes 29 per cent to the country's



Minister for agriculture and fisheries K Atchannaidu attends swearing-in ceremony of governing body members of the AP State Aquaculture Development Authority at the fisheries department office at Penamaluru in Vijayawada on Tuesday

- Noting that US tariffs and international conditions have hit the sector, Atchannaidu says CM Chandrababu Naidu is focusing on new markets, exports and mandatory registration with geo-tagging of ponds; 48% already registered
- Electricity subsidy for aquaculture farmers raised from Rs 800 cr to Rs 1,200 cr, applicable only to registered farmers

fisheries sector. He said the Chief Minister has directed that registration of fish and shrimp ponds based on survey numbers be made mandatory, and so far, 48 per cent of ponds across the state have been registered. The government has removed difficulties earlier faced by farmers in pond registration and has also introduced geo-tagging of ponds.

The minister further stated that aquaculture farmers have been provided with electricity subsidy worth Rs 800 crore so far, which will be increased to Rs 1,200 crore. He clarified that the subsidy will be applicable only to registered farmers.

Atchannaidu asserted that the development of backward and weaker sections is possible only under the coa-

lition government. He was speaking after participating as chief guest, along with BC welfare minister S Savitha, at the oath-taking ceremony of the chairman and directors of the Andhra Pradesh State Kalinga Vaishya Development Corporation in Vijayawada. The oath was administered to corporation chairman Boyina Govindarajulu and other directors.

He recalled that during the previous TDP government, BCs had received the highest number of jobs and medical seats. On the issue of including Vaishyas in the OBC category, he said discussions are underway with the Central government, adding that Union minister K Ram Mohan Naidu had also taken up the matter with the Prime Minister.

AGE LIMIT FOR CHILD CARE LEAVE FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES REMOVED

- State govt issues orders doing away with upper age limit for children, allowing eligible employees to use CCL at any stage of service up to retirement
- Benefit extended to women employees and single male employees, including unmarried, widower and divorcee staff and covers children with disabilities
- Total eligible CCL of 180 days can now be availed in up to 10 spells during entire service, subject to existing conditions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government on Tuesday issued orders removing the upper age limit for children for availing Child Care Leave (CCL) by government employees, permitting eligible employees to utilise the leave facility at any time during their service up to retirement.

The finance department issued the orders with immediate effect, extending the benefit to women employees as well as single male employees, including unmarried, widower and divorcee employees, subject to existing eligibility conditions. The revised policy also covers children with disabilities.

As per the orders, Child Care Leave may be availed for child rearing, attending

to children's health needs, or caring for them during school or college examinations, illness and other related requirements.

The government recalled that it had initially permitted women employees to avail Child Care Leave for a maximum period of 60 days during their entire service. This entitlement was later enhanced to 180 days, to be availed in a maximum of three spells. Subsequently, the facility was extended to single male employees on similar terms.

In a further revision, the government increased the permissible number of spells for availing the eligible 180 days of Child Care Leave from three to 10 spells during the entire service period.

Employees who had already availed 60 days or part thereof were allowed to

AP JAC welcomes the decision

VIJAYAWADA

THE Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee (AP JAC) Amaravati has welcomed the state government's decision to remove the 18-year age ceiling on Child Care Leave (CCL) and thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for fulfilling his promise to women employees.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, AP JAC leaders said the new Government Order allows women employees to avail CCL at any time during their service, regardless of their

children's age, as per rules. They noted that over 60 per cent of the state's workforce would benefit, enhancing the dignity and welfare of working mothers.

Welcoming the decision, AP JAC Amaravati women's wing chairperson Pare Lakshmi, general secretary Ponnuru Vijayalakshmi, associate chairperson Saikam Siva Kumar Reddy and treasurer Dr Sailakshmi said AP has become the first state in the country to remove the age restriction on Child Care Leave.

utilise the extended period within the revised limit of 10 spells, excluding the spells already availed.

Earlier, the government had removed the upper age limit for women employees and permitted them to avail Child Care Leave at any stage of service before retirement, while directing the finance department to issue detailed

operational guidelines.

The government has now formally extended the removal of the upper age limit to both women employees and single male employees, including in cases involving differently-abled children. All other conditions stipulated in the earlier government orders will continue to apply.

- Collector calls for micro plan for the event focusing on programmes, tourism facilities and logistics
- It has become a major attraction for bird lovers and nature enthusiasts as over 10000 migratory birds visit the area every winter

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

GOOD news for bird lovers and tourists. The much-anticipated Flamingo Festival will be held at Pulicat Lake in the Sullurpet constituency of Tirupati district for two days on January 10 and 11, 2026, the district administration has announced.

District collector Dr S Venkateswar has directed officials to begin preparations immediately to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the festival. A review meeting in this regard was held on Tuesday at the local Collectorate with conservator of forests and zoo curator C Selvam and regional director of tourism Dr R Ramana Prasad.

Addressing the meeting, the collector said thousands of flamingos migrate to the Pulicat Lake region every year, making it essential to organise the festival in a scientific and well-planned manner. He instructed officials to prepare a detailed

Flamingo Fest to light up Pulicat on Jan 10-11



District collector Dr S Venkateswar speaking at a review meeting on the Flamingo Festival in Tirupati on Tuesday. Conservator of forests C Selvam, tourism RD R Ramana Prasad and others are also seen.

micro plan covering event programmes, tourism facilities, stage arrangements and overall logistics.

Special attention will be given to arrangements at key locations including Pulicat-Nellapattu, BV Palem, Atakanithippa, Irakkam Island, Ubbalamadugu and Periyapalayam. The Collector stressed that the Flamingo Festival should be developed into one of the major tourism events of the state, with all departments working in close coordination.

He also called for wide publicity at the state and national levels to attract more tourists. Plans are to be drawn up for extensive promotion through posters, logos, banners, publicity material and digital display boards. All departments were asked to submit their action plans at the earliest.

District tourism and culture officer M Janardhan Reddy, APTDC EE Subramanyam, tourism officials and event organisers attended the meeting.

It may be recalled that Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, one of the largest pelicanries in the region, serves as an important breeding and roosting site for both long-distance and local migratory birds. The Flamingo Festival, which began in 2001 as a tourism revenue initiative, has grown into a major attraction. Each winter, around 10,000 to 12,000 migratory birds from nearly 80 species visit Pulicat, making it a haven for birdwatchers and nature lovers.

VB-GRAMIN Bill raises fears among rural workers

NARESH NANDAM
ONGOLE

THE Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (VK-GRAMIN) VB-G RAM G Bill which was introduced in Parliament on Monday to replace the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), promises increase in workdays from 100 to 125, but masks fundamental changes that could leave rural workers worse off. Experts estimate that states like Andhra Pradesh could lose up to Rs 5,000 crore in Central funding, likely forcing

- Bill promises 125 workdays but replaces the legal right to employment with budget-based allocations, risking funding cuts of up to Rs 5,000 crore for states like Andhra Pradesh
- Cost burden shifts to states, which must fund 40% of expenses and bear any excess spending, while a clause allows suspension of work for 60 days during peak farm seasons.
- Mandatory tech-heavy systems and Centrally approved plans may exclude vulnerable workers and weaken scheme's role as a flexible safety net during rural distress

them to cap work even when villagers need it.

The most significant shift transforms employment from a legal right into a budget-controlled programme. Under

der MGNREGA, households could demand work and the government was legally bound to provide it within 15 days or pay unemployment allowance.



The new law replaces this with 'normative allocation' based on fixed budgets decided by the Central government for each state. Work will now depend on budget ceilings rather than worker demand.

Financial burden shifts dramatically to states, which must now contribute 40 per cent of costs (10 per cent for northeastern states).

Any spending beyond the allocated ceiling is borne en-

tirely by state budgets. A controversial provision allows states to suspend all scheme work for 60 days during peak agricultural seasons.

For landless labourers who depend on the programme when farm work is scarce or exploitative, this legally closes a crucial safety net precisely when income is most needed.

Technology requirements compound access barriers. Mandatory biometric attendance, GPS tracking and app-based systems may exclude elderly workers, those with poor connectivity or worn fingerprints, and people lacking proper documentation.

All work must now come

from pre-approved Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans integrated with national infrastructure systems. This removes MGNREGA's flexibility for urgent, simple employment during distress, favouring large infrastructure projects requiring multi-scheme coordination.

Chakradhar Buddha, coordinator for LibTech India, an NGO, observed that many provisions of the VB-GRAMIN Act are unfair. He said that the employment system shifts from a demand-driven legal entitlement with relatively simple ground-level processes to a Centrally-controlled, technology-heavy

scheme, where budget constraints and digital compliance may override workers' survival needs. He said that Andhra Pradesh used to receive feedback and suggestions on best practices for the MGNREGA through APNA (Andhra Pradesh NGOs Alliance).

He advised the state, which played a key role in the design and implementation of the MGNREGA, to retake the lead and restart consultations with stakeholders and the NGOs network to propose actionable changes that help workers from all regions receive work when they really need it and wages on time.

Employment guarantee scheme must be free from political interferences

Revamping welfare schemes is a good idea, so changes in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, per se, are not objectionable. However, the way it is being done smacks of a desire to score political points. It begins with the name. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is proposed to be replaced with the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Grameen), or VB G RAM Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reacted with “Why are they removing Mahatma Gandhi’s name? He is considered the biggest Indian leader. Whenever such a name changes, a lot of expenditure happens in stationery and

paperwork.” More than that it makes the government a target for its detractors, which is increasingly coming under the influence of Gandhi haters. This does no good to the government under the Sangh Parivar, many of whose members have expressed admiration for Nathuram Godse. Enacted by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in 2005, the MGNREGA guarantees 100 days of work in villages. The Act has a provision for an unemployment allowance. “MGNREGA is bottom-up, people-centred, demand-driven, self-selecting and rights-based programme. It provides a legal guarantee for wage employment by providing allowances and compensation both in

cases of failure to provide work on demand and delays in payment of wages for work undertaken,” an official document says. The new Bill proposes several changes. It raises the 100-day guarantee to 125. Also, the scheme will no longer be demand-driven. Further, states will bear the financial burden partially. At present, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is entirely a Centrally-sponsored scheme—that is, the Centre provides 100 per cent of wages, while states take care of a small part of the expenses in hiring skilled labour and arranging materials. Under G Ram G, the Centre’s contribution will be limited to 60 per cent, whereas most states will have to spend 40 per cent. For

Northeastern and Himalayan states, this ratio will be 90:10. The new legislation proposes that work under the revamped scheme will not be available during the peak agricultural season. The government will rely on biometrics and geo-tagging for transparency. Non-availability of work during the peak agricultural season will be vehemently protested by the Left and civil society organisations. Communist leaders are no longer as powerful or influential as they were when the MNREGA came into being but Left-leaning NGOs and public intellectuals are still a force to reckon with.

The government will have a tough time tackling their resistance. At any rate, this provision privileges the interests of farmers over labour-

ers; it will be interesting to see how the BJP will face the criticism of being anti-poor. Besides, states, especially those under non-BJP parties, will be loath to share the burden of the rural employment guarantee scheme.

There are also states like Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab, which face tremendous fiscal challenges, and it will be extremely difficult for them to finance the revamped scheme. Therefore, all stakeholders must try to sort out the matter in a spirit of cooperative federalism. The Centre should be willing to accept reasonable amendments to the proposed legislation, and states should rise above party and parochial interests to make the scheme better.

LETTERS

Use AI for maintaining peace

THIS has reference to your editorial ‘AI and militancy make a potent combination’ (Dec 16). It has aptly described about AI having become what it is today, which is comparable to the prevailing gun culture in the US and bullets fired by terrorists. People remain clueless about impending strikes at them. This free for all ready to use technology is fast becoming a peril to the peace-loving society due to phishing and cyberattacks. AI must be used in places where human involvement and vigil against the enemy are needed 24x7 throughout the year.

S Lakshmi, Hyderabad

Manekshaw was one of a kind

The opinion piece on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw ‘Surrender or get wiped out’, Manekshaw’s ultimatum to Pak is a standout battle cry’ (THI Dec 16) rightly evokes a military mind where wit reinforced, rather than diluted, authority. Manekshaw’s genius lay in combining strategic patience with an unshakeable moral confidence. His famous “I’m always ready, sweetie” was not banter but a declaration rooted in preparedness. Equally prescient was his warning that premature political orders, if issued, “may never be received,” a rare assertion of professional integrity in civil and military relations. His humour, often quoted, was forged in far harsher circumstances. The surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers was not merely a battlefield triumph but an unprecedented strategic leverage. That such leverage failed to deliver a final settlement on Kashmir remains one of India’s costliest diplomatic omissions. Against this legacy, Pakistan’s present attempts to elevate General Munir to Manekshaw’s stature appear aspirational at best. After all, history, not rank or rhetoric, confers stature.

Harsh Pawaria, Rohtak

Name change or a game changer?

THE decision of the Union Government to increase the guaranteed work to 125 days per rural household and focus on four areas like increasing rural connectivity, climate resilience, rural livelihood infrastructure and water security under the newly named rural employment guaranteed Act is a welcome move. But changing the name of the scheme introduced in 2005 by the UPA regime should have been avoided. The NDA government has been gradually reducing its budgetary allocation stating that the scheme had some loopholes. Although an increase to 125 days per household is good, it still falls short of the demand for 200 days work a year. The government should increase the wages and make the ratio of Union and States’ contribution to 9:1 instead of 6:4 as the financial status of most of the States are not good.

A G Rajmohan, Anantapur-515004

‘G RAM G’ brings no cheer

The proposed revised form of MGNREGA, which will be renamed as VB G RAM G Bill, has come up with unlimited promise, but limited guarantee. The nature of supply driven job provision instead of the erstwhile demand will result in cutting the size of resources to the needy people. The proposed ban on the works under the scheme during peak agricultural season would put job seekers at a disadvantageous position regarding their negotiations of daily wages. The minimising of central share from ninety percent to sixty percent for the scheme would burden cash strapped states further. Instead of strengthening the scheme, the Centre has come up with a weakened version when it is aiming for Viksit Bharath.

Dr D V G Sankara Rao, Srikulam

Name spree continues with G RAM G

THE Narendra Modi-led Union Government has decided to replace the world’s largest rural jobs programme MGNAREGA with Viksit Bharat Gurantee Rojgar Ajeevika Machine Gramin (VB- G RAM G) after earlier renaming Raj Bhavan and the PMO, among others. Though the renamed rural jobs programme is aimed at increasing the number days to 125 from 100, it has a paused provision for 60 days in a year. Further it changed the Centre and state ratio of financial commit from 90:10 to 60:40 and capped budget support. This implies that some States must shell from their coffers if they spend more than what is allotted to them. However, app-based attendance, Aadhar linked payments and geotagging workites are welcome as these become part of the law and can enhance transparency and accountability.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru (AP)

thehansreader@gmail.com

BENGALURU ONLINE

Congress will return to power in 2028 as well: CM

BELAGAVI: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday asserted that the Congress will return to power in Karnataka in 2028 with the people’s mandate, just as it did in 2023, and said the BJP would continue to remain in the Opposition.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly at Suvarna Soudha while responding to questions raised by the Opposition, the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the Congress government enjoys the support of 140 MLAs and that there was no need for the Opposition to create unnecessary speculation.

Referring to a popular proverb, Siddaramaiah remarked that the role of the Opposition seemed to be adding salt to a burning wound. He said that despite repeated provocations, none of the ruling party legislators would be swayed. “The people have blessed me to serve as Chief Minister for five years. We have the strength of 140 MLAs, and the Opposition need not indulge in sour commentary,” he said. The Chief Minister said the Congress government clearly understands the pulse of the people. “Just as the people blessed us in 2023, they will do so again in 2028. The people of Karnataka will never bring the BJP to power,” he asserted.

Siddaramaiah alleged that although the BJP has ruled the state twice, it never came to power with a clear popular mandate.

Read more at <https://epaper.thehansindia.com>

Can CBI contain cybercrime effectively?



RAVULAPATI SEETARAMARAO

THE Supreme Court’s decision comes as a whiff of fresh air to the countless victims of cyber frauds. It is heartening that courts, when necessary, take responsible and appropriate decisions on key public issues — decisions that governments and police should be making — and even provide guidelines for their implementation. This is a wake-up call for those who uphold democracy and the separation of powers of their duty.

With “digital arrest scams” proliferating across the country, the Supreme Court’s directions to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for carrying out a comprehensive probe into such crimes and criminals — including seeking Interpol’s cooperation and tracing the origins — should be seen as a positive development in criminal justice prudence. The

Court also issued notices to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), directing it to use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to investigate deep-rooted patterns of funds being moved through various banks in these crimes, so that proper inquiries can be conducted and perpetrators cannot escape. Referring to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the Supreme Court ordered online intermediaries to cooperate with the CBI and asked them to collect and hand over data and information related to digital arrests to investigative agencies.

The court suggested that states and Union Territories not only set up coordination centers to thoroughly investigate cybercrime but also adopt plans to proactively prevent such offenses. The apex court also directed that the cyber-crime coordination centres be linked with law enforcement agencies so that cybercrimes can be taken up for investigation.

A few days ago, under the leadership of Chief Justice Suryakant, the Supreme Court gave the CBI detailed guidelines on cybercrime—particularly digital arrests—sending a strong signal that tackling



these crimes is being treated as a high priority. The court identified three types of cyber scams. One involves online “digital arrests” where perpetrators, often targeting retired officers, pose as investigative agencies and extort their hard earned money and cause severe psychological distress. Although media reports show these offences are occurring across the country, they have not stopped and gullible people continue to fall prey. The Supreme Court specifically entrusted the CBI with the responsibility of apprehending those who run such scams and carrying out investigations.

Scammers are running another kind of cybercrime: luring victims with attractive-sounding investments, getting

them to deposit large sums, and defrauding them under the guise of “advance tax” or other pretexts. Another widespread cyber-scam involves flooding WhatsApp with ads for supposed part-time jobs, using YouTube to offer “free tasks” for small payments to gain trust, then convincing victims to pay large amounts for “premium” tasks. Many people have encountered these scams. Victims often suffer in silence, not reporting to the police, and some become so distressed that they end their lives. The central government informed the Supreme Court in a note that cybercriminals have already swindled nearly Rs 30 billion. These fraudsters, posing as digital authorities, are extorting hard-earned

Saluting VNVK Sastry, a selfless supporter of adivasis



DR MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR

LITTLE boys and girls of a primary school in Nalgonda district once cried inconsolably when their beloved teacher, V N V K Sastry, was transferred. Refusing to accept the loss quietly, they walked nearly ten kilometres to the national highway and staged a protest until their voices were heard. Blessed indeed is the teacher who wins such young hearts.

That instinctive affection followed Dr Sastry wherever he went. A retired senior officer, social anthropologist, and lifelong fieldworker, he habitually won hearts through devotion to duty and an unshakeable concern for the people he served. Recalling their nearly five-decade-long association around 2020, senior journalist and former editor of The Hindu (Hyderabad), Dasu Keshav Rao, summed him up in simple terms: a man who never worked for files alone, but for people.

A full moon night in Srisaalam:

One incident narrated by Keshav Rao captures the essence of Dr Sastry’s life. On a full-moon night in December 1988, when he was heading the Chenchu Project, they were in the core area of the Srisaalam Tiger Sanctuary, where they were treated to welcome festivities that were organised by the Chenchu community. Earlier that day, they had visited

an ashram school where conditions were appalling. The warden was absent, as usual; children were being served rotten rice and tamarind water in the name of sambar. The fine rice meant for the children never reached the school.

Dr Sastry suspended the absentee warden on the spot and immediately arranged a proper meal—rice, curries, sambar and milk—something the children rarely got to toast. The following morning, as they were driving away, a group of men suddenly intercepted their vehicle, running and panting from a distant hamlet located beyond a hill.

Alarmed, they asked if something was wrong.

“Pani emi ledu saar. Meeru maa penta vachaaru. Memu adiviki poyaamu. Choodaadaniki vachaamu. Anthe saar.”

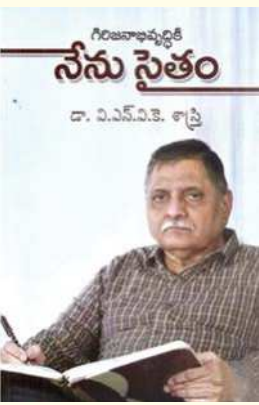
Nothing was wrong, they explained. They had only come to see and thank the officer who had visited their village.

A life dedicated to adivasi communities:

The humble friend of adivasis he passed away in the early hours of December 8, at the age of 78. His demise marks the end of a remarkable five-decade journey that was dedicated to understanding, documenting, and empowering adivasi communities in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

A Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Andhra University (1980), he spent 52 years in research, fieldwork, institutional building, and training. He emerged as one of South India’s most respected scholars of tribal societies. He authored ten major books and over a hundred research papers and articles in English and Telugu, covering tribal women, forest rights, cultural change, development models, and the everyday lives of remote communi-

Friends and former colleagues remember him as a gentle intellectual, a disciplined researcher, and an unwavering advocate of Adivasi dignity. He combined rigorous empirical fieldwork with rare human warmth, ensuring that tribal voices found space in policy, scholarship, and public discourse.



A Adilabad specialist:

Reverentially hailed as an Adilabad specialist, the district’s history, culture, and struggles were etched deeply into his scholarship and memory. It is now 44 years since the police firing at Indrevelli, where several Gond tribals were martyred. His work stands as a tribute not only to the Gonds, but also to the people of the district and their rich cultural diversity.

The mighty Godavari, Pranahitha, Penganga, Kaddem, and numerous rivulets flow through dense forests that account for nearly half of the district’s geographical area.

Adilabad also houses a significant tribal population. Here, diversity is strikingly evident: Gonds, Kolams, Nairkods, Lambadas, Pardhans, and Thotis live in a complex and symbiotic relationship with nature.

Images from those years flicker vividly: the Indrevelli firing on the Gonds; police-Naxal encounters in the Aalampally forests; the Tamil Nadu Express accident near Sirpur; the Dakshin Express derailment at Mancherla; and the tireless efforts of committed officers such as VPC. Sastry, CVSK Sarma, KR Kishore, Subrahmanyam, Manohar Prasad, GN Phani Kumar, and VNVK Sastry to improve the

lives of tribal communities. Equally vivid are memories of Prof Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf’s visit to Marlawai to perform the last rites of his wife, Betty, and the vibrant Kelsapur Jatra.

Indrevelli killings:

Three officers from Hyderabad were among the first to reach Indrevelli, where police had opened fire on protesting Gonds the previous evening, killing many and injuring several others. The administration was dazed and uncertain about the actual casualty figures. The three officers trekked through forests and hill-top habitations, braving scorching summer heat and humidity, to meet the injured and the families of the deceased.

Later, when the Collector, AK Goel, informed forest officials at Mancherla that the Indrevelli toll was far higher than the officially stated figure—he did mention the actual number to Keshav Rao—it became clear how deeply the truth had been suppressed.

A pioneering anthropologist

Dr Sastry’s scholarliness traversed anthropology, ecology, tribal history, and literature. His works, published in academic journals and government reports, and available on public platforms, remain foundational texts for students, administrators, and young researchers.

His notable publications are: Andhra Pradesh Tribal Women and Children – An Overview, Changing Patterns in Tribal Societies, Komaram Bheem (Telugu), Sanchara Sravanthi (Telugu), Reports for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and Training manuals and textbooks, including contributions to undergraduate curricula

Mentor, adviser and advocate:

Even after retirement, Dr Sastry remained intellectually active and socially committed. For nearly two decades, he served as a freelance consultant and guest faculty, Institute of Tribal Development Studies, Hyderabad; contributed to NALSA Tribal Rights training modules for legal services authorities; expert investigator, Centre for Good Governance (World Bank land governance project); Course editor, PG Diploma in Tribal Development Management, NIRD; Member, National Expert Committees on Bauxite Mining (A.P) and Kolleru Lake Sanctuary; senior consultant, APARD and adviser for Andhra Pradesh Community Forest Management Project (World Bank).

His deep understanding of forest rights, land governance, and community institutions made him a sought-after expert across government agencies and academic institutions.

Friends and former colleagues remember him as a gentle intellectual, a disciplined researcher, and an unwavering advocate of Adivasi dignity. He combined rigorous empirical fieldwork with rare human warmth, ensuring that tribal voices found space in policy, scholarship, and public discourse.

His passing away leaves a profound void in anthropology, tribal welfare administration, and development studies. Yet his writings, training programmes, institutions, students, and the countless tribal families, whose lives he touched, stand as his enduring legacy.

(The writer is an ormer Central Information Commissioner, and presently Professor, School of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad)

‘Dhanurmasotsavam’ begins with grandeur at Simhachalam

- Annually, the ‘Nelaganta’ period commences exactly a month before the Sankranti festival
- The ceremonial ringing of the bell in the temple premises symbolically heralded the arrival of Dhanurmasam
- This ritual traditionally marks an auspicious commencement for a series of special sevas, daily pujas, and devotional observances

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

MARKING the beginning of an auspicious period comprising special rituals and devotional observances, the sacred Dhanurmasotsavam’ started in a grand manner on Tuesday at the Sri



Devasthanam officials and priests carrying out ‘Nelaganta’ ritual at Simhachalam Devasthanam in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam. As per the instructions of the Devasthanam Executive Officer N Sujatha, the temple priests carried out the traditional ‘Nelaganta’ ceremony in strict adherence to

scriptural customs under the supervision of assistant executive officer K Tirumaleswara Rao. Annually, the ‘Nelaganta’ period commences exactly a month before the Sankranti festival. At the auspicious time

of 1:00 pm, chief priests G Srinivasacharyulu and K Seetharamacharyulu, along with other priests and Vedic scholars, performed the ritual amid the recitation of Vedic chants. The ceremonial ringing of the bell at the temple

premises symbolically heralded the arrival of Dhanurmasam, a sacred month of immense spiritual significance in the Hindu calendar.

This ritual traditionally marks an auspicious commencement for a series of special sevas, daily pujas, and devotional observances followed throughout the month.

The event witnessed the participation of Special Deputy Collector Geetanjali, temple supervising officer K Venkateswara Rao, public relations officer Naidu and a large gathering of devotees.

With the ceremonial beginning of Dhanurmasam, the temple is set to host a month-long schedule of religious activities, drawing devotees from far and wide to seek divine blessings and partake in the celebrations.

Chief of Naval Staff concludes visit to Brazil

- During the official visit, the CNS held high level engagements with senior Brazilian officials
- Apart from the defence industry collaboration, the discussions focused on bilateral cooperation
- The engagements underscored the mutual commitment to deepen maritime cooperation between India and Brazil

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

CHIEF of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi’s visit to Brazil aimed at strengthening the maritime partnership between the two nations.

During the recent official visit, the CNS held high level engagements with senior Brazilian officials, including the Defence Minister, the



MoU documents exchanged between the Indian Navy and the Brazilian Navy in the presence of Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

Chief of the Joint Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces, and the Commander of the Brazilian Navy.

Apart from the defence industry collaboration, their discussions focused on bilateral cooperation.

A key development was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on exchanging information on maintenance of

Scorpene-class submarines and other naval vessels, between the Indian Navy, the Brazilian Navy, and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited

(MDL).

The CNS visited various Brazilian Navy facilities, including the Itaguai Naval Complex and the amphibious helicopter carrier, NAM Atlantico (A140). CNS also attended the passing out parade of 140 midshipmen at the Brazilian Navy’s Naval Academy at Rio de Janeiro.

These engagements underscored the mutual commitment to deepen maritime cooperation between India and Brazil, advancing shared security goals, and training cooperation.

Cake-mixing, grape stomping ceremony adds to X’mas fervour



Ahead of Christmas, Sun International Institute of Tourism and Management organises a cake-mixing and grape stomping ceremony in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

ENGAGING students in a fun-filled event, Sun International Institute of Tourism and Management organised a cake mixing and grape stomping ceremony in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

Executive Director of the institution Asha Jasti encouraged the students to take part in the ceremony aimed to unite communities and spread cheer among people.

As part of the celebrations, stalls such as ‘feed the Santa’, X-Mas goodies, pick your décor and X-Mas accessories were set up at the venue.

Following a dress code of red and white, the event saw participation of several students.

Assorted dry fruits were mixed with bottles of liquor to make a 50-kg cake.

Highlighting the significance of Christmas celebrations that unite communities across the city, Executive Director of the institution Asha Jasti

informed that the cake made from the soaked dry fruits will be distributed free of cost to orphanages and old age homes across the city on the eve of Christmas.

Bheemunipatnam MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao’s wife Ganta Sharada participated in the event.

Radisson Blu GM Abhishek Pani, HR Ratnakar, Executive Chef Ramesh, Raj Kiran, Novotel HR Nisha Batwani, executive chef Saurabh Chaudhary, among others were present.

VIPT bags 1st prize at Smart India Hackathon 2025

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

STUDENTS from Vignan Institute of Pharmaceutical Technology (VIPT), Duvvada, Visakhapatnam, bagged the first prize at the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025, hardware edition, grand finale held at the nodal centre, Chennai Institute of Technology (CIT), Chennai.

Organised by the Ministry of Education, AICTE, and the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, ‘SIH 2025’ recorded large-scale participation from across the country, with over 72,000 ideas submitted by nearly 69,000 teams. From these entries, 1,360 teams were selected for the national finale, conducted at 60 centres nationwide. Team Ecocure emerged



Students from VIPT bagged the first prize at the ‘Smart India Hackathon 2025’

as a joint winner for the problem statement SIH25218: ‘Screening Tool for Early Detection of Neurological Conditions’ and received a cash prize of Rs.1.5 lakh. It was shared with another winning

team as part of the joint award. Congratulating the students, chairman of the institution Lavu Rathaiah and Principal Y Srinivasa Rao mentioned that the achievement reflects VIPT’s strong emphasis

on innovation, practical learning and problem-solving approach.

He appreciated both the team and mentors for securing national recognition at a premier innovation platform.

Fishermen community youth cricket tourney from today

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

THE coastal security Police in Visakhapatnam is organising a Fishermen Community Youth

Cricket Tournament from December 17.

The four-day-long tournament will continue at the AR Ground, Kailasagiri till December 20. Organisers of the

event mentioned that the objective of the tournament is to promote sportsmanship, discipline and community bonding among the fishing community youth.

Several teams from various coastal areas are expected to participate to make the event competitive and engaging.

This initiative also aims to encourage youth participation in constructive activities and strengthen the relationship between the Coastal Security police and the local fishing community.

YSRCP spreading false propaganda: Minister

GUNTUR: Revenue Minister Anagani Satya Prasad said that YSRCP leaders are spreading false propaganda against the construction of medical colleges on PPP mode.

He participated in the locally arranged programmes in Repalle town of Bapatla district on Tuesday and distributed the financial assistance from the CMRF to 41 beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, “If the YSRCP government had constructed the medical colleges under PPP mode, it would have taken 25 years. The YSRCP government had failed to construct at least five medical colleges at a cost of Rs 500 crore. The coalition government in the state completed construction of medical colleges within two years.

The medical colleges will get free seats and NRI seats also. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has failed to construct a medical college in Pulivendula also.

He gave priority to the construction of a palace at Rushikonda rather than construction of medical colleges. “So far, we have distributed Rs 12 crore financial assistance from the CMRF in Repalle Assembly Constituency.”

ACA all set to host India–Sri Lanka women’s T20 Series

- Officials chair key meeting to discuss over several aspects related to the matches
- The discussions reflect a strong spirit of coordination and shared responsibility
- Top cop outlines comprehensive security and crowd-management measures to ensure the safety of players, officials, and spectators

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

ANDHRA Cricket Association is making necessary arrangements for upcoming India–Sri Lanka Women’s T20 International matches.

Ensuring flawless conduct of the upcoming T20 International matches, a preparedness meeting was held at the ACA–VDCA International Cricket Stadium here on Tuesday. City Police



A view of ACA-VDCA International Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam

Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi, DCPs Mary Prashanti and Manikanta, GVMC Zonal Commissioner Ayyappa Naidu, and ACA chief operating officer Girish Dongre, along with other key stakeholders discussed various aspects.

The discussions reflected a strong spirit of coordination and shared

responsibility, underscoring the administration’s commitment to delivering a world-class sporting experience.

Addressing the meeting, the Police Commissioner outlined comprehensive security and crowd-management measures to ensure the safety of players, officials, and spectators. Multiple ticketing options

including M-tickets, e-tickets, and physical tickets have been arranged for public convenience, while enhanced security deployment at ticket counters and strategic locations around the stadium will be in place.

To further strengthen safety, CCTV surveillance will be installed in parking areas, supported by an

upgraded centralised public address system for real-time communication.

As part of stadium safety protocols, water bottles will not be permitted inside the venue, while women police personnel will be deployed to ensure the security of all visiting teams.

Briefing the gathering, ACA COO Girish Dongre

informed that both teams will arrive on 17 December, with the Indian women’s team staying at Novotel Hotel and the Sri Lankan women’s team accommodated at Four Points Hotel.

He informed that BCCI officials were also present during the meeting in view of the matches,

reflecting the importance of seamless coordination between national and local stakeholders.

The highly anticipated matches will be played at the Andhra Cricket Association–Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association (ACA–VDCA) International Cricket Stadium on

December 21 and December 23.

To enhance spectator comfort, complimentary drinking water facilities will be provided inside the stadium. Tickets for both T20I encounters went on sale on Monday at 7 pm and are available exclusively through the District by Zomato app.

In a move aimed at encouraging maximum fan participation, ticket prices have been kept affordable, starting at Rs.200, with additional categories priced at Rs.300, Rs.350 and Rs.400, ensuring accessibility for cricket lovers across all sections.

The bilateral series promises high-octane action and thrilling competition, as the Indian women’s team takes on Sri Lanka before a passionate home crowd. With Visakhapatnam known for its enthusiastic cricket fans, strong turnout is expected for both matches. Cricket enthusiasts are advised to book early, as tickets are likely to sell out quickly.

PARENTING

Love after 40: Not just romance, a practical support system for child's life pressures



ASKARI JAFFER

In your 20s, love is all about taking chances just because the moment felt right and the luxury to make mistakes. But, dating

in 40s is a different energy. It is more stable, calm, and grounded in life experience. By this age, people have lived enough to know what truly matters and what's merely noise. Young people imagine

love is like two pieces of a puzzle that complete each other. But mature daters know better; it is two complete individuals choosing to support and help each other grow.

In the last few years, love has taken on a whole new meaning for divorced, separated, and widowed singles with kids. It is not only about romance; it has become a real source of support. When life is a full

Love after 40 isn't about chasing sparks—it's about building stability, understanding, and shared strength. For single parents and those starting over, companionship becomes a support system, not just a romance. In this phase of life, love means choosing a partner who stands with you through real-world pressures, every day

plate, with kids to care for, aging parents, financial responsibilities, and society's prying eyes, having a companion who is there by your side through the thick and thin brings more than just joy; it brings the kind of strength everyone deserves. Carry-

ing all that burden alone is not easy; the right partner is not just a date or a romantic presence. They are the teammate who understands and shares that weight.

The dating journey after 40, one that is often seeking a second chance, brings a different kind of magic.

What was once viewed with suspicion is now beginning to be socially accepted, to the extent that specific apps have been built for people seeking love at a more mature age. Standard dating apps fall short for people over 40. At this stage, especially for single parents, dating can be very different. It is not just swiping for fun and sparks; the checklist is rewritten, priorities shift, and what truly matters is finding a person who understands that life can throw a curveball at any point; they want maturity, reliability, and compatibility.

38% of daters beyond 40 look for emotional stability over the thrill alone; someone who will patiently listen without rushing to "fix" things, because sometimes you just need to be heard. A partner who doesn't judge their past or understands that, on most days, their child will come before everything. By the time you're 40, romance isn't about big declarations anymore; it's found in small, steady efforts.

Rebound's Founder and CEO, Ravi Mittal, added, "Love for single parents, or daters above 40, is definitely more than just romance. It's an ecosystem of support. Surveys show single parents are often looking for a match who understands that their plans depend on their kids' school schedule and even mood, and they might be extremely thorough during interactions because introducing someone new to a child's life comes with a lot of hope and fear." 3 in 5 daters with kids claim that finding a suitable partner who values maturity and respects their responsibilities is much easier through dating apps for second chances because these platforms tackle the realities of taking a second attempt at love, instead of brushing them under the rug.



Tamannaah Bhatia shares her desi-style of enjoying tea in private

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, on Tuesday, gave a glimpse into her personal moments by sharing how she enjoys her tea in true desi style.

Taking to her Instagram handle, the 'Baahubali' actress posted a candid video of herself, where she is seen enjoying tea in desi style—served in a plate. The post highlights how the actress takes a mindful pause at the start of her week, savouring her tea and embracing a calm, unhurried start to the day. The text on the clip read, "I didn't rush my Monday. I eased into it. These minutes are private until now. Just me and tea. And time." The clip features Tamannaah at her candid best, wearing a white night suit and eating soaked nuts before enjoying her tea. She added the trending track "Tame Impala" from Dracula as the background score.

Tamannaah Bhatia often shares updates about both her personal life and professional projects on social media. Recently, she opened up about portraying yesteryear actress Jayashree in V Shantaram's upcoming biopic.

In her latest Instagram

post, Tamannaah reflected on how the experience taught her far more than she had anticipated. She described stepping into the shoes of the iconic star as a deeply enriching journey.

Sharing a series of behind-the-scenes videos of her transformation into Jayashree, the 'Lust Stories 2' actress wrote, "Every bit of love that we have received on the poster of Jayashree ji for V Shantaram, is an ode to her. Ode to her grace, and her legacy. Thank you."

"Stepping into this world has already been intimate and deeply meaningful, even on the early days. V Shantaram's vision reshaped cinema long before its time. Becoming Jayashree has taught me more than I had imagined, and I look forward to everything this journey will continue to bring."

Tamannaah Bhatia will be seen alongside actor Siddhant Chaturvedi in the upcoming biopic. Directed by Abhijeet Shirish Deshpande, the film titled V Shantaram is a historical biographical drama that celebrates the life, legacy, and cinematic revolution sparked by one of India's most visionary storytellers.

Here's how Alia Bhatt brings weekend vibes to a weekday

Actress Alia Bhatt showed how to keep things effortlessly stylish by bringing weekend vibes to an otherwise ordinary weekday.

Taking to her Instagram handle, the 'Raazi' actress, on Tuesday, posted a series of her stylish photos and videos from a recent award function. She simply captioned the post, "weekend wali vibe weekday pe." In the images, Alia, dressed in a black dress, can be seen striking different poses for the camera. The first close-up shot gives a glimpse of the actress's subtle makeup, while in the others she is seen posing sensuously for the lens.

December 15, Alia Bhatt made a

glamorous appearance at the star-studded Filmfare OTT Awards 2025, held in Mumbai. The 'Student of the Year' actress turned heads in a striking all-black Hervé Léger dress from 1993. Alia's black gown stands out with a plunging sweetheart neckline and wide halter-style straps.

Alia's stunning appearance at the Filmfare OTT Awards 2025 followed another major milestone in her career. The actress was recently honoured with the Golden Globes Horizon Award at the fifth edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

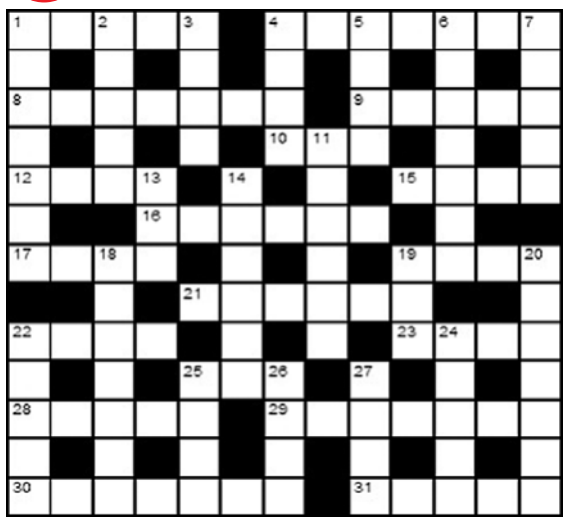
Speaking about receiving the

honour, she said, "The Golden Globes are an iconic part of the global awards universe and I am delighted to be part of it and look forward to continuing my career in telling more stories of powerful and deserving women."

On the professional front, Alia Bhatt is set to star in the upcoming film "Alpha," the seventh installment in the Yash Raj Films Universe. Helmed by director Shiv Rawail, the movie also features Sharvari and Bobby Deol. Produced under the Yash Raj Films banner, "Alpha" is scheduled for release on April 17, 2026, and is anticipated to be a landmark in India's female-led action cinema.



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Damp (5)
 - Ennui (7)
 - Splash a liquid (7)
 - Surpass (5)
 - Sarovar : bird sanctuary in Gujarat ? (3)
 - Sporting side (4)
 - Very small (4)
 - Tear away forcibly (6)
 - One pound sterling (4)
 - Vice president, in short (4)
 - One of the Fates (6)
 - Polish (4)
 - Ex-India all-rounder Ali (4)
 - Fifty two in Roman numerals (3)
 - Location of ancient Samos (5)
 - Ex-P.M. Lal Bahadur (7)
 - Scott's famous novel (7)
 - It may develop when things don't seem to be going smoothly (1,4)

DOWN

- Saqlain : Former Pakistan off-spinner (7)
- Ex-Mrs. Trump (5)
- Ballet skirt (4)
- Farm building (4)
- Monetary unit of Cambodia (4)
- Deterioration (7)
- Lactate (5)
- Possessions and resources (6)
- Insane (3)
- Centres of atoms (6)
- Spanish princess (7)
- Voice of America, in short (3)
- It's proof is in the eating (7)
- Small yeast-raised pancake (5)
- The conductor's wand (5)
- Plaster base (4)
- Words of comprehension (1,3)
- Japan's first capital (4)



Solution to December 16

SUDOKU



Solution to December 16

Sameera Reddy shares her go-to nature's real electrolyte drink for gut detoxification

Actress Sameera Reddy shared her go-to natural electrolyte drink, praising its detoxifying and gut-friendly properties.

Describing it as "refreshing, detoxifying, and gut-friendly," she highlighted how banana stem water can help flush out toxins, reduce bloating, and support healthy digestion—all without any complicated steps. Sameera explained that packed with high fiber, this natural drink not only aids digestion and weight management but also helps maintain blood sugar balance, healthy cholesterol levels, and kidney health. The 'De Dana Dan' actress also shared a method to prepare this gut-friendly detox drink. She recommends starting with fresh banana stem and cumin seeds. Reddy then advises blending the chopped stem and seeds together, then straining the mixture to extract the juice. She revealed that the drink is best consumed fresh in the morning on an empty stomach, allowing its cleansing and digestive benefits to kick in naturally. Sharing the video on Instagram, she wrote, "Refreshing, detoxifying, and gut-friendly! This simple banana stem water helps flush toxins, reduce bloating, and keep digestion happy—without any fuss. Comment 'DETOX' for more mindful recipes from our inner circle wellness community Benefits: High-fiber detox drink that aids digestion & weight management Supports blood sugar balance & healthy cholesterol Natural diuretic—great for kidney health & BP control. Drink fresh, preferably in the morning on an empty stomach. Light, cleansing,



and naturally healing—perfect for daily gut reset." Sameera Reddy often shares recipes for natural and wholesome treats on social media. Earlier, she had revealed the recipe for her healthy, chocolatey, and guilt-free cookies. She has also been sharing recipes using coconut. In terms of work, Sameera is gearing up for the release of her upcoming horror-thriller 'Chimni,' where she plays in the role of Kali. The film follows a grieving mother living in the haunted Chanderi palace, where a malevolent spirit has taken hold of her daughter.



Training young minds for India’s space future

FROM CHANDRAYAAN TO GAGANYAAN, THE NEXT LEAP DEPENDS ON TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SPACE INNOVATORS

- Youth as a strategic asset: India’s demographic advantage can drive long-term leadership in space science and technology.
- Expanding access to space education: Outreach programmes, early education and regional-language content can democratise learning.
- Academia–industry collaboration:: Partnerships with startups and private players are enabling hands-on training and innovation.
- Bridging gaps for sustainability: Addressing rural access, faculty shortages and industry alignment is vital for future missions

DR PRIYANK KUMAR

India has made remarkable achievements in space exploration in the last two decades, carving a distinctive position among space powers. From launching satellites for global clients to accomplishing the unprecedented mission of Chandrayaan-3 and gearing up for Gaganyaan human space flight, ISRO has set new benchmarks in the segment.

However, these achievements are just the beginning, as India’s most valuable asset, its youth, will keep the momentum going and growing. Hence, investing in training young minds will lead to a strong, innovative, and self-reliant space ecosystem.

Today, space education is no longer confined to elite institutions or specialized research centres. It is becoming a national priority, especially as space technology

increasingly merges with artificial intelligence, robotics , climate science, and life sciences. As one of the youngest nations on the planet, India has a demographic advantage that can be leveraged to fuel its space future.

By introducing space science early in education and creating pathways for hands-on learning, India can cultivate a generation of thinkers, builders, and explorers who will shape the next era of space innovation.

To support this vision, several outreach programs have been launched for students at various levels. For instance, ISRO’s Yuvika programme, also termed the Young Scientist Programme, inspires young students with comprehensive knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science, and Space Applications.

Such meticulously designed programmes motivate students to pursue



higher studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and contribute to the nation’s scientific growth.

In addition to these initiatives, prominent educational institutions like BIT Mesra are offering specialized programs in aerospace engineering and =rocket technology. These institutions are fostering interdisciplinary learning, encouraging students to explore the connections between space and other promising fields such as data science, environmental studies, and automation.

It is also important to mention the increasing role of the private sector in space education and innovation, as

cutting-edge startups and tech organisations are collaborating with academic institutions to offer internships, workshops, and mentorship programs. These partnerships are fostering a vibrant ecosystem where students can work on live projects, develop prototypes, and even launch small satellites. The rise of space-tech incubators and accelerators is further driving entrepreneurial interest among young innovators.

However, despite the growing momentum, India’s space education landscape faces several challenges that must be addressed to sustain long-term progress. In this regard, uneven access to

classrooms, and regional language content can help democratize access to space knowledge. This inclusive approach ensures that talent from every corner of the country can contribute to India’s space journey.

Looking ahead, India’s space ambitions are set to rival those of established space powers like the United States, Russia, and China. Missions to study the Sun (Aditya-L1), Venus, interplanetary exploration and setting up our own Bhartiya Antariksha Station are advancing, and to support them, a highly skilled workforce with expertise in astrophysics, planetary science, and advanced propulsion systems will be essential. This makes it even more crucial to create a strong educational foundation today.

India’s rising prowess in space is a testament to its scientific expertise and visionary leadership. But the true potential lies in empowering the next generation of space scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. By investing in education, fostering innovation, and forging inclusive opportunities, India will not just prepare for future missions but will shape the future of space itself.

(The author is Head of Space Engineering & Rocketry at BIT Mesra)



Seerat-un-Nabi educational initiative identifies ‘100 Gems’ for advanced training programmes

HYDERABAD: A large-scale Seerat-un-Nabi competition concluded at Shahi Masjid Bagh-e-Aam, drawing a gathering of more than 2,000 participants here on Tuesday. The concluding ceremony was addressed by international motivational speaker Munawar Zama, who highlighted the importance of structured learning and character development.

The faith-based educational initiative was organized under the supervision of the mosque’s Imam, Maulana Ahsan Al Hamoomi, with the objective of promoting systematic study of the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Participants from diverse backgrounds—including students, working professionals, and senior citizens—took part in the program. According to the organizers, around 1,200 candidates appeared for written examinations conducted in two sessions after a three-month preparation period. Study materials were made available in multiple languages to ensure wider participation.

Addressing the gathering, Munawar Zama, Founder and CEO of English House Academy, announced the selection of 100 top-performing participants, referred to as the “100 Gems,” who will be enrolled in advanced development programs.

These programs will focus on communication skills, debating, and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. He also announced a 50 percent fee concession for deserving candidates and full scholarships for orphaned students. Maulana Ahsan Al Hamoomi proposed the introduction of annual leadership camps for the selected participants to further enhance their sense of social responsibility and community engagement.

The event witnessed several moving moments, including senior citizens returning to examination halls after several decades. Organizers announced plans to make the Seerat-un-Nabi competition an annual event, with possibilities of expanding it to other parts of India.

Today is National Say It Now Day

EXPRESSING THANKS: A GIFT THAT BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

In today’s fast-paced world, youngsters often move from one goal to another without pausing to reflect on the people who support them along the way. Friends who listen, family members who sacrifice, and loved ones who encourage us quietly shape our lives every day. Learning to express gratitude and appreciation to these people is not only a kind gesture but also a powerful habit that can transform relationships and personal well-being.

Gratitude is more than simply saying “thank you” out of politeness. It is about acknowledging how someone’s presence, words, or actions have made a meaningful difference in our lives.

When youngsters take the time to tell a friend, “You helped me believe in myself,” or tell a parent, “Your support gave me strength,” they create moments of deep emotional connection. These honest expressions remind others that their efforts matter and are noticed.

Encouraging youngsters to express appreciation also helps them develop empathy and emotional intelligence. By reflecting on how others have influenced them, young people learn to see beyond themselves. They begin to understand that success, happiness, and growth are rarely achieved alone. This awareness fosters humility and strengthens bonds built on respect and understand-

ing. Expressing gratitude can also have a positive impact on mental health. Studies and everyday experiences show that people who practice gratitude feel happier, less stressed, and more optimistic. For youngsters facing academic pressure, social challenges, or uncertainty about the future, focusing on appreciation can shift their mindset from what is lacking to what is meaningful. Sharing gratitude out loud amplifies this effect, creating a cycle of positivity between individuals.

Moreover, telling loved ones how they have made a difference can leave a lasting impression. Words of appreciation are often remembered long after gifts or

achievements fade. A simple message, letter, or heartfelt conversation can strengthen relationships and even heal misunderstandings. For some, hearing appreciation at the right moment can provide motivation, comfort, or hope.

In conclusion, encouraging youngsters to express gratitude and appreciation is an investment in stronger relationships and healthier communities. By openly telling friends, family, and loved ones how they have shaped their lives, young people learn the value of kindness, connection, and emotional honesty. A few sincere words can make a lifetime of difference—for both the speaker and the listener.



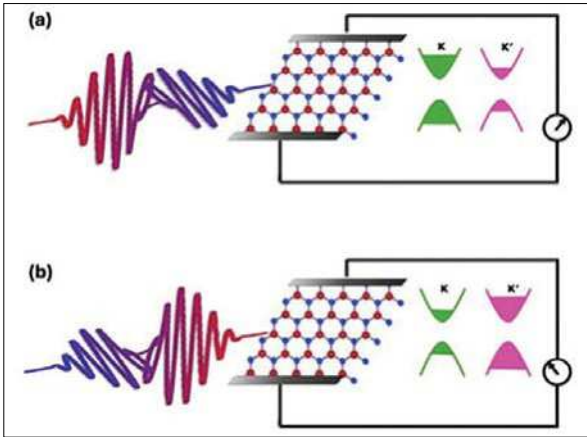
Single light pulse can control quantum states in 2D materials: IIT Bombay

Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay announced that they have discovered a simple new way to use light to control quantum states inside ultra-thin materials, a breakthrough that could lead to computers that are far faster and more energy-efficient than today’s electronic devices.

The research focuses on two-dimensional semiconductors, materials that are only one atom thick and thousands of times thinner than a human hair. Inside these materials, electrons can exist in two distinct quantum states known as valleys, labelled K and K’.

These two states can be compared to the 0 and 1 used in digital computing, forming the basis of a growing research area called valleytronics.

Until now, controlling these valley states has been



difficult. Earlier techniques required complex laser setups using circularly polarised light and multiple laser pulses, and even then, the control was often incomplete or hard to measure.

As a result, reliable and reversible switching between the two valley states remained a major challenge.

The IIT Bombay team has now shown that this com-

plex setup is not necessary. In a study published in the journal ‘Advanced Optical Materials’, the researchers demonstrated that a single linearly polarised laser pulse can both control and read the valley state of electrons.

The key lies in introducing a small, controlled skew in the laser pulse’s polarisation. According to Prof. Gopal Dixit from IIT Bombay, this

slight asymmetry in the laser pulse is enough to push electrons into either the K or K’ valley.

By reversing the skew in the pulse, the electrons can be switched back to the other valley. This makes the process fully reversible, with the two valley states effectively acting as quantum versions of 0 and 1.

What makes the discovery even more significant is that the same laser pulse also generates a tiny electric current.

This current acts as a built-in signal that reveals which valley state the electrons have moved into. In simple terms, the system can be controlled and read at the same time, without the need for extra lasers or measuring devices.

The researchers also found that the method works across a wide range of laser wavelengths and does not need to be finely tuned to the material’s energy levels.

Sir CV Raman National Olympiad Talent exam held

Suchirindia conducted the prestigious Sir CV Raman National Olympiad Talent Exam for students from Classes 1 to 10. The examination witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 90,000 students across 730 centres nationwide. Young participants displayed strong competitive spirit. Toppers will be honoured with scholarships, medals, and Young Genius Awards at a grand ceremony scheduled on February 3, 2026, at Ravindra Bharathi, Nampally, Hyderabad

Photo: Adula Krishna



U-19 Asia Cup

India maul Malaysia by 315 runs

Abhigyan Kundo's historic unbeaten double ton and Deepesh Devendran's 5/22 set up massive win

DUBAI

ABHIGYAN Kundo's record 209 not out and an excellent return of 5/22 from Deepesh Devendran set up a massive 315-run victory for India against Malaysia in their U-19 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday.

India's margin of win is now their second biggest in terms of runs in Youth ODIs, after a 326-run triumph over Uganda in 2022.

Kundo etched his name in record books with a first-ever double century for any Indian in Youth ODIs, scoring his runs off 125 balls with 17 fours and nine sixes to fire India to a mammoth 408 for seven.

In reply, right-arm medium pacer Devendran ran through the Malaysian middle-order after Kishan Singh and Udhav Mohan struck once each to rock the opposition, and despite a late resistance from Hamzah Panggi (35), Malaysia were bowled out for 93 in 32.1 overs.

It was a perfect outing for the Indian colts who put together a robust batting show, in which the tone was set by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi who notched up a quickfire 50 off 26 balls (5 fours and 3 sixes). While Sooryavanshi could not convert his start into another big score, having scored 171 a few days ago against UAE, India were unperturbed even as they lost Vihaan Malhotra (7) and Ayush Mhatre (14) cheaply.

No 4. Vedant Trivedi teamed up with Kundo as the two added 209 runs for the fourth wicket to consolidate, in which the latter was the dominant of the two with his aggressive stroke play particularly on the leg side.

The 17-year-old Kundo's rotation of the strike was top notch as he collected 55 singles during his innings while hitting 17 fours and nine sixes in his superlative knock.

Kundo's double ton is also only the second instance of a batter at U-19 level crossing the 200-run mark, with South Africa's Jorich Van Schalkwyk's 215 against Zimbabwe earlier this year being the first.

The 18-year-old Trivedi looked set for a triple-figure score but ended up giving a return catch to Jaashwin Krishnamurthy, walking back for 90 of 106 balls (7 fours). Kundo was the aggressor in his 87-run stand for the fifth wicket with Kanishk Chouhan while he brought up his double hundred.

BRIEF SCORES:

India U-19 408/7 in 50 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 50, Vedant Trivedi 90, Abhigyan Kundo 209 not out; Muhammad Akram 5/89) beat Malaysia 93 in 32.1 overs (Hamzah Panggi 35; Deepesh Devendran 5/22, Udhav Mohan 2/24) by 315 runs.

Asian Youth Para Games: Indian shuttlers win 8 gold

NEW DELHI

INDIAN youngsters delivered a remarkable performance at the Dubai 2025 Asian Youth Para Games, winning 8 gold medals in the Para badminton events. The Indian team proved to be a formidable force, securing an impressive 17 medals – 8 gold, 3 silver, and 6 bronze.

At the core of India's success was Jatin Azad, whose composed and confident performances defined the team's spirit. Azad achieved double gold in the SU5 category; first capturing the men's singles title before returning to the court with Shivam Yadav to win gold in men's doubles. Their partnership, founded on trust and communication, remained strong under the pressure of finals day.

Speaking after his victories, Azad looked beyond Dubai with quiet determination, as he said, "I want to play in all championships, gain more experience and exposure. With more exposure, I will achieve more – and I know I will be selected for the LA28 Paralympics," he said.

India's successful streak was also driven by mental toughness. Harshit Choudhary, another gold medalist, emphasised the mindset that helped the team navigate the most challenging moments of the

IPL 2026 to be held from March 26 to May 31

MUMBAI: The 19th Indian Premier League will be held from March 26 to May 31 but it remains to be seen if defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru's home base gets a game after a deadly stampede halted all big-ticket cricket at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. As per established norms, the Chinnaswamy should host the tournament opener given the home side, RCB, won the IPL 2025 title but that is unlikely to be clear till the time BCCI comes out with the full-scale schedule.

The venue was witness to chaos and a stampede, which left 11 dead, after RCB's trophy celebrations drew lakhs on the streets, that was well over the state machinery's capacity to handle at a short notice in June this year.

While the venue has received conditional clearance from the Karnataka government, it also needs to meet the necessary safety and security standards following the deaths.

Hyderabad Open Golf to be held in Feb 2026

Tournament poster unveiled at Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Hyderabad Open Golf Tournament, an initiative of the TGolf Foundation, was officially announced with a poster launch at the Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club here on Monday. Regarded as India's premier amateur golf championship, the tournament will be held from February 18 to 21, 2026, and is expected to bring together top amateur golfers from across the country.

The poster was unveiled in the presence of Madhusudhan Rao, Head of Business – Emaar India; NRN Reddy, Founder of TGolf Foundation; Papi Reddy, General Manager, Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club; and Prashanth Reddy, along with



other dignitaries and golf enthusiasts.

Speaking on the occasion, the organisers said the Hyderabad Open has been envisioned as a flagship amateur golf event in India. The tournament aims to offer participants a professional-level tournament experience, world-class playing conditions, and a highly competitive platform for both emerging and established amateur golfers.

Registrations for the championship are now open, and interested players can register by scanning the QR code available on the official tournament poster.

Hosted at the iconic Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club, known for its challenging layout and scenic beauty, the Hyderabad Open is expected to further strengthen Hyderabad's reputation as a major golfing destination in the country.

Telangana's Shivani bags 3rd medal at SGFi Nationals

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

TELANGANA swimmer Shivani Karra continued her impressive run at the 69th SGFi National Swimming Championship for Girls 2025–26, winning a silver medal in the U-14 girls' 100m backstroke on Day 5 at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Swimming Stadium here on Tuesday.

Shivani clocked 1:09.97 to finish second, narrowly behind CISCE's Shreya Binil, who took gold with a timing of 1:09.14. This silver marked Shivani's third medal of the championship, adding to her earlier gold in the 200m backstroke and silver in the 50m backstroke, underlining her dominance in backstroke events.

In another notable performance for Telangana, Sudhiksha Krishna secured the bronze



medal in the U-19 girls' 50m freestyle, clocking 28.24 seconds. Karnataka's Shalini R. Dixit won the gold with a timing of 27.75 seconds, while Shubhnoor Kaur of Chandigarh claimed silver in 28.01 seconds.

The championship is being held from December 12 to 17 in New Delhi.

Spotlight on SKY as India eye series win over SA

LUCKNOW: Shubman Gill's lean patch has been the talking point but an equally "out of runs" skipper Suryakumar Yadav is also under intense scrutiny as India look to find the right balance and seal the five-match series against South Africa in the fourth T20I here on Wednesday.

The third game was an ideal

opportunity for Suryakumar to rediscover his touch while India chased a modest 118-run target, but the ease that once made him the top ranked batter in the world was noticeably missing.

Shots that defined his dominance have been producing erratic results and the match in Dharamsala was no different as he fell to his trademark pick-up



stroke, highlighting a continued struggle. But he was defiant when it

came to self-assessment. "The thing is, I've been batting beautifully in the nets. I'm trying everything that's in my control. When the runs have to come, they'll definitely come. I'm not out of form, but definitely out of runs," Suryakumar confidently said at the post-match presentation ceremony after India's win in Dharamsala on Sunday.

However, the numbers tell a worrying story. The Indian captain has been searching for fluency for over a year, averaging under 15 in the format this season. Additionally, he's still without a half-century in 2025, the longest such phase of his career.

Only twice during this period has he managed to bat beyond 20 balls.

Modi govt's illegality exposed: Cong on relief to Gandhis

NEW DELHI

THE Congress on Tuesday claimed the "illegality" of the Narendra Modi government and its "politically motivated prosecution stands fully exposed" after a court here refused to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's National Herald money laundering case against Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and others.

In a statement, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said the ED's proceedings against Congress leadership -- Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi -- in the case have been found to be "completely illegal and mala fide" by the court.

"The mala fide and illegality of the Modi government stands fully exposed. The court has ruled that the ED case is without jurisdiction;



it has no FIR, without which there is no case. This politically motivated prosecution by the Modi government over the last decade of the principal opposition party stands exposed before the people of India," she said.

"No case of money laundering, no proceeds of crime and no movement of property; all baseless charges that have been a part of a politi-

cal witch hunt, propaganda, reputation assassination and campaign which stands defeated today," Shrinate said.

She said the Congress party and its leadership are committed to fighting for the truth and for the rights of every Indian. "We cannot, and will not ever be intimidated, because we fight for the truth," she added.

Party general secretary K

C Venugopal said, "Through this judgment, the court has exposed the illegal and mala fide political targeting by the Narendra Modi government."

"From day one, the opposition, especially Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, has been targeted without any legal basis or wrongdoing. This judgment clearly vindicates our stand," he added.

Refusing to take cognisance of the federal probe agency's money laundering charge against Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and five others in the National Herald case, the court noted that the chargesheet filed is based on a probe into a complaint by a private person and not on an FIR of a predicate offence.

Its cognisance is impermissible in law, the judge said. (PTI)

Goa nightclub fire case

Luthra brothers deported, taken into police custody

NEW DELHI

GAURAV Luthra and Saurabh Luthra, co-owners of the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Goa where a massive fire killed 25 people, were deported from Thailand on Tuesday and taken into custody by Delhi and Goa police as soon as they landed in Delhi. The brothers arrived in the Indian capital in an Indigo flight and were immediately handed over to authorities for further legal proceedings, 10 days after a blaze tore through the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Arpora in North Goa.

Gaurav, 44 and Saurabh, 40, will be produced before a Delhi court where the Goa police will seek their transit remand.

A TV reporter tracking the brothers from Bangkok attempted to shoot inside the aircraft, prompting the airlines and accompanying security officials to summon additional force to whisk away the two



men.

The Luthra brothers are facing a case of culpable homicide and negligence following the December 6 tragedy, which investigators allege was compounded by the nightclub operating in violation of mandatory fire safety norms. The incident raised serious questions over alleged fire safety violations and lapses by the management. Gaurav and Saurabh fled to Phuket in the early hours of December 7, hours after the fire at their nightclub, prompting the authorities to issue an Interpol

Blue Corner Notice and cancel their passports.

The duo was detained by Thai authorities at Phuket on December 11 following a request from the Indian government which later coordinated with officials in Thailand to deport them under legal treaties between the two nations.

On December 11, a Delhi court rejected the transit anticipatory bail pleas. Additional Sessions Judge Vandana termed the allegations against the brothers "prima facie grave and serious" and severely criticised their "conduct."

The court took note of the police investigation that the brothers had booked tickets to Phuket one hour after the fire, a fact their counsel had initially "concealed" while seeking protection from immediate arrest.

The judge said that leaving immediately after the tragedy was a clear attempt to "evade the legal process".



Security forces hunt for terrorists holed up in Udhampur village

JAMMU: Security forces searched for terrorists in Udhampur on Tuesday, a day after a policeman was killed in a gunfight there, a police officer said.

During the encounter on Monday, one terrorist was believed to have been injured, while two policemen suffered minor bullet wounds.

"The operation has been resumed in the area to track down the holed-up terrorists. The cordon has been further strengthened," the officer told PTI.

A joint team of the Special Operations Group (SOG) of police, along with the army and the CRPF, is on the job with sniffer dogs, the officer said.

On Monday, forces got locked in a gunfight with terrorists in Soan village of the Majalta area in Udhampur. The village was raided by the police on a tip-off about the presence of three terrorists, believed to be affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit.

The encounter took place in the besieged village around 6 pm and continued for some time, resulting in injuries to one SOG jawan, Amjad Pathan, son of Bashrat Khan. Pathan, a resident of Salva, Mendhar in Poonch district, later succumbed.

"A very small SOG team engaged the terrorists. Combing of the forest has been impeded due to darkness and treacherous terrain," IGP Jammu Bhim Sen Tutti said in a social media post.

34 Maoist cadres surrender in Bijapur

RAIPUR/BIJAPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

IN a significant victory for anti-Naxal operations, 34 Maoist cadres, including 7 women, surrendered before senior police and CRPF officials in Bijapur district on Tuesday, carrying a combined bounty of Rs 84 lakh.

The surrendered cadres, primarily from the South Sub-Zonal Bureau, also include members linked to the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC), Telangana State Committee, and Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) Division.

Key figures include a Divisional Committee Member (DVCM) from the Keralapal

Area Committee with a Rs 8 lakh bounty, several PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla Army) members, Area Committee Members (ACMs), platoon leaders, militia commanders, and frontal organisation office-bearers like DAKMS and CNM presidents.

Disillusioned with Maoist ideology, they pledged allegiance to the Indian Constitution, vowing a peaceful life. Each received Rs 50,000 immediate incentive under the state's rehabilitation policy, Police officials said.

The surrender occurred amid joint efforts by District Reserve Guard (DRG), Bastar Fighters, Special Task Force (STF), CoBRA, and CRPF battalions, influenced by the



Chhattisgarh government's "Puna Margam: Rehabilitation to Rejuvenation" campaign—a reintegration drive—and the "Niyad Nellanar" scheme delivering development to remote villages.

Police Superintendent of Bijapur Jitendra Kumar Yadav appealed to the remaining Maoists, "abandon violence without fear. The government's policies ensure a secure, respectable future."

He highlighted family de-

sires for normal lives.

Since January 2024, Bijapur has seen over 824 surrenders (per local claims, aligning with reports of 790+ by late 2025), alongside arrests and encounters, reflecting intensified operations.

Statewide, thousands have surrendered in 2025, weakening Maoist structures in Bastar. Officials credit proactive security, trust-building, and welfare initiatives for transforming fear into dialogue and development in South Bastar.

Rehabilitation processes, including legal formalities and reintegration support, are underway. This marks another step toward Chhattisgarh's goal of lasting peace in Naxal-affected regions.



'Chikiri Chikiri' sets the internet ablaze, crosses a century in Telugu alone

150 million+ views across 5 languages

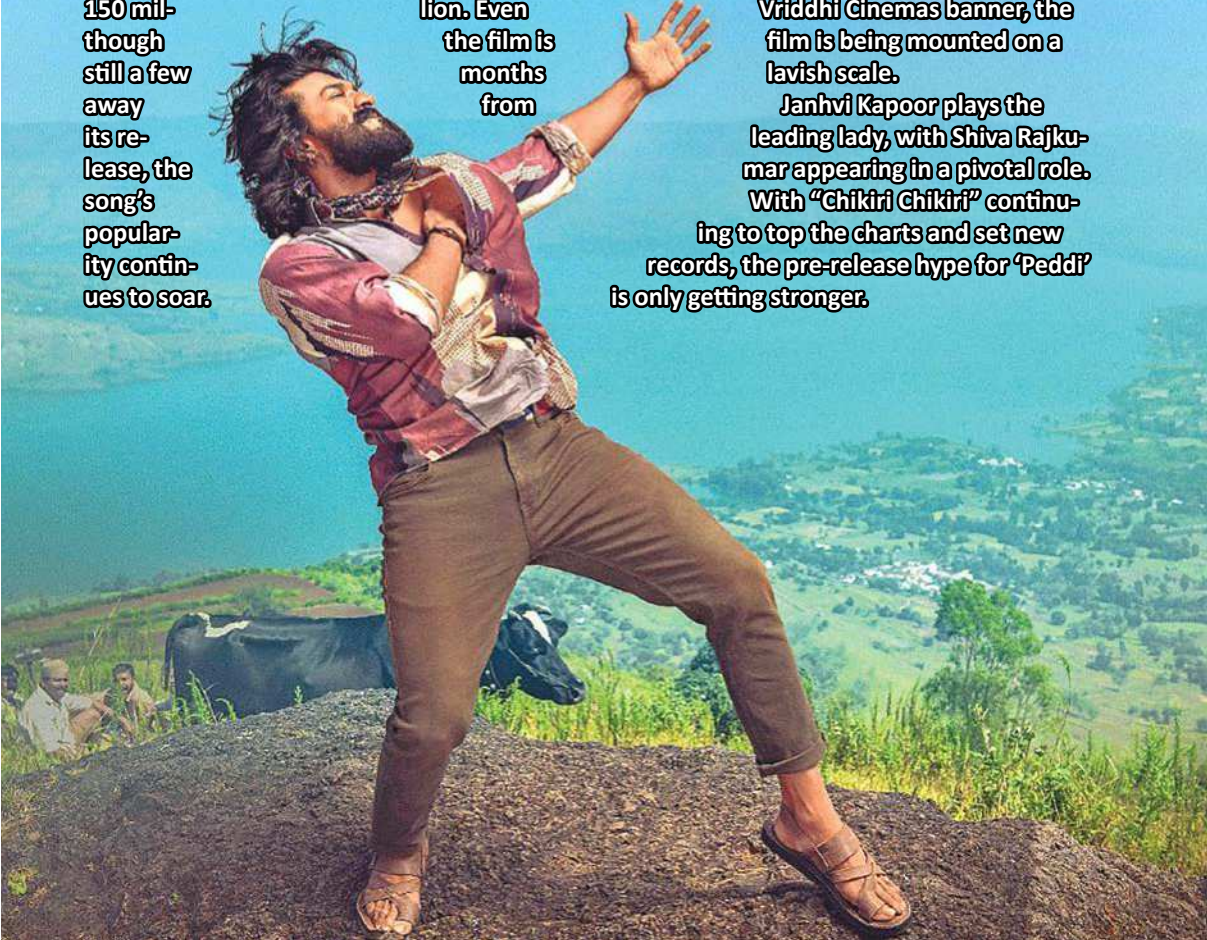
Mega Power Star Ram Charan has once again showcased his immense star power. The first song from his upcoming film, 'Peddi', titled "Chikiri Chikiri", is creating waves online. What began as a high-energy launch has now turned into a massive worldwide sensation.

Within just a month of its release, the Telugu version alone has crossed 100 million views, while the combined views across five languages have surpassed 150 million. Even though still a few months away from its release, the song's popularity continues to soar.

Composed by A.R. Rahman, the song's powerful beats and catchy rhythm have impressed audiences everywhere. Ram Charan's energetic dance moves and commanding screen presence have become a hot topic on social media, inspiring countless reels and fan edits.

Director Buchi Babu Sana's stylish visuals and keen attention to detail make the song look grand and exciting, further amplifying the buzz around 'Peddi'. Produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the Vridhhi Cinemas banner, the film is being mounted on a lavish scale.

Janhvi Kapoor plays the leading lady, with Shiva Rajkumar appearing in a pivotal role. With "Chikiri Chikiri" continuing to top the charts and set new records, the pre-release hype for 'Peddi' is only getting stronger.



Producer Raj Kandukuri wishes for success of 'Jinn', releasing on Dec 19

Produced by Nikhil M. Gowda under the banners of Sadalamma Film Productions and Bilva Studios, 'Jinn' is directed by Chinmay Ram. The film features Amit Rao, Parvez Simba, Prakash Tuminad, Ravi Bhat, and Sangeetha in key roles. The movie is set for a grand release on December 19. Ahead of its release, a trailer launch event was held on Monday, attended by chief guests Raj Kandukuri, Veerabhadra Chowdary, and Sohel.

The trailer raises intriguing questions: What is the mystery behind the haunted lake? What is the secret hidden inside the college? It depicts four youngsters trapped by spirits, unable to escape from a college building, with the entry of a Jinn adding to the suspense. The makers manage to scare the audience right from the trailer itself. The visuals and background score are highly engaging and captivating. After the trailer launch, the speakers shared their thoughts:

Raj Kandukuri said:

"Jinn" is a very interesting title. There are two kinds of Jinn—good Jinn and bad Jinn. I feel horror films carry comparatively less risk. If fear is presented effectively, audiences always support horror films."

Veerabhadram Chowdary said:

"I really liked the trailer of 'Jinn'. Horror films are tasting

success these days. Director Chinmay Ram has made this film very well. 'Jinn' will surely achieve good success."

Sohel said:

"Telugu audiences encourage films from all languages and technicians from all regions. I really liked the trailer of 'Jinn'. The tagline 'Spooky World' is impressive. I wish the director and producer great success."

Director Chinmay Ram said:

"Thank you to everyone who attended our film 'Jinn'. Special thanks to producer Nikhil garu for investing in and supporting us."

Amit Rao said:

"Thanks to everyone who came to the 'Jinn' trailer launch event. Many people don't know what 'Jinn' means. In Islam, spirits and supernatural beings are referred to as Jinn."

Parvez Simba said:

"We took an idea that struck us and brought it this far. We did extensive research on Jinns. With this movie, we are presenting a completely new world."

Marella Manikantha said:

"Thanks to everyone who attended our 'Jinn' event. This is a film audience have never seen before. Producer Nikhil garu made it on a grand scale, and director Chinmay Ram has executed it brilliantly."



'Dhandoraa' Is a Wonderful Film That Combines All Kinds of Commercial Elements - Actor Sivaji

The film 'Dhandoraa' stars the iconic actor Sivaji in the lead role. Ravindra Banerjee Muppaneni, head of Loukya Entertainment—who has garnered attention for producing acclaimed films like 'Color Photo' and 'Bedurulanka 2012'—has produced 'Dhandoraa'. Along with Sivaji, actors Navadeep, Nandu, Ravi Krishna, Manika Chikkala, Mounika Reddy, Bindu Madhavi, Radhya, Aditi Bhavaraju, and others play important roles in the film. Directed by Muralikanth, the movie is set for a grand release on December 25. As part of the promotions, actor Sivaji interacted with the media. Here are some key excerpts from his interaction:

Have you heard the story of 'Dhandoraa' before 'Court'?

I first heard the story of 'Dhandoraa'. My role in it is very new. The makers of 'Dhandoraa' had given an advance earlier, but there was a delay in production. So 'Court' was released first.

What is your role going to be like in 'Dhandoraa'?

My role in 'Dhandoraa' will be different. Whether it is good or bad is something the audience will decide. They may not fully understand it immediately; after watching the film, the audience will have to tell me about my role.

Can 'Dhandoraa' be considered a completely message-based film?

'Dhandoraa' is not a completely message-oriented film. It is a film made by combining all kinds of commercial elements.

Since it comes after 'Court', there are expectations on 'Dhandoraa'. Will your role



live up to them?

The response to my role as Mangapati in 'Court' is similar to the response I expect for my role in 'Dhandoraa'. Such roles come only if you are very lucky as an actor. I got a character with many different shades in this film.

Prostitutes were portrayed in films like 'Vedam' and 'Kancheepuramlo'. How are they portrayed in this film?

Bindu Madhavi's character in 'Dhandoraa' has been portrayed in a very classy manner. Everyone will connect with the film and its characters.

Do you feel new directors are using you more?

I mostly work with new directors. Our filmmakers are very calculative. Even though we have a lot of potential actors, they often bring actors from other languages.

Did you enjoy films like 'Missamma'? Do you enjoy films like 'Court' and 'Dhandoraa'?

I enjoyed all kinds of films such as 'Missamma', 'Shailaja Krishnamurthy', and 'Adirindayya Chandram'. I have always had confidence in myself as an actor. I can play all kinds of roles, from comedy to negative shades. Now, I feel the time has come for me.

TRAILER OF '45: THE MOVIE' UNVEILED

Popular music director Arjun Janya takes the director's chair for the first time with the much-awaited flick '45: The Movie', a project that promises scale, substance, and star power in equal measure. The film unites three formidable forces of Kannada cinema—Karunada Chakravarthy Shiva Rajkumar, Real Star Upendra, and the versatile Raj B Shetty—setting the stage for a cinematic collision unlike any other. Produced by Uma Ramesh Reddy and M. Ramesh Reddy under the Suraj Productions banner, '45: The Movie' has been crafted with a clear ambition to stand apart. From its striking promotional material to the intriguing snippets unveiled so far, the film has steadily built an air of mystery that has kept audiences talking. With anticipation peaking, the makers have now unveiled the theatrical trailer.

The opening frames introduce a powerful visual idea—a date of birth, a date of death, and the fleeting stretch between them. This stark imagery becomes the film's thematic backbone, suggesting that existence is not just about living, but about being accountable for every choice made within that narrow window of time. The trailer hints at a belief



system where moral reckoning does not stop with death, giving the film an almost metaphysical undertone.

Bringing together Shiva Rajkumar, Upendra, and Raj B Shetty, '45: The Movie' blends contrasting personas into this moral framework. Upendra's resonant voiceover lends philosophical gravity, framing the narrative as a reflection on cause and consequence. Raj B Shetty appears rooted

and vulnerable, representing the ordinary individual caught in forces larger than himself. Shiva Rajkumar's presence, particularly his unexpected appearance in a red Bharatanatyam costume, introduces a striking sense of duality and transformation.

The cinematography by Satya Hegde stands out, while Arjun Janya's pulsating score amplifies the experience. The production values are exceptional, and the

film features high-intensity action sequences choreographed by leading stunt masters Dr K Ravi Verma, Jolly Bastian, and Differnet Danny Chetan D'Souza. Dialogues are written by Anil Kumar, and editing is handled by K M Prakash.

With the trailer setting the bar high, '45: The Movie' is gearing up for a grand release in five languages on January 1, ushering in the New Year with a bang.

Geetha distributors to release Mohanlal's 'Vrusshabha' in Telugu on Dec 25

The prestigious Geetha Film Distributors, known for releasing blockbuster films like 'Kantara', 'Viduthalai', 'Chaava', and 'Mahavatar Narasimha', along with many other Telugu super hits, is now bringing the highly anticipated film 'Vrusshabha', starring the complete actor Mohanlal, to Telugu audiences. With the involvement of this leading distribution house, anticipation around the film has reached new heights. This period film promises audiences a cinematic spectacle like never before.

Written and directed by Nanda Kishore, 'Vrusshabha' is a sweeping saga of love, destiny, and vengeance, exploring the unbreakable bond between a father and son. Announcing this exciting development, the makers unveiled a powerful poster featuring Mohanlal in two different looks. Geetha Film Distributors is planning a grand release for the film. Shot simultaneously in Malayalam and Telugu, with releases planned in Hindi and Kannada as well, 'Vrusshabha' is set to be one of the most memorable cinematic events of 2025. Worldwide Release: December 25, 2025. The previously unveiled teaser introduced audiences to Mohanlal in a commanding avatar as a warrior king,

carrying the powerful message, "When Destiny Calls, Blood Must Answer." With the evocative tagline "Reborn Love – A Love So Strong, It Defies Death," the teaser impressed cinema lovers nationwide, ending with a dramatic transition between the past and present that left audiences intrigued by the story's dual worlds.

Starring Mohanlal alongside Samarjit Lankesh, Ragini Dwivedi, and Nayan Sarika, 'Vrusshabha' also features a strong ensemble cast, with more names to be announced. The film features music by Sam CS, sound design by Resul Pookutty, dialogues by SRK, Janardhan Maharshi, and Karthik, and high-octane action sequences choreographed by Peter Hein, Stunt Silva, and Nikhil.

Presented by Connekt Media and Balaji Telefilms Ltd in association with Abishek S. Vyas Studios, and produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R. Kapoor, C.K. Padma Kumar, Varun Mathur, Saurabh Mishra, Abishek S. Vyas, Praveer Singh, Vishal Gurnani, and Juhi Parekh Mehta, 'Vrusshabha' is an epic action cinematic journey that explores the emotional bond between a father and son. The film blends action, drama, and visual spectacle with deeply moving storytelling.



'Missterious' climax will be memorable - Director Mahi Komati Reddy

The movie 'Missterious' stars Rohit as the hero and Abid Bhushan in a police role, alongside actresses Riya Kapoor and Meghna Rajputh. Directed by Mahi Komati Reddy and produced by Jay Vallamdas under the Ashlee Creations banner, the film is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on the 19th of this month. On this occasion, director Mahi Komati Reddy shared several key highlights of the movie in an interview today.

Director Mahi Komati Reddy said in the interview:

"Our film, 'Missterious', is not a regular-format movie like others; we have crafted it around a distinct point. The film includes elements of crime, love, and crush, along with strong thrilling aspects. The audience will definitely be entertained, as such thrilling elements have not been shown in any film so far. The suspense surrounding who the killer is will continue until the very end of the film. The climax episode will be a blend of suspense and thrill, featuring an unexpected twist that no one can predict. After the movie ends, everyone will surely be talking about that climax.

When it comes to thriller movies, songs are not usually highly expected. However, we have included three songs based on the story's requirements, and all of them fit perfectly. They add a good kick and ensure the audience does not feel like they are only watching a crime film. Our music director, M.L. Raja, has provided chartbuster music for these songs.

Overall, 'Missterious' is a mix of crime, crush, love, thrill, suspense, songs, and fight scenes. The audience will come to the theatre, enjoy all these elements, and leave entertained. Especially, the climax episode will be unforgettable.

So far, the promotional content for 'Missterious' has received very good feedback. We produced the film wonderfully with the support of our friend and producer, Jay Vallamdas. Initially, we planned to release the movie on the 12th of this month, but due to the release of Akhanda 2, we decided to bring it to audiences a week later, on the 19th."