



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.

P6

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.

P4

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.

P7

"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.

P8

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WINDOWS

Senior citizen booked for touching female crew member

NEW DELHI: A case has been registered here against an elderly passenger for allegedly touching a female crew member inappropriately during a flight from Dammam, Saudi Arabia, police said on Tuesday. After the flight landed here, the cabin crew filed a complaint with the RGI airport police station on December 13 against the passenger, aged about 60. However, he denied intentional misconduct and claimed that the contact was accidental, police said.

Leopard kills eight-year-old boy in Junnar

PUNE: In the latest incident marking the escalation in the human-animal conflict, an eight-year-old boy was killed by a leopard in Junnar tehsil of Pune district in Maharashtra. The big cat hiding in the bushes pounced on Rohit Kapare at a farm while his mother was working nearby in Mangrul Pargaon village, the police said. Forest officials said they have sought permission to eliminate the feline involved in the attack. Junnar forest division reportedly has more than 1,000 leopards.

Soldier dies in landmine blast in J-K's Kupwara

SRINAGAR: An Army soldier died in a landmine blast in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said here on Tuesday. Havildar Zubair Ahmad of the Army's 13 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry was injured in a land mine blast at Putaha Khan Gali in the Trehgam area of the border district on Monday, they said. Officials said the injured soldier was rushed to a military hospital at Drugmulla but was declared dead on arrival.

Bomb threat: Raj Rajasthan HC, courts searched

JAIPUR: Police checked the Rajasthan High Court and the Sessions Court premises here thoroughly after receiving a bomb threat via e-mail on Tuesday, officials said. The threat message, sent to the e-mail ID of the Sessions Court, claimed that explosives were planted in the high court judges' chambers, they said.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Ours is a democratic party, and he is a powerful president. No, not elected, but selected by the supreme leader

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.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



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 mullied 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.



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.

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.



Mohali kabaddi player killing

Murder at behest of gang, shooters identified, say police

HANS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH

THE Mohali Police on Tuesday said three suspects, including two shooters, who allegedly killed a 30-year-old kabaddi player-cum-promoter in the middle of a tournament here a day ago, have been identified and they are associated with a gang which orchestrated the killing.

Kanwar Digvijay Singh alias Rana Balachauria was critically injured in the attack

and was rushed to the Fortis Hospital in Mohali where he was declared dead, police said.

The incident took place at Sohana in Mohali where a private kabaddi tournament had been going on for the past few days, SSP Harmandeep Singh Hans said.

A statement issued by the hospital said, "Mr Kanwar Digvijay Singh, a 30-year-old kabaddi player, was brought to the Fortis Hospital, Mohali, at 6:05 pm with gunshot injuries. Despite immediate

clinical assessment, he was declared dead."

The SSP told reporters that the assailants were 2-3 in number, who reportedly fled on a motorcycle after the incident.

Asked if there was any enmity angle or gang rivalry behind the killing, the SSP said, "The matter is under investigation."

Some eyewitnesses told police that the attackers pretended to be fans and approached Rana to click selfies but opened fire soon after.

The tournament was being held in a packed ground, where Punjabi singer Mankirt Aulakh was also expected for the evening matches to give away prizes, they said.

When Rana reached the ground, he was stopped by the attackers who requested for a selfie.

"We first thought firecrackers were being burst," an eyewitness said, referring to the gunshots.

"To scare the spectators, the attackers also fired in the

● Kanwar Digvijay Singh was critically injured in the attack and was rushed to the Fortis Hospital in Mohali where he was declared dead

● Some eyewitnesses told police that the attackers pretended to be fans and approached Rana to click selfies but opened fire soon after

air," he said.

The killing brought back memories of three years ago when another kabaddi player, Sandeep Nangal, was shot dead in Jalandhar district in the middle of a tournament at Mallian Kalan village.

More recently, a 25-year-old kabaddi player named Teja Singh was shot dead in broad daylight in Jagraon in October this year.

The opposition Congress, SAD and BJP slammed the Bhagwant Mann government over the Mohali incident, alleging total collapse of law



and order in the state under the AAP.

Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said in a post on X, "Open firing at a kabaddi tournament in Mohali, claiming the life of player

Rana Balachauria, is a chilling reminder of @AAP Punjab's abject failure to maintain law and order. Bullets flying at public events are proof of governance collapse. Punjabis are being forced to live in fear."



Collision between cars amid fog on Expressway, 2 dead

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BARABANKI

TWO people were killed and three others injured after a speeding car collided with another vehicle amid dense fog on the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki district on Tuesday, police said. The accident occurred near Sariyan village under the Haidergarh Kotwali area when a Maruti Ertiga, attempting to overtake another vehicle, rammed into a Mahindra Scorpio moving ahead, they said.

Due to poor visibility caused by fog, the drivers of both vehicles failed to spot traffic on the expressway in time, the police said, adding that the impact was so severe

that the Ertiga was flung into the air and fell into a roadside ditch after skidding off the road. Babloo (35), a resident of Bahuhara village in Bihar's Chapra district, and Deepak Kumar (36) from Hanumangarh in Lalganj area of Azamgarh district, who were travelling in the Ertiga, died in the accident, they said.

The injured were identified as Mohammad Tahir (55), Asif (22) and Kamrudin Ansari (64), all residents of Azamgarh district. They were initially admitted to a nearby hospital and later referred to the district hospital for further treatment.

On receiving information, local police rushed to the spot and carried out rescue operations.

MINOR GIRL ABDUCTED, RAPED FOR 2 WEEKS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BALLIA

A 22-year-old man was arrested on Tuesday in Sitapur district for allegedly abducting a 16-year-old girl and raping her repeatedly for nearly two weeks, officials said. According to police, the girl, a class 10 student from a village under the Dubhar police station area, went missing on December 1 after leaving home for college.

When she did not return, her family searched for her and, the next day, lodged a missing person complaint.

Dubhar SHO Ajay Pal said the police rescued the girl on Monday from a location within the Dubhar area. In her statement to the police, the minor said that she had come in contact with one Ranjit Pal (22), a resident of Sarva village in



● According to police, the girl, a class 10 student from a village under the Dubhar police station area, went missing on December 1 after leaving home for college

● The minor said that she had come in contact with one Ranjit Pal (22), a resident of Sarva village in Sitapur district's Sidhauri area, through mobile communication

Sitapur district's Sidhauri area, through mobile communication.

She alleged that Ranjit abducted her and raped her over nearly two weeks.

Based on the girl's statement, police added rape charges against the

accused and also booked him under relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

SP Omveer Singh said the accused was arrested from Dubhar town on Tuesday and sent to jail

after completion of legal formalities.

In another incident, in Barabanki, A 31-year-old married woman in Sahavpur town of the Barabanki district was found dead, allegedly hacked to death, at the house of her lover, who, too, was married, police said on Tuesday.

Police suspect the role of the married man's parents and his four sisters, who are allegedly absconding, in the crime.

The matter came to light on Tuesday morning.

Sandeep, a resident of Sahavpur, got married about a month ago. He, however, was also in a relationship with Mamta, a married woman from Gorakhpur, police said.

On Monday night, Mamta visited Sandeep's house when his parents and sisters were at home; however, his wife was at her maternal home.

Har 'tackling' climate change; air pollution control to get direction

World Bank proposes
Rs.3,000 crore
support till 2030:
Rao Narbir Singh

CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Environment, Forest and Wild Life Rao Narbir Singh said that climate change is not just a challenge for one country but has become one of the biggest global concerns. International seminars are being organised on this serious issue, where environmental experts are sharing their experiences and carrying out new research.

He said that environmental imbalance in India's NCR region is a matter of serious concern. The Haryana Government is committed to controlling environmental pollution and is ensuring strict compliance with the directions issued by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Supreme Court. To address air pollution, the World Bank has also taken an initiative. Under this, a proposal has been made to provide Haryana with assistance of about Rs.

3,000 crore till the year 2030, out of which Rs. 1,000 crore will be provided in the first phase by 2026. All necessary procedures in this regard are being completed by the department.

Gurugram, Sohna new Hi-Tech nurseries

The Forest Department has prepared a plan to develop all nurseries in Gurugram and Sohna as model hi-tech nurseries. These nurseries will prepare plants that can be planted in different parts of the city after one to two years. For this purpose, modern nurseries of South India will be studied and similar advanced nurseries will be developed in Haryana.

Sugarcane price at Rs. 415 per quintal.

Chandigarh: Haryana Cooperation, Heritage and Tourism Minister, Dr. Arvind Sharma said that to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a Developed India, Union Home and Cooperation Minister, Amit Shah has set a target of establishing 150 new sugar mills across the country. In this direction, the process of set-

ting up a cooperative sugar mill in Naraingarh, Haryana, is underway. He said that Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini has announced the sugarcane price at Rs. 415 per quintal. Haryana today stands ahead of other states in terms of sugarcane payments and facilities provided to farmers.

'Pradhanmantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana'

Chandigarh: Haryana Energy Minister, Anil Vij said that the Pradhanmantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana will be expanded across the state in the form of a campaign so that Haryana emerges as the leading state in the country in implementing this scheme and rooftop solar systems are installed in the maximum number of households. In this regard, Vij said that monitoring committees will be constituted by the Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam and the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam to ensure rapid expansion of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Vij said that a revolving fund could be created for this purpose. Officers informed the Energy Minister that Rs.100 crore each would be allo-

cated to the Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam and the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam, and that government approval for this allocation has already been obtained. With the availability of this fund, the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana will be expanded at a much faster pace.

CM lays foundation stones

Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini on Tuesday announced that Hansi will be accorded district status as the 23rd district of Haryana, marking a significant administrative milestone for the region. The Chief Minister further stated that the official notification will be issued within a week, after which Hansi will formally attain district status from the revenue administration perspective.

Addressing a 'Vikas rally' in Hansi, the Chief Minister also inaugurated and laid foundation stones of three development projects worth Rs. 77.30 crore.

Strong focus on farmers' welfare

Speaking on agricultural reforms, the Chief Minister said that the state govern-

ment is procuring all crops at Minimum Support Price (MSP). He informed that Rs. 1.64 lakh crore has been directly credited to the accounts of nearly 12 lakh farmers for crop procurement. Over the past 11 years, farmers have received Rs. 15,448 crore as compensation under crop damage and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. In contrast, during its 10-year tenure, the Congress government disbursed only Rs. 1,138 crore and left Rs. 269 crore unpaid, which was cleared by the BJP government after assuming office in 2014, said Sh. Nayab Singh Saini.

Sex ratio improves

Chandigarh: Haryana's Additional Chief Secretary, Health Department, Sh. Sudhir Rajpal, directed departmental officers to aim for achieving a sex ratio of 920 by the end of this year. He emphasized ensuring registration of all newborn births, particularly in areas with a migrant population in cities and towns.

He was chairing the weekly meeting of the State Task Force constituted to improve the sex ratio, held here today.

Yogi pays tribute to Ram Janmabhoomi leader

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AYODHYA

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday visited Ayodhya to pay tributes to former BJP MP and prominent Ram Janmabhoomi movement leader Ram Vilas Vedanti, who passed away a day earlier following a heart attack. Adityanath offered floral tributes to Vedanti, a revered saint of the Vashishtha Ashram, remembering him as a life dedicated to the cause of Lord Ram and national service. In a post on X, the chief minister said Vedanti's "entire life of sacrifice devoted to 'Ram kaj and rashtira seva' will always remain memorable and inspirational". He added, "May Lord Ram grant the departed soul a place at His divine feet". During his visit to the temple town, the chief minister also offered prayers at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple and the Hanuman-garhi shrine, officials said.

UP SI among accused in extortion case, suspended

AMROHA

A sub-inspector at Simbhavali police station in Hapur district is among the accused in an extortion case in Amroha, officials said on Tuesday.

The sub-inspector, identified as Nitin Kumar Verma, and another accused, Naveen Verma, are absconding. Four other members of the gang have been arrested, the officials said. The arrested include Khalid (42) and Deepak (34), both history-sheets, Lakhani (45), and a woman, Kaushar (30). Police seized Rs 20,000 in cash and a mobile phone used in the crime during the arrests.



According to police, the gang extorted Rs 1.25 lakh from the complainant, Naim, from Sambhal district, by threatening to frame him in a false rape case. The victim was called on the pretext of buying a plot and intimidated before the money was taken from his family.

A case has been registered at Gajraula police station under sections 308(5) and 308(7) (extortion), 127(2) (wrongful confinement), 317(2) (stolen property) and 61(2) (criminal conspiracy) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said, adding that raids are underway to arrest the absconding accused.

Saini bats for transforming State's 'mandis', proposes new initiatives

HANS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has proposed a slew of initiatives to transform the state's mandis into a modern, transparent and farmer-friendly market system.

At a Marketing Board meeting, he proposed the rollout of 'Harit Mandi, Khushaal Farmer', under which he called for the establishment of farmer assistance centres in every mandi (grain market), where grievances can be registered immediately and resolved promptly, ensuring

Haryana Chief Minister proposed the rollout of 'Harit Mandi, Khushaal Farmer', under which he called for the establishment of farmer assistance centres in every mandi (grain market), where grievances can be registered immediately and resolved promptly, ensuring that farmers do not have to make repeated visits to offices

that farmers do not have to make repeated visits to offices.

Saini said that farmers practising natural farm-

ing should be given special space and priority in mandis to sell their produce, as this form of farming represents the future and should



be actively encouraged.

Furthermore, the chief minister stressed the need to ensure safe and dedicated spaces for women farmers

and women traders, and to promote their greater participation, according to an official statement.

Calling for greater

transparency in the market fee collection, Saini said that the foundation of the Marketing Board's functioning lies in ensuring the prosperity of farmers and strengthening the state's economy.

In the meeting with the office-bearers of the board, Saini also said that market committees are not merely government offices, but vital power centres of the rural economy. Therefore, their efficient management is essential to strengthen trust and reliability between farmers and traders, he said. He noted the successful implementation of

e-procurement and direct benefit transfer (DBT), enabling farmers to receive the full value of their work by eliminating the role of middlemen.

Further, Saini emphasised that every process, from issuing gate passes to the collection of market fees, must be digitised to enhance transparency.

He also highlighted that all 24 crops are being procured from farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) and that work is being accelerated to improve basic facilities, such as sheds, drinking water, toilets, and rest houses in

mandis across the state.

The CM stated that providing cold storage facilities near farm gates for fruit and vegetable growers is a top priority of the government and directed market committee officials to prioritise proposals for establishing such units under the PPP model in their respective areas.

He also stressed the need to improve road connectivity to mandis so that farmers can bring their produce without difficulty, and instructed the officials to adopt solar energy to meet their electricity requirements.



- The MP from Kerala asserted that the bill is not merely an administrative tweak but an “assault on the very spirit and philosophical foundation of the programme
- Opposition members opposed the proposed legislation at the introduction stage and pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny

‘Ram ka naam badnaam na karo’: Tharoor on G RAM G Bill

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

CONGRESS MP Shashi Tharoor took a sharp dig at the BJP-led Centre on Tuesday while opposing the VB-G RAM G Bill in the Lok Sabha, recalling the 1971 hit Bollywood number -- “Dekho o deewano (tum) ye kaam na karo, Ram ka naam badnaam na karo”.

The MP from Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram asserted that the bill is not merely an administrative tweak but an “assault on the

very spirit and philosophical foundation of this crucial programme”.

Introducing the bill, Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the Centre not only believes in Gandhi but also follows his principles. “The (Narendra) Modi government has done more for rural development than previous governments,” he said.

Opposition members opposed the proposed legislation at the introduction stage and pressed for sending the bill to a parliamen-

tary panel for greater scrutiny. The MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress, strongly objected to the “removal” of Gandhi's name.

Tharoor said the VB-G RAM G Bill represents a “deeply regrettable and retrograde step” for the country and for its commitment to the welfare of its most vulnerable citizens.

“My first objection, as with others, is the ill-advised decision to remove the name of the Father of the Nation, for the reasons already stat-

ed, which I will not repeat. But this is not merely an administrative tweak, it is an assault on the very spirit and philosophical foundation of this crucial programme,” he said.

Asserting that Gandhi's vision of Ram Rajya was never a purely political project, the former Union minister said it was a socio-economic blueprint rooted in the empowerment of villages, and his unwavering faith in Gram Swaraj was part of his vision of Ram Rajya.

“The original Act, by bear-

ing his name, acknowledged this profound connection -- that true employment guarantee and upliftment must flow from the grassroots, embodying his principle of the last person first. To remove the name of Mahatma Gandhi is to strip the bill of its moral compass and historical legitimacy,” Tharoor said.

“Then to have two languages in the title just to make the acronym G RAM G is not just a violation of Article 348, as pointed out in the previous discussion,

but it also reminds me of a song from my childhood -- ‘Dekho o deewano (tum) ye kaam na karo, Ram ka naam badnaam na karo,’” he added.

The Congress leader also called for seriously questioning the intent behind the financial restructuring proposed in the bill.

“The proposal to impose 40 per cent of the financial burden directly on state governments is not merely fiscally irresponsible, it is a measure that threatens to make the entire programme unviable,” he said. --PTI

Police nab 10 ‘scammers’ in digital fraud crackdown

- The arrests were made in raids across Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana as part of a probe that began in southeast Delhi
- One of the accused was arrested at Mumbai airport when he was attempting to fly to Dubai. The syndicate operated a digital arrest scam, threatening its victims through video calls



seven states — Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana — as part of a probe that began in southeast Delhi, they said.

“One of the accused was arrested at Mumbai airport while he was attempting to fly to Dubai,” an officer said.

The syndicate operated a digital arrest scam, threatening its victims through video calls while impersonating police officers.

The callers would lie to their targets that their

Aadhaar and mobile numbers were linked to serious criminal cases and would coerce them into transferring money to avoid arrest.

The fraud came to light with a complaint filed on December 7 by a Shaheen Bagh resident, who alleged that he had been cheated of Rs 99,888 after receiving threatening video calls from fraudsters posing as Karnataka Police.

An FIR was registered under Section 318(4) (Cheating) of the BNS, and

a probe was launched into the alleged fraud.

Investigations revealed that the arrested accused were part of an interstate and cross-border network involving mule bank accounts, illegal SIM activation and social media authentication using multiple devices, police said.

“Financial analysis and technical surveillance showed that more than Rs 50 crore was linked to at least 66 complaints registered against the accused on the National Cyber-crime Reporting Portal,” the officer said, adding, two members of the syndicate are still absconding.

Police said the arrested accused played different roles, including procurement of mule accounts, handling debit cards, illegal SIM activation, and routing of proceeds of crime.

Several of them have a cyber fraud history, indicating a well-established criminal ecosystem, they said.

Woman who ‘instigated’ Mukherjee Nagar stabbing nabbed with 3 Others

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Police has arrested three men and a woman, and detained a juvenile, in connection with a murder by stabbing in Mukherjee Nagar, an officer said on Tuesday. A man was stabbed in the north Delhi area during a fight on Monday. He succumbed at the LNJP Hospital.

According to police, Aman, the victim, was having food at a restaurant with his brother when a woman, accompanied by four to five men, and allegedly drunk, started a quarrel with them.

The group allegedly tried to confine the brothers inside the restaurant, but they



managed to escape. However, they caught Aman near the restaurant, and he was stabbed in the abdomen.

According to the complaint filed by Aman's 22-year-old younger brother, Nitin, the woman allegedly instigated the attackers, police said.

Acting on local intelligence, police made raids and arrested Ramesh, 26, Gau-

tam, 23, and Satyam, 25, all residents of Mukherjee Nagar. The woman, a 26-year-old, was also nabbed, and a juvenile was apprehended.

During interrogation, the accused confessed to their involvement in Aman's murder and revealed the names of their other associates, including one Mohit.

A hunt is on to nab the rest of the accused, police said.

SIX HELD AT DELHI AIRPORT FOR SMUGGLING NARCOTICS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

CUSTOMS officials at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport here have arrested six men for smuggling into the country narcotics worth Rs 48 crore, an official statement issued on Tuesday said. The accused were intercepted after their arrival from Bangkok on December 11. Upon detailed examination of their baggage, 24 polythene pouches concealed in two grey,

one green, and one teal-coloured trolley bags were recovered.

“The pouches contained green-coloured narcotic substance suspected to be ganja/marijuana, weighing 48.016 kg (net weight),” said the statement issued by the customs.

“Preliminary diagnostic testing indicated the substance to be ganja/marijuana,” it added.

The approximate market value of the seized contraband is Rs 48.01 crore, it said, adding that all the accused persons were arrested.

126 flights cancelled as low visibility disrupts flight ops at Delhi airport



HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

LOW visibility conditions disrupted flight operations at Delhi airport on Tuesday, leading to widespread cancellations, a Delhi International Airport Ltd official said.

So far, 49 departures and 77 arrivals have been cancelled due to poor visibility, he added.

At the same time, crisis-hit IndiGo said it cancelled 110 flights across its network due to disruptions caused by bad weather at Delhi airport.

“Due to low visibility, 49 departures and 77 arrivals have been cancelled so far

at Delhi airport,” the official said. As winter sets in, early mornings across northern India can bring fog that may occasionally slow down flight movements, IndiGo said in a post on X.

The airline also said it cancelled 110 flights on Tuesday due to disruptions caused by bad weather at the Delhi airport.

“Our teams are well prepared and closely monitoring weather conditions”, IndiGo said, adding that wherever possible, “we are making thoughtful adjustments on the ground to reduce inconvenience and ensure any waiting time is as comfortable as possible”.

Colder nights return to Kashmir as mercury dips below freezing point

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR

AFTER a brief respite, Kashmir witnessed a sharp drop in night temperatures, with minimum readings settling below the freezing point across most parts of the valley, officials said on Tuesday.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius, nearly four degrees down from the Monday night's 1.9 degrees Celsius, they said.

A thick layer of fog engulfed the city and most other parts of the valley, particularly areas around water bodies, during the early hours, the Meteorological Department said.

Qazigund in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at minus 1.8 degrees Celsius. Kokernag in south Kashmir registered a minimum of minus 0.6 degrees Celsius.



In Gulmarg, the minimum temperature settled above the freezing point at 0.5 degrees Celsius, the weather office said. The famous ski resort was the only place in the Kashmir valley where night temperatures remained above freezing.

Pahalgam, one of the base camps for the Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, logged a low of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius.

Konibal and Pulwama towns in south Kashmir were the coldest recorded places in Jammu and Kashmir, registering minimum temperatures of minus 4.0 degrees Celsius. Kashmir is inching

towards ‘Chillai Kalan’ -- the 40-day harshest winter period beginning on December 21 -- when the chances of snowfall are highest and temperatures drop sharply.

So far this winter, the valley has not witnessed any major wet spell. The prevailing dry weather has led to a rise in ailments such as cough and common cold.

The weather is likely to remain partly cloudy till December 18, after which, there is a possibility of light rain or snow at scattered places across the valley till December 21, coinciding with the onset of ‘Chillai Kalan’, the Met office said.

Chidambaram slams use of Hindi words in bills’ names

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader P Chidambaram has slammed the “increasing practice” of the government using Hindi words in the titles of the bills and said the change is an “affront” to the non-Hindi-speaking people.

Chidambaram said the non-Hindi-speaking people cannot identify a Bill/Act with titles that are in Hindi words written in English letters, and they cannot pronounce them.

“I am opposed to the increasing practice of the government using Hindi words written in English letters in the title of the Bills to be introduced in Parliament,” the former Union minister said late Monday night.

Hitherto, the practice was to write the title of the Bill in English words in the English version and in Hindi words in the Hindi version of the Bill,



Chidambaram said.

“When no one pointed out any difficulty in the 75 year practice, why should government make a change?” he said.

“This change is an affront to non-Hindi speaking people and to States that have an official language other than Hindi,” the Congress leader said.

Successive governments have reiterated the promise that English will remain an Associate Official Language, Chidambaram said.

“I fear that promise is in danger of being broken,” the Congress MP said. --PTI

Her body was found lying on the bed inside the room, police said.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that Anjali had allegedly hanged herself using a piece of cloth tied to the ceiling fan. It is suspected that the noose eventually might have loosened or torn off, resulting in her being found lying on the bed.

Family members informed the police that Anjali was a final-year student of a librarian science course from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). About a week ago, her final-year examination results were declared, and she had failed, following which she had been under depression, they said.

The family has not raised any allegation of foul play, police said, adding that no suicide note or external injury marks were found on the body during the initial inspection.

Inquest proceedings have been initiated in the matter as per the law. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of death, and further investigation is underway, police added.

DDA launches Awaas Yojana for govt staff, offers 25% discount

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Development Authority has announced the launch of the DDA Karmayogi Awaas Yojana 2025, a special housing scheme for serving and retired employees of the Central and state governments, public sector undertakings, public sector banks, local bodies, autonomous bodies and government universities.

Under the scheme, 1,168 newly constructed flats of

Under the scheme, 1,168 newly constructed flats of one, two and three BHK categories are being offered for sale in Pocket-9, Sector A1 to A4 in Narela on a first-come-first-serve basis

one, two and three BHK categories are being offered for sale in Pocket-9, Sector A1 to A4 in Narela on a first-come-first-serve basis. A key feature of the scheme is a flat 25 per cent discount



across all categories, making the prices significantly lower than the original disposal cost, according to a circular

released on Friday.

After the discount, the disposal price excluding maintenance charges ranges

from Rs 34.03 lakh to Rs 34.28 lakh for 1 BHK flats, Rs 79.81 lakh to Rs 88.16 lakh for 2 BHK flats, and Rs 114.57 lakh to Rs 127.11 lakh for 3 BHK flats, depending on the plinth area.

The plinth area, including common areas and balconies, ranges from 61.17 to 61.65 square metres for 1 BHK, 126.53 to 140.56 square metres for 2 BHK, and 163.76 to 183.36 square metres for 3 BHK flats.

Parking space is also available, measuring 5.76 square

metres for 1 BHK, 11.52 square metres for 2 BHK and 23.04 square metres for 3 BHK units, it stated.

The department said maintenance charges are to be paid upfront for one year at the time of issue of demand letters. The corpus fund has been fixed at Rs 75,000 for 1 BHK, Rs 1.50 lakh for 2 BHK and Rs 2.50 lakh for 3 BHK flats.

The monthly maintenance charge has been set at Rs 1.50 per square foot for 1 BHK, Rs 2 per square foot

for 2 BHK and Rs 2.50 per square foot for 3 BHK flats. GST will not be levied on maintenance charges, it said.

The authority said the flats are newly built and located in a planned residential area with improving connectivity.

The housing pocket is close to Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) and GT Karnal Road, and is part of the approved Rithala-Narela-Kundli Metro corridor, which is expected to improve access to central Delhi

and adjoining areas.

The scheme brochure will be available on December 19 and registrations will open the same day on DDA's Awaas Portal. Booking will commence on January 14, 2026, while the scheme will close on March 31, 2026, the circular read.

The one-time registration fee is Rs 2,500, while the booking amount has been fixed at Rs 50,000 for 1 BHK, Rs 4 lakh for 2 BHK and Rs 10 lakh for 3 BHK flats, according to the DDA.

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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 Vadrta 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)

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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 Soukha 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>



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 the 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.”

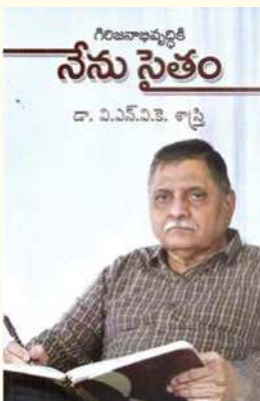
Nothing was wrong, they explained. They had only come to see and thank the officer who had visited their village.

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)

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



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

that Andhra Pradesh contributes 29 per cent to the country's 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 coalition 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.

Sarpanch Chandu Naik gets blessings from KTR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

UNDER the leadership of former MLA Anjaiah Yadav, the newly elected sarpanch candidates from the local body elections met BRS working president KT Rama Rao at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

On this occasion, Upparigadda village sarpanch from Farooqnagar mandal, Chandu Naik, along with deputy sarpanch Eerla Srilatha, was felicitated by KTR with a shawl.

Speaking to the newly elected sarpanch Chandu Naik, KTR advised him to always remain among the people and set an example in village development. He encouraged him to work tirelessly for the progress of the village, to stay connected with the villagers, understand their problems, and strive to resolve them.



KTR further suggested that as sarpanch, Chandu Naik should extend his full cooperation and support for the development of Upparigadda, transforming it into a model village.

The programme was attended by sarpanches, deputy sarpanches, and other leaders from various villages in the constituency.

Age limit for Child Care leave for govt employees removed

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

Telangana moves SC against AP's Polavaram-Nallamala Link Project

Alleges unilateral diversion of Godavari floodwaters without clearances

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN a fresh intensified water dispute between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the Telangana government filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar Link Project (PNLP), formerly known as the Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project (PBLP) on Tuesday.

The writ petition, filed under Article 32 of the Constitution, seeks a mandamus to restrain Andhra Pradesh from proceeding with the project, which aims to divert surplus floodwaters from the Godavari River to the Krishna and Gundlakamma basins.

The petition accuses Andhra Pradesh of unilaterally advancing the project in violation of the Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT) Award of 1980, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act (APRA) of 2014, and Central Water Commission (CWC) guidelines. It specifically requests an interim stay on ongoing expansion works of the Polavaram project's Right Main Canal (RMC) and a recent e-procurement tender for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR), floated on November 21 and modified on November 24.

The PNLP, estimated at around Rs 58,000 crore, is designed to divert 2 TMC of water per day from the under-construction Polavaram dam on the Godavari.

The project comprises three segments: first, enhancing the



capacity of the Polavaram RMC from 17,500 cusecs to over 35,000 cusecs or building a parallel canal to feed into the Krishna River; second, constructing the Bol-lapalli reservoir with a potential storage capacity of up to 400 TMC; and third, lifting water through tunnels in the Nallamala hill range to the Nallamala Sagar reservoir in Prakasam district. It will benefit the Rayalaseema and south coastal regions in Andhra Pradesh.

Telangana contends that the project relies on "flood waters" not apportioned by the GWDT, which allocated dependable flows but left surplus waters undistributed. The petition highlights that Andhra Pradesh has proceeded despite lacking in-principle clearance for the Pre-Feasibility Report (PFR), submitted to the CWC in May 2025 and still under scrutiny.

Key concerns raised include inter-state implications, potential submergence risks in Telangana

due to Polavaram backwaters, and environmental violations.

The petition notes that the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change returned the proposal in June 2025, directing Andhra Pradesh to first resolve interstate issues with the CWC. Objections have also come from Karnataka and Maharashtra, with the former claiming compensation for Krishna basin diversions and the latter seeking clarity on flood-based project guidelines.

Despite these, Andhra Pradesh formed a Special Purpose Vehicle, Jala Harathi Corporation, in April 2025 for execution and issued tenders for the DPR even as the PFR appraisal continues.

The CWC, in its letter on December 4, reportedly directed Andhra Pradesh not to proceed with DPR preparation without clearance, yet bids were received, and an award is imminent, according to the petition.

Flamingo Fest to light up Pulicat on Jan 10-11

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 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.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public at large that M/s Tathastu Realty Private Limited bearing CIN U70109HR2022PTC123262 having its registered office at Ground Floor, Tower-A, Vatika Towers, Golf Course Road, Sector-54, Gurgaon, Haryana, India, 122011 ("Company") is investigating the right, title and interest in relation to the property, as more particularly described in Schedule I hereto along with all the rights, title, interests, benefit, easementary rights and structures lying constructed thereon or appurtenant thereto, owned by the Company ("said Property").

Whereas the Company has represented that, certain previous title documents in respect of the said Property has been lost/ misplaced/ not available with the Company list of which are described in Schedule II ("Lost / Misplaced Documents").

All persons and/or entities, other than Company, claiming or asserting to have any rights, titles, possession, benefit, interest or an interest in the said Property or any part thereof of any nature, whatsoever and/ or any claim, whatsoever by way of, under, or in the nature of sale, memorandum of understanding, gift, lease, tenancy, license, inheritance, transfer, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, lien, trust, succession, possession, easement, bequeath, inheritance, share, assignment, attachment right of way, lis-pendens, reservation, contracts, agreement, partnership, family arrangement, settlement, maintenance, development rights, decree or order or judgment of any Court of Law, development rights, consumption or any liability, commitment or demand or otherwise howsoever and/ or having any objection(s) of any manner, whatsoever regarding the title and possessory rights of the Company, on the basis of Lost / Misplaced Documents, or any nature whatsoever, are hereby required to make the same known in writing, along with along with true copies of all documentary evidences to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication hereof, failing which, it will be presumed that no one has any right, title, claim or interest in the Property or any part thereof adverse to that of Company and all claims and demands shall be treated as abandoned, surrendered, relinquished, released, completely waived and not enforceable/binding on our Client and/or an impediment to the title of the Company for all intents and purposes or impact the proposed transaction in any manner and the title of the Company shall be treated as clear and marketable without any further reference.

Schedule-I

210 Unsold Units (2- Residential, 208 Commercial Units) in TATHASTU 35 developed on Land Admeasuring 9.90625 Acres situated in the revenue estate of Villages Mohammadpur Gujar and Sohna, Sector 35, Sohna, District Gurugram, Haryana.

Schedule II ("Lost / Misplaced Documents")

Sr. No	Documents
1.	Original Sale Deed bearing Document No. 745 registered on 19/06/1998 executed by Ms. Kamlesh in favour of Mr. Subhash Chand & Ms. Murti Devi with respect to land admeasuring 6 Kanal 16 Marla comprised in Mustatil No. 29, Killa No. 5(5-12), Mustatil No. 11, Killa No. 25(1-4) situated in the revenue estate of Village Sohna, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana.
2.	Original Release Deed dated 07/05/2010 executed by Mr. Bhim Singh s/o Ram Chander (1/20 share), Ms. Sarla widow of Ram Chander (3/4 share) in favour of Mr. Rohtash & Mr. Mukesh sons of Uday Chand (1/5 share), Mr. Nareesh Kumar & Mr. Ramesh Kumar sons of Ashok (1/5 share), Mr. Ajay & Mr. Vijay sons of Mr. Subhash (1/5 share) and Mr. Sube Singh, Mr. Kanwarbhan & Mr. Lal Chand sons of Dayaram (1/5 share) with respect to land admeasuring 21 Kanal 19 Marla being 4/5 share of land admeasuring 27 Kanal 9 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 66, Khata No. 81, Mustatil No. 23, Killa No. 10(8-0), 22(7-16), Mustatil No. 24, Killa No. 1(6-9), 2(4-12), 9(0-12) situated in the revenue estate of Village Mohammadpur Gujar, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.686, Book No. 1, Volume No. 1907 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 07/05/2010.
3.	Original Release Deed dated 07/05/2010 executed by Mr. Rohtash s/o Uday Chand, Mr. Ashok Kumar, Mr. Subhash Chand sons of Harnad (3/20 share), Mr. Bhim Singh s/o Ram Chander, Ms. Sarla widow of Ramchander (1/20 share) in favour of Mr. Sube Singh, Mr. Kanwarbhan & Mr. Lal Chand all sons of Dayaram with respect to land admeasuring 4 Kanal 16 Marla being 1/5 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 0 Marla comprised in Khewat/Khata No. 67/82, Mustatil No.23, Killa No. 11(8-0), 20(8-0), 21(8-0) situated in the revenue estate of Village Mohammadpur Gujar, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.690, Book No. 1, Volume No. 1907 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 07/05/2010.
4.	Original Transfer Deed dated 12/04/2016 executed by Ms. Murti Devi w/o Dayaram in favour of Mr. Sube Singh, Mr. Kanwarbhan, Mr. Lal Chand sons of Dayaram with respect to land admeasuring 1 Kanal 4 Marla 6 Sarsai being 1/20 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 13 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 81, Khatoni No. 92, Mustatil No. 23, Killa No. 12(7-6), 13(4-10), 18(3-8), 19(8-0), 23(0-13), 26(0-16) situated in the revenue estate of Village Mohammadpur Gujar, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.152, Book No. 1, Volume No. 2099 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 12/04/2016.
5.	Original Transfer Deed dated 12/04/2016 (within blood relation) executed by Ms. Murti Devi in favour of Mr. Sube Singh, Mr. Kanwarbhan, Mr. Lal Chand sons of Dayaram with respect to land admeasuring 2 Kanal 16 Marla being 1/5 share of land comprised in comprised in Khewat No. 327, Khatoni No. 354, Mustatil No. 29, Killa No. 5(5-12), and land admeasuring 1 Kanal 15 Marla being 35/93 share of land admeasuring 4 Kanal 13 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 328, Khatoni No. 355, Mustatil No. 11, Killa No. 25(4-13), and land admeasuring 1 Kanal 5 Marla being 1/3 share of land admeasuring 3 Kanal 15 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 329, Khatoni No. 356, Mustatil No. 11, Killa No. 15(0-19), 16(2-16), and land admeasuring 0 Kanal 13 Marla being 1/5 share of land admeasuring 1 Kanal 6 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 612, Khatoni No. 652, Mustatil No. 28, Killa No. 1/(1-6) [total land admeasuring 6 Kanal 9 Marla] situated in the revenue estate of Village Sohna, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.154, Book No. 1, Volume No. 2099 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 12/04/2016.
6.	Original Transfer Deed dated 03/04/2015 executed by Ms. Sunita D/o Uday Chand in favour of Mr. Chirag Yadav s/o Vipin Kumar Yadav with respect to land admeasuring 1 Kanal 4 Marla being 24/480 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 0 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 74, Khatoni No. 89, Mustatil No.23, Killa No. 11(8-0), 20(8-0), 21(8-0), and land admeasuring 1 Kanal 0 Marla being 24/493 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 13 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 81, Khatoni No. 92, Mustatil No. 23, Killa No. 12(7-6), 13(4-10), 18(3-8), 19(8-0), 23(0-13), 26(0-16) [Total land admeasuring 2 Kanal 4 Marla] situated in the revenue estate of Village Mohammadpur Gujar, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.22, Book No. 1, Volume No.2093 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 03/04/2015.
7.	Original Transfer Deed dated 12/04/2016 executed by Mr. Ashok Kumar s/o Harnad in favour of Mr. Nareesh Yadav, Mr. Ramesh Yadav sons of Ashok Kumar with respect to land admeasuring 4 Kanal 16 Marla being 1/5 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 0 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 80, Khatoni No. 91, Mustatil No.23, Killa No. 11(8-0), 20(8-0), 21(8-0), and land admeasuring 4 Kanal 18 Marla 6 Sarsai being 1/5 share of land admeasuring 24 Kanal 13 Marla comprised in Khewat No. 81, Khatoni No. 92, Mustatil No. 23, Killa No. 12(7-6), 13(4-10), 18(3-8), 19(8-0), 23(0-13), 26(0-16) [Total land admeasuring 9 Kanal 14 Marla 6 Sarsai] situated in the revenue estate of Village Mohammadpur Gujar, Tehsil Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana. The said Deed is duly registered as Document No.150, Book No. 1, Volume No. 2099 at registered at the Off ce of Sub-Registrar, Sohna on 12/04/2016.

Authorised Signatory
Tathastu Realty Pvt. Ltd.

Place: Gurugram
Date: 15/12/2025

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.

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 Shrinete 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 political witch hunt, propaganda, reputation assassination and campaign which stands defeated today," Shrinete 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)

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.

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".

Bondi beach attack: 3 Indian students among injured

NEW DELHI

THREE Indian students were among 40 people injured in the terrorist attack on Sydney's Bondi Beach in Australia, according to a media report on Tuesday.

Two out of these three students are believed to be receiving treatment in the hospital. The Australia Today news portal reported.

The names of the Indian students injured during Sunday's attack have not been disclosed yet.

The Indian students sustained injuries during the shooting, and their exact condition has not been formally confirmed yet, it said.



Naveed Akram, 24, and his father, 50, opened fire on a gathering during the Jewish festival Hanukkah by the Sea celebration.

At least 15 people were killed in the attack, including a 10-year-old child. Five of the injured remain in critical condition, while two injured police officers are in serious but stable condition, it added.

New South Wales Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon said the investigation is expanding as new information emerges, including international travel by the alleged attackers and the discovery of extremist material, the report said. (PTI)



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.



In line with the national vision of 'Sahakar se Samridhhi' to deepen and expand the cooperative movement, Ladakh has adopted the Model Bye-Laws for PACS, enabling them to undertake oaver 25 diversified business activities while enhancing transparency, accountability, and governance -**Amit Shah**, Union Cooperation Minister

BIZ BRIEFS

Film event in Hyderabad

The Niri9 International Film Festival is set to return with its third edition in Hyderabad on January 10 and 11, a moment of cultural convergence between the North Eastern region and Telangana. This year, the festival received 176 film entries across categories, including 40 feature films, 65 short films, 56 shorter films, and 15 documentaries. Dr Junmoni Devi Khaund, Festival Director, said: "This event is not just a festival; it's a movement of stories, cultures, and connections."

Volvo Car's initiative

Volvo Car India announced an expansion of its sustainability-driven Reverse Project with the launch of a new plantation initiative at Matri Van along the Gurugram - Faridabad Highway. Under its CSR initiative for, the company will support the plantation of over 20,000 native trees over 20 acres of Aravalli land, as part of the Community Barren Land Transformation Project, led by SankalpTaru Foundation in partnership with the Haryana Forest Department.

ETS hosts event in Hyd

ETS, the global leader in educational assessment and creator of the TOEFL iBT test, hosted a TOEFL Experience Days event in Hyderabad on December 16. The event offered a look at the enhanced TOEFL iBT launching on January 21. Sidnei Rodrigues de Souza, Executive Director, said: "TOEFL is evolving to better reflect how students communicate in real academic settings. We are updating the test content and structure, introducing AI-powered scoring for greater precision."

Ujjivan SFB's Ivory program

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched Ivory, a program designed for India's mass affluent segment. The offering integrates digital banking with curated experiences, including, entertainment, and dining benefits. Hitendra Jha, Head-Retail Liabilities, Ujjivan SFB, said: "Today's emerging mass affluent segment continues to face barriers in accessing quality banking services. Many encounter high balance requirements, inconsistent service delivery, and generic reward programs that do not align with their lifestyles."

NSE partners with HCLTech

NSE Academy Ltd., (NAL), a subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd., has partnered with HCLTech, to deliver a series of joint certificate programs in technology and finance, aimed at equipping students and professionals with future-ready skills in BFSI and fintech across India and the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) region. This partnership will enable organizations and universities to nurture a future-ready workforce by providing access to industry-leading, ready-to-deploy programs.

Rupee falls 23 paise to settle at fresh record low of 91.01/\$

The rupee has fallen from 90 a dollar to 91 in the last 10 trading sessions

MUMBAI

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 developments related to the India-US trade agreement.

During the session, the local unit lost 36 paise from its previous close against the greenback to hit its lowest-ever level of 91.14, but regained some ground later in the day. Even a weaker greenback and a sharp decline in global crude oil prices could not prevent the slide in the local unit, forex traders said.

The rupee has fallen from 90 a dollar to 91 in the last 10 trading sessions. The unit has slipped 1 per cent against the greenback in the past five sessions alone.

The issue was brought up in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, and Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said, "During the current



financial year, the depreciation of the Rupee has been influenced by the increase in trade deficit and likely prospects arising from the ongoing developments in India's trade agreement with the US, amid relatively weak support from the capital account."

"The depreciation of currency is likely to enhance export competitiveness, which in turn impacts the economy positively. On the other hand, depreciation may raise the prices of imported goods. However, the overall impact of exchange rate depreciation on domestic prices depends on the extent of the pass-through of international

commodity prices to the domestic market," he said.

Citing data, Chaudhary said that this year the rupee opened at 90.87 against the greenback and traded in the range of 90.76 to 91.14 before settling at 91.01 (provisional), down 23 paise from its previous close.

On Monday, the local unit settled at 90.78 against the US dollar, registering a loss of 29 paise from its previous close. "Rupee made a new lifetime low as dollar buying continued with news that (US President) Donald Trump has not agreed to the new trade proposals from India.

"The value of the INR is market-determined, with no target or specific level or band. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regularly monitors the foreign exchange market and intervenes in situations of excess volatility. Further, the RBI monitors key developments across the globe which may have an impact on USD-rupee exchange rate," the minister said.

According to forex traders, the rupee might even cross the 92 per dollar-mark this month. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.87 against the greenback and traded in the range of 90.76 to 91.14 before settling at 91.01 (provisional), down 23 paise from its previous close.

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Gold snaps 4-day record rally, drops ₹1,700

NEW DELHI: Snapping the four-day record rally, gold prices declined by Rs 1,700 to Rs 1,35,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday as investors booked profits amid weak global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had surged by Rs 4,000 to touch an all-time high of Rs 1,37,600 per 10 grams on Monday. The metal rose by Rs 6,000 over the previous four days, trading at record highs. "Gold prices witnessed profit booking and remained volatile, with the yellow metal slipping towards the \$ 4,275 level in global markets and staying under pressure," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. Echoing sentiments, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said, "Domestic gold prices also softened, curtailing a four-day advance. These losses were, however, notably mitigated by the persistent weakness in the Indian Rupee which quoted at a record low level".

In the local bullion markets, silver prices also depreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,98,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes).

Better regulatory oversight, ease of compliance via reforms: FM

Says FDI limit in insurance sector was increased from 26% to 49% in 2015, 74% in 2021 and now to 100%

NEW DELHI: FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the insurance reforms brought in through a bill in Parliament will grant greater access to insurance for the people, have better regulatory oversight and ensure ease of compliance. Moving the "The Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025" for consideration of the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the draft legislation was aimed at bringing transparency, ease of compliance mandates and increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector.

The minister said that the FDI limit in the insurance sector was increased from 26 per cent to 49 per cent in 2015, 74 per cent in 2021 and now proposed to 100 per cent.

"These have brought in a greater push for the insurance sector. The number of insurers has risen from 53 in 2014 to 74 now," Sitharaman said. She said insurance penetration has improved from 3.3 per cent in 2014-15 to 3.8 per cent now and insurance density or the average insurance premium paid per



person in a year has jumped from \$55 in 2014 to \$97 now.

The minister said the total insurance premium paid has risen from Rs 4.15 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 11.93 lakh crore and assets under management increased from Rs 24.2 lakh crore to Rs 74.4 lakh crore. "We are now looking for greater penetration, better regulatory oversight, easier compliance and more FDI," Sitharaman said. The minister said over the year, an ecosystem has developed in the country for providing greater access for people to insurance.

Sitharaman said that various government schemes such as the PM Fasal Bima Yojana and the Jana Arogya Yojana have brought poor people under the insurance umbrella, a move that has helped immensely during the Covid pandemic.

Vivo's unveils Switch-off campaign

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

VIVO India has launched the seventh edition of its #SwitchOff campaign, it also unveiled a Digital Video Commercial which aims to bring the message to the emotional centre of every Indian home- the dining table. According to the 2025 Switch Off Study, dinner is the strongest daily bonding moment, with 72 per cent of children spending the most time with parents at dinner and 91 per cent saying conversations improve when phones are set aside.

GeetajChannana, Head-Corporate Strategy, Vivo India, said: "Every family remembers a time when dinner was the happiest pause in the day, a moment where conversations flowed without interruption and everyone felt heard. Today, those moments disappear quietly, not because we don't care, but because our attention is constantly pulled away."

Channanaadded: "The Switch Off campaign was created to remind people that meaningful relationships deserve undivided attention."

GDP growth set to accelerate to 7.5% in FY27: Report

MUMBAI

INDIA'S economic growth is expected to pick up pace and remain strong in the coming years, with GDP likely to expand at 7.5 per cent in FY27, even as inflation stays under control, according to Axis Bank's Economic Outlook 2026 on Tuesday.

The report, authored by Neelkanth Mishra, Chief Economist at Axis Bank and Head of Global Research at Axis Capital, says India can grow faster than its long-term trend without triggering inflationary pressures.

This is because the economy still has enough unused capacity, or slack, which allows growth to rise smoothly. Axis Bank expects India to grow faster than most global peers and even above market expectations, making it the world's fastest-growing large economy.

The strong outlook is supported by easing pressure from government finances, lower borrowing costs, and supportive monetary policy.

The report also highlights that ongoing structural reforms and regulatory easing will help sustain growth over



the medium term.

A key driver of this growth will be a fresh rise in investment activity. With company balance sheets in better shape, the cost of capital remaining low, and factories running at high capacity, businesses are likely to increase capital expenditure in FY27. This new investment cycle is expected to further strengthen economic momentum.

The bank's economists also see steady gains in productivity and a revival in capital formation, which together support a long-term trend growth rate of around 7 per cent.

Even with growth moving above this trend, inflation is expected to remain well behaved.

Axis Bank forecasts headline inflation at around 4 per cent in FY27. While food prices may see some rebound, underlying price pressures remain muted.

Quintrans garners \$750K in pre-seed funding round

NEW DELHI

CAPITAL-A, a specialist venture capital fund for manufacturing and deep tech, has led a \$750,000 'pre-seed' round in a deep tech engineering startup, Quintrans. The round also saw participation from Sumeet Kabra of RR Global, SanchiConnect, AIC-Pinnacle and other strategic partners, alongside ecosystem support from existing partner IIMA Ventures. "Capital-A, India's specialist venture capital fund for manufacturing and deep tech, has led a \$750,000 pre-seed round in Quintrans, a deep tech engineering startup developing India-built direct-drive linear motion systems for industrial automation, robotics and equipment manufacturing," according to a release. An industry terminology used by founders, investors and venture capitalists (VCs), pre-seed typically refers to funding stage before the seed round, when a company is focused on the prototype, and Proof of Concept (PoC).

SkyWalker ortho robotic system launched at Arete Hospitals

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

ARETE Hospitals, Hyderabad, has become the first medical institution in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to introduce the SkyWalker Orthopedic Robotic System in collaboration with US headquartered MicroPort Orthopedics Inc., for knee replacement surgery, marking a significant milestone in the region's healthcare landscape.

"Arete Hospitals has always been committed to integrating innovations that make a real difference for our patients," said Dr Pavan Kumar Reddy, Medical Director & HOD- Critical Care, Arete Hospitals. "The launch of this system is another milestone in our pursuit of clinical excellence at Arete Hospitals, and we are proud to be the first to bring this technology to the twin states. Arete Hospitals is built on the premise of positivity, efficiency & proficiency and advanced medical technology adoption is at our core" added Dr Reddy.

Dr Prabhat Reddy Lakireddi, Director - Orthopaedics Arthroscopy, Sports

Injuries, Robotic & Joint Replacement Surgery, Arete Hospitals, Hyderabad, said, "The system gives us real-time data for joint line reconstruction and ligament balancing, while the NitrX Evolution implant provides remarkable stability and function. We've seen smoother recoveries, better range of motion, and excellent functional outcomes in our initial cases with SkyWalker".

The system is designed to work with the NitrX Evolution implant, enabling accuracy and sub-millimeter precision in knee joint alignment. This combination provides personalised outcomes, faster recovery, and longevity. Dr Mukesh Parmar, Senior Director and General Manager, South Asia, MicroPort Orthopedics, said, "The choice of implant is as critical as the robotic platform itself, because it stays with the patient for life. The new implant has shown excellent clinical outcomes, and when paired with the system, it creates a powerful combination that empowers surgeons and delivers customised and consistently favourable patient outcomes."

ITC gets nod to acquire Birla's Century pulp paper biz

NEW DELHI: Fair trade regulator CCI on Tuesday cleared conglomerate ITC Ltd's proposal to acquire the pulp and paper business of Aditya Birla Real Estate Ltd (ABREL) for Rs 3,498 crore. The development came after ABREL in March this year announced that its board has approved the execution of the business transfer agreement for the divestment of the pulp and paper undertaking situated in Lalkuan, Uttarakhand, by way of a slump sale to ITC. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) said it has approved the proposed deal. "Commission approves acquisition of paper and pulp manufacturing business of Aditya Birla Real Estate Limited by ITC Limited," the regulator said in a post on X.

Established in 1984 at Lalkuan (Nainital, Uttarakhand), pulp and paper undertaking Century Pulp and Paper (CPP) of ABREL is a well-established player in the Indian paper industry with an installed capacity of 4.8 lakh metric tonnes per annum. In March, ABREL said, "The transfer of the business will be for a lump-sum cash consideration of Rs 3,498 crore, to be paid by ITC to ABREL."

India's long-term outlook remains positive, indices to remain near all-time high in 2025

Valuations are stretched across large parts of the market, smaller stocks are under pressure, and investors are becoming increasingly selective about where they deploy capital

NEW DELHI: India's long-term outlook remains firmly positive, underpinned by favourable demographics, policy continuity, rapid urbanisation and sustained productivity gains, a report said on Tuesday. As 2025 draws to a close, Indian equity markets are sending mixed signals. Benchmark indices remain close to record highs, but beneath the surface, the picture is far more nuanced.

Smallcase Managers, in its report, said that valuations are stretched across large parts of the market, smaller stocks are under pressure, and investors are becoming increasingly selective about where they deploy capital. The managers noted that as US growth moderates and the Federal Reserve eventually pivots, interest-rate differentials should increasingly favour Emerging Markets, with India standing out as the most attractive destination.

Dhiren Shah, smallcase manager, Co-Founder, Kamayakya, said: "We re-



main bullish on Indian equities in 2026, with a clear focus on stock selection rather than index levels. While public capex has driven growth so far, the next phase will come from a revival in private capex as corporate balance sheets strengthen and capacity utilisation rises, setting up the next leg of India's structural growth."

India's macro backdrop remains constructive, aided by moderating inflation, the beginning of a rate-cut cycle and continued policy focus on manufacturing, infrastructure and exports. The report expects the economy to

grow at a steady 6-7 per cent in real terms, with inflation anchored closer to 4 per cent, implying a phase of more stable, though slightly lower, nominal growth compared to the previous decade.

"Tariff-related noise from the US, particularly around a potential Trump return, is more of a sentiment and liquidity risk for India than a structural one. It can tighten global liquidity, lift volatility and lead to temporary FII outflows, but it does not change India's core growth story," said Vivek Sharma, smallcase manager, Investment Head, Estee Advisors.

Markets remain in red amid weak cues

Persistent foreign fund outflows, a weak rupee and sluggish global market trends dented investor sentiment

NEGATIVE MOMENTUM

- BSE Sensex fell 533.50pts (-0.63%) to 84,679.86
- NSE Nifty dropped 167.20pts (-0.64%) to 25,860.10
- FII's offloaded ₹1,468.32 cr; DII's bought ₹1,792.25 cr



MUMBAI: Benchmark Sensex tumbled 533.50 points and the broader Nifty declined to the 25,860 level on Tuesday as persistent foreign fund outflows, a weak rupee and sluggish global market trends dented investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 533.50 points or 0.63 per cent to settle at 84,679.86. During the day, it dived 592.75 points or 0.69 per cent to 84,620.61. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 167.20 points or 0.64 per cent to a week's low of 25,860.10.

Among Sensex firms, Axis Bank tanked the most by 5.03 per cent. Eternal, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance were also among the laggards. However, Titan, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

"Continued INR weakness to fresh record lows, driven by persistent FII outflows and subdued global sentiments, dragged domestic markets into negative territory," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments

Limited, said.

The rupee breached the record low level of 91 against the US dollar and hit 91.14 in intra-day trade due to foreign fund outflows on Tuesday. The BSE midcap gauge dropped 0.78 per cent, and the smallcap index dipped 0.69 per cent. Among sectoral indices, realty tanked 1.36 per cent, followed by bankex (1.03 per cent), commodities (0.91 per cent), IT (0.90 per cent), BSE Focused IT (0.86 per cent), financial services (0.83 per cent) and metal (0.82 per cent). Telecommu-

nication and consumer durables were the only gainers. A total of 2,519 stocks declined while 1,651 advanced and 158 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"A risk-averse mood dominated trading as the rupee's breach of the 91 level against the US dollar raised macro concerns, while weakness across Asian markets added to global uncertainty. This combination prompted investors to reduce risk, triggering broad-based profit-booking, particularly across realty, financial services, metal and IT names," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,468.32 crore on Monday, while domestic institutional investors (DII's) bought stocks worth Rs 1,792.25 crore, according to exchange data. On Monday, the Sensex dipped 54.30 points or 0.06 per cent to settle at 85,213.36. The Nifty edged lower by 19.65 points or 0.08 per cent to 26,027.30.

