



THE Hans India



WOMENIA
Ramayana Kalpavrkam returns with a grand celebration of dance, music and devotion
The fourth edition of 'Ramayana Kalpavrkam,' presented by Shankarananda Kalakshetra and Natyarambha, featured a galaxy of performances, talks.

EDIT
Bad governance leading to erosion of lakes and water bodies
Years back, every village and settlement had a lake—protected by a raised embankment, a katta. The lake was not merely a water body but a living institution. Its embankment was guarded by local deities.

BUSINESS
Mkts rise over 1% as value buying spurs rebound on D-St
Stock markets rebounded on Monday with benchmark Sensex jumping by 943 points on value buying in blue-chip oil & gas, banking and auto shares after facing a massive drubbing on the Budget day.

YOUNG HANS
Emerging roles in risk, finance, and technology: What students must learn today?
If you're a student or just starting your career, you may be wondering where the strongest long-term opportunities will be in the coming years.

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WINDOWS



'Trump spoke with Modi'

Claims Ambassador Gor
NEW DELHI: US President Donald Trump spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor wrote in a post on X, with a cryptic "stay tuned". This came soon after the US President posted a photograph of India Gate on Truth Social, with the message: "India's beautiful triumphal arch, our will be greatest of all (sic)." The cryptic posts come at a time when ties have chilled between the two countries, India and the US have been unable to sign any sort of agreement on trade, despite almost a year of negotiations. The two sides were close to a deal in July last year, which fell through. The negotiations have continued since, but there seems to be little movement for a conclusion at the moment. Also on Monday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar left for the US, where he is set to hold a bilateral meeting with his American counterpart Marco Rubio and meet other senior officials on Tuesday and Wednesday. He will also attend the critical minerals ministerial convened by the Secretary of State.

Sports Ministry keen to revive Formula 1 in India

NEW DELHI: The Sports Ministry is keen to bring Formula 1 back to the Buddh International Circuit soon and has already initiated dialogues with the track authorities to revive the race last held in India in 2013. According to a ministry source, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has already visited the circuit in Greater Noida and held talks with officials from Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, the state run body which took control of the facility from the owners – the now bankrupt Jaypee Group. Adani is in fray to buy the troubled Jaypee Group and once that happens, the whole process of trying to get the race back in India may gain momentum. What is clear for now is that the central government wants the high-profile sport to return to the country. The India round was held for three seasons from 2011 to 2013 before being dropped from the Formula 1 calendar due to tax and bureaucratic issues.



Iran President orders restart of nuclear talks with US



IRREGULAR by MANJUL
For the past 75 years, all budgets were life changing. They just didn't change mine

CM readies for war with Centre over 'zero funds'

Tells TG Cong MPs to raise Budget injustice issue in Parl

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE state government is bracing to launch a fight against the Union government for not announcing any new projects to Telangana and not allocating funds that are required in the Union Budget 2026-2027 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday.

Taking a serious note of Centre's 'deliberate' indifference towards the state, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy instructed CMO officials and Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao to prepare a report on the Centre's allocations and seek early clearance of the pending projects.

Officials said that the Chief Minister will hold a high-level meeting to deliberate on the Union Budget,



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will meet some Union ministers in New Delhi after the municipal elections and appraise them of the status of the pending projects in the state and seek allocation of Central funds

its impact on the state's development and the financial condition.

"The state government was hopeful that the Centre would give approvals to pending projects like including Metro Rail phase-2, Musi rejuvenation project and funds for development works," officials said. They

pointed out that a special team was analysing the budget and subsequently taking stock of the findings vis-a-vis challenges facing the state due to Centre's delay in approving projects.

The Chief Minister was planning to hold a meeting with Congress MPs from Telangana and instruct

them to raise the issue of injustice meted to the state in the budget session of the parliament. A memorandum would also be submitted to the union ministers demanding fair allocation of funds.

Sources said that Revanth Reddy would meet some union ministers in New Delhi after the municipal elections and appraise them of the status of the pending projects that is putting a heavy burden on the state exchequer.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is preparing a report in consultation with the state finance department to seek more funds from the Centre and complete the pending projects this year. The budget preparation meetings would also take into consideration the poor allocations to the state.

RAHUL GANDHI VS RAJNATH SINGH IN LS

Massive showdown over ex-army chief's memoir

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



A major political row erupted on Monday as Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi sought to quote in the Lok Sabha from an unpublished "memoir" of former army chief M M Naravane on the 2020 India-China conflict to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, evoking a backlash from BJP leaders who accused him of misleading the House and belittling the armed forces.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla disallowed Gandhi from raising the issue, but he did not relent and several Opposition leaders also rallied behind him. The House was adjourned twice and later for the day amid uproar as heated

exchanges took place between the treasury and Opposition benches.

While Gandhi said the government is "afraid" of a line that he wants to quote from the book and asserted that he would state that line in the Lower House, the BJP alleged that the Congress leader undermined the dignity of Parliament and hurt the morale of the Indian soldiers with his false accusations, in defiance of Speaker Om Birla's ruling.

The ruling party's leaders, including ministers, asked Gandhi to stop "speaking the language of anti-India elements".

Speaking with reporters, Gandhi claimed that he was not being allowed to quote from Naravane's unpublished book in the Lok Sabha because it indicts Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for "letting down" the army during the 2020 conflict with China. **Continued on Page 5**

PARL BEGINS DEBATE ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

REPORT:
P5

ICC mulls suspending Pak as T20 WC 'India boycott' row deepens



NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD

HOURS after the Pakistan government announced that the cricket team of the country will not play against India in the upcoming T20 World Cup, the ICC has warned to reconsider the stance,

making the board aware of the long-term implications they might face as a result of boycotting the high-profile fixture.

The ICC issued a warning that the boycott could lead to punitive sanctions, including its suspension.

Continued on Page 5

'Corrupt' KCR can't be father of Telangana: CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday launched a scathing attack on former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, strongly countering claims of some BRS leaders who project KCR as 'Father of Telangana state'.

Referring to certain leaders projecting themselves as freedom fighters, Revanth Reddy said it was inappropriate to compare them with Mahatma Gandhi. "When minor police notices are issued, they ask whether notices can be served on the 'Father of the Telan-



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy addressing the Ravi Narayana Reddy National Award function in Hyderabad on Monday

gana state'. Gandhiji sacrificed power and ultimately gave his life to the bullets of evil men. What sacrifices has this self-proclaimed father of the state made?" he asked.

Speaking after presenting Ravi Narayana Reddy

National Award to Justice B Sudharshan Reddy here, the Chief Minister said there was no Telangana activist who did not face hardships during the Bharat Rashtira Samithi regime.

Continued on Page 5

Air India grounds flight after fuel switch moves from 'run' to 'cutoff'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

AN Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner was grounded after its left fuel control switch failed to stay in the 'run' position twice and moved to 'cutoff' during engine startup, an airline spokesperson said.

The flight AI 132 came from Heathrow to Bengaluru on Monday.

"We are aware that one of our pilots has reported a possible defect on the fuel control switch of a Boeing 787-8 aircraft," the Air India



spokesperson said. "After receiving this initial information, we have grounded the said aircraft and are involving the OEM to get the pilot's concerns checked on a priority basis," the spokesperson said, referring to the original equipment manufacturer, ie, Boeing. **Continued on Page 5**

MUSK, TRUMP, PRINCE ANDREW & BILL CLINTON

Epstein files reveal hidden ties

NEW YORK

A massive tranche of three million pages of previously sealed Jeffrey Epstein documents has brought elite figures back into the spotlight. Some of the people named always maintained that they barely knew him; many others stated that they were repulsed by him from the start.

The latest files, including emails, letters and travel records, revealed Epstein



kept close ties with Hollywood stars, politicians, and industry leaders, even after he had been convicted of sex crimes in 2008.

Elon Musk, Howard Lutnick, and Richard Branson are among those now under scrutiny.

Continued on Page 5

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



HMDA rakes in Rs 1,000 cr from high-rise permits

103 HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS GIVEN PERMISSION IN 2025; TELLAPUR, KOKAPET HOTSPOTS

- ▶ Developers opting for high-rises due to unlimited FSI
- ▶ Adverse impact on infra, power, water resources likely

K CHANDRASHEKAR
HYDERABAD

THE high-rise buildings in the city are filling the coffers of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) as it has raked in over Rs 1,000 crore in the last one year thanks to the permissions being given liberally



to such constructions. Of late, the HMDA has even given permission to buildings with 50 to 70 floors. During the year 2025 alone, 103 high-rise buildings were

given permission compared to 64 in the year 2024. According to official data, the areas such as Tellapur, Gandipet, Narsingi, Kokapet and others which were small

List of recent high-rise permits		
Area	Height of skyscraper (meters)	No of Floors
Kokapet	206.75	59
Tellapur	158.4	50
Kollur	119.7	39
Kollur	134.35	37
Bachupally	108.06	35
Kokapet	105.3	23

villages until recently, have turned into hot destinations for high-rise buildings in the city. The top high-rise buildings for which permissions have been given, include a

skyscraper with 70 floors in Osman Nagar near Tellapur and a high-rise with 63 floors in Kokapet with height going over 215 meters (the project is in preliminary

approval stage and likely to get completed by 2029). According to a senior official in the Municipal Administration & Urban Development (MA&UD), the permissions for such high-rise buildings are given based on the width of the road, traffic assessment and other infrastructure. A senior official said that if the road width is more than hundred feet, the permission for a high-rise building is given. The official said that based on this phenomenon, permission for high-rise was given in Abids area.

Continued on Page 5



Revised IBC Bill in 2nd half of budget session: FM

NEW DELHI: The Union government is likely to bring in the revised Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) Amendment Bill when Parliament re-assembles for budget session after recess, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday, signalling progress on the long-pending overhaul of India's insolvency framework.

"The select committee has submitted its report, and it is expected to be taken up in Parliament in the latter half of the current session after the House reconvenes following the recess," Sitharaman told the media during a post-budget briefing.

The remarks indicate that the government is preparing to move ahead with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025, after factoring in the recommendations of the parliamentary panel.

CPI ditches Congress for Kothagudem civic elections

RULING PARTY STRIKES ALLIANCE WITH CPM

KOLISHETTY
VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

IN a significant twist in alliance politics during the ongoing municipal elections, the CPI has extended only an "empty hand" to the ruling Congress, while the Congress has instead forged an understanding with the CPM, particularly in the Kothagudem Municipal Corporation where the CPI is considered strong.

While the CPI and Congress are contesting the municipal polls in alliance in parts of North Telangana, including Mancherial Municipal Corporation, the tie-up has broken down in Kothagudem.

The two parties had allied in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections, in which the CPI won the lone Kothagudem Assembly seat.

However, the alliance did not continue during the sarpanch elections, where the CPI contested independently, winning 40 sarpanch posts and securing more votes than the Congress in the constituency.

In the Kothagudem Municipal Corporation, the

• CPI is firm on its stand to win the Kothagudem Municipal Corporation mayor's post at any cost



CPI demanded 30 of the 60 divisions, citing its organisational strength. The Congress offered 20 to 25 seats, a proposal the CPI rejected, arguing that it was unfair for Congress to dictate terms in an area where the CPI has a stronger base. CPI leaders maintained that, "as per dharma," they should decide seat-sharing in Kothagudem, alleging that the Congress was taking decisions even in areas where it is weak.

Amid the deadlock, the Congress entered into an alliance with the CPM in Kothagudem, allotting two divisions to the CPM and contesting the remaining 58 divisions. Apart from Con-

gress and CPI, the BRS is also in the fray. Meanwhile, the CPI is understood to have entered into a friendly arrangement with the TDP, which has considerable influence in the constituency, with several TDP leaders filing nominations.

The alliance impasse has also affected other municipalities. In Edulapuram municipality of Palair constituency, represented by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, the CPI fielded candidates in 15 wards, while the Congress contested all 32 wards. In Madhira municipality, the CPI fielded five candidates, with Congress contesting all wards

after alliance talks failed. A similar situation prevails in Sathupally municipality, where the CPI is contesting independently.

Meanwhile, both CPI and CPM have given a free hand to their local leadership to decide on alliances in the municipal elections, as was done during the sarpanch polls. With this autonomy, local leaders are engaging in tactical arrangements with Congress and the BRS based on local political equations.

Responding to the CPI's stance, Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the Congress party would always keep its doors open to like-minded parties.

He added that the party was willing to work with any political force that comes forward without making unreasonable demands, as it has done in the past.

A close associate of CPI State Secretary and party's lone MLA Kunamneni Sambasivarao said the party is contesting independently in Kothagudem. He clarified that the TDP is extending support to the CPI and that TDP candidates are also contesting in a few divisions in Kothagudem Municipal Corporation. It is learnt that the CPI is firm on its stand to win the Kothagudem Municipal Corporation mayor's post at any cost.

Give B-Forms only to winning horses, Revanth prods TG Congress

- The Chief Minister is confident of Congress winning with good majority
- Leaders told to work together, treat polls as a challenge
- Prepare local manifesto; engage with people on party initiatives
- In-charge Ministers to prevent rebels and ensure unity
- Nominated posts for leaders who don't get tickets

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD



of the Congress party.

While participating in a Zoom meeting on Monday, along with AICC in-charge general secretary Meenakshi Natarajan, TPCC chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud, in-charge Ministers, Political Advisory Committee (PAC) members and DCC presidents, CM Revanth Reddy said that all leaders should work together diligently, taking the municipal elections as a challenge since the polls are being held on party symbols.

The Chief Minister suggested that leaders prepare

a local manifesto and go to the people to explain the party's programmes and initiatives. He asked the DCC presidents to take responsibility for issuing B-forms to party candidates and ensuring coordination at the grassroots level.

The Chief Minister directed the in-charge Ministers to ensure that there would be no rebels in the elections and that all leaders work in unison. The CM said that the party would give nominated posts to leaders who did not get tickets in the municipal elections.

CONGRESS TO DECIDE FATE OF REBELS TODAY

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD



THE Congress party is likely to take a decision in a meeting to be held at Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's old Camp Office on Tuesday on whether to ignore or initiate disciplinary action against rebel candidates, if any remain in the fray after the withdrawal of nomination papers on February 3, sources said.

The meeting will primarily focus on the issue of rebels contesting the elections after the final date for withdrawal, as the polls will be held on the party symbol.

On the other hand, the AICC in-charge general secretary Meenakshi Natarajan has asked the in-charge ministers to attend the meeting with complete details of official candidates as well as rebel contestants, if any.

Party leaders said the rebel issue is a delicate one and needs to be handled cautiously, failing which the party could face double trouble.

"If the rebels are ig-

nored, violations of party discipline may continue. If action is initiated, the rebels may work against the official candidates. Either way, damage is inevitable if rebels remain in the fray. Hence, the Chief Minister, on Monday, has instructed the in-charge ministers to ensure that rebels withdraw their nomination papers by hook or crook," a senior leader said.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will chair this important meeting on Tuesday evening at his old Camp Office in Jubilee Hills. TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, AICC in-charge general secretary Meenakshi Natarajan, in-charge ministers, and other senior leaders will attend the meeting.

It is learnt that the meeting will also discuss recent political developments and their impact on the upcoming municipal elections. Strategies to strengthen the party in parliamentary constituencies, implementation of development works, and welfare schemes are also expected to be reviewed.

BJP launches LED campaign vehicles for municipal polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE BJP has introduced a new campaign strategy ahead of the upcoming municipal and municipal corporation elections by unveiling specially designed LED campaign vehicles. The initiative was formally launched at the party's state headquarters by BJP Telangana President N Ramchander Rao, in the presence of senior leaders and party workers, on Monday.

Speaking at the event, Rao said the LED campaign vehicles would play a crucial role in effectively communicating the party's vision and policies to the people. He emphasised that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central government has implemented several development and welfare programmes, and these vehicles will help highlight those achievements at the grassroots level.

"Through LED screens, citizens will be able to clearly understand the BJP's proposals for urban development

State President N Ramchander Rao inaugurates the initiative at the party headquarters



and the solutions we are offering to local problems," he stated.

Rao further underlined that the BJP's primary agenda in the municipal elections is to address public issues and ensure transparent governance. He noted that the vehicles will showcase details of Central schemes such as housing, sanitation and welfare programmes, alongside the BJP's roadmap for strengthening municipal infrastructure.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Ma-

harashtra Minister and BJP's Telangana municipal election in-charge Ashish Shelar, Rajasthan's former minister and co-in charge Ashok Parnami, Rajya Sabha member and co-in charge Rekha Sharma, and former Rajya Sabha MP GVL Narasimha Rao. Their presence underscored the party's commitment to intensifying its campaign efforts in Telangana.

Large numbers of party leaders and workers also participated in the event, signalling strong organisational backing for the initiative.

The BJP leadership expressed confidence that the innovative campaign vehicles would enhance voter engagement and help convey the party's message more effectively across urban and semi-urban areas.

With this launch, the BJP has set the stage for a high-tech, people-centric campaign, aiming to strengthen its presence in Telangana's municipal polls campaign and position itself as a credible alternative for development-focused administration. Rao added.

BJP releases charge sheet against Cong rule in state

- BJP accuses the Congress government of corruption, unfulfilled guarantees and administrative failures

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD



AHEAD of the municipal and municipal corporation elections, the Telangana BJP intensified its attack on the Congress government by releasing a charge sheet accusing it of corruption, broken promises and administrative collapse. Titled 'Fake Promises - Deceptive Assurances', the document was released by BJP Telangana unit presi-

dent N Ramchander Rao along with Maharashtra Minister Ashish Shelar in the presence of senior leaders.

Addressing the media, Rao said the Congress came to power by announcing six guarantees and over 420 promises but failed to implement even basic commitments. He alleged that the state is facing a serious finan-

cial crisis, resulting in delays in payment of salaries to government employees and pensions to retired staff. Assurances such as DA arrears, PRC implementation, health cards and restoration of the old pension scheme remain unfulfilled, creating uncertainty among employees and pensioners.

Accusing the Congress

of betraying farmers, Rao said welfare schemes such as Rythu Bandhu, farm loan waivers and farmer insurance have been neglected or discontinued. He claimed the Bhoobharati Act has triggered fresh land disputes, pushing farmers into distress and destroying their trust in the government.

Failures in education and

BJP President N Ramchander Rao and Maharashtra Minister Ashish Shelar unveil the document

healthcare were also highlighted. According to Rao, fee reimbursement arrears have crossed several thousand crore rupees, while promises of new IIITs, schools in slum areas and education security cards exist only on paper. In healthcare, unpaid Rajiv Aarogyasri bills have forced hospitals to stop treatments, affecting poor patients. Promised super-specialty hospitals and maternity hospitals have not materialised.

Women's welfare was described as another major failure. The BJP alleged that promises of Rs 2,500 monthly assistance, gold for brides, Anganwadi wage hikes and electric scooters remain unimplemented. Similarly, unemployed youth were promised Rs 4,000 monthly allowance and two lakh jobs within a year, but the BJP

claimed no major fresh recruitment has taken place.

On urban governance, Rao alleged corruption worth Rs 2,500 crore in municipal bodies. He pointed to overflowing garbage, damaged roads and poor street lighting, alleging development is sustained mainly by Central government funds.

The charge sheet further accused the Congress of neglecting SC, ST and BC welfare, failing to resolve podu land issues and allowing encroachment of temple lands. Rao alleged law and order has deteriorated with rising thefts, drug abuse and communal tensions. Concluding the press meet, Rao urged voters to reject Congress and BRS and support BJP, asserting it alone can ensure corruption-free governance in Telangana state.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.G. LIMITED.
OPERATION: SURYAPET CIRCLE
OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO: 0-04/2025-26
Tenders are invited from eligible vendors for various Electrical and Civil works in Suryapet Circle. Schedule dates for Open-Tender Specification No: 01/25-26 to 07/25-26 of Tender Notice 0-04/2025-26 of SE/OP/Suryapet are: 1. Bid download starts from 03.02.2026 at 15:00 Hrs. 2. Last date and time for submission of Bid hard copies along with DD's and BG's: 10.02.2026 upto 15:00 Hrs. 3. Bid opening Date & Time: 10.02.2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
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Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, Suryapet
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Government of Telangana
HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
O/o. Chief General Manager (Engg.), O&M Circle No. V, Sainikpuri, Sec'bad-94, Telangana
e-TENDER NOTICE
e-tender Notice No. & Date
407/CGM(E)/O&M-C/V/2025-26, Date: 03.02.2026
Name of Work: Laying of 900mm dia RCC Sewer trunkline from Old Hayathnagar Highway to Sai Baba temple, Mudhiraj Colony main road under Kamalanagar Section, Sub Division II, O and M Division XI.
Estimate Contract Value: Rs.151.73 Lakhs
1. Tender Document will be available online from Date: 03.02.2026 from 5.00 PM onwards and the last date for receipt of tenders is Date: 17.02.2026 upto 5.00 PM 2. Name & address of Chief General Manager (Engg.), concerned - Chief General Manager (Engg.), O&M Circle-V, HMWSSB, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad -500094. 3. The Contractors/ firms are requested to upload the information in the 'ZIP' format preferably. 4. Further details can be seen on @ <https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in>
Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg.), O&M Circle No. V, Sainikpuri, Sec'bad-94, Telangana.

THE SINGARENI COLLIERIES COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government Company)
REGD. OFFICE: KOTHAGUDEM-507101, TELANGANA.
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
It is to notify that Environmental Clearance has been granted by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Telangana for expansion of existing Kondapuram Underground (KPUG) Coal Mine Project of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited, located near Kondapuram Village, Manuguru Mandal, Bhadradi Kothagudem District of Telangana State for enhancement of coal production from 0.54 MTPA to 0.648 MTPA within the same project area of 477.03 ha (20% increase as per MoEF&CC, O.M. dated 11th April, 2022 under para 7(ii)(a) of EIA Notification, 2006) along with environmental conditions and safeguards vide EC Identification No. EC25B0102TG5102170N and File No. SIA/TG/CMIN/522129/2025, dated 31.01.2026.
This paper advertisement is being issued in compliance to the General Instruction 5(1) and Standard Condition No. 10.1 of Environmental Clearance. Accordingly, the Singareni Collieries Company Limited is now entitled to enhance the coal production from 0.54 MTPA to 0.648 MTPA within the same project area of 477.03 ha, subject to the conditions mentioned therein.
A copy of the Environmental Clearance letter is available with The Environmental Engineer, Telangana Pollution Control Board, Regional Office, Beside MRO office, Near SCCL Head Office, Kothagudem, Bhadradi Kothagudem District-507101.
The Environmental Clearance letter can also be seen on the website of MoEF&CC at <https://parivesh.nic.in> and on the website of SCCL at <https://scclmines.com/evn>.
Further, in compliance to the General Instruction 5(2) and Standard Condition No. 10.2, copies of the Environmental Clearance letter will be submitted to the Heads of Local Bodies, Panchayats and Municipal Bodies for displaying the same for a period of 30 days from the date of receipt.
Kothagudem, Director
Date: 03.02.2026. (Planning & Projects)
PR/2026/ADVT/ENV/14
DIPR R.O.No. 14901-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26 Dt: 02-02-2026

Lapses at govt hospital leaves pregnant women in the lurch

- PP Unit Medical Officer and staff absent even after 10 am
- Postnatal mothers and infants forced to wait until noon for vaccination
- Alleged lack of supervision allowing negligence to continue unchecked
- Responsible Medical Officer accused of failing to attend or monitor the unit

JAYAPRASAD
NAGARKURNOOL

IRREGULAR attendance and lack of time discipline by the PP Unit staff at the Nagarkurnool District General Hospital has been causing severe inconvenience to pregnant women, postnatal mothers, newborns, and children coming for vaccination over the past several days.



As per norms, the PP Unit staff are required to be present at the designated centre in the Government District General Hospital by 9:00 am. However, it is alleged that the staff often fail to arrive even by 12 noon, leaving mothers and infants waiting for hours.

On Monday, even by 10:00 am, neither the PP Unit Medical Officer nor any staff were present, and the vaccination room was found locked. Pregnant women, lactating mothers, and parents carrying newborns were forced to wait

outdoors, facing considerable hardship.

Patients alleged that this has become a routine issue for the past few days, and the absence of supervision by higher authorities has worsened the situation. Due to the delay, pregnant women and mothers visiting the hospital for medical consultation and vaccination services are compelled to wait for long hours.

It is further alleged that the PP Unit Medical Officer also serves as the Medical Officer at Tadoor, resulting in similar lapses at both lo-



cations. Despite repeated complaints and allegations, higher officials have reportedly failed to initiate any action, leading to murmurs and dissatisfaction within the Health Department.

Patients and attendants have demanded immediate action against the concerned Medical Officer and absentee staff. The prevailing situation, they said, is highly unfortunate and reflects poorly on maternal and child healthcare services.

Affected mothers expressed anguish over the hardships they are facing

and urged senior health officials to intervene immediately, take strict action against the erring staff, and ensure regular and timely functioning of the PP Unit.

Responding to the issue, District Medical and Health Officer Ravi Kumar said that such incidents were unfortunate. He stated that staff had been immediately arranged to ensure services were restored. He also assured that an inquiry would be conducted into the matter and that strict action would be taken against those found responsible.

UNION BUDGET: RUE CONTINUES

Agrarian crisis ignored, says Kisan Cong leader

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

THE Kisan Congress criticised the Union Budget 2026-27 alleging that it has failed to address the crisis in agriculture and rural livelihoods despite signs of a slowdown in the sector flagged by the government's own Economic Survey.

The organisation appealed to farmers and rural workers to protest against the budget and participate in the general strike scheduled for February 12.

Agri planner and National Coordinator of the Kisan Congress (AICC), Dhulipudi Srikanth, on Monday said the Finance Minister's budget speech mentioned small and marginal farmers only once and made no reference at all to rural labour.

"At a time when farmers are under stress, the budget was expected to provide relief and renewed momentum. Instead, it has proved



National Coordinator of Kisan Congress, Dhulipudi Srikanth

disappointing," he said.

The allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has been pegged at around Rs 1.40 lakh crore, marking a nominal increase of 5.3 per cent over the revised estimates for 2025-26. The organisation said that after adjusting for inflation, the increase does not amount to any real rise in agricultural spending.

On farmer support, the organisation said the budget offered no major relief measures, pointing to a cut in fertiliser subsidy from Rs 1.86 lakh crore to Rs 1.70 lakh crore and a reduction in food subsidy compared to last year's revised figures.

Major disappointment for TG, complains Rayala



State Warehousing Corporation Chairman, Rayala Nageswara Rao

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

STATE Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao said the Union Budget has caused severe disappointment to Telangana, alleging that the BJP-led Central government has once again meted out injustice to the state by failing to allocate adequate funds. Rao said that despite Telangana contributing substantial tax revenues to the Centre, the state had been given zero returns.

"We pay taxes running into lakhs and crores, but Telangana has been completely ignored in the allocation of resources," he alleged.

He condemned what he described as discriminatory treatment towards Telangana and accused the Centre of adopting a biased approach, particularly towards states governed by the Congress.



Every house in Edulapuram to get tap water, vows Ponguleti

Revenue Minister slams BRS at Edulapuram municipal poll campaign

HANS NEWS SERVICE
EDULAPURAM (KHAMMAM)

Revenue, Housing and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy promised that the embankment work in the municipality would be completed by June and that every house would be provided with tap water. He said development works worth about Rs 308 crore were currently underway across all wards in the municipality.

Addressing roadshows in Wards 2, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27 as part of the Edulapuram municipal election campaign on Monday, he called upon voters to support the Congress. Ponguleti said Edulapuram would be developed as a role model for the state and urged people to vote for Congress candidates in the upcoming municipal elections.

Highlighting the Congress government's initiatives, Ponguleti said ration cards had been issued to all eligible poor families after coming to power, describing it as a hallmark of Congress

governance. He reiterated his commitment to resolving flooding issues in Edulapuram, assuring that the retaining wall project, being taken up at a cost of Rs 690 crore, would act as a protective shield for the municipality. Taking a dig at the former ruling party's leadership, the Minister said leaders who "remained confined to farmhouses and moved around in air-conditioned vehicles" were unaware of the hardships faced by residents in low-lying colonies, particularly during floods and drainage overflows. He alleged that issues faced by Rajiv Gruha Kalpa housing residents were ignored earlier and were now being politicised for electoral gain.

He accused the BRS party of neglecting the poor during its decade-long rule and resurfacing only at election time to seek votes. Ponguleti accused the party of spreading misinformation out of frustration after witnessing the development initiatives undertaken by the present Congress government.

CM Revanth to visit Miryalaguda tomorrow



Miryalaguda Sub Collector Amith Naryana along with DSP Rajashekar inspecting the venue at Gudur village

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MIRYALAGUDA (NALGONDA)

CHIEF Minister Revanth Reddy is scheduled to visit Miryalaguda on February 4. As part of his tour, he will address a public meeting at Gudur village in Miryalaguda mandal. In view of the

proposed visit, arrangements for the public meeting were inspected on Monday by Miryalaguda Sub-Collector Narayan Amit along with DSP Rajasekhar.

The officials reviewed the venue, security arrangements, traffic management, seating, stage setup, and

other logistical facilities required for the conduct of the meeting. The Sub-Collector instructed concerned local officials to ensure that all arrangements are made without any lapses and that necessary coordination is maintained among departments.



Sarpanch Nethakani Krishnaiah inaugurating employment guarantee works in Cheruvugattu village of Narketpally mandal in Nalgonda on Monday

It favours only the wealthy: PCC leader

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

CRITICISING the Union Budget, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) member Mohammed Javed alleged that the budget effectively turns its back on the poor while facilitating the accumulation of wealth by the rich.

In a statement on Monday, Javed said the budget prioritises capital expenditure on infrastructure and defence but fails to provide relief to common citizens.



PCC member, Mohammed Javed

He expressed concern over increased tax burdens, including hikes in securities transaction tax, stating that such measures would

adversely impact the middle class. "The budget has left farmers and the middle class deeply disappointed. Even the PM-Kisan assistance has not been enhanced, reflecting the Centre's apathy towards the agrarian community," he said.

"The complete omission of Telangana's key development projects from the Union Budget is unfortunate and unacceptable," he said, alleging that the Centre has deliberately ignored the state.

ACB nabs revenue inspector

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GURRAMPODU (NALGONDA)

A Revenue Inspector from Gurrampodu in Nalgonda, Mohammed Abdul Hakeem, was caught by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) while he was accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000.

Sharing details, officials from ACB informed that a farmer from Utlapalli village in Gurrampodu mandal had been making repeated visits to the revenue office for the past eight years to get his 1.15 acres of land registered online.

Taking advantage of the situation, the RI alleg-



edly demanded Rs 50,000 to resolve the issue. The farmer initially paid

Rs 30,000 and requested completion of the work.

When Abdul Hakeem insisted on payment of the remaining amount, the farmer approached the ACB officials.

On Monday, while accepting the bribe amount from the farmer, ACB officials led by Inspector Jagadish Prasad caught him red-handed.

Officials stated that a case has been registered and the accused will be produced before the court on Tuesday.

BC and Dalit voices demand fair representation in polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHABUBNAGAR

RENEWED political heat was witnessed here on Monday on the issue of social justice as Backward Class (BC) organisations demanded proportionate representation for all BC communities in the forthcoming corporation elections.

Addressing the media at the Roads and Buildings Department premises, BC JAC Rights State Convener Sarangi Lakshminathan said that sustained struggles by BC caste associations had paved the way for a BC leader to become the Mayor of Mahabubnagar. He asserted that the same spirit of justice must

First Dy Mayor post must be allotted to Dalits: BC JAC leader



now be reflected in the upcoming elections by ensuring representation to all communities in proportion to their population. He further demanded that the post of First Deputy Mayor be allotted to Dalits, stressing the need for inclusive leadership.

Adding political sharpness to the demand, BC Samaj United Mahabubnagar District President Modal Srinivas Sagar questioned the Congress party's commitment to social justice. He asked why BCs were denied due importance in corporation elections even as the party undertakes a nationwide tour advocating social justice. Raising a community-specific concern, Kummari (Potters) As-

sociation District President Bugganna said the Kummari community had consistently been denied representation in corporation elections. He urged authorities to at least ensure due priority for the community in corporation-level posts.

The meeting saw the participation of several leaders and representatives, including retired DEO Vijay Kumar, Nai Brahmin Seva Samiti Town President Ashwini Satyam, Medari Association Secretary Anjaneyulu, MRPS leader Singireddy Parameshwar, Nai Brahmin Association leader Chandramouli, and others, highlighting the broad-based support for the demand.

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Cong govt brought perceptible change in two years: Ponguleti



HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

STATE Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Monday said the Telangana government has demonstrated the change the people desired and upheld public trust in just two years.

Addressing the launch of the modernized I&PR Department website at the Secretariat, he said the state was in crisis when their government took office, particularly in the economic sector. "Under Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy's leadership, we are overcoming challenges step by step and accelerating development and welfare programs," he said.

Highlighting reforms across agriculture, education, healthcare, housing, ration distribution, and employment generation, the Minister said Telangana has become a role model for the country. He stressed that the Information Department plays a key role in communicating these achievements effectively to the public and instructed officials to leverage technology for quick dissemination of govern-

ment schemes. "Two years is a short period, but the government's achievements are remarkable. We have implemented several welfare schemes, promoted economic growth, and are moving forward with the Telangana Rising - 2047 vision. Our approach combines global competitiveness with welfare for the poor," he said.

I&PR Commissioner Ch. Priyanka, Chief Minister's CPRO G. Malsur, Information Department Additional Director D.S. Jagan, Joint Director Ramana, and other officials participated in the program.

Harish questions Sajjanar's derogatory remarks on phone-tapping case

HYDERABAD

FORMER minister and BRS legislature party deputy floor leader Harish Rao has expressed strong dissent regarding the statements made by Hyderabad police commission and SIT chief VC Sajjanar, who referred to the alleged phone-tapping case as "illegal." He contended that this characterisation lacks legal validity pending a judicial resolution.

The BRS MLA also raised a serious question being asked by the people of Telangana. "Why does the SIT chief repeatedly avoid recognising K. Chandrasekhar Rao, as the Leader of the Opposition?" Harish Rao asked.

In a statement on Monday, Harish Rao said it was deeply disturbing that the head of an investigating agency would



publicly use language that presumes the outcome of an ongoing probe. He stressed that in a constitutional democracy, until a competent court records a finding, no allegation can be treated as an offence.

Harish Rao pointed out that the role of the police is strictly limited to investigation. Police officers are not judges or adjudicators, and

they have no authority to declare any act as "illegal" at the stage of enquiry.

Harish Rao explained that whether any phone interception was legal or illegal depends entirely on strict compliance with Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, the Information Technology Act, and the safeguards laid down by the Supreme Court in PUCL vs Union of India. Any

deviation or violation can be determined only through judicial scrutiny, not through official police communications. By using the expression "illegal phone tapping" in an official message, the SIT Chief has displayed a preconceived notion about the outcome of the investigation.

Harish Rao said this conduct is unbecoming of the office held by a senior IPS officer and runs contrary to the standards of neutrality, restraint, and impartiality mandated under the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968.

He warned that such premature conclusions, particularly in a politically sensitive matter involving a former Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, create a reasonable apprehension of bias and political motivation in the investigation.

PHONE-TAPPING CASE

Kavitha slams KTR for finding fault with SIT grilling KCR

Says BRS should reflect upon this internally as to why such a situation emerged

HYDERABAD

SUSPENDED BRS leader K Kavitha on Monday criticised party working president and her brother K T Rama Rao for finding fault with SIT questioning party supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao in connection with the phone-tapping case.

Rama Rao spoke as if it's a crime to summon KCR for examination but nobody is exempted from law, she observed. Speaking to reporters here, she said "KCR was called (for questioning) in phone-tapping yesterday. (BRS) working president K T Rama Rao said many things. He spoke as if summoning for examination is a crime and atrocious. When you are in public life, there will be many issues and you have to face



their consequences," she said.

It would be better if leaders cooperate for investigation to take place transparently and help in bringing it to a closure, said Kavitha, daughter of KCR. Observing that KCR has not been summoned for examination all

these days, she said the BRS should reflect upon this internally as to why such a situation emerged. She said she had appeared before the ED and the CBI in the case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, though she did not do anything wrong.

"All have to cooperate with the law. We have to appear for the examination when we are summoned. None can salvage BRS unless there is a change in their way of thinking," she said.

In an apparent reference to her cousin and BRS MLA

T Harish Rao, she claimed that truth may not come out in the phone-tapping case as there is a match-fixing between Congress government and the former. She suspected that the Congress government would only make some noise in the phone-tapping case in view of the municipal elections (on February 11) and leave it at that and wouldn't finish the probe. Alleging that there has been no progress in the investigation into phone-tapping case during the last two years, Kavitha said the probe should go forward if the Congress government is transparent. Speaking to reporters on Sunday after KCR's examination, Rama Rao claimed that the phone-tapping case is a "frivolous" one and that there is "nothing" in it.

CM presents Ravi Narayana Reddy award to Justice Sudarshan Reddy

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday presented the "Ravi Narayana Reddy National Award" to eminent jurist Justice B. Sudarshan Reddy at a city ceremony, hailing the awardee's commitment to democracy and constitutional values.

Recalling the legacy of freedom fighter Ravi Narayana Reddy, the Chief Minister said he fought feudalism and monarchical rule, donated 500 acres of land to the poor, and inspired generations by stepping away from power at the peak of his influence.

Ravi Narayana Reddy was elected to Parliament with a bigger majority than Jawaharlal Nehru and was chosen by Nehru himself to in-



augurate the first Parliament building, he noted.

Drawing parallels with the present, Revanth Reddy said some leaders today refuse to give up power despite public rejection. He said

leaders like Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, Ravi Narayana Reddy, Jaipal Reddy and Justice Sudarshan Reddy shaped Telangana's political consciousness across the generations.

Praising Justice Sudarshan Reddy, the CM said his democratic commitment led him to contest against 'single-party, single-person rule', making him a deserving recipient of the award.

CEF South-Creativity is the new economy

MSME Minister highlights AP's visionary growth model

- India's strong democratic framework offers an unparalleled platform for talent to flourish
- Kondapalli Srinivas lauds The Hans India for hosting CEF South
- Says that anything created in Visakhapatnam can now reach the world

VASU POTNURU
VISAKHAPATNAM

CREATIVITY today is not just an idea but a powerful economic driver capable of positioning regions on the global map, MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas underlined. Delivering his address at the concluding session of the first edition of Creative Economy Forum (CEF) South organised by The Hans India in collaboration with the CEF along with HMTV as the media partner in Visakhapatnam, the minister stressed the immense economic power of creativity and that innovative thinking has the potential to build strong and sustainable economies.

Underlining that India's strong democratic framework offers an



MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas along with Tamil Nadu BJP vice-president Khushbu Sundar, Creative Economy Forum South founder Supriya Suri, among others, at the first edition of the CEF South organised in Visakhapatnam

unparalleled platform for talent to flourish, the minister said, "The state government's progressive journey, the minister attributed credit to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for his visionary leadership spanning over four decades. Between 1995 and 2004, the Chief Minister was among the top leaders in the country to foresee the future of Information Technology, laying a strong foundation through pioneering IT initiatives, modern agricultural practices, micro-education

reforms, and reliable power supply for farming." Highlighting Andhra Pradesh's future-ready governance, he stated that the government has rolled out 23 progressive policies covering key sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, advanced equipment manufacturing, aeronautics and space technology. Despite challenging circumstances, these reforms have helped the state attract substantial investments, with nearly 25 percent of India's total investments in the past year flowing into

Andhra Pradesh, Kondapalli Srinivas stressed. Talking about Visakhapatnam's growing role as a global hub for innovation and enterprise, the minister said, "Anything created in Visakhapatnam can now reach the world." After spending 17 years in the IT sector, the Minister shared that he returned to his hometown to actively support government-led initiatives and contribute to educational institutions. The Minister further noted that the Chief Minister's commitment to transparent

and efficient administration led to the adoption of real-time governance.

Stressing the importance of ideas in entrepreneurship, the minister said that strong and original ideas naturally attract investment and sponsorship. With multiple funding mechanisms now available, he said, even innovators from remote areas have an opportunity to pitch their ideas. Appreciating The Hans India for organising the prestigious event in Visakhapatnam, the minister described the event as a true representation of South India's dynamic spirit, calling it highly inspiring and impactful.

Wow! Two-time kidney transplant recipient scripts Antarctica history

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN a landmark achievement, Sneha Raju has become the world's first two-time kidney transplant recipient to set foot on Antarctica, camp overnight there, and cross the Antarctic Circle.

The historic expedition took place from December 17 to 28 and was conducted in full compliance with established Antarctic expedition standards. This is the first time that an individual has successfully accomplished the typical Antarctic expedition, including interior landing, overnight camping, and Circle crossing, after undergoing two kidney transplant surgeries. This makes the triumph a first-of-its-kind in the world, eligible for global recognition.

The expedition began



from Ushuaia on December 17, 2025, crossing the notoriously challenging Drake Passage before reaching the Antarctic Peninsula.

On December 19, the first landing was made at Barrientos Island, followed by an official continental landing

at Portal Point.

Sneha Raju camped overnight on the Antarctic continent at Portal Point under continuous daylight, setting foot on Detaille Island (66° 52' S, 66° 48' W) after crossing the Antarctic Circle. This marks one of her remarkable accomplishments under extreme climatic conditions. Sneha Raju was serving as the Deputy Head (Corporate Communications) at NCC Limited in Hyderabad.

Sneha Raju camped overnight on the Antarctic continent at Portal Point under continuous daylight and setting foot on Detaille Island (66° 52' S, 66° 48' W) post crossing the circle marking one of the remarkable accomplishments under extreme climatic conditions. Sneha Raju was working with NCC Limited as Deputy Head (Corporate Communications) in Hyderabad.



Guntur man bids Rs 2.08 cr for fancy vehicle number!

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE craze for fancy vehicle registration numbers in the Telugu states has once again come to light, with a resident of Guntur setting a new national record by purchasing India's most expensive number plate for whopping Rs 2.08 crore.

Kiran Kolpakula of Guntur won the online auction of the ultra-rare VIP registration number 'DDC 0001' (also known as DDC 001) for Rs 2.08 crore in January. This is the highest amount ever paid for a vehicle registration number in India. The auction was conducted by the newly launched auction house platform of Big Boy Toyz (BBT) in its debut event.

The 'DDC 0001' num-

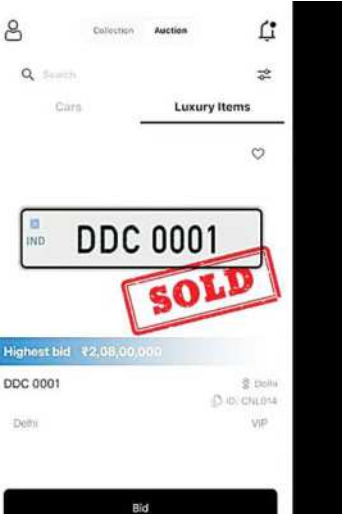
Ultra-rare VIP registration number 'DDC 0001' auctioned on Big Boy Toyz platform



ber plate was previously owned by Big Boy Toyz founder Jatin Ahuja, which added to its exclusivity and market value. The plate

is considered a rare and premium collectible among automobile and luxury asset enthusiasts.

The Rs 2.08-crore sale



has surpassed all previous benchmarks for registration number auctions in the country. In 2025, the 'HR 88 B 8888' plate was auctioned

for Rs 1.17 crore, but the deal was later cancelled due to non-payment. The plate was eventually resold for Rs 26.7 lakh. In comparison, the successful sale of 'DDC 0001' has now become the highest confirmed transaction in this segment.

Experts said the record-breaking sale reflects the rising demand for premium registration numbers as status symbols and collectible assets.

Such numbers are increasingly viewed as a mark of prestige among business owners and automobile enthusiasts.

The latest auction is expected to further boost interest in luxury number plates and organized auction platforms across India.

KTR raps CP Sajjanar for 'playing judge' in phone tapping case

HYDERABAD

BRS working president and former minister KT Rama Rao on Monday strongly objected to City Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar's remarks terming the phone tapping probe as an "illegal phone tapping case", accusing him of overstepping his role as an investigator.

Reacting to the Commissioner's statement after the SIT concluded questioning former Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao, KTR said Sajjanar appeared to be acting as "both judge and jury". In a post on X, KTR asserted that the legality or illegality of the case can be determined only by courts, not by the head of the investigation. He urged the judiciary to take note of what he called "extremely objectionable statements."

SIT officials questioned KCR for nearly five hours at his Nandinaragar residence here on Sunday. Following this, Sajjanar referred to the



matter as an "illegal phone tapping case", triggering sharp political reactions.

Meanwhile, BRS leaders and cadres staged protests across villages and towns against SIT notices issued to KCR. Thanking party workers, KTR said the mobilisation reminded him of the Telangana movement days and claimed administrative failure was evident in the state.

Addressing the media in Hyderabad, KTR criticised the government over law and order, alleged lapses during Medaram Jathara arrange-

ments, demanded a white paper on Davos investment agreements, and reiterated calls for a CBI and sitting judge probe into the Singareni coal scam. He alleged misuse of SITs to divert public attention and claimed the Congress leaders' narratives in the phone tapping case were "collapsing one by one".

On municipal elections, KTR said BRS campaigns would be conducted locally without large rallies or roadshows and expressed confidence of good results for the party.

Indus water talks stall as India rejects Hague arbitration

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

INDIA has refused to recognise the latest orders of the Court of Arbitration (CoA) in The Hague under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), asserting that it will not participate in proceedings it deems illegitimate.

The CoA had directed India to submit operational "pondage logbooks" from the Baglihar and Kishanganga hydroelectric plants as part of the "Second Phase on the Merits" and scheduled hearings on February 2-3. The court noted that India had not filed any counter-memorial or indicated participation. Government sources described the CoA as "so-called illegally constituted" and accused Pakistan of seeking to involve India in "parallel proceedings" outside the neutral expert mechanism.

STT hike to secure savings from speculative bets: CEA

NEW DELHI: Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Monday that the increase in Securities Transaction Tax on derivatives trading announced in the Union Budget 2026-27 is aimed at securing household savings from highly speculative bets rather than generating revenue for the government. "The purpose (of STT hike) is not revenue generation...the purpose is to ensure hard-earned savings are used to maximise wealth in households. The SEBI has pointed out how people lose money through F&O," the CEA told journalists.

The Union Budget 2026-27, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday, proposed raising STT on futures to 0.05 per cent from the present 0.02 per cent and on options premium and exercise of options to be raised to 0.15 per cent from the present rate of 0.1

per cent and 0.125 per cent, respectively.

The stock market crash in the shares of brokerage-related companies after the presentation of the Budget was attributed to the hike in STT.

The tax changes are mechanical in design. The STT applies per transaction, so a higher rate increases the cost of trading for participants who buy and sell frequently, including intraday strategies that rely on turnover. By raising the transaction levy, the government increases the all-in cost of derivatives trades alongside exchange fees and other statutory charges.

Similarly, Revenue Secretary Arvind Shrivastava also said, after the presentation of the budget, that "the volumes in the F&O market are in the realm of heavy speculation when compared to the size of the country's GDP or underlying securities market".

BJP 'mastermind' behind Sunetra's appointment as Dy CM: Saamana

MUMBAI: The Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) on Monday claimed the BJP leadership was the "mastermind" behind NCP leader Sunetra Pawar taking oath as Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister, just days after her husband Ajit Pawar's demise.

An editorial in the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' also alleged that the BJP leadership and Nationalist Congress Party leaders Sunil Tatkar and Praful Patel do not want the unification of the two NCP factions.

Sunetra Pawar took oath as the state's first woman Deputy CM on Saturday, barely three days after NCP leader Ajit Pawar and four others died in an air crash at Baramati in Pune district, inviting criticism from some quarters over the pace at which the development took place.

TG BJP moves into action mode; to douse rebel fire ahead of polls

Rebel nominations attract suspension from the party for 15 years, warns BJP chief

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

BJP State President N Ramachander Rao has delivered strong warning directing party cadres to rally behind officially nominated candidates in the upcoming municipal elections.

He said on Monday that only those candidates, who have been allotted the party's B-form, should contest. He urged all other BJP leaders, who filed nominations independently to withdraw their immediately in the interest of party unity and success.

Rao warned that any member choosing to contest as a rebel candidate would face strict disciplinary action. "If anyone



contests independently without withdrawing their nomination, they will be suspended from the party for 15 years, with no chance of rejoining in the future," he declared.

Acknowledging the disap-

pointment of those who did not receive tickets, Rao assured that the party values their contributions. "Those who have worked tirelessly for the growth of the BJP will be duly honored, even if cir-

cumstances prevented them from receiving tickets this time," he said.

He highlighted that candidate selection was based on survey reports, social factors and party-specific considerations, ensuring that only those with strong winning prospects were chosen.

Rao expressed confidence that, just as in past panchayat elections, the BJP would continue its winning streak in municipal polls through the dedication of party workers and the trust of the people. He called on all leaders to withdraw nominations and work collectively in their divisions and wards to secure victory for the party's official candidates.

'Corrupt' KCR can't be father of Telangana: CM

Continued from P1

"How can a person who neglected the people of Telangana and tortured Telangana activists become the father of the state?" he questioned. He also alleged that phone-tapping indeed took place during KCR's regime and said the former chief minister must answer for it.

Revanth Reddy further questioned KCR on how his family accumulated many farmhouses and businesses worth thousands of crores. A person who accumulated wealth through corrupt means can't be father of Telangana, he alleged. "BRS leaders committed several mistakes. How can anyone say they will commit crimes and yet not be questioned? In a democracy, inquiry is mandatory when one chooses an illegal path," he said.

Highlighting the sacrifices of genuine Telangana activists, Revanth Reddy cited Prof. M Kodandaram, who united activists and led the

movement. "Was he not a Telangana protagonist? Was it not during your rule that his doors were broken and he was arrested? Did you remember Telangana protagonists then?" he asked, adding that police notices and questioning could not be equated with oppression.

The Chief Minister also referred to activists like Ravi Narayana Reddy, who, he said, lost everything for the cause of Telangana. "Those who accumulated positions and assets worth thousands of crores cannot claim to be activists," he remarked.

Criticising the BRS leadership for blaming the people for their electoral defeat, Revanth Reddy said democracy does not permit such arrogance.

"If people reject you, you must introspect. Had you accepted your mistakes gracefully, at least some dignity would have been preserved. Saying that the people made a mistake by defeating BRS

reflects a dangerous mindset," he said.

Quoting Dr BR Ambedkar, the Chief Minister said that in a democracy, those who choose the wrong path must face investigation. He pointed out that leaders like former Jharkhand chief minister Shibu Soren had faced police inquiries in the past and asserted that no one was above the law.

"We are not divine beings. The era of medieval emperors who equated their suffering with that of the kingdom is over. In a democracy, those who commit mistakes must face investigation," he said.

Revanth Reddy also said that the SIT had served notices in the phone-tapping case as wrongdoing had taken place. "How can anyone demand that the SIT conduct an inquiry by visiting wherever KCR stays? Everyone is equal before the law and must answer for the mistakes committed," the Chief Minister asserted.

Iran Prez orders resumption of nuclear talks with US

TEHRAN

IRANIAN President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday ordered the start of nuclear talks with the United States, according to reports. "Iran and the United States will hold talks on the nuclear file," the reports said, without specifying the date.

The move signals a de-escalation after Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a stern warning on Sunday to the US, stating that if the latter starts a war, it will turn into a regional war.

However, Trump had, even after Khamenei's strong remarks, reiterated his hope that the US and Iran could strike a deal. While responding to questions related to Iran's Supreme Leader's remarks, the US President said that he was hopeful both the

nations will make a deal. "Hopefully, we'll make a deal. If we don't make a deal, then we'll find out whether he was right," Trump said while talking to reporters.

Even though Iran and the United States have been at odds for quite some time, the recent escalation in tensions between the two nations was triggered by the anti-government protests in Iran during which, thousands of people reportedly died during crackdown on demonstrators, which prompted the US President to intervene and warn Iran against taking action against protesters.

The protests, which started on December 28, 2025, over the declining economic condition of the country soon turned into an agitation against the current Iranian regime. However, Iran

described the protests as "riots" stoked by the United States and Israel.

On Sunday, Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said that he believes the US President was "wise enough to make the correct decision", even though he was concerned about "miscalculations".

Aragchi said that the Islamic nation does not have trust in the United States as a negotiating partner anymore while some nations in the middle east were trying to mediate and rebuild that trust.

"So I see the possibility of another talk if the US negotiation team follows what President Trump said: to come to a fair and equitable deal to ensure that there is no nuclear weapons," he told CNN in an interview.

Air India grounds flight after fuel switch moves from 'run' to 'cutoff'

Continued from P1

Following the incident, a Boeing spokesperson confirmed they are in touch with Air India and are "supporting their review of this matter."

Air India said it has informed the civil aviation regulator DGCA about the matter concerning the fuel switch. "At Air India, safety of our passengers and crew remains top priority," the spokesperson said.

After an Air India Dreamliner

crashed in Ahmedabad in June 2025, killing 260 people, the Tata-owned airline had checked the fuel control switches on all Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet. The airline had reported it found no issues. In July 2025, a preliminary report from investigators who looked into the Ahmedabad Dreamliner crash showed that seconds after take-off, the plane's engine fuel control switches were switched off briefly, starving them of fuel.

Epstein files reveal hidden ties

Continued from P1

The documents show Musk exchanging a handful of emails with Epstein over the years about potential travel or social events. One email even mentions a part of Epstein's private island. Last year, Musk claimed he never visited Epstein's island and even posted on social media that the serial sex offender tried to get him to go to his infamous place, but he refused.

The files, though, suggest that in November 2012, Musk seemed curious about the island, sending Epstein an email asking, "What day/night will

be the wildest party on your island?" After the documents came out, Musk clarified on social media that he only had a few emails with Epstein and has repeatedly denied visiting his island, or flying on his private plane, nicknamed the "Lolita Express".

He also said that some of the emails could be misinterpreted and used by people trying to damage his reputation. "I was well aware that some email correspondence with him could be misinterpreted and used by detractors to smear my name," he added

Massive showdown over ex-Army Chief's memoir

Continued from P1

"Naravane ji has written about the Prime Minister and Rajnath Singh ji clearly in his book, which has appeared in an article, and I am quoting from that article. They are scared because if it comes out, the reality of Narendra Modi ji and Rajnath Singh ji will be revealed. What happened to the 56-inch chest when China was before us and advancing?" Gandhi said. Congress and its leaders also shared on social media

excerpts from an article in a magazine that quoted Naravane's unpublished book.

Earlier, as Gandhi Motion to speak on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, he said he would first like to respond to the charges made by the previous speaker, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, against the Congress on nationalism and began quoting from what he said was the "memoir" of Naravane talking about the India-China conflict of 2020.

Parl begins debate on President's Address

NEW DELHI: The Rajya Sabha has taken up discussion on the motion of thanks on the President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament. A total of 16 hours has been allotted for the discussion. Moving the motion, Nominated Member C Sadanandan Master said, President Murmu in her address has articulated a clear and confident vision of India's journeys towards Viksit Bharat. He said, from day

one, the NDA government has been very clear about social justice and poverty eradication. The MP said, Viksit Bharat can be built only with the basic strategy Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas. He said, Government was able to bring 25 crore people out of poverty in the last decade.

Seconding the motion, Dr Medha Vishram Kulkarni of BJP said, the President's address highlights India's continued progress.

HMDA rakes in Rs 1,000 cr from high-rise permits

Continued from P1

The unlimited floor space index (FSI) offered by the government is said to be the main reason for the developers opting for skyscrapers which invariably put immense pressure on infrastructure, power and natural resources like water.

The tallest building in the city and also in the southern part of India would be coming at Osman Nagar it will have 70 floors. Officials said that the project is coming up in an area of about seven acres and would have three towers with over 870 units. Similarly, another tall-building for which permission was

given in 2025 is a 63-floor building on a 2.17-acre land in Kokapet. According to the official, in recent times, the HMDA has given permission for high-rise buildings with about 60 floors and over 206 meters in height. Among the top ten building permissions given recently, there is a 59-floor building coming up at Kokapet with a height of 206.75 meters, a 50-floor building with a height of 158.4 meters at Tellapur, a 39-floor building with 119.7 meters height and another 37-floor building at an height of 134.35 meters, both at Kollur, and a 35-floor building with a height of 108.06 meters at Bachupally.

ICC mulls suspending Pakistan as T20 WC 'India boycott' row deepens

Continued from P1

"The ICC hopes that the PCB will consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which it is itself a member and beneficiary of," the global body said in a statement.

Pakistan on Sunday announced a boycott of its high-profile men's T20 World Cup group league match against India. "The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan grants approval to the Pakistan Cricket Team to participate in the ICC World T20 2026, however, the Pakistan Cricket Team shall not take the field in the match scheduled on February 15 against India," the government posted on social media. "While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan," the ICC further stated.

Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan

LIFE expectancy in India at the time of independence was approximately 30-32 years. This rather low figure was driven by widespread poverty, inadequate healthcare, malnutrition, and high infant/maternal mortality rates. Since 1947, life expectancy has more than doubled, rising to over 70 years in recent years. This is, by itself, considered to be a major milestone as it reflects an improved public health care in the country. With about 65 per cent of Indians currently under the age of 35 and the median age speculated to be around 29, lifespan is a constant subject of interest. With a senior citizen population of around 11 per cent of the total, many a time the statement 'age is just a number' is bandied about in social circles. It thus becomes interesting to know how a human being's lifespan can be computed; some recent studies are helpful in this regard. Genetics may explain about half of a person's lifespan, a study has suggested, pointing to a far more significant role of genetics than indications from earlier research. The findings, published in the journal Science, show that once mortality due to external factors such as accidents or infections are accounted for, "heritability of human life span due to intrinsic mortality is above 50 per cent".

Researchers from Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science and Karolinska Institutet in Sweden pointed out that understanding the heritability of human life span is central to ageing research, yet measuring genes' influence on longevity remains a challenge. Earlier studies have estimated that life span may be 15-33 per cent heritable across varied populations, with a typical range of 20-25 per cent, they said. The researchers show that the estimates "are confounded by extrinsic mortality -- deaths caused by extrinsic factors such as accidents or infections". While genes linked to lifespan have been identified, external environments like disease or living conditions can exert a powerful influence on how long one lives and often obscure or confound potential genetic effects, they said. "Extrinsic mortality systematically masked the genetic contribution to life span in traditional analyses," the authors wrote. The team added that historical data from twin studies -- often explored for understanding how genes interact with environment and contribute to noticeable traits -- lack sufficient cause of death information to correct for extrinsic mortality.

"We use mathematical modeling and analyses of twin cohorts raised together and apart to correct for this factor, revealing that heritability of human life span due to intrinsic mortality is above 50 per cent," they said. "Correcting for extrinsic mortality raises the estimate for the heritability of human life span in twin and sibling studies to (nearly) 55 per cent, more than twice previous estimates and in line with heritability of most human traits," the team added. All the same, for humans around the world, it would be far more important to add life to years than add years to life as another popular saying goes. With quality of life under constant strain owing to prevailing socio-economic conditions, lifespan, whether inherited or lived

Bad governance leading to erosion of lakes and water bodies



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU

YEARS back, every village and settlement had a lake—protected by a raised embankment, a katta. The lake was not merely a water body but a living institution. Its embankment was guarded by local deities—Katta Maisamma, Gandhi Katta Maisamma, Pochamma—symbols of collective memory and ecological discipline. The deity stood there as a reminder and a silent message—do not breach the bank, do not pollute the water and do not encroach upon the commons. Cut to the present times. At most places, the lake is gone. The embankment is gone. But the deity remains. Massive temples have replaced modest shrines. Expensive cars are driven in for rituals. Lemons are tied, pumpkins broken and garlands draped. There is a ticket for the vehicle and another for Ashtottara. Water is sprinkled to complete the ritual—often drawn not from the vanished lake, but from a purchased plastic “water bubble.”

Faith without water, development without life: Faith continues. Ecology does not. This is not a criticism of belief. Every society has its rituals. Even rockets sent into space are adorned with lemons, ginger,

and tamarind. Belief is not the problem. Selective belief is. We remember the deity but forget her purpose. We worship the guardian but destroy what she guarded.

Lakes turn drains; rivers become sewers:

Today though lakes exist, many of them have turned into drains. The Musi is no longer a river; it is an open sewer. Lake beds have been converted into schools, universities, hospitals, malls, and even government offices. Planning permissions were granted, layouts approved, foundations laid—often by the very State that is constitutionally bound to protect all natural resources.

We are now told not to drink water from our village lakes. We are told the wells are unsafe. That may be true—but it hides a deeper truth: the water did not become unfit by accident; it was made so by neglect, encroachment, and pollution. Real estate did not merely consume land. It consumed water, memory, and accountability.

From wells to water bubbles:

Every backyard once had a well. No one asked where the water came from—it was right there. Today, in apartments and gated colonies, no one asks about water sources. Buyers ask about parking, lifts, and amenities. Water is assumed. If there is a shortage, they say: ‘buy a water bubble.’

Plastic bottles have replaced public water systems. We buy packaged drinking water bottles oblivious of whether they are mineral water or ordinary tap water. We have even forgotten how to ask for pure water, because purity has been outsourced to a label.

This is not a consumer



When lakes disappear, and bottled water becomes the norm, it is not culture that has failed—it is constitutional governance that must be blamed. When citizens are forced to rely on plastic bottles instead of public water infrastructure, the State has abdicated its duty. When faith is commercialised, and ecology is ignored, governance loses moral legitimacy.

Supporting constitutional jurisprudence:

Beyond these, the Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised in decisions such as M C Mehta vs Union of India and related environment cases that:

Protection of the environment, water, and air is integrated with the right to life under Article 21;

The State has constitutional duties under Article 48-A (environmental protection) and the public trust doctrine to preserve natural resources;

Sanitation and access to clean water are essential for human dignity.

Virender Gaur vs State of Haryana (1995):

The Supreme Court reiterated that: “Article 21... the protection and preservation of environment, ecological balance free from pollution of air and water, sanitation... are essential for enjoyment of life with human dignity.” (1995) 2 SCC 577. This decision emphatically placed water and sanitation within the ambit of Article 21 rights.

In a case of A P Pollution Control Board vs M V Nayudu

(1999), although primarily an environmental pollution and public trust doctrine case, the Court explicitly tied environmental protection to Article 21 and held that:

“Protection and preservation of environment, ecological balance free from pollution of air and water... are integral facets of the right to healthy life under Article 21.”

This reinforced that a hygienic environment and clean water are essential to life and dignity.

Hygiene: From discipline to convenience:

There was a time when the first act on returning home was washing one's hands and feet. Earthen pots cooled water naturally. People drank without touching the vessel—the madi tradition—an act often dismissed as superstition, but deeply rooted in hygiene. Even hot coffee was sipped that way.

Today, we walk into homes with shoes on. We drink by putting bottles to our lips. Half-used plastic bottles are discarded. Caps are left open; water spills onto smooth floors, causing slips and broken bones. Dustbins fill with plastic and wastewater. This, we are told, is “modern civilisation.” What has changed is not merely the habit, but our relationship with water, waste, and responsibility.

Constitutional failure behind the cultural shift:

The Constitution of India does not speak the language of nostalgia. It speaks the language of duty.

Article 21 guarantees the right to life—not mere survival, but life with dignity. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that this includes the right to clean drinking water, sanitation, and a healthy envi-

ronment. Article 47 directs the State to improve public health. Article 48A mandates environmental protection. Natural resources, including water bodies, are held by the State under the public trust doctrine—they are not commodities to be sold or sacrificed.

When lakes disappear, and bottled water becomes the norm, it is not culture that has failed—it is constitutional governance that has to be blamed.

When citizens are forced to rely on plastic bottles instead of public water infrastructure, the State has abdicated its duty. When lake beds are allotted for construction, the State has breached trust. When faith is commercialised, and ecology is ignored, governance loses moral legitimacy.

Faith cannot replace water: You can build a grand temple for Katta Maisamma. You can perform elaborate rituals. But if the lake she guarded is gone, the worship is hollow. Faith cannot recharge groundwater. Lemons cannot purify drains. Plastic bottles cannot substitute for living water bodies.

A civilisation that remembers its gods but forgets its lakes is not progressing—it is erasing its future.

The Constitution does not ask us to abandon belief. It asks the State to ensure that belief does not become an excuse for ecological destruction. It asks governance to protect the commons—water, land, air—so that culture, faith and life itself can survive.

Until lakes return, wells are revived, and water is treated as a right rather than a product, no amount of ritual will quench our collective thirst.

(The writer is Advisor, School of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad)

LETTERS

Duty exemption on cancer drugs is a life-saving move

IN a major initiative, the Union Budget 2026-27 has given Customs duty exemption on cancer medication drugs and brought down life-saving medications at affordable rates, which is a widely appreciable initiative. One must remember that cancer patients are increasing by over a million every year in India. Another good augury is the government's proposal to establish over 200 cancer care centres across the nation. One fondly hopes that this will bring a huge relief to cancer-inflicted patients and their families from the middle- and low-income groups.

Saketh Sirasanagandla, Hyderabad

Middle class ignored, yet again

THE 2026-27 Union Budget ignores the middle class by retaining income-tax slabs and rates, while increasing securities transaction tax. The super rich are incentivised by write-offs of their loans and lower class is enjoying the benefit of freebies and free/subsidised housing. However, the middle class has to bear the brunt huge education costs, EMIs for essential consumer goods and rising house rents on the one side and loss of job security and rising unemployment or underemployment owing to technological progress and adverse changes in labour codes, on the other side.

P R Ravinder, Hyderabad

High-speed rail corridors must include Warangal

THE Union Budget 2026–27 has announced three high-speed rail corridors for Hyderabad connecting Pune, Bengaluru and Chennai, projecting them as “growth connectors.” However, the complete omission of Warangal—the second-largest city of Telangana and a major educational, industrial and cultural hub—is deeply disappointing and economically short-sighted. Equally concerning is the proposal to divert nearly half of the rail traffic through the Bibinagar–Nadikudi section. Instead of upgrading Kazipet into a modern transit hub, the current plan risks turning it into a congestion bottleneck. Warangal has been repeatedly assured of a railway manufacturing unit and redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme. I urge the Ministry of Railways and the Telangana Government to re-examine the corridor alignments and include Warangal–Kazipet in the high-speed rail framework, ensuring that Telangana's development is not confined to Hyderabad alone.

Vidyasagar Reddy Kethiri, Hanumakonda-506009

Oppn has chosen rhetoric over reason

THE Opposition's criticism of the Union Budget 2026-27 appears less an exercise in economic scrutiny and more of a reflexive political ritual. Ignoring fiscal constraints, global uncertainty, and inflationary pressures, it has chosen rhetoric over reason. The budget's calibrated focus on capital expenditure, infrastructure push, fiscal consolidation, and targeted welfare reflects pragmatic governance, not indifference. To dismiss these measures as “anti-people” without credible alternatives only exposes an unwillingness to engage with hard economic realities.

S Lakshmi, Hyderabad

Unbecoming of Cong, DMK and TMC

THE Congress, TMC and DMK have indulged in irresponsible fault-finding over the Union Budget, branding it with a variety of pejorative labels rather than engaging with its substance. Such rhetoric is uncalled for at a time when the economy demands constructive debate and policy seriousness. Instead of offering credible alternatives or acknowledging fiscal constraints, the Opposition has chosen theatrics over analysis. Budgetary scrutiny is vital in a democracy, but reducing a complex financial exercise to slogan-driven criticism only weakens parliamentary discourse and does little to advance national economic interests.

Sakunthala K R, Hyderabad

Should the Centre fund development projects in states?

THE Union Budget sets out how the Centre will spend money on national priorities like national highways, railway corridors, power grids, defence, and large infrastructure projects. States, on the other hand, prepare their own budgets to meet local needs like irrigation canals, hospitals, schools, and village roads. Transfers from the Union Budget to states happen in several ways. First, tax devolution: a constitutionally mandated share of central taxes recommended by the Finance Commission. Second, grants-in-aid: funds given to states to cover revenue deficits, disaster relief, or special needs. Third, centrally sponsored schemes: programmes like MGNREGA or PMAY, where both Centre and states share costs. Fourth, central sector schemes: fully funded by the Centre but implemented in states, such as PM-KISAN. Chief Ministers often criticize the Union Budget because it does not announce state-specific projects or increase their share of funds. They feel their states are ignored when allocations are shown only in aggregate. The Union Budget builds national infrastructure, while state budgets decide local development priorities.

Dr O Prasada Rao, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

BENGALURU ONLINE

Govt changes timing of Urdu schools during Ramadan

BENGALURU: The Karnataka government has decided to change the school working hours for Urdu-medium primary, upper primary and high schools across the state during the month of Ramadan in the academic year 2025-26. State Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday said calling the government's move as appeasement of minorities was not right. The decision applies to all government, aided and unaided Urdu-medium schools and follows a review of existing orders and a representation submitted by the Karnataka State Primary School Education Association (R), Bengaluru, a government circular said.

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

Frequent conduct of tribal festivals can propel TG and AP economies

NOMULA SRINIVAS RAO

WHEN the deep forests of Tadvai in Mulugu district begin to reverberate with divine chants, the world witnesses a spectacle unlike any other. The Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, reverentially deemed as the 'Kumbh Mela of the south,' is not merely a religious congregation; it is a seismic cultural event.

For a brief, intense period of 10 to 12 days, the forest transforms into a sea of humanity. Over one crore pilgrims traverse difficult terrains, thousands of buses ply continuously, and tons of 'bangaram' (pure jaggery) are offered to the deities. The sheer scale of logistics, the transactional volume of offerings, and the mobilization of resources prove one thing undeniably: tribal culture has a magnetic pull that can generate massive economic activity.

However, a pertinent question arises. If a biennial or annual event can stimulate such colossal engagement, why restrict this potential to a single, massive calendar date?

There is a pressing need for the state governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to transition from relying solely on “mega-events” to hosting regular, frequent tribal festivals. Such a shift could be the master key to unlocking rural entrepreneurship and revitaliz-

ing local economies in the tribal hinterlands.

Moving beyond the 'boom and bust' cycle:

Currently, the economic benefits of tribal festivals are concentrated in short, explosive bursts. During the Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, local traders, transporters, and artisans see a windfall. But once the deities return to the forest and the temporary shelters are dismantled, the economic silence returns.

By institutionalizing a calendar of frequent tribal festivals—perhaps monthly or quarterly circuits across districts like Adilabad, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Visakhapatnam, and East Godavari—the two Telugu states can create a sustainable economic ecosystem. Regular events would mean a steady stream of income for local populations rather than a once-a-year lottery. It transforms the narrative from “pilgrimage management” to “cultural economy management.”

Untapped potential of tribal entrepreneurship:

The primary beneficiary of frequent festivals would be the tribal entrepreneur. Our tribal belts are reservoirs of unique craftsmanship and organic produce that the urban market desperately craves but rarely accesses.

Handlooms and handicrafts:



Tribal festivals serve as the perfect open-air market for authentic goods. From the intricate Dokra metal crafts of Adilabad to the vibrant handlooms of the Koyas and Gonds, these products often languish due to a lack of market visibility. Regular festivals would provide a permanent platform for artisans to display and sell their work directly to consumers, eliminating middlemen. This encourages the younger generation of artisans to continue their hereditary crafts, viewing them as viable businesses rather than dying traditions.

Culinary entrepreneurship:

In an era where “organic” and “farm-to-table” are the buzzwords, tribal cuisine is the gold standard. The bamboo chicken of Araku or the millet-based rotis of Telangana's tribes are delicacies that urban foodies travel miles to taste. Frequent festivals would allow local families to set

There is a pressing need for the state governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to transition from relying solely on “mega-events” to hosting regular, frequent tribal festivals. Such a shift could be the master key to unlocking rural entrepreneurship and revitalizing local economies in the tribal hinterlands.

up food stalls regularly, turning home kitchens into micro-enterprises. This not only monetizes traditional knowledge but also preserves culinary heritage.

Tourism as a force multiplier:

The jatara proves that people are willing to travel for an experience. However, the modern tourist—especially the younger demographic—seeks “experien-

tial travel.” They want to witness the rhythmic beats of the Gussadi dance, understand the rituals of the Dhimsa, and immerse themselves in nature.

By organizing frequent cultural festivals, the Tourism Departments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh can curate ‘tribal circuits’. These festivals can act as anchors for eco-tourism. When thousands of tourists visit a district for a weekend festival, the ripple effect is felt across the hospitality sector. Homestays, local guides, transport operators, and small shops all thrive. It encourages infrastructure development in remote areas, not just for the sake of construction, but to service a growing service economy.

Empowering women and youth:

The most significant impact of a localised festival economy is on women and youth. In the tribal context, women are often the custodians of agricultural produce and handicrafts. The sale of forest produce—honey, medicinal herbs, tamarind, and the famous ‘bangaram’ (jaggery)—is often managed by women.

Regular market-festivals give Self-Help Groups (SHGs) a consistent revenue channel. Instead of selling raw produce to middlemen at throwaway prices, they can package and brand their products for festival

visitors, capturing higher value. Similarly, tribal youth can be trained as cultural ambassadors, tour guides, and event managers, fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship that reduces migration to overcrowded cities.

The path ahead:

The government of Telangana state has already shown commendable dedication in organising the massive Sammakka Saralamma Jatara. The machinery is in place; the intent is visible. The next step is decentralisation and frequency.

We need not wait for the stars to align for a biennial Jatara to celebrate tribal culture. By creating a robust calendar of smaller, frequent festivals, we can turn every district into a cultural hub. This approach respects the sanctity of the massive annual pilgrimages while acknowledging that culture must be a living, breathing, and earning part of daily life.

Transitioning to frequent tribal festivals is not just about celebration; it is a strategic economic policy. It is about taking the spirit of the ‘bangaram’ offering—which symbolises wealth and purity—and ensuring that wealth flows back into the hands of the people, for whom the forest is their home.

(The writer is a former OSD to former Union Civil Aviation Minister)

Emerging roles in risk, finance, and technology: What students must learn today?

WILLIAM MAY

If you're a student or just starting your career, you may be wondering where the strongest long-term opportunities will be in the coming years. One area that's becoming increasingly relevant is risk management. Hiring trends show strong momentum, with risk-specific roles among the fastest-growing in India and ranked among the top 25 job roles in LinkedIn's 2026 job trends report. What's more, demand for risk professionals is rising not only in traditional financial services, but also across emerging and fast-evolving sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI), sustainability, technology, and consulting. This broad-based demand highlights how risk management has moved from being a niche function to a core business capability.

This growth reflects the way business itself is changing. Market volatility, evolving regulations, climate-related disruptions, and the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence are reshaping how organizations make decisions—both in daily operations and long-term strategic planning. As a result, risk considerations now influence lending decisions, investment strategies, technology adoption, and enterprise-wide planning. Risk management has also become central to how



companies protect their assets, ensure regulatory compliance, and identify opportunities for sustainable growth. Together, these shifts are opening new and diverse career pathways in India and globally, offering students and early professionals meaningful opportunities for long-term professional success.

Opportunities across finance, AI, and sustainability

Financial innovation, digital lending platforms, and advanced technologies continue to increase exposure to financial, operational, technological, and sustainability-related risks. This environment is creating steady demand for pro-

fessionals who can assess risk, interpret data, and support decision-making across different functions within an organization. For instance, credit risk teams play a critical role in evaluating the financial strength of borrowers and counterparties in faster, more data-driven lending environments. Their work helps institutions manage defaults while expanding access to credit.

Market risk professionals, meanwhile, focus on how changes in interest rates, equity markets, foreign exchange movements, and commodity prices impact trading activities and investment portfolios. Their analysis supports institutions in managing vol-

atility and protecting capital. Liquidity, operational, and model risk teams ensure that organizations can meet financial obligations during periods of stress and that internal models, systems, and processes function as intended. Together, these roles form the backbone of modern financial risk management.

The wider use of AI and digital infrastructure has introduced additional challenges that go beyond traditional financial risk. Issues such as model bias, data quality, system transparency, cybersecurity threats, and data privacy concerns are becoming increasingly important. These risks have driven demand for profession-



als who can oversee responsible technology use, strengthen governance frameworks, and ensure compliance with emerging regulations. At the same time, climate change and sustainability pressures are influencing asset values, credit decisions, insurance models, and long-term corporate strategy. As a result, organizations are seeking risk professionals who can connect climate and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data with financial analysis to support resilience and long-term value creation.

Emerging risk specializations and skills in demand

Employers are increas-

ingly focusing on specialized risk roles across finance, AI and data analytics, cybersecurity risk management, ESG and sustainability risk, and regulatory compliance. These areas reflect the growing complexity of global financial systems, digital platforms, and regulatory expectations. Roles such as credit risk analyst, operational risk manager, cybersecurity risk specialist, ESG risk analyst, and compliance specialist continue to see strong and sustained demand across industries.

At the same time, organizations are looking for professionals who combine technical expertise with practical, real-world skills. This includes the

ability to work with data and quantitative models, familiarity with regulatory frameworks, digital and AI literacy, awareness of cybersecurity risks, and the capability to communicate risk clearly to diverse stakeholders. Strong communication skills are particularly important, as risk professionals often need to translate complex analysis into actionable insights for senior management and business teams. Together, these capabilities support informed decision-making in fast-moving financial markets and evolving business environments.

Preparing for risk careers in a changing job market

For students and early

professionals, entry-level risk-related careers can offer both stability and attractive base salary potential relative to other sectors, depending on skills, location, and the organization. Over time, as professionals gain experience and develop specialized expertise, they can progress into higher-earning risk specialist or leadership roles, where annual total compensation can be significantly higher.

To build a strong foundation, students can consider pursuing dedicated, globally recognized certification and certificate programmes in risk management across areas such as finance, sustainability, and AI. These programmes help develop essential analytical, technical, and governance-related skills that are increasingly valued by employers. They are relevant across banking, asset management, consulting, technology firms, and real-economy organizations focused on navigating financial markets, sustainability challenges, and the growing use of Generative AI. By investing early in these skills, students can position themselves strongly for the evolving world of work and long-term career growth in risk management.

(The author is Managing Director, Global Head of Certifications and Educational Programs)

Students showcase next-gen space & robotics innovations

MIT inaugurated the International Rover Challenge (IRC) 2026 and the International Space Drone Challenge (ISDC) 2026. The events are being organised in collaboration with the Space Robotics Society (SPROS) and have drawn participation from young innovators across India and overseas.

The inauguration marked the beginning of a global convergence of student-led teams showcasing technological innovation, scientific curiosity, and collaborative problem-solving in the fields of space robotics and aerial systems. This year's editions feature 33 national and international rover teams and 22 drone teams, underscoring the growing global footprint of the two competitions.

Lt. Gen. (Dr.) M. D. Venkatesh, VSM (Retd.), Vice Chancellor of MAHE, presided over the ceremony as Chief Guest. Welcoming participants, he highlighted that platforms such as IRC and ISDC reflect MAHE's



philosophy of experiential learning, where classroom knowledge is translated into real-world engineering solutions.

He noted that such competitions foster perseverance, confidence, and innovation, while also contributing to technological advancement, nation-building, and economic growth.

Cdr. (Dr.) Anil Rana, Director, MIT, emphasised the vibrant culture of innovation on campus and reiterated the institute's commitment to holistic education beyond academ-

ics. He highlighted MIT's strong ecosystem of student engagement through 26 major project teams and over 70 technical and cultural clubs, along with experiential initiatives that build resilience and adaptability among students.

The event also acknowledged Sagar Dhaka, MIT alumnus (EEE, Class of 2019) and Founder of SPROS, for his leadership and continued association with his alma mater in promoting global student innovation in robotics and aerospace technologies.

Celebrating healers, leaders, and changemakers



National Women Physicians Day 2026 is a moment to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of women doctors who serve at the healthcare systems worldwide. Observed on February 3, the birthday of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell—the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States—this day honors both the pioneers who broke barriers and the present-day physicians who continue to redefine medicine through skill, compassion, and leadership. Women physicians play a vital role across every specialty, from primary care and pediatrics to surgery, research, public health, and medical education. Beyond clinical excellence, they are often at the

forefront of patient advocacy, community health initiatives, and innovation. Their work has been especially visible in recent years, as women doctors have led responses to public health crises, advanced medical research, and championed equitable access to care.

Despite these achievements, women physicians continue to face challenges, including gender bias, pay gaps, underrepresentation in leadership, and the pressure of balancing demanding careers with personal responsibilities. National Women Physicians Day is not only a celebration, but also a reminder of the need for continued progress toward equity, inclusion, and supportive work environments within healthcare.

Scientists develop single-unit device to capture, save solar energy

NEW DELHI

Indian scientists at the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed a solar-powered energy storage device that can both capture and store energy in a single unit, marking a major step towards clean, self-sustaining storage systems, an official statement said.

Unlike conventional solar systems that require separate units for energy harvesting and storage, the new technology can do both functions, reducing cost and energy losses during conversion, it said.

The statement from the Ministry of Science and Technology said the device known as photo-rechargeable supercapacitor was developed by researchers at the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences, Bengaluru under DST.

The new technology paves way for efficient, low cost, and eco-friendly power solutions for portable, wearable, and off-grid technologies, it said.

Conventional hybrid systems relied on additional power management electronics to regulate voltage and current



mismatches between the energy harvester and the storage unit.

The resultant system complexity and device footprint was detrimental for miniaturised and autonomous devices, the statement said. The innovation used the help of binder-free use of nickel-cobalt oxide (NiCo2O4) nanowires, which have been uniformly grown on nickel foam using a simple in situ hydrothermal process.

"These nanowires, only a few nanometres in diameter and several micrometres long, form a highly porous and conductive 3D network that efficiently absorbs sunlight and stores electrical charge. This unique architecture allowed the material to act simultaneously as a solar energy harvester and a supercapacitor elec-

trode," the statement detailed.

When tested for real-world applications, the device delivered a stable output voltage of 1.2 volts, maintained 88 per cent of its capacitance retention even after 1,000 photo-charging cycles.

Further, it operated efficiently under varying sunlight conditions—from low indoor illumination to intense sunlight. This stability indicates that the nanowire structure can endure both mechanical and electrochemical stress over extended periods of use, the statement noted.

The self-charging power system can function anywhere even in remote regions without access to an electrical grid and can substantially reduce dependence on fossil fuels and conventional batteries.

Nasr School hosts farewell for ISC batch

HYDERABAD

Nasr School hosted a farewell ceremony for the outgoing students of Classes X and XII of the ISC Batch of 2025–2026, celebrating the completion of an important chapter in their academic journey. The evening was a graceful blend of tradition, talent, emotion, and togetherness, reflecting the core values of the institution.

The programme began with a vibrant welcome that set an upbeat tone for the celebrations. One of the most awaited highlights was the Ramp Walk, where students from both classes took to the stage with remarkable confidence and elegance. Showcasing individuality, charm, and poise, the participants impressed the audience as the event progressed through multiple rounds. The final

round featured a Question-and-Answer segment, testing the finalists' clarity of thought, articulation, and presence of mind.

The event was judged by distinguished guests from the creative field. Lucky Lakshmi Naidu—model, actress, journalist, and NCC achiever—and Madhuri Atluri, renowned designer and Mrs. Hyderabad 2019, brought valuable insights and inspi-

ration through their experience and achievements. As a gesture of appreciation and sustainability, the guests were welcomed with saplings.

The cultural segment added colour and energy to the evening, with captivating dance performances and melodious songs presented by students of Classes IX and XI. A soulful trumpet performance and an energetic flash mob further elevated

the atmosphere, followed by a lively DJ session that allowed students to celebrate and create lasting memories.

The declaration of titles, recognising students for their confidence, stage presence, and unique personalities.

Principal Mir Mohiuddin Mohammed announced the winners and addressed the gathering, extending his blessings and best wishes to the outgoing batch.





Shivaranjani Harish



Sujata & Preetisha

ANNA RAO GANGAVALLI

The fourth edition of 'Ramayana Kalpavrkasam,' presented by Shankarananda Kalakshetra and Natyarambha, featured a galaxy of performances, talks, and interactive sessions. CCRT, Madhapur, was the venue for the three-day event (January 30th–February 1st, 2026). Always attended by an overflowing audience, the yearly event, conceived and curated by

Padma Shri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, has become an eagerly awaited star attraction in the cultural landscape of Hyderabad. After the inauguration on the first day by Dr. Sandhya Purecha, Chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the evening featured a poignant Odissi duet titled 'Seeta Haran', presented by Dr. Sujata Mohapatra and her daughter Preetisha. Sujata wore a green costume with blue borders, while Preetisha

Ramayana Kalpavrkasam returns with a grand celebration of dance, music and devotion

The fourth edition of 'Ramayana Kalpavrkasam,' presented by Shankarananda Kalakshetra and Natyarambha, celebrated India's epic heritage through a rich confluence of dance, music, and dialogue. Held at CCRT, Madhapur, the three-day festival offered audiences an immersive journey into the Ramayana through performances, talks, and interactive sessions. Conceived and curated by Padma Shri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, the annual event continues to be a highlight of Hyderabad's cultural calendar



Ananda Shankar & Raghav Krishna



Rekha Achyutani

wore the same colours in reverse. Debiprasad Mishra's lighting effects created a tracery of lights moving in incandescent columns across the stage like glowing pillars, enveloping the artistes. The duo's synergy was in full play as they alternated in the role of Ravana, which was the highlighted sequence of the piece. As he abducts Sita, who is persuaded to step over the threshold of safety,

the valiantly loyal Jatayu tries to rescue her. After a striking duel, the great eagle is defeated. Bleeding and torn, Jatayu expires in Rama's lap. Exquisite abhinaya was displayed throughout. Next came Sandeep Narayan's Carnatic vocal concert, balancing classical rigour with contemporary sensibility and receiving exceptional audience recognition. Producing rapture, the



Carnatic Fusion

swara alaap of Kambhoji was melodiously interpreted. Immersive Rama rasa was fully appreciated in the various other compositions in different ragas and languages, some requested by aficionados of the exceedingly popular singer. Day two began at dawn with a deeply absorbing pravachanam on Sita Rama Kalyanam by the famous Chaganti Koteswara Rao. The divine marriage was described as the sacred union of Dharma and Shakti. He explained that Sita was central to the Avatar's unfolding to achieve the destruction of Ravana. A thought-provoking dialogue between Dr. Ananda Shankar and Raghava Krishna of BRHAT

explored the role of the arts in reclaiming India's civilisation in a contemporary context. Dharma, truth, and art are inseparable, and knowledge elevates consciousness. Dr. Mohan Raghavan examined the Ramayana experience with regard to technology, while critiquing colonial interpretations of Indic texts. Charusmitha Rao and Shivaranjani Harish presented 'Navarasa through the Ramayana', interspersing Bharatanatyam with design and storytelling. The evening was exciting with the mesmerising puppet-style dance drama 'The Ramayana' by Rangasri Little Ballet Theatre, Bhopal, where human puppets glided as though

controlled by unseen strings. Entertainingly vibrant folk music by Bhungar Khan and the Manganiyar group Dharohar from Barmer, Rajasthan, with fast pacing and beats, energised the spectators at the day's conclusion. The final day of the festival opened with Chaganti Koteswara Rao's discourse on Hanumat Darshanam. Hanuman's strength, devotion, and importance were extolled using the metaphor of the connecting knot of flowers in a garland, symbolising him as the link between Rama and Sita during and after their separation. Historian T. S. Krishnan delivered a talk drawing on his extensive research on South Indian temples, inscriptions,

and literature, reflecting on the importance of awareness in shaping narratives. Rekha Achyutani spoke about Dharmic parenting, noting that while modern education may lead to success, true happiness lies in Indian traditional approaches that nurture grounded and timeless Bharatiya values. An engaging and interactive quiz session followed, reinforcing key Ramayana themes. As evening approached, Shrinivasa Varakhedi, Vice-Chancellor of the Central Sanskrit University, delivered a scholarly address on the epic's ethical framework and its continued relevance today. The festival concluded exuberantly on a high note with a classical fusion concert led by music producer Mahesh Raghavan. Tradition was reimagined in Carnatic music tailored to contemporary tastes while staying rooted in heritage. The medley of blended vocals and instruments was a spectacular finale, heartily enjoyed by the huge audience, who expressed their admiration with tremendous applause. Also set up were a host of Kala Grama artisanal stalls with local merchandise, including a Ramayana Dolls display, which was eye-catching and thronged with customers.

Kalpana Iyer, the original 'Ramba Ho' girl, reveals she danced barefoot despite bleeding feet for the song

In an exclusive conversation, Bollywood veteran star Kalpana Iyer, the woman of the moment, opened up about the grit and physical toll behind her iconic dance performances. The actress' is currently stirring headlines, as a recent video of her dancing to her legendary number "Ramba Ho" at the age of 70 took the internet by storm. Talking to IANS, the actress recalled her early years in the industry as a dancer. Kalpana spoke candidly about dancing through pain, bruises, and bleeding feet, long before comfort and vanity became industry norms. "I started dancing at 17, and I have never complained. I have shared green rooms, danced barefoot with scraped and bloodied soles, during Ramba Ho and have even done Raja Hindustani



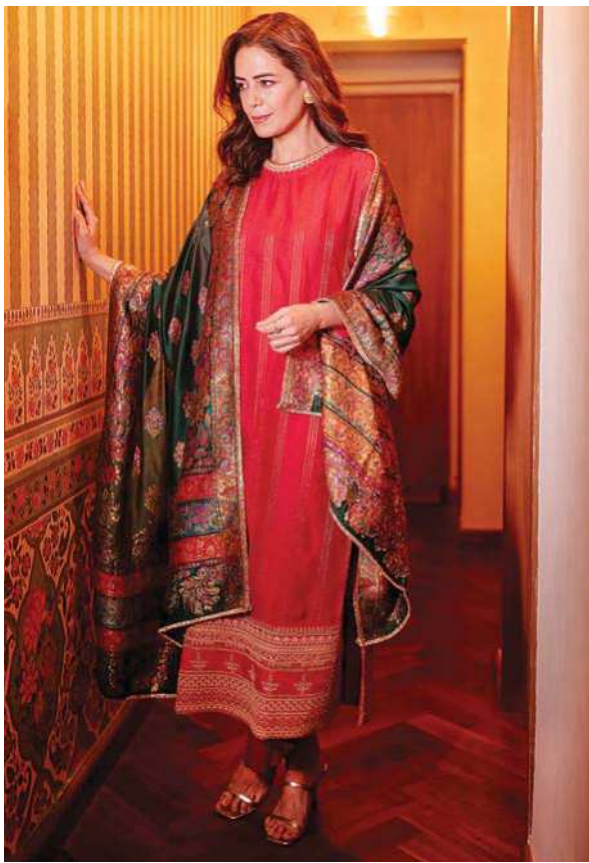
barefoot with injury. I didn't have time to complain; I just worked and kept moving focusing on the opportunities that came my way and was so grateful for it. Dance has brought me so much joy in my life," she said, reflecting on an era where perseverance mattered more than privileges. For Kalpana, in her own words, dance was never just a performance but a calling that demanded complete surrender, regardless of physical hardship.

Speaking about today's generation of performers, Kalpana was generous in her praise, stressing that comparisons between any eras of Bollywood is unfair. "These days, girls have to put in a lot more effort. We did too, I don't deny that, but today you can see the detailing and the investment producers make. The more effort you put in, the more is invested in you. They look beautiful, their clothes are gorgeous, and some of them dance exquisitely. Times have changed and I respect that completely. I have immense love for all these girls and I truly wish them well," she shared. Taking a trip down memory lane, Kalpana explained that it were her stark features and individuality that defined her success. She credited her slim frame, long legs, and expressive movement for

setting her apart in her time, while also acknowledging the role of camera work. From songs like 'Jab Chhaaye Mera Jaadu' and 'Hari Om Hari' to many hit movies, she described her journey as fulfilling and unique. Now open to a second innings, Kalpana said she is willing to explore any role, as long as it respects her age and comfort, adding that she is even open to playing a naani or daadi. The actress further also clarified a long-held myth about Ramba Ho shoot. Kalpana revealed that the song was not shot in Goa, as widely believed. "We had shot at Nataraj Studio in Mumbai. Prema and I danced in a dance studio, right in front of Ramanand Sagar's office," she said, offering a behind-the-scenes detail.

Mona Singh on mistakes: They are lessons that help you grow as a human being

Actress Mona Singh strongly believes that mistakes are an essential part of life and should be treated as lessons rather than burdens to carry forward. Sharing her thoughts, the actress said that when she makes a mistake, she prefers to reflect on it, learn from it, and move on, rather than feeling guilty or weighed down by it. According to her, that is the only way to truly move ahead in life. Asked whether she ponders over the mistakes she makes or has learnt to accept them and move on, Mona, who is all set to be seen in the second season of the Netflix series 'Kohrra', said: "That's the only way to go forward in life, I think — and not treat it as a mistake or feel guilty about it and carry that baggage. It's a lesson." Mona added that life constantly teaches people valuable lessons, often through the people who enter their lives. She said: "And I think that's what life does. It keeps teaching us those lessons. People come into our lives for a certain reason."



She shared that some relationships last, while others fade with time, but each one serves a purpose and leaves behind a learning experience. "Some stay, some go. But they always teach you a lesson. And I think that's very, very human. And that's the way forward, if you don't want to stay bitter and want to grow and evolve as a human being," said the actress. The new chapter of 'Kohrra' also stars Barun Sobti and Rannvijay Singha. The second season will stream on Netflix starting February 11. In the new season, Barun reprises his role as the sharp-witted investigator Amarpal Garundi, who teams up with a new character played by Mona to solve a complex, dark murder mystery of a woman. 'Kohrra' season 2 is scheduled to premiere on February 11. Created and written by Gunjit Chopra, Diggi Sisodia, and Sudip Sharma, Season 2 brings a fresh case and a new pairing, rooted once again in Punjab's bleak, wintry terrain where silence often speaks louder than a confession.

A Film Squad Production in association with Act Three, produced by Saurabh Malhotra, Sudip Sharma, Manuj Mittra, and Tina Tharwani, Season 2 also marks an important creative evolution for the series. Talking about Mona, she is widely recognised for playing the eponymous heroine in the soap opera 'Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin'. The actress is also known for her work in 'Kya Huaa Tera Vaada', 'Pyaar Ko Ho Jaane Do', and 'Kavach... Kaali Shaktiyon Se'. She made her film debut with a supporting role in Rajkumar Hirani's comedy-drama '3 Idiots' in 2009.

CROSSWORD

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- Mental health (6)
- Sumerian sun god (4)

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Solution to February 2

BIZ BRIEFS

Bridgestone's new partnership

Bridgestone India has announced a new collaboration with Parmish Verma, a Punjabi singer and actor as part of its strategy to deepen consumer engagement in key regional markets. Rajiv Sharma, Executive Director, Bridgestone India, said: "North India is a strategically important market for us. Parmish Verma's credibility and deep connection with audiences make him an ideal partner to represent Bridgestone. This collaboration enables us to engage meaningfully with young consumers."

HIET partners with Air India

Hindustan Institute of Engineering and Technology (HIET), part of the Hindustan Group of Institutions (HGI), announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Air India Limited at Wings India 2026 at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad. Under the agreement, HIET will deliver structured training for Category B1.1 (Aeroplane Turbine) and Category B2 (Avionics) engineers selected by Air India. The programme is designed to support the airline's growing requirement for licensed aircraft maintenance engineers amid rapid fleet.

Classic Legends' new outlet

Classic Legends marks an important milestone in its journey of strengthening technical capability and service excellence with the inauguration of the Advanced National Training Centre at its Pithampur plant in Indore. Anupam Thareja, Co-Founder, Classic Legends, said: "As our brands continue to grow, strengthening our service capability ecosystem becomes extremely important. The Advanced National Training Centre is a strategic investment in people, skills and infrastructure, aimed at building future-ready technicians."

Montra Electric gets certification

Montra Electric (e-M&HCV business vertical), part of the Murugappa Group, has become the first heavy-duty electric truck manufacturer in the country to receive certification under the Government of India's PM E-DRIVE Scheme. HD Kumaraswamy, Union Minister, said: "The PM E-DRIVE scheme is a testament to the growing prowess of Indian innovation in the heavy-duty electric vehicle segment. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, we are committed to decarbonizing our logistics."

Xiaomi opens 15 service centres

Xiaomi announced the strategic expansion of its Premium Service Centre network in India with the launch of premium service centres across 15 new cities. Sudhin Mathur, COO, Xiaomi India, said: "The strong response to our first 10 Premium Service Centres reaffirmed that customers increasingly value faster, more dependable, and experience-led after-sales support. As part of Xiaomi's value-for-experience strategy for 2026, the expansion into 15 additional cities is a natural next step."

Mkts rise over 1% as value buying spurs rebound on D-St

BLUE-CHIP OIL & GAS, BANKING AND AUTO SHARES SPURRED REBOUNDS AFTER FACING A MASSIVE DRUBBING ON BUDGET DAY

Recovery Mode

- BSE-Sensex rallied 943.52pts or (+1.17%) to 81,666.46
- NSE-Nifty climbed 262.95pts or (+1.06%) to 25,088.40
- FII's offloaded Rs588.34 cr on Sunday



MUMBAI: Stock markets rebounded on Monday with benchmark Sensex jumping by 943 points on value buying in blue-chip oil & gas, banking and auto shares after facing a massive drubbing on the Budget day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 943.52 points or 1.17 per cent, to settle at 81,666.46. During the day, it surged 1,009.31 points or 1.25 per cent to a high of 81,732.25. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 262.95 points or 1.06 per cent to end at 25,088.40. During the day, it advanced 282.65 points or 1.13 per cent to 25,108.10.

Value buying after a sharp correction on Budget day and a steep decline in global crude oil prices helped key indices recover, experts said. From the Sensex firms, Power Grid jumped 7.61 per cent and Adani Ports climbed 4.76 per cent. Bharat Electronics, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, InterGlobe Aviation, ICICI Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the other major gainers. Axis Bank, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Trent and Titan were the laggards.

Among indices, BSE Utilities jumped the most by 2.66 per cent, followed by power (2.54 per cent), services (2.38 per cent), energy (1.98 per cent), auto (1.98 per cent), oil & gas (1.92 per cent) and metal (1.90 per cent). IT, BSE Focused IT and healthcare were the laggards.

India's manufacturing sector activity witnessed a slight recovery in January, amid faster increase in new orders, even as business confidence slipped to its lowest level in three-and-a-half years, a monthly survey said on Monday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), rose from a two-year low of 55 in December to 55.4 in January.

In the PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday announced measures to boost manufacturing, offered long-term tax incentives for global data centres, and support for agriculture and tourism as she unveiled a Rs 53.5 lakh crore Union Budget for 2026-27, seen as a long-term blueprint for sustaining growth amid rising global risks. Shunning populist measures despite five key states, including West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, heading to polls, the Budget signalled continued fiscal consolidation and infrastructure spending.

Non-IT sectors lead white-collar hiring with 3% growth in Jan

BPO/ITES among the top 5 sectors to register a double-digit YoY growth, says report

Positive growth

- BPO/ITES sector posted a 21% growth in hiring
- Hospitality/travel sector registered a 15% rise
- Insurance sector also registered more than 7% growth
- However, banking and financial services saw a decline of 15%



NEW DELHI

INDIA'S white-collar hiring began 2026 on a steady footing, with a 3 per cent rise (year-on-year) in January, driven by non-IT sectors and fresher hiring, a report showed on Monday.

Non-IT sectors were the primary drivers of this growth, with BPO/ITES surging more than 21 per cent, hospitality/travel climbing over 15 per cent, insurance advancing more than 7 per cent, and healthcare gaining more than 5 per cent, as per the Naukri Job-Speak Index.

Banking and financial services was one major non-IT sector to see a decline, slipping 15 per cent (on-year). Meanwhile, the IT sector remained flat for the month. Within this landscape, AI/ML roles sustained strong momentum with a more than 34 per cent rise.

Over the past three months, BPO/ITES has consistently ranked among the top 5 sectors for double-digit YoY growth.

In January 2026, hiring in the sector rose 21 per cent YoY, supported by broad-based demand across experience levels, including a strong 39 per cent increase in fresher hiring and a 9 per cent rise among professionals with 13-16 years of experience. Non-metro cities emerged as key drivers, with Jaipur (more than 66 per cent) and Ahmedabad (over 43 per cent) posting stand-out contributions. Foreign multinational corporations (MNCs) were a major force behind this surge, contributing more than an 80 per cent increase in hiring activity, said the report.

"It's encouraging to see sustained year-on-year growth in key sectors like BPO/ITES and Hospitality. These areas have shown consistent momentum over recent months and have kicked off 2026 on a strong, positive note. Equally promising is the robust performance from Indian IT MNCs, which bodes well for the overall job market," said Dr Pawan Goyal, Chief Business Officer, Naukri.

INDIAWOOD event in B'luru from Feb 26

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

FPIs offloaded ₹36,000-cr in Jan

Amid global uncertainties, going ahead the sharp increase of STT in futures and options is likely to act as a marginal negative for FPI flows in the near term



NEW DELHI: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) remained in a selling mode in January, withdrawing nearly Rs36,000 crore (about \$3.97 billion) as global uncertainties persisted. Meanwhile, a higher securities transaction tax (STT) proposed in the Union Budget may weigh on overseas investor participation in the near future.

The recent flight of foreign capital followed the worst outflow of Rs 1.66 lakh crore (\$18.9 billion) recorded in 2025, triggered by volatile currency movements, global trade tensions and concerns over potential US tariffs and stretched market valuations.

Going ahead, the sharp increase of STT in futures and options is likely to act as a marginal negative for FPI flows in the near term, particularly for high-frequency and derivative-focused global funds, said Akash Shah, Technical Research Analyst at Choice Equity Broking.

"While the STT hike may help boost tax collections, it risks dampening trading volumes and could slow tactical FPI participation. To meaningfully revive sustained FPI inflows, investors will be looking more closely at macro stability, the rupee movement, and consistency in tax policy rather than just growth optics," he added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget speech for 2026-27, announced a proposal to raise the STT on futures to 0.05 per cent from the present 0.02 per cent and STT on options premium and exercise of options to be raised to 0.15 per cent from the present rate of 0.1 per cent and 0.125 per cent, respectively.

According to data from

NSDL, FPIs pulled out Rs35,962 crore from Indian equities in January. This continued selling pressure by FPIs reflects a combination of global and domestic drivers impacting foreign investor sentiment.

The key reasons for the FPIs sell-off include US tariff threats on Europe amid the Greenland dispute, which sparked global risk-off sentiment, alongside a stronger US dollar, elevated bond yields, rupee weakness to Rs90-92 levels, and stretched valuations, Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst, Angul One Ltd, said. Himanshu Srivastava, Principal, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said, "Globally, persistent risk aversion, still elevated interest rates in developed markets, and a strengthening US dollar have encouraged capital to remain on the sidelines or rotate into other markets perceived to offer better risk-adjusted returns."

Share buybacks to be taxed as capital gains for shareholders



NEW DELHI: In a move to protect minority shareholders and curb tax arbitrage by promoters, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday proposed a major overhaul of the taxation framework governing share buybacks. Presenting the Union Budget 2026-27, Sitharaman said that buybacks will be taxed as capital gains for all categories of shareholders.

To discourage misuse of tax arbitrage, promoters will be subject to an additional buy-back tax, raising the effective tax rate to 22 per cent for corporate promoters and 30 per cent for non-corporate promoters, she stated. Sitharaman said, "Change in taxation of buyback was brought in to address the improper use of buyback route by promoters." Market experts believe that the higher tax burden on promoters may lead companies to reassess their capital allocation strategies between dividends and buybacks.

RoopBhootra, Whole-time Director, Anand Rathi Share and Stock Brokers, said: "The proposed move is a positive

for individual shareholders as tax liability reduces from 30 per cent (highest slab rate) to capital gains rates (short term 20 per cent and long-term 12.5 per cent) and negative for corporates and discourages buyback and pushes corporates to use reserves for capital expenditure and/or R&D."

"Revamp of buyback tax framework, and the rise in STT (Securities Transaction tax) on futures and options will influence investor behaviour and short-term sentiments," ParizadSirwalla, Partner and Head, Global Mobility Services- Tax, KPMG in India, said.

In market parlance, buy-back tax is a kind of tax levied on companies that buyback their own shares from shareholders. Generally, governments impose this tax to restrain firms from distributing profits to shareholders through share buybacks rather than paying dividends.

Union Budget redefines the individual tax experience

This Budget 2026-27 marks a quiet but powerful shift in India's personal taxation philosophy

K NARESH KUMAR

WITH the Budget now placed before Parliament, many who wait anxiously for this annual exercise will likely feel a sense of relief. Personally, I believe the Budget—at least from an individual's perspective—should ideally be a largely non-consequential event, intervening only when course correction or genuinely transformative change is required. Instead, it has gradually evolved into a highly hyped spectacle, one that often inflates expectations and, in turn, breeds disappointment. Over time, this anticipation has made the Budget less about steady governance and more about headline-driven outcomes.

Ironically, some of the most consequential fiscal decisions in recent years have been announced outside the Budget itself—whether it was the corporate tax reductions in 2019 or the personal income tax slab changes in 2024. This shift suggests a deliberate move by the government to decouple major

policy actions from Budget Day theatrics, reserving the Budget for consolidation rather than surprise.

This Union Budget 2026-27 marks a quiet but powerful shift in India's personal taxation philosophy—from enforcement-heavy compliance to citizen-centric tax design. At the heart of the Budget lies the Income Tax Act, 2025, replacing a 65-year-old law with one built for a digital, mobile, globally connected taxpayer. Simplified language, redesigned forms, and automation are announced signaling a clear intent: compliance should feel routine, not risky. This is the biggest structural change in decades possibly with less legal interpretation, fewer disputes and easier DIY (Do-It-Yourself) compliance.

The most immediate relief comes through cash-flow friendly measures. By slashing TCS on overseas travel, education, and medical remittances to 2 per cent from 5 per cent, the government addresses a long-standing grievance—money being col-



In a rare display of empathy, the Budget fully exempts interest awarded by Motor Accident Claims Tribunals from tax. Compensation meant for rehabilitation will no longer be diluted by tax deductions through TDS (Tax Deducted at Source)—a small change with profound human impact.

lected upfront and refunded months later. For families funding education abroad or managing medical emergencies, this is real, tangible relief. It results in lower cash

blockages, fewer refunds, and immediate liquidity relief especially for students, families and global Indians. Also, customs duty on imports for personal usage was proposed

to cut to 10 per cent from 20 per cent.

In a rare display of empathy, the Budget fully exempts interest awarded by Motor Accident Claims Tribunals from tax. Compensation meant for rehabilitation will no longer be diluted by tax deductions through TDS (Tax Deducted at Source)—a small change with profound human impact. No officer interaction with automated lower/nil TDS certificates for small taxpayers. This removes a major friction for retirees, pensioners, freelancers and investors with multiple income sources.

Compliance reforms go beyond rates. Automated lower-TDS certificates, centralized Form 15G/15H submission via depositories, and extended timelines for revising returns reflect an understanding of how people actually earn, invest, and make mistakes. The system now corrects errors rather than punishing them. ITR (Income Tax Return) revision deadlines are extended to 31st March with a nominal

fee. Also, the filing of returns for non-audit business cases & trusts is extended to 31st Aug, lowering stress, fewer penalties and better alignment with real-life realities.

Perhaps the most progressive move is the one-time foreign asset disclosure window. In an era of global careers and digital assets, inadvertent non-disclosure is common. A six-month amnesty-style window is proposed for small foreign income/asset declaration, targeted at students, tech employees, relocated NRIs and first-time global earners. By offering immunity for small assets and a clean-up window without stigma, the government chooses trust over threat. The limit is set at small non-immovable assets less than 20 Lakh under Black Money Act. This is a humane correction mechanism instead of criminalization for genuine mistakes.

Share buy-backs are now taxed as capital gains for all shareholders with an additional tax for the promotor to disincentivize misuse of tax arbitrage. That said, the

Budget also nudges behaviour. Higher STT (Securities Transaction Tax) on derivatives reminds retail traders that leverage and speculation carry costs—both financial and systemic. The STT increased on futures by 0.05 per cent and options by 0.15 per cent. The message is subtle but firm: productive investing over churn, thus increasing barriers for frequent traders while long-term investors remain unaffected. Hope retail investors take note.

In sum, Budget 2026-27 does not merely tweak slabs or rates. It reimagines the relationship between the individual and the tax system—simpler, fairer, and more aligned with modern economic life. For the honest taxpayer, this is one of the most psychologically reassuring Budgets in recent memory.

(The author is a partner with "Wealocity Analytics", a SEBI registered Research Analyst firm and could be reached at info@wealocity-analytics.com)

APSRTC to introduce 2,500 electric, CNG buses in five yrs

● Corporation's new VC&MD Krishna Babu says they will procure 1,050 electric buses under PM e-Bus scheme; focus will be on green mobility and fuel savings

● 'Stree Shakti' boosted ridership as women commuters rise to 67%, occupancy nears 90%

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

ANDHRA Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) new vice-chairman and managing director M T Krishna Babu on Monday unveiled a comprehensive plan to introduce electric buses across the state over the next five years. Under the PM e-Bus scheme, he said 1,050 electric buses would be inducted, while plans are in place to introduce another 1,450 electric and CNG buses in the coming days.

Krishna Babu took charge as VC & MD at the RTC headquarters in RTC House here following retirement of Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao whose three months service



APSRTC vice-chairman and managing director M T Krishna Babu taking charge at the RTC headquarters in Vijayawada on Monday. He later chaired a review meeting with senior officials

extension expired on January 31. Krishna Babu later conducted a review meeting with executive directors, heads of departments, and district public transport officers to assess the corporation's financial position, bus maintenance, passenger services, bus station amenities, and employee welfare.

Addressing officials, he said the induction of electric and CNG buses would play a crucial role in reducing fuel consumption in urban and inter-urban transport, controlling pollution, improving road safety, and promoting sustainable mobility. He noted that over the next five years, the shift to electric buses would not only save energy and reduce fuel costs, but also provide modern and comfortable public transport facilities while strengthening APSRTC's financial position.

Directing officials to im-

prove operational efficiency and passenger services, he reviewed the 'Stree Shakti' scheme launched by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. He said 23-25 lakh women passengers are availing free travel daily, with women commuters accounting for 65-67 per cent of total ridership. He said that bus occupancy has reached nearly 90 per cent, significantly contributing to APSRTC's financial stability.

Referring to an IVRS survey, Krishna Babu said around 80 per cent of passengers expressed satisfaction with RTC services, while 20% pointed out issues related to toilets and drinking water facilities at bus stations. He instructed officials to address these shortcomings immediately. The VC & MD also discussed commercial utilisation of vacant RTC lands and the expansion of cargo services,

which currently generate about Rs 210 crore annually, to further strengthen non-fare revenue.

Highlighting employee welfare, he said there are nearly five lakh government employees in the State and their role in service delivery is vital. He clarified that all government welfare schemes and facilities would be extended equally to public transport department (PTD) employees. He assured that the government is giving special priority to job security, improved working conditions, and the phased resolution of pending employee grievances.

Orders have been issued to provide alternative employment or Additional Monetary Benefits (AMB) to 682 PTD employees declared medically unfit after January 1, 2020. He said the measure would provide significant financial relief to the affected families.



Ambati remanded to 14 days' judicial custody amid political row

- YSRCP leader handed over to Rajahmundry central jail after a Guntur court remands him
- Multiple cases filed citing threats, abusive language and obstruction of police; 16 cases registered statewide
- High Court orders police protection for Rambabu's family after alleged attacks by TDP activists on his residence and office

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GUNTUR

YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu was remanded to 14 days of judicial custody by Guntur special mobile court on Monday. Rambabu was arrested on Saturday in connection with a case registered at the Nallapadu police station over his derogatory remarks against Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Police booked him under Sections 126(2) and 132 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Another case was registered under Sections 126(2), 196(1), 352, 351(2) and 292, citing threats, abusive language and derogatory remarks.

Police said Rambabu was taken to Rajahmundry Central Jail late on Sunday night and formally handed over to jail authorities in the early hours thereafter. According to police, the cases relate to incidents reported on Saturday at Chillies Centre in Gorantla, where Rambabu allegedly obstructed police personnel on traffic duty and was involved in a confrontation linked to the removal of a TDP banner near the NTR statue.

A separate case was registered based on a complaint by a local TDP leader, accusing Rambabu of "issuing threats, using abusive language and making derogatory remarks" against the Chief Minister during a press conference and later at the site, police said.

Police informed the court that 16 cases had been registered against Rambabu



across the state in connection with his remarks against the Chief Minister. Officials said his statements had triggered political debate and public unrest, leading to law and order concerns.

During the hearing, Rambabu alleged that police officials had harassed him. He also told the court that no case was registered despite alleged attacks by TDP activists on his office and damage to furniture.

Separately, Rambabu's wife filed a petition in the High Court seeking police protection, alleging attacks by TDP activists on their residence and office in Guntur city. She claimed that activists had also set fire to a car belonging to the family.

Following the High Court's directions, police pickets were set up at Rambabu's residence and office in Navabharat Nagar, Guntur, on Monday, and security measures were put in place for his family.

On the other hand, the YSRCP alleged that Rambabu was being "politically targeted" and claimed there was "a serious threat" to his life following the incidents.

BACKLASH AGAINST YSRCP LEADERS

Jagan accuses Naidu govt of anarchy, warns of public rebellion

- YSRCP chief blames the TDP-led govt for fostering violence, citing attacks on the houses of former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Jogi Ramesh
- Links the incidents to the Tirumala laddu ghee controversy, claiming central labs like NDDB and NDRI had exposed the govt's 'false allegations'
- Calling it 'jungle raj' and 'barbaric rule,' the former CM warns that public anger is mounting and such intimidation would ultimately 'burn down' the govt

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday, accusing the government of encouraging violence and intimidation against opposition leaders.

Reacting to the recent attacks on the houses of former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Jogi Ramesh, Jagan alleged that the incidents reflected "anarchy and barbaric rule" in the state.

In a strongly worded post on social media platform X, Jagan said Naidu was under the illusion that such acts

would instil fear among political opponents. "You set fire to the houses of Ambati Rambabu and Jogi Ramesh and think you have created fear through these heinous acts. This is your delusion. Remember, Chandrababu, you have actually set fire to your own government," he said.

Jagan connected the incidents to the Tirumala laddu ghee controversy and recent reports by central agencies. He said laboratories such as the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) had exposed what he called the government's "false allegations".

"When Central govern-



ment laboratories proved your accusations wrong and people questioned your mistakes, you could not digest it. That frustration has now turned into violence," Jagan alleged. He claimed that instead of accepting facts, the ruling party was resorting to intimidation.

Describing the attacks as a dangerous sign for democracy, the YSRCP chief said the burning of opposition leaders' houses symbolised "jungle raj" in Andhra Pradesh. "The fire set to their houses reflects anarchy and barbaric governance. The flames lit against democracy will eventually burn down your own government," he warned. Jagan said public anger was steadily rising and

would soon erupt against the ruling dispensation. "In the coming days, the flames of people's anger will reduce your government to ashes," he said. Issuing a direct warning to Chief Minister Naidu, Jagan said history had repeatedly shown that governments which relied on force and intimidation never survived. "In a democracy, the hand that lights the fire of violence will inevitably get burned. Anarchic rule will come to an end. The jungle raj you created will be buried," he wrote. He also asserted that political power gained through fear would not last and that democratic resistance would ultimately prevail.

LADDU GHEE CASE

CBI chargesheet sparks fresh political row

- It finds Harsh Fresh Dairy supplied adulterated ghee to TTD as early as Fe 2019
- It's a proxy for Bhole Baba Dairy and the supply occurred during the TDP-led NDA government's tenure in the state
- Former TTD chairman Bhumana also accuses that dairies got repeated approvals under TDP rule

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

THE CBI chargesheet in the Tirupati ghee adulteration case has triggered a political storm in the state, with both the ruling and opposition parties trading charges and selectively citing portions of the document to back their claims.

Amid the political sparring, the chargesheet brings out a crucial finding: the supply of adulterated ghee to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) began much earlier than previously believed. According to the investigation, Harsh Fresh Dairy — a proxy firm linked to Bhole Baba Dairy — supplied adulterated ghee to the Tirupati trust as early as February 2019, when the TDP-led NDA government was in power in the state.

This finding directly challenges the narrative that revisions to ghee procurement guidelines in February 2020 led to dubious dairies entering the TTD supply chain. The CBI investigation indicates that adulteration was taking place even when procurement norms were considered



stringent. As per the chargesheet filed by the CBI-led Special Investigation Team (SIT), Harsh Fresh Dairy Products Pvt Ltd was incorporated in 2012 and was run by Pomil Jain and Vipin Jain along with their spouses, who were also directors. Though based in Uttarakhand, the firm allegedly secured contracts by creating forged documents and fake inspection reports in collusion with external dairy experts and lower-level staff in the TTD procurement wing. Using this fabricated paper trail, the company obtained an FSSAI licence and won a ghee supply contract in February 2019 by emerging as the lowest bidder at Rs 291 per kg. The contract involved supplying 82,000 kg of ghee in tins. The investigation states that the company did not procure milk at all and instead supplied ghee adulterated with palm oil, palm kernel oil, and chemical additives.

The chargesheet also names Bareilly-based Premier Agri Foods Pvt Ltd, which allegedly supplied adulterated ghee to the TTD over several years. The firm is reported to have secured contracts since

2013, irrespective of changes in procurement guidelines or the government in power.

Even after Bhole Baba Dairy was disqualified during the YSRCP regime, the investigation found that adulterated ghee continued to be routed to the TTD through proxy firms. In 2023, despite tighter rules aimed at restricting supply to reputed companies, the dairy allegedly channelled ghee through Vyshnavi Dairy, AR Dairy, and Malganga by again manipulating inspections and internal processes.

The chargesheet further notes that four ghee tankers from AR Dairy, rejected by NDDB tests in mid-2024 for adulteration, were allegedly rerouted back to the TTD under a different company name and used in the preparation of Tirupati laddu prasadam. Meanwhile, speaking to the media on Monday, YSRCP leader and former TTD chairman Karunakar Reddy said the SIT report had clearly established that a few technical experts, continuing from the TDP government's tenure, colluded with ghee suppliers and indulged in corruption. He said Bhole Baba Dairy, earlier known as Harsh Fresh Dairy, supplied ghee to the TTD until 2018 and received technical approval for ghee supply during the tenure of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at a rate of Rs 291 per kg. According to the SIT findings, Bhole Baba Dairy is the prime accused in the adulteration case and had supplied ghee to the TTD even during the TDP regime. Bhumana also alleged that Premier Dairy, another key accused, was repeatedly granted approval to supply ghee during the same period.

Primary focus should be on financial success: Khushbu

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

THE primary focus should be on financial success to enable philanthropy and contribute to a sustainable India, alleviating poverty and improving lives, actress and Tamil Nadu BJP Vice President Khushbu Sundar emphasised.

Advocating an inclusive society built on secularism, harmony and unity at the Creative Economy Forum South organised in Visakhapatnam, Khushbu delivered a thought-provoking talk on the theme 'Money, Markets, and IP: Financing the Future of Films and Music'. Emphasising the importance of understanding the economy and personal growth, Khushbu said platforms like Creative Economy Forum (CEF) provide insightful ideas for growth and development of the creative domain.

Hosted by The Hans India and CEF in collaboration with HMTV, the CEF aimed at encouraging industry leaders and policymakers to

focus on the growing role of creative industries in India's economic growth. Moderated by founder of CEF Supriya Suri, the session on 'Money, Markets, and IP: Financing the Future of Films and Music' saw Kerala-based actress Cuckoo Parameswaran, filmmaker Satya Reddy and secretary of SIMCA Secretary Sridhar J Swaminathan sharing their thoughts on the theme.

Elaborating the theme, Khushbu said, "Global trade financing, institutional funding, private investments, smart cooperation models and new-age tools are needed to back talent. Films and music are assets that can be structured, valued and scaled." The maiden edition of Creative Economy Forum South brought leaders and entrepreneurs from diverse fields, shared insights into multiple themes and nudged the communities to explore new ideas by adopting innovative methods and unlearning redundant practices.

Creative Tech Revolution

Bringing experts from anima-



Actress and Tamil Nadu BJP Vice President Khushbu Sundar, founder of CEF Supriya Suri and Kerala-based actress Cuckoo Parameswaran walking the ramp at the CEF South organised in Visakhapatnam by The Hans India and CEF

tion, film production, Artificial Intelligence and digital media, the first session focused on 'Creative Tech Revolution: How AI, Gaming, Animation and Digital Media are Redefining Growth'.

As a session moderator-speaker, Professor and Director of The School of Core Engineering GITAM Dr. Pakki Bharani Chandraraj highlighted how technology is slowly but surely changing the way one creates or chooses stories.

During the session, Telugu Film Producers Council president KL Damodara Prasad expressed confidence that AI cannot take away human emotions in storytelling but it would certainly help ease lives of certain departments and save time. "Things get pretty fast now," he opined.

Echoing similar views, co-founder of LBS Studio and co-chair of Andhra Pradesh VFX Animation and Gaming Association Meghana



Creative Economy Forum Supriya Suri and managing director of Hyderabad Media House Private Limited K. Hanumanth Rao felicitating the speakers at the CEF South organised in Visakhapatnam by The Hans India and CEF

Tirumalasetty opined that AI made the pre-visualisation and VFX parts much effortless. "However, it cannot replace human intervention anywhere in near future," she opined.

Director of Vishal Peripherals Vikash Hisariya and founder Chief Executive Officer and VFX Supervisor Phantomfx Bejoy Aruptharaj shared their views on the theme.

Handlooms to High Streets

Centred on 'Handlooms to High Streets: Transforming Heritage

into Scalable Businesses', the following session threw insights into leveraging traditional crafts and design for modern markets. Moderated by product designer of Eco Friends Jameela Akula, executive director of FDDI-Hyderabad Narsimhugari Tej Lohit Reddy, founder of Sankalpa Art Village Chalapathi Rao shared insights into how labour-intensive Indian handloom sector has emerged into a sought-after and sustainable segment, experiencing a significant renaissance.

Culinary Crossing Borders

Speaking about 'culinary crossing borders' in the last session, food expert N Parthasarathy opined, "Food festivals, exhibitions, television shows, and digital platforms draw massive audiences and inspire curiosity, learning, and opportunity." Chairman of Pioneer Institute of Hotel Management chef Saka Sudha Kumar, corporate executive chef of GITAM Deemed to be University Agatamudi Rupeshwar Rao, co-founder of HETC Foods Pvt Ltd

Vavilala Srinivas and Sun International of Tourism and management Principal Rajeshwari laid emphasis on how the food industry is one of the largest employment generators globally and how it has evolved in creation of jobs. They spoke about how cuisines connect cultures and serve as an economic and cultural bridge across countries.

Envisioned as an effective platform to foster collaboration among government, industry and the creative community, placing Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as emerging hubs for creative and cultural enterprises of the country, the four sessions of the forum aided in exploring how creativity, technology and heritage can be transformed into scalable economic opportunities.

Featured by founder of the Creative Economy Forum Supriya Suri, the coveted event in the City of Destiny was held in the presence of managing director of Hyderabad Media House Private Limited K Hanumanth Rao, among others.



Pan-India ‘Nagabandham’ teaser announced

A bhishek Nama's much-anticipated mythological action drama 'Nagabandham', starring Virat Karana, is generating strong buzz, with the first-look posters receiving an immense response. The makers have now locked the teaser release for February 15, the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri.

The striking teaser poster features a majestic cobra coiled protectively around a hidden treasure inside an ancient temple, perfectly hinting at the film's mystical suspense and divine intrigue. This glimpse into the core narrative promises a thrilling exploration of the sacred 'Nagabandham' tradition, set against the backdrop of India's historic Vishnu temples.

Nabha Natesh and Iswarya Menon play the leading ladies, alongside powerhouse performers Jagapathi Babu, Jayaprakash, Murali Sharma, and B.S. Avinash in pivotal roles.

The film boasts strong technical support, with Soundar Rajan S handling cinematography, RC Pranav in charge of editing, and Ashok Kumar overseeing production design, ensuring a grand visual spectacle. Produced by Kishore Annapureddy and Nishitha Nagireddy, 'Nagabandham' is nearing the final phase of production and is gearing up for a massive Pan-India release in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam this summer.



Naveen Chandra praises ‘Honey’ at trailer launch

‘Honey’ is a psychological horror film written and directed by Karuna Kumar, starring Naveen Chandra and Divya Pillai in the lead roles. Produced by Ravi Peetla and Praveen Kumar Reddy under the banner of OVA Entertainments and presented by Shekhar Studios, the film blends psychological depth, social relevance, and horror elements. ‘Honey’ is set to release in theatres on February 6. The promotional content released so far has received a wonderful response, and the makers recently launched the trailer.

Speaking at the trailer launch event, hero Naveen Chandra said, “Hello everyone. I am very happy with the wonderful response to the trailer. I thoroughly enjoyed the filmmaking

process. This is a film that will grow through word of mouth. We have tried to make it within our budget while still delivering a different and unique experience to the audience in theatres.”

Director Karuna Kumar said, “This time too, I have made a new attempt. I originally wrote this story, titled ‘Darkness’, for literature. Our producers later decided to adapt it into a film. We see such incidents happening in places like Madanapalle and Old Basti, often within the same house. In ‘Honey’, we explore the life of a person searching for and achieving something called ‘Pilli Maya’. It is a story that unfolds within the mind, even when everything seems dark. The film was inspired by a real-life incident.”

Actor Raja Ravindra

shared, “Hello everyone. When the director narrated the story, I liked it but wondered how it would be executed. The film has been shot even more wonderfully than I expected. He also gave me an extraordinary and memorable character. Technically, the film is outstanding.”

Heroine Divi said, “Hello everyone. I always wanted to work with Karuna Kumar. I met him during the film ‘Palasa’, but it didn’t work out then. I immediately agreed when he called me for this project.”

Heroine Divya Pillai added, “Hello everyone. I was scared when the director narrated the story to me. It is very new and unique. I thank Karuna Kumar and Ravi for giving me this opportunity. I am very happy to work with Naveen again.”

‘One by Four’ emerges box-office winner



Tejas Gunjal Films and Rohit Gunjal Films have jointly produced the action crime drama ‘One by Four (One/4)’, starring Venkatesh Peddapalem, Aparna Mallick, and Heena Soni in the lead roles. The film is directed by Bahubali Palani K, who previously worked as an associate director on the blockbuster ‘Baahubali’. It is jointly produced by Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal and Rohit Ramdas Gunjal.

Recently released, ‘One by Four (One/4)’ has emerged as a successful film, receiving appreciation from audiences across all sections and performing well in theatres. To celebrate the success, the team held a success meet at the Hyderabad Film Chamber, where they shared their experiences and gratitude.

Director Bahubali Palani K said, “Audiences have made ‘One by Four (One/4)’ a blockbuster. Collections are strong in every theatre. Once again, viewers have proved that if the content is good, even a small film can achieve big success. Hero Venkatesh impressed everyone with his action sequences and performance. He has already done action films in Kannada, and I believe he

has a bright future in Telugu cinema as well. Our producers Ranjana and Rohit came from Mumbai with great passion for cinema and entered Tollywood with dedication. I hope they produce many more films. However, it is unfortunate that some actors who initially seek opportunities do not show up during promotions. They should at least support the film out of gratitude.”

Producer Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal said, “Our film ‘One by Four (One/4)’, which blends a strong message with entertainment, is being well received by audiences. The success is purely due to its solid content. The character ‘Pavitra’ is receiving special appreciation, and hero Venkatesh’s performance is widely praised. The film highlights the struggles a woman faces due to blackmail, making it a thought-provoking experience. We are deeply hurt that we did not receive promotional support from the heroines. Despite providing all facilities, they did not participate in promotions. Their absence caused losses to the film. We feel it is better to encourage and cast Telugu girls rather than depend on outsiders.”



Celebrities rally behind ‘Barabar Premistha’ release

The team of ‘Barabar Premistha’ held a grand pre-release event ahead of the film’s theatrical launch, with several prominent guests extending their support and wishing success for the youthful entertainer. Starring Attitude Star Chandra Hass in the lead, the film is directed by Sampath Rudra and presented by Kakarla Satyanarayana. It is produced by Geda Chandu, Gayatri Chinny, and AVR under the banners of CC Creations and AVR Movie Wonders. Miss India finalist Meghna Mukherjee plays the female lead, while Arjun Mahi, known for ‘Ishtamga’, appears as the antagonist. The film is all set for a grand release in theatres on February 6.

The pre-release event, held on Sunday (February 1), was attended by chief guests Jayanth C. Paranjee, JD Chakravarthy, and Aadi Saikumar, along with the film’s cast

and crew. The evening was filled with appreciation for the team’s efforts and confidence that the film would connect strongly with audiences.

Speaking at the event, Chandra Hass expressed gratitude for the support he has received. He said he has always admired filmmakers like Jayanth C. Paranjee and actors like Aadi Saikumar, whom he considers an inspiration. Thanking his father Prabhakar for constant encouragement, he added that the film has been made with complete sincerity. He promised that ‘Barabar Premistha’ would keep viewers engaged throughout with numerous twists and an engaging narrative. He also praised director Sampath Rudra for presenting him in a new and impactful way.

Aadi Saikumar extended his heartfelt wishes to Chandra Hass, recalling his association with Prabhakar during

‘Next Nuvvu’. He appreciated Chandra Hass’ dedication and hard work and said he hopes ‘Barabar Premistha’ becomes a major breakthrough in the young actor’s career. He urged audiences to watch the film in theatres and support the team.

Veteran director Jayanth C. Paranjee said the title ‘Barabar Premistha’ reflects confidence and attitude, perfectly matching Chandra Hass’ personality. He praised the film’s music, performances, and direction, expressing strong belief that it would emerge as a big hit.

JD Chakravarthy also conveyed his best wishes, applauding Prabhakar’s inspiring journey and encouraging audiences not to miss the film. Director Sampath Rudra shared that the film has a Telangana backdrop and a gripping climax that will leave a lasting impression. He thanked the producers and music director RR Dhruvan for their contributions.

Devotional drama ‘Dakshina Kaali’ releases worldwide

‘Dakshina Kaali’ is an upcoming devotional entertainer starring Subbu and Priyanka as the lead pair, while actress Archana will be seen in the role of the Goddess. The film is produced by Satyavani Meesala under the Srinidhi Creations banner, for which she has also provided the story. Directed by Thota Krishna, the movie is being made as a devotional drama with strong spiritual elements. The film is all set for a worldwide grand theatrical release on the 6th of this month in Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada.



Recently, the songs launch event of ‘Dakshina Kaali’ was held at the Hyderabad Film Chamber. Renowned director V. Samudra and producers Tummalapalli Rama Satyanarayana and Prasanna Kumar attended the event as chief guests. Speaking on the occasion, director V. Samudra said that the songs and trailer of ‘Dakshina Kaali’ were very impressive and reminded him of the film ‘Ammoru’.

He expressed hope that actor Azad, who played the villain in the film, would gain recognition similar to Sonu Sood’s performance in ‘Arundhati’. He added that for producers who cannot afford Sonu Sood’s remuneration, Azad would be a strong alternative.

Producer Tummalapalli Rama Satyanarayana stated that new films must continue to enter the industry and expressed confidence that ‘Dakshina Kaali’ would definitely be a success after watching its content. He wished for the film to achieve grand success like ‘Ammoru’.

Producer Prasanna Kumar said that filmmaking is not just about words but requires immense effort and dedication. He appreciated the lady producer for making ‘Dakshina Kaali’ with great commitment and assured that their support would always remain with the film’s team. Director Thota Krishna said that ‘Dakshina Kaali’ has been made to showcase the divine power and greatness of the Goddess. He revealed that apart from directing the film, he also played an important role in it. He assured that the movie would entertain audiences with all the elements they expect. Producer Satyavani Meesala shared that the Goddess guided them from the beginning of production until release. She said the shooting was completed smoothly without any hurdles due to the Goddess’s blessings. She clarified that the film was not made for monetary gains but solely to portray the greatness and miracles of Goddess Dakshina Kaali. She also thanked seniors like V. Samudra, Prasanna Kumar, and Rama Satyanarayana for their encouragement and support.

‘Winter’ begins with traditional pooja ceremony

The film ‘Winter’, jointly produced by Crescent Cinemas and TSR Makers, was launched grandly with a traditional pooja ceremony.

‘Winter’ features Ram, Aadithya Suraj Singh, Kusuma Chandhaka, Shashikala, and Srijitaa Ghosh in the lead roles. The film is being produced by Riyaz Ahmed

and T. Srinivas Rao. Suresh Lankalapalli, who received critical acclaim for ‘Racharika’, is handling the story, screenplay, and direction for this project. With this film, Rizwan Ali will be introduced on screen as the antagonist. Notably, ‘Winter’ is based on real-life incidents that occurred in Kashmir.

The pooja ceremony

marking the commencement of the film was recently held in a grand manner, with the entire team in attendance. Rituals were performed seeking the film’s success and a smooth, obstacle-free production journey. Details regarding the remaining cast and technical crew will be announced soon.



‘Mr. Work From Home’ team creates buzz in Bheemili

The pre-release ceremony of ‘Mr. Work From Home’ was held at the Visakhapatnam Film Nagar Center in Bheemili Thimmapuram on Saturday. The film is being produced by Aravind and directed by Madhu, with Trigun playing the hero and Palayi Radha Krishna as the heroine.

Director Madhu said that the story of the film is centered on the use of new machinery in agriculture. The film focuses on the love and marriage of a young woman born into a rural farming family, while also delivering entertainment within a family setting.

Hero Trigun added that this film is very relevant for today’s generation and carries a message for future generations.

Producer Aravind stated that the film will be appreciated by audiences and praised director Madhu for crafting the story in a way that will resonate well with viewers. He also confirmed that the film is scheduled to release on February 13. The film team actively participated in the pre-release event, generating excitement among fans and the local community.

