



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.

P8

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.

P6

Odisha gets Rs 10.9K cr for railway sector
 Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday said the Centre has allocated Rs 10,928 crore for the railway sector development in Odisha in the Union Budget for 2026-27 financial year.

P5

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

P4



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Mamata, along with 'SIR-affected' families, meets CEC

NEW DELHI: Wearing black shawls as a mark of protest, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee along with some "SIR-affected" families and party leaders on Monday met Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar here. Last week, CEC Kumar had given time to Banerjee, who has been demanding a halt to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal, for a meeting on Monday. Banerjee, who reached the national capital on Sunday, was being accompanied by Trinamool Congress MPs Abhishek Banerjee and Kalyan Banerjee, who is also an advocate.

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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

Maintaining law & order paramount for govt: CM

Naidu alleges YSRCP conspiracy to incite violence
 Calls for restraint among Telugu Desam Party workers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
 AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister and TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday said maintaining law and order is paramount and that no violation will be tolerated under any circumstances, irrespective of political affiliation.

The Chief Minister's remarks come in the wake of high drama over the weekend, which witnessed the arrest of senior YSRCP leader Ambati Ramababu in Guntur and also an alleged attack against Opposition party leader Jogi Ramesh's house in Vijayawada. "Maintaining law and order is paramount, and that



no violation will be tolerated under any circumstances, irrespective of political affiliation," Naidu said. The Chief Minister took note of the incident involving protests

held outside Ramesh's residence, following which the Ibrahimpatnam police registered a case on its own. Police have booked several TDP leaders from the Mylavaram

Assembly constituency in connection with the incident. Naidu stated that the rule of law must prevail at all times and that political disagreements should be expressed only through democratic and constitutional means.

He also alleged that the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) was conspiring to incite violence and disturb law and order in Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing a teleconference with ministers and senior party leaders, the Chief Minister said that YSRCP leaders were resorting to provocative statements and abusive language out of frustration after losing power.

Continued on Page 7

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 7

PARL BEGINS DEBATE ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

REPORT: **P7**

ICC mulls suspending Pakistan as T20WC '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. "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.

Continued on Page 7

CM NAIDU LAUNCHES PILLOO AI

HANS NEWS SERVICE
 AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday launched Pilloo AI, a voice-based billing and accounting platform aimed at empowering small and medium enterprises and local entrepreneurs across Andhra Pradesh.

The launch, held at the Secretariat, marked a major step in the government's push to integrate artificial intelligence into grassroots business operations and promote digital governance.

Continued on Page 7

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 7

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 7

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



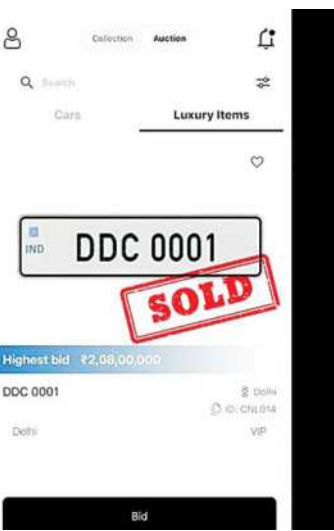
Guntur man bids Rs 2.08 cr for fancy vehicle number!

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

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



by the newly launched auction house platform of Big Boy Toyz (BBT) in its debut event.

The 'DDC 0001' number 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.



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.

CPM calls ‘Chalo Delhi’ on March 24, slams Centre’s ‘anti-people’ policies

- Party to hold nationwide mobilisation from March 9–20 ahead of ‘Chalo Delhi’ protest, targeting what it calls anti-people laws and policies of the Centre
- Politburo member Raghavulu terms Union Budget ‘accounting jugglery,’ flags cuts to welfare sectors, Polavaram funding drop, MGNREGS cost burden on states, and loan-driven Amaravati funding
- Questions NDA allies TDP and Jana Sena over Andhra Pradesh fund denial, criticises pro-corporate projects, and warns new Bills will hurt workers and farmers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CPM politburo member B V Raghavulu announced that the party will stage a ‘Chalo Delhi’ protest on March 24, demanding withdrawal of what he termed the Centre’s anti-people policies and laws. Ahead of this, a nationwide campaign from March 9 to 20 will be launched to mobilise public opinion.

The announcement came during the CPM state committee’s two-day meeting at MBVK here, attended by po-

litburo members Raghavulu, U Vasuki and state secretary V Srinivasa Rao.

Addressing the media, Raghavulu described the Union Budget as “deceptive accounting jugglery,” alleging that allocations to key sectors and welfare schemes were slashed. He accused the Centre of manipulating figures by comparing allocations with revised expenditure estimates, creating an illusion of higher spending.

Citing examples, he noted that Polavaram project funding fell from over Rs 5,000



CPM politburo members B V Raghavulu and U Vasuki, along with state secretary V Srinivasa Rao, at the two-day state committee meet in Vijayawada on Monday

crore last year to Rs 3,320 crore, warning that completion could take decades. He also criticised replacing Amaravati funds with loans, forcing dependence on borrowings. On MGNREGS, he said though Rs 95,000 crore was allocated, states must bear 40% of costs, calling it “fraudulent.”

Raghavulu alleged that de-

spite TDP and Jana Sena’s alliance with the NDA, Andhra Pradesh continues to face injustice in fund allocation. He questioned CM Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan over their failure to secure resources.

He further criticised industrial corridors and semiconductor projects as benefiting corporates rather than gener-

ating local employment. He warned that new Bills on labour, electricity, seeds, nuclear liability, and geo-spatial issues would harm workers and farmers. Condemning recent political violence, Raghavulu urged parties to end abusive language and attacks, stressing that democracy can only survive through constructive debate and public trust.

Don’t turn AP into a ‘Ravana Kashtam’: CPI

CPI state secretary Eswaraiah alleges that mutual attacks by TDP and YSRCP are aimed at diverting attention from people’s issues

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CPI state secretary Gujjula Eswaraiah cautioned the ruling TDP and opposition YSRCP against dragging Andhra Pradesh into a climate of hatred, violence, and political vendetta. He urged both parties not to turn the state into a ‘Ravana Kashtam’ through their bitter rivalry. He asserted that the state does not belong to any individual or family but is the collective asset of six crore people.

In a statement issued on Monday, Eswaraiah alleged that both the TDP and YSRCP were indulging in mutual abuse, provocative statements, and attacks with the sole aim of diverting public attention from pressing public issues. He said the recent political developments were bringing disrepute to a state once ruled by great leaders and were creating a situation in which de-



G Eswaraiah

mocracy itself appeared to be hanging its head in shame.

Criticising the politicisation of sensitive spiritual issues such as the Tirupati laddu, he said such actions reflected a lack of maturity and responsibility on the part of political leaders. Instead of addressing people’s concerns, both parties were resorting to personal attacks to conceal their failures and anti-people policies, which he described as highly deplorable.

Eswaraiah expressed serious concern over attacks on

houses and offices, prolonged detentions even in the presence of women, and the apparent inaction of the police. He said there was little difference between the previous YSRCP regime and the present TDP-led government in terms of governance style. He warned that political violence, irrespective of who was in power, would erode democratic values.

The CPI leader stressed that the state is not a private estate or a rowdy arena, and demanded that both ruling and opposition parties focus on real issues such as unemployment, education, healthcare, agrarian distress, remunerative crop prices, labour rights, and overall development.

He urged political parties to exercise restraint, uphold democratic decorum, and act responsibly, warning that people were closely watching their conduct and would respond at the appropriate time.

Rs 10,000 cr allocated to AP rail projects in Budget: Vaishnaw

VIJAYAWADA: ANDHRA Pradesh has been allocated a record outlay of over Rs 10,000 crore for railway projects in the Union Budget for fiscal 2026-27, railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. “Infrastructural projects worth Rs 93,649 crore are underway in Andhra Pradesh and a record budget allocation of Rs 10,134 crore has been made for the state for the year 2026-27,” Vaishnaw was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the Vijayawada division of the South Central Railway (SCR). The railway network in the southern state has achieved 100 percent electrification, the minister added. Observing that seven high-speed rail corridors were announced across the country in the budget, he said two of those, Hyderabad - Bengaluru and Hyderabad - Chennai, will traverse through the state.

Pawan raps JSP leaders over silence on ghee issue

Deputy CM says party failing to counter YSRCP attacks

HANS NEWS SERVICE

JANA Sena Party president and Deputy chief minister K Pawan Kalyan on Monday expressed strong displeasure with party leaders for failing to effectively counter the YSRCP’s criticism against him over the Tirumala laddu issue.

At the party’s general body meeting held at the Jana Sena office in Mangalagiri, Pawan Kalyan reacted sharply to the conduct of party MLAs, ministers, and Political Affairs Committee (PAC) members, questioning their silence despite sustained attacks from the YSRCP.

Citing the ICAR–NDRI report, which stated that no animal fat was found in the Tirumala laddu samples, the YSRCP has been targeting



Pawan Kalyan. The opposition party has alleged that he had earlier spread false propaganda about animal fat being mixed in the laddus and had also made false claims regarding laddus sent to Ayodhya.

Against this backdrop, Pawan said he was facing intense criticism from the YSRCP, while Janasena leaders were not responding adequately. “Even with so much happening regarding the Tirumala laddu issue, why is no one speaking up? Do I have to answer everything? If that is the case, why are you here as MLAs and ministers?” he asked. “If I have to speak about everything,

then what are you here for?” he remarked, expressing dissatisfaction over their silence.

The Deputy CM cautioned party leaders against falling into what he described as the YSRCP’s trap.

He said opposition leaders were resorting to personal attacks and advised Jana Sena members to remain vigilant. He instructed them to counter criticism with facts and ideological clarity and warned that YSRCP leaders might target them and their family members. He urged party leaders to respond only on policy, ideology, and subject-related matters and avoid personal controversies.

Kollu blames anger against YSRCP for attack against Ambati

- The excise minister says attack on Rambabu reflects growing resentment against ‘corrupt YSRCP’
- Rejects caste angle, calls comparisons with Vangaveeti Ranga ‘shameful’ and accuses YSRCP of provoking divisions
- Alleges misdeeds by YSRCP leaders, warns of legal action, and claims Jagan Reddy is plotting unrest in the state

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

EXCISE minister Kollu Ravindra on Monday said the attack on YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu was the result of growing public anger against the party. Speaking to the media in Machilipatnam, the minister said public resentment against the “corrupt YSRCP” was increasing by the day and accused the party of provoking caste and religious sentiments as it was unable to face people’s anger.

He strongly objected to comparisons being made between Rambabu and late leader Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga, calling such remarks shameful. “What was Ranga’s stature as a leader who stood for the people, and what is the stature

of Rambabu, who speaks irresponsibly on the streets?” he said. Ravindra said it was disgraceful to attribute the attack on Ambati Rambabu to caste when it was a spontaneous expression of public outrage.

The minister urged people to note YSRCP’s “devious attempts” to gain political mileage by giving caste colour to incidents. He said YSRCP leaders had no moral right to criticise Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and minister Nara Lokesh, adding that Rambabu was being widely criticised by the public. He claimed the ruling coalition was exercising restraint despite what he termed as “shameful conduct” by YSRCP leaders, and alleged that former chief minister Jagan



Excise minister kollu Ravindra addressing a meeting of TDP leaders in Machilipatnam on Monday

Mohan Reddy was conspiring to create unrest in the state.

Ravindra also lashed out at YSRCP leader Perni Venkatramaiah alias Nani, accusing him of speaking without shame after allegedly misappropriating rice meant for the poor.

He further criticised former minister Jogi Ramesh, alleging that he had endangered public lives through spurious liquor. Terming Jogi Ramesh’s claims of speaking for Back-

ward Classes (BCs) as ironic, Ravindra asked where he was when BCs faced attacks and arrests during the previous YSRCP regime. The minister said the government was committed to maintaining law and order and warned that cases would be filed and legal action taken against every YSRCP leader found guilty of wrongdoing. He earlier addressed a meeting of TDP leaders and in-charges of various wings.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**
SAMAGRA SHIKSHA

Notification for Expression of Interest
(RFB No.SS/5/2026-GCDO, Dt.01-12-2026)

The State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh invited applications from the interested firms/agencies to participate in Request for Bid (RFB) for Procurement and Supply Sanitary Incinerator with Smoke Eliminator under Samagra Shiksha & PM SHRI Schemes for AY 2025-26. The details can be seen in the e-procurement portal at <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in> from 03.02.2026 by 11.00 AM Sd/- B. Srinivasa Rao, I.A.S., State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha

DIPR R.O.No.4786-PP/CJ/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt: 02.02.26


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POSSESSION NOTICE FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY [(Appendix IV) Rule 8(1)]
WHEREAS the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of IKF Home Finance Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as “IKF”) under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002), and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated mentioned below under Section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon you being the borrowers (names mentioned below) to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers mentioned herein below having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers mentioned herein below and to the public in general that the undersigned has Taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The borrowers mentioned here in above in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with said property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of “IKF” for an amount as mentioned herein under and interest thereon.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) LAN	Description of Secured Assets (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1.	Lan :- LNV1200323-240010389 1. Mr/Mrs. Bharnikana Prasad 2. Mr/Mrs. Geetha Bharnikana Are R/O, D No: 3-26, 1 S-1, 2nd Floor, Ko Enclave Flat No-53, Sarada Nagar, Beside Sai Baba Temple, Anakapalli, Anakapalli Mandal, SRO and District and Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India and Also At Thummalasivaru Kottavuru Village & Grampanchayath, D No: 1-163, S No: 593/ 2, Sarada Nagar 15th Veedhi, -531055	RCC Building bearing D.No.1-163 with plinth area measuring 1150 sq.ft, land admeasuring 211 sq.yds covered by Survey No. 593/2 situated at Thummalapalli Sivaru Kottavuru Village and Panchayat, Anakapalli Mandal, SRO and District and bounded by: North : House of P.Gandhi, South : Part of site of this property, Part of RCC house of others, East : Y. Satyanarayana property and others, West : Panchayathi road	18.11.2025 Rs. 43,17,450/- (Rupees Forty Three lakh Seventeen Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Only)	31.01.2026

Place : Anakapalli, Andhra Pradesh
Date : 31.01.2026

Authorized Officer
For IKF Home Finance Limited

**CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED**
Corporate Office: Chola Crest, Super B, C54 & C55, 4, Thiru Vi Ki Industriel Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600032.

POSSESSION NOTICE [(APPENDIX IV) (See rule 8 (1))
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of M/s. Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited, under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002), and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated mentioned below under Section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon you being the borrowers (names and addresses mentioned below) to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers mentioned herein below having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers mentioned herein below and to the Public in General that the undersigned has Taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The Borrowers mentioned here in below in particular and the Public in General are hereby cautioned not to deal with said Property and any dealings with the Property will be subject to the charge of M/s. Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited for an amount as mentioned herein under and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name and Address of the Borrower/s & Loan Account No.	Date of Demand Notice	Outstanding Amount	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Possession
Loan A/c No: HL01VIS000017628 1. Mr/Mrs. Mounika Dantuluri 2. Mr/Mrs. Sivajagannadha Varma Kucheralapati All Are R/At :- Mig-I House No 102, Phase 2, Vuda Colony, Vizianagaram, Near Vuda Colony, Bondapalli, Andhra Pradesh - 535003. Also At :- Flat No: 501, Fourth Floor Rajesh Residency, Sy. No: 86/5, VUDA Rc. No. 6315/2016/L7, Thallavallasa Village & Gram Panchayat, Bheemunipatnam 531163	17.11.2025	Rs. 28,56,045/- (Rupees Twenty Eight lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Five Only) 17.11.2025	the Flat No.501 on the Fourth Floor of "Rajesh Residency" with an undivided share of land admeasuring 85.92 sq.yds out of 1619.4 sq.yds and Plinth area measuring 1630 sqft covered by Survey No.86/5 situated at Tallavallasa Village, Bheemunipatnam Mandal, Anandapuram SRO, Visakhapatnam District and bounded as: North: Open to sky; South: Common Corridor and Open to sky; East: Open to sky; West: Open to sky.	28-01-2026 (Possession)

Place : Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
Date : 28.01.2026

For Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited
Authorised Officer

Elaborate arrangements are being made for the 102nd annual Gunadala Lourdes Matha Maha Utsavams, scheduled to be held for three days

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

VIJAYAWADA Catholic Diocese Bishop Rev Dr Telagathoti Joseph Raja Rao has said that elaborate arrangements are being made for the 102nd annual Gunadala Lourdes Matha Maha Utsavams, scheduled to be held for three days from February 9 to 11. He said that more than 10 lakh devotees from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and other states are expected to attend the annual festival.

In view of the upcoming celebrations, Bishop Joseph Raja Rao, along with Monsignor Muvvala Prasad and

other clergy, unveiled the festival poster at the Gunadala Social Service Centre in Vijayawada on Monday. Later, the bishop also laid foundation stones for new residential complexes near the Centenary Church, intended for the benefit of priests and devotees visiting the shrine.

Addressing a press conference, Bishop Raja Rao said that comprehensive arrangements are being put in place to ensure the smooth and orderly conduct of the three-day festival. He informed that several bishops from the Visakhapatnam Archdiocese, along with bishops from the dioceses of Nellore, Kadapa, Kurnool, Guntur, and others, would attend the celebra-



Vijayawada Catholic Diocese Bishop Rev Dr Telagathoti Joseph Raja Rao, along with Monsignor Muvvala Prasad and festival committee members, releasing the poster for the 102nd Gunadala Lourdes Matha Utsavams in Vijayawada on Monday

tions as chief guests. Vicar General Meshapam Gabriel, Education Desk Director Father Kolakani Marianna,

Social Service Centre Director Father Thota Sunil Raju, and others were present at the press meet.

Fuel conservation drive SAKSHAM 2026 launched

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

SAKSHAM 2026 (Sankrashan Kshamta Mahotsav), the flagship fuel conservation campaign of the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, Government of India, was launched in Andhra Pradesh on Monday. The fortnight-long awareness campaign, which began on February 1, will conclude on February 15. The state-level inauguration of SAKSHAM 2026 was held at Tummalapallivari Kshetraya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada. The campaign was formally launched, and a fuel conservation pledge was administered by State Level Coordinator (SLC) for the oil industry, N Bhaskara Reddy, along with

senior officials from various Oil Marketing Companies.

Addressing the gathering, Bhaskara Reddy said SAKSHAM 2026 aims to create widespread awareness among citizens on the importance of fuel conservation, efficient utilization of petroleum products, and sustainable energy practices.

He added that the campaign would engage different segments of society through people-centric activities such as cyclothons, walkathons, CNG auto and car rallies, training programmes for LPG delivery personnel, group interactions with homemakers, students, and college youth, vehicle emission checks, and technical workshops on oil and gas conservation.

T Bhaskara Rao, divisional



State level coordinator N Bhaskara Reddy addressing participants during the launch of SAKSHAM 2026 fuel conservation campaign at the Tummalapallivari Kshetraya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Monday

LPD head of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Vijayawada, stressed the need to conserve petroleum products

in view of rising demand due to the rapid increase in vehicles. C T Venugopala, BPCL, Vijayawada territory manager

(LPG), advocated the use of renewable, clean, and green fuels and electric vehicles for transportation.

GAIL DGM S K Tiwari called upon students to act as ambassadors of energy conservation, while Pankaj S Chaudhary, DGM (LPG), HPCL, highlighted the importance of fuel conservation for environmental protection and reducing India’s dependence on crude oil imports.

Prizes were distributed to school students who won drawing competitions on the conservation theme. A large number of students and stakeholders participated in the event. HPCL senior sales manager N Murali Krishna and other officials were also present.

Fishermen families celebrate as they reunite after months of uncertainty

Indian fishermen, who were lodged in a prison in Bangladesh, returned home safely

Express immense relief and gratitude upon setting foot on Indian soil once again

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

SCENES of joy and relief unfolded at Visakhapatnam Harbour here on Monday morning as Indian fishermen, who had been detained in a prison in Bangladesh, returned home safely and reunited with their families after months of uncertainty.

The fishermen reached the harbour by fishing vessel IND-APV5-MM-735. Among them, nine fishermen from North Andhra



Fishermen who were detained in Bangladesh reached Visakhapatnam safely on Monday

Pradesh were arrested on October 22 after their boat accidentally drifted into Bangladeshi waters following an engine failure. They were sent to Bagerhat prison in Bangladesh before being released through dip-

lomatic efforts. The harbour witnessed emotional scenes as anxious family members broke into tears of joy upon seeing their loved ones return safely. Prayers and heartfelt conversations marked the

reunion, bringing an end to months of distress for the families. The fishermen appeared healthy and expressed immense relief and gratitude upon setting foot on Indian soil once again. Following their release,

a message of gratitude was also conveyed through an official post on 'X', thanking the Ministry of External Affairs and senior officials for their intervention.

Officials from the Indian Coast Guard, JD Fisheries-Visakhapatnam, marine police, civil police and leaders of the fishermen community were present at the harbour to receive the returning fishermen.

Expressing gratitude on behalf of the fishing community, Vasupalli Janakiram, president of the East Coast Mechanised Fishing Boat Owners Association, thanked the High Commission of India, the Assistant High Commission at Khulna, the Indian Coast Guard, and officials and public representatives of the Andhra Pradesh government for their diplomatic and humanitarian efforts.

Bheemili MLA to write to EC for cancellation of Oppn for YSRCP

Says that the conduct of YSRCP leadership had brought 'shame' to the civilised society

Screens the previous comments allegedly made by Jagan Mohan Reddy on various occasions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

BHEEMUNIPATNAM constituency MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao alleged that the use of abusive language appears to be the 'DNA' of the YSRCP and informed that he would write to the Election Commission of India seeking revocation of the party's recognition.

Addressing the media at his camp office here on Monday, Srinivasa Rao said that the conduct of the YSRCP leadership had brought 'shame' to the civilised society. He remarked that people were shocked by the language used by former Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy against Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, one of the country's senior-most political leaders.

To substantiate his statement, the MLA screened the



Bheemuniapatnam constituency MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Monday

previous comments allegedly made by Jagan Mohan Reddy on various occasions. He noted that leaders joining the YSRCP too tend adopt abusive and unparliamentary language.

Further, Srinivasa Rao recalled that individuals who had circulated false information about Jagan Mohan Reddy's wife, YS Bharati, on social media were suspended from the Telugu Desam Party. He stressed that politicians must maintain minimum decorum and warned that YSRCP leaders, who are indulging in vulgar remarks, would be remembered as 'shameless'.

Citing former Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, the MLA recalled that he had once gracefully withdrawn

remarks made against Naidu in the Assembly, setting an example for political decorum. The Bheemili MLA said that it was unreasonable to politicise the issue by attributing it to taste when those who committed mistakes were being punished.

Recalling Jagan Mohan Reddy's stand in the Assembly that opposition status would be lost if five or six members switched loyalties from the then 23 members of the TDP, Srinivasa Rao said, "Now, after winning only 11 seats, Jagan is demanding Opposition status. How is that reasonable?" Srinivasa Rao remarked. Party leaders Chikkala Vijay Babu, Ganta Nukaraju, Molli Lakshman Rao, P. Venkatrao, and Gurnath were present.

Centre eases unmanufactured tobacco tax

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

RAJAHMUNDY MP Dagubati Purandeswari has drawn the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the mounting distress among FCV tobacco farmers in the state following the proposed sharp increase in cigarette excise duty. In a detailed letter, she highlighted the dependence of thousands of farmers in the East Godavari region on FCV tobacco cultivation, carried on for decades in the absence of profitable alternative crops. The MP referred to the notification issued on December 31, 2025, proposing a 73 per cent excise duty hike on cigarettes, effective February 1, 2026. She stated that the announcement caused anxiety among farmers, farm workers, women labourers and tribal communities in her constituency.

She argued that FCV tobacco used in cigarette manufacturing was being taxed disproportionately compared to bidis and chewing tobacco, even though several studies have found these products to be more harmful to health.

Purandeswari pointed out that cigarettes already attract far higher taxes per kilogram than other tobacco products, and the proposed revision would widen this gap further. She warned that steep taxation would reduce demand and production, directly impacting farmers' incomes. As per industry estimates cited by her, growers could face a price drop of Rs 50 to Rs 70 per kg, amounting to a 20-25 per cent loss, making it difficult to recover cultivation costs. She also raised concerns that excessive taxation would fuel the illegal and smuggled cigarette trade, which already accounts for about 26 per cent of the Indian market. Smuggled cigarettes, sold at much lower prices, do not use Indian tobacco, resulting in livelihood losses for domestic farmers while benefiting illegal operators.

In a positive development, the Union Budget has addressed one key concern. As per Gazette Notification No 04/2026 issued on February 1, 2026, excise duty on unmanufactured tobacco that is unbranded and not packed for retail sale has been fixed at nil.

Tiger takes shelter in banana plantation

Forest officials inform that the big cat entered the area around midnight on Saturday, triggering fear among residents of nearby habitations

Officers deployed trap cameras and drone surveillance and installed cages to capture the tiger

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

PANIC gripped Thorredu and the surrounding villages in East Godavari district after a tiger entered the region via Eluru, reportedly taking shelter in a banana plantation at Thorredu village. Forest officials said the big cat entered the area around midnight on Saturday, triggering fear among residents of nearby habitations.

According to officials, the tiger attacked a cattle shed located beside the main road, killing two cows and a four-month-old calf. The carcasses were dragged into a nearby banana plantation, where the animal is believed to be resting. The incident came to light on Sunday morning, following which forest department officials rushed to the spot.

District Forest Officer V Prabhakara Rao, Range Officer N David and other



The tiger's pugmarks near banana plantation at Thorredu of Rajamahendravaram Rural mandal

officials inspected the area. Even as officials and local leaders were present, reports emerged that the tiger fled deeper into the plantation, intensifying anxiety among villagers. Forest officials said the tiger is likely to remain inside the plantation for at least 48 hours, as it had fed sufficiently. They cautioned locals against creating disturbances, warning that the animal could turn aggressive if provoked.

To monitor its movement, the forest department deployed trap cameras and drone surveillance and installed cages to capture the

tiger. A joint rapid response team comprising forest, police and revenue officials has been stationed in the area.

Speaking to 'The Hans India', DFO Prabhakara Rao said there were inputs suggesting that two male tigers had migrated from Chhat-tisgarh through Maharashtra forests.

One is reportedly located in Vikarabad district of Telangana, while the other could be the animal sighted in East Godavari. He said the tiger was likely below three years of age and capable of covering 25 to 35 kilometres in a single night.

Rajahmundry MP Dagubati Purandeswari spoke to forest, revenue and police officials over the phone and instructed them to take immediate steps to safely relocate the tiger to its natural habitat. Rajamahendravaram Rural MLA Gorantla Buchaiah Chowdary, Rajanagaram MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna and RUDA chairman BVR Chowdary visited the site and assured the affected farmer of prompt compensation.

As a precautionary measure, District School Education Officer K Vasudeva Rao announced a one-day holiday on Monday for all government and private schools in Seethanagaram, Korukonda and Rajahmundry Rural mandals. He clarified that the decision was taken considering the possible movement of the tiger in these areas.

However, Regional Intermediate Education Officer I Sarada stated that Intermediate practical examinations on Monday were conducted as per schedule and that the holiday would not apply to these exams.

Officials advised parents to ensure children do not venture outdoors unnecessarily and urged residents to keep lights on near cattle sheds at night and avoid moving alone in vulnerable areas.

Call to work for a child marriage-free society

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CALLING for collective efforts to build a child marriage-free society, NTR district collector Dr G Lakshminisha urged all stakeholders to work with commitment to ensure a bright future for children.

He said transforming NTR district into a model district free from child marriages requires the active participation of every section of society. The collector on Monday flagged off the Vasavya Mahila Mandal (VMM) child marriage-free campaign chariot at the Collectorate in Vijayawada. He also launched a signature campaign against child marriages as part of a large-scale public awareness drive.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Lakshminisha appreciated Vasavya Mahila Mandal for taking up the initiative as part of its social responsibility. Emphasising adherence to laws and regulations, Dr Lakshminisha said society must raise its voice firmly against child marriages. He also suggested that the VMM team aim to collect signatures from over one lakh people through the campaign to further strengthen public participation and awareness. The Collector said the awareness chariot would tour both rural and urban areas of the district to educate people on the

Capacity-building workshop on utility led aggregation model for rooftop solar

APEPDCL has undertaken large-scale awareness campaigns at village, mandal, division and district levels

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

A capacity building workshop on the implementation of rooftop solar through the Utility Led Aggregation (ULA) Model in Andhra Pradesh was held at the Centre of Excellence for Energy Transition (CoEET) here on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman and Managing Director of APEPDCL Prudhvi Tej Immadi stated that as part of India's climate commitments, the Union government has launched an ambitious programme to facilitate solar power to one crore households under the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

The CMD informed that the state currently has around 94,000 consumer-led rooftop solar installations with a total installed capacity of 328 MW. Of them, APEPDCL alone has contributed 44,452 rooftop solar installations with a capacity of 142 MW.

The CMD said that APEPDCL has undertaken large-scale awareness campaigns at village, mandal, division and district levels, including door-to-door campaigns and distribution of pamphlets.



APEPDCL CMD Prudhvi Tej Immadi addressing the gathering in Visakhapatnam on Monday

The CMD explained that from application to commissioning, all charges are collected at a single stage, ensuring ease and transparency. The APEPDCL is providing approvals within 3-4 days on average, with a maximum turnaround time of one week, he added.

Further, Prudhvi Tej stated that the government has introduced a utility-led scheme, funding the remaining capital expenditure through the state's subsidy budget, under which eligible domestic consumers are already receiving 200 units of free power per month.

He stated that tenders have been awarded using a division-wise cluster approach, covering all divisions and Letters of Award (LOAs) have been issued to 41 EPC vendors. The project has now entered the criti-

cal implementation phase with material supply already commenced in several divisions, he informed.

The CMD expressed confidence that with the proven efficiency of APEPDCL engineers and coordinated efforts of EPC partners, the project would not only achieve the target of 2 lakh rooftop solar connections but also emerge as a national model for large-scale solarisation of economically backward communities.

APEPDCL Director (Operations) TV Surya Prakash, director T Vanaja, (Projects & HRD), and director (Finance) S Hari Babu, Chief General Managers L Dyva Prasad, and B Ashok Kumar, superintending engineers and executive engineers from 11 districts along with senior officers and EPC vendors were present.

PNB opens two new branches in Vizag

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

PUNJAB National Bank Seethammadhara and Yendada branches have been inaugurated by zonal manager Vandana Pandey in the presence of circle head DGM Anand Kumar. With this, a total of 69 branches are in Visakhapatnam circle.

The circle is spread from West Godavari to Srikulam covering rural, semi urban and urban branches. Under the leadership of Anand Kumar, the circle is ranked top in zone and second in PAN India, informed the bank officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Vandana Pandey informed that each branch caters all the retail, agri and MSME products and all the products are available on digital platforms on PNB website. Bank has set a high target in digital lending in the upcoming 132 years of



Bank officials at the launch of the new branch of Punjab National Bank at Yendada in Visakhapatnam

foundation day on April 12. She conveyed Andhra Pradesh consists of two circles in PNB Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. Seethammadhara branch man-

ager Kasi Viswanath and Yendada branch manager S Dharmendra along with branch and circle staff participated in the event.

Hans India Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I. KOVVURI SOBHANADRI KALYANI (New Name) W/o. Kovvuri Srinivasa Reddy, Previously Called KOVVURI SOBHANADRI KALYANI KUMARI (Old Name) R/o. 11-3-714, Plot No-6, Gangapur Layout, Sriipuram, Visakhapatnam. Now Changed my name from KOVVURI SOBHANADRI KALYANI KUMARI (Old Name) to KOVVURI SOBHANADRI KALYANI (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as KOVVURI SOBHANADRI KALYANI (New Name) W/o. Kovvuri Srinivasa Reddy, for all purpose.

(TH_KVM)

CHANGE OF NAME

I. KHUSHBU MISHRA (New Name) W/O. RAUNAK MISHRA, Previously called as KHUSHBU (Old Name), R/o FNO-303, Susyama enclave, Jawahar Nagar, Sriharipuram, Visakhapatnam-District. Now changed my name from KHUSHBU (Old Name) to KHUSHBU MISHRA (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as KHUSHBU MISHRA (New Name) for all purpose.

(TH_KVM)

CHANGE OF NAME

I. PAMPANA JAYASARADADEVI (New Name) W/o. Gudula Symmla Rao, Previously Called GUDALA JAYA SARADA DEVI (Old Name) R/o. 4-69-23/5, Flat-6, Steel Apartments, Lawsonsbay Colony, Visakhapatnam. Now Changed my name from GUDALA JAYA SARADA DEVI (Old Name) to PAMPANA JAYASARADADEVI (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as PAMPANA JAYASARADADEVI (New Name) W/o. Gudula Symmla Rao, for all purpose.

(TH_KVM)

CHANGE OF NAME

I. P. KARUNAKAR REDDY (OLD NAME) S/O PATLOLLA GOVIND REDDY, Residing at Flat 308, near KIMS hospital, Sheelanagar, Visakhapatnam - 530032, change my name from P. KARUNAKAR REDDY (OLD NAME) to PATLOLLA KARUNAKAR REDDY (NEW NAME) hence forth I am being called as PATLOLLA KARUNAKAR REDDY (NEW NAME) for all purposes.

(TH_KVM)

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Name and Address of the Borrower/s & Loan Account No.	Date of Demand Notice	Outstanding Amount	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Possession
Loan A/c No. HL04JUW000028462 1. Mr/Mrs. Lahari Chidi 2. Mr/Mrs. Ravi Kumar Chidi All Are R/At : - 1-372/1, Ramapuram Colony, Near Nukalamma Temple, Anakapalle, Andhra Pradesh - 531001 Also At : Survey No.74-4 D No 3-55 Rambili Mandalam Gorapudi, Village Appanna Palem Visakhapatnam District Dairy Milk Centre Visakhapatnam 535250	17.11.2025	Rs. 21,24,392/- (Rupees Twenty One lakhs Twenty Four Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Two Only) as of 17.11.2025	The title property of the house bearing D.No.3-55 with plinth area of 790 sq.ft, land admeasuring 484 sqyds South Part out of 22 cents, covered by Survey No.74/4 situated at Appannapalem Village, Gorapudi Sivaru Appannapalem Panchayat, Rambili Mandal, Yellamanchili SRO, Visakhapatnam District and bounded as: North: Vendor's land and road; South: Site belongs to L. Narayanaamma and Srimuluri; East: Site of E.Jayalakshmi; West: Land belongs to P.Venkayalu.	29-01-2026 (Possession)
Place : Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh Date : 29.01.2026		For Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited Authorised Officer		

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 Chandra Kumar 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. Hanumantha 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 Hanumantha Rao, among others.

ODISHA GETS RS 10.9K CR FOR RAILWAY SECTOR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday said the Centre has allocated Rs 10,928 crore for the railway sector development in Odisha in the Union Budget for 2026-27 financial year. Addressing a press conference through virtual mode from New Delhi, Vaishnaw said railway projects worth Rs 90,659 crore are under progress in the State.

“We had promised to invest more than Rs 1 lakh crore in Odisha. Now, with the recent budget allocation, the total investment in the railway sector will cross Rs 1 lakh crore soon,” he said.

The present allocation exceeded 13 times the average allocated amount of Rs 838 crore Odisha had received each fiscal during the UPA regime between 2009 and 2014, he said. The State in the 2025-26 financial year was allocated Rs 10,599 crore.

The Railway Minister said Odisha will also benefit from



the East-West freight corridor project.

The 2,052-km corridor will connect Dankuni in West Bengal with Surat in Gujarat. “It will pass through Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The corridor will boost industrial development and economic activity across Odisha,” he stated.

Stating that six pairs of Vande Bharat Express and six pairs of Amrit Bharat Express

are currently operational in Odisha, Vaishnaw said that the State will also have bullet train service soon. In the last 11 years, around 2,200 km of new railway tracks have been constructed in Odisha, which exceeds the total railway network of Malaysia, he pointed out.

For protection of wild elephants from train accidents, Vaishnaw said his ministry would instal AI-based thermal cameras along railway

tracks to detect and prevent collisions with elephants. The project will be launched within 6 months. Besides, 200 spots have been identified across the country for construction of underpasses to allow smooth movement of the elephants, he added.

East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal said a total of 59 stations in Odisha have been identified for complete redevelopment under the Amrit Station Scheme with a cost of Rs 2,439 crore, of which work at six stations—Cuttack, Baripada, Barpali, Bimlagarh, Paralakhemundi and Talcher-- have been completed.

About 88 per cent of the total budgetary allocation made for the ECoR for the year 2025-26 has been utilised so far.

When it comes to Odisha, the total expenditure stood at 91 per cent, he informed mediapersons.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi thanked Prime Minister Nar-

endra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the Railway Minister for the railway budget. This initiative of the Central government towards the progress of Odisha has further strengthened the resolve of building a ‘Prosperous Odisha’, Majhi wrote on X.

“I firmly believe that the ‘East-West Freight Corridor’, which was approved in the current budget, will usher in a new era in the industrial and commercial fields in Odisha,” he said.

Majhi said the use of AI-based thermal cameras and Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks will create a model towards the protection of wildlife.

Stating that his government is committed to providing all possible support to the Central government for the overall development of Odisha, the Chief Minister said, “With our joint efforts, Odisha will definitely become a progressive and prosperous State.”

Prez arrives on 6-day visit to Odisha

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu arrived here on Monday on a six-day visit to Odisha during which she will attend religious and academic programmes across five districts, officials said. President Murmu was received at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here by Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and others.

She was accorded a ceremonial welcome as different cultural troupes performed at the airport and on the way to Lok Bhavan. According to her itinerary, she will attend programmes across Khurda, Jaipur, Balasore, Puri and Mayurbhanj districts over the next few days.

“Elaborate security arrangements have been made at all the places she will visit,” a senior police officer said, adding that special deployment have been made in Bhubaneswar where the President will stay for four days. After an overnight stay at Lok Bhavan, President Murmu will visit Jaipur on Tuesday to offer prayers at Maa Biraja temple and perform rituals at Navi Gaya, a sacred place for offering puja in honour of ancestors.

Public entry to Maa Biraja



temple is restricted from 5.30 am till departure of the President on Tuesday. On Tuesday afternoon, she will attend the convocation ceremony of Fakir Mohan University in Balasore as the chief guest and proceed to Puri, where she will perform ‘pind daan’ at Swetanganga tank on Wednesday morning and visit Shree Jagannath Temple around 7.40 am. Public visit to the 12th century shrine is also regulated during Murmu’s visit in Puri.

Later in the day, the President will visit her home district, Mayurbhanj, where she will inaugurate a holiday home at Rairangpur, visit a Girls’ Higher Secondary School, unveil the statue of tribal leader Bhanjir Sunaram Soren and inaugurate a sports complex.

On the final leg of her Odisha tour, the President will visit the Simlipal National Park

on February 5 and spend the night there. The visit of tourists to Similipal is also restricted for three days starting February 4 due to security reasons, a Forest department official said.

Before going to Similipal, the President will attend a special programme at the Rairangpur Jagannath Temple and interact with tribal women and youth groups.

On February 6, Murmu is scheduled to attend the Black Swan Summit India, an event jointly organised by the Odisha government and the Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN) to discuss the impact of AI and future technology stacks on global capability centres, education, and the future of jobs in the FinTech and InsurTech sectors. She is scheduled to leave Bhubaneswar for Chhattisgarh on Saturday, officials said.

CM unveils Rs 600 cr growth package for Rayagada



C B SINGH

RAYAGADA: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday laid the foundation stones for several key development projects in Rayagada, marking a significant push to the district’s growth and infrastructure. Upon arrival at Yesco Ground, Majhi participated in the 108-kundiya Vedic Vishwashanti Mahayajna, where he offered the ‘Purnahuti’. He later inaugurated the Subhadra Shakti Mela, a powerful showcase of women’s empowerment in the district, and extended various forms of assistance to women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Majhi launched development projects worth Rs 600 crore in Rayagada and announced that 80 per cent of jobs in industries being set up in the district would be reserved for local youth. The Chief Minister inaugurated 22 projects worth Rs 238 crore and laid the foundation stones for 87 others valued at over Rs 366 crore. The projects include infrastructure development works such as roads, bridges, healthcare, schools and women empowerment initiatives. Majhi also laid the foundation stone for beautification of Maa Majhariani temple with an in-

vestment of Rs 37 crore.

Among major infrastructure announcements, Majhi said a six-lane road connecting Berhampur with Jeypore would be constructed to improve regional connectivity. He also promised that a medical college would be established in Rayagada in the near future, addressing a long-standing demand of the district. During the programme, women from Self-Help Groups were felicitated for their contributions and achievements.

While addressing the media, Majhi highlighted the objectives of the Subhadra Yojana, claiming that the scheme is intended to create livelihood opportunities for women through cottage industries, self-employment and small businesses, with the Subhadra Shakti Mela envisioned as a platform to connect women entrepreneurs to national and even international markets.

Referring to the Union Budget, the Chief Minister stated that Odisha has received due importance from the Centre. He highlighted that thousands of women in Rayagada district have become Lakshmi Didis, reflecting the success of women-centric livelihood programmes.

ASBM hosts Youth Fest ‘IGNITE’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE ASBM University hosted a two-day National Youth Fest, IGNITE 2026, on its campus on January 30 and 31. The event was formally inaugurated by Pradeep Ghosal, Head (CSR), Tata Power Odisha.

The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 500 students from across Odisha and other States, who competed in a wide range of events such as BGMI, Let’s Nacho, Solo Singing, War of Bands, Fashion Show, Quiz, Fun Fair, Treasure Hunt, and more.

The grand finale was graced by Odia film actor and Kori MLA Akash Dasnayak, who addressed the students with an inspiring message emphasising dedication, determination, and hard work. Renowned Odia actor Rusi Pattanaik also graced the occasion and motivated the stu-



dents with his encouraging words.

The event featured vibrant cultural performances, culminating in an electrifying DJ Night that brought the celebrations to a thrilling

close. On the first day, the ASBM–Technology Business Incubator Foundation showcased Markfest, focusing on idea generation and promoting startup initiatives among young innovators. The Found-

er and President of ASBM University, Prof Biswajeet Pattnayak, addressed the gathering and lauded the students for their exceptional efforts in organising such a scintillating two-day event.

CM rolls out projects worth Rs 276 cr for Subarnapur

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

CHIEF Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Sunday unveiled development projects worth Rs 276 crore and announced new initiatives involving an additional Rs 633 crore for Subarnapur district during his one-day visit to the western town. Majhi launched the projects while attending the ‘Subhadra Shakti Mela’, a congregation mostly comprising women at Subarnapur.

He disbursed Rs 126 crore interest-free loans to 1,848 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and said this financial support will strengthen women-led enterprises, promote self-reliance, and enhance livelihoods. Of the projects launched, foundation stones were laid for 24 projects worth Rs 173 crore, while 34 projects valued at Rs 103 crore were inaugurated.



These projects are aimed at strengthening infrastructure in sectors such as roads, drinking water, irrigation, education, health, rural development and urban development. Before attending the Mela, the Chief Minister visited the ‘Samadhi Peeth’ (memorial) of Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi, who guided Odisha’s social and spiritual consciousness, will be honoured through the comprehensive development of his Samadhi Peeth, for which Rs 35 crore will be spent.

KIIT organises mega blood donation camp

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

AS part of the Art of Giving initiative, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) organised a mega blood donation camp on Saturday. Since early morning, thousands of students and staff members from KIIT, KISS and KIMS made a beeline for the collection centre to voluntarily donate blood.

The blood donation camp was inaugurated by the Founder of KIIT and KISS, Achyuta Samanta, who extended his gratitude to all the volunteers for their noble contribution.

Blood was collected with the participation of medical professionals and staff from



the blood banks of KIMS, SCB Medical College and Hospital, Capital Hospital Blood Bank, BMC Hospital, Bhubaneswar, Central Red Cross Blood Bank in Cuttack, Indian Red Cross Society, Odisha State Branch in Bhubaneswar, as well as blood banks from the district headquarters hospitals of Jaipur, Dhenkanal, Kendrapara, Puri, Angul, Keonjhar and Khurda.

A total of 4,000 units of blood were collected. KIIT University Vice-Chancellor Saranjit Singh, Pro V-C C B K Mohanty, K D Raju, KIMS Principal R C Das, KIMS Medical Superintendent Manas Behera, KIIT Registrar J R Mohanty, KIMS Group Director Dillip Panda, along with several other senior officials from KIIT and KIMS joined the camp.

Over 1K mobile phones seized from 21 burglars

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BERHAMPUR

ODISHA Police on Sunday arrested 21 burglars and recovered 1,066 mobile phones during raids in Ganjam district, officials said. According to police, 20 of them are from West Bengal.

The arrests were made during raids in Bhanjanagar, where the gang members were staying. They were allegedly involved in looting mobile phones from different parts of Odisha and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, police added.

Police said they seized 1,066 mobile phones, five tablets and accessories, including 1,275 batteries and 424 motherboards, besides 11 motorcycles



and nine fake number plates. The value of the seized items has been estimated at around Rs 50 lakh.

Ganjam Additional SP Ranjan Kumar Dey said police suspect the accused may have smuggled the looted mobile phones to other countries. “A detailed investigation is underway to ascertain the source of the mobile phones and the rea-

son for possessing such a huge number of devices,” he said.

Out of the arrested persons, 20 hail from different districts of West Bengal and the remaining one was from Bhanjanagar. The accused resided in four rented houses in Bhanjanagar. While seven of them stayed in a house, 13 others lived in three houses, police added.

Wildlife activists welcome Budget’s ‘turtle trail’ initiative

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BERHAMPUR

WILDLIFE activists expressed hope that the proposed sea turtle research centre in Ganjam district will be expedited after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned “turtle trails” near major nesting sites in her Budget speech.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi also said turtle trails will be developed near major nesting sites in Odisha, Karnataka and Kerala to promote wildlife tourism and environmental protection. “This nature-based tourism scheme announced in the Budget will focus on eco-friendly tourism infrastructure, the Chief Min-

ister said.

Earlier, there was a proposal to set up a sea turtle research centre near the mouth of Rushikulya river, a major mass nesting site of Olive Ridley turtles. The location has good communication facilities and is close to Berhampur University and a regional centre of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Gopalpur.

The Forest department had identified around 3.5 acres of government land near Purunabandh for the establishment of the proposed centre, but no further progress has been made, sources said. “As the Union Finance Minister proposed the turtle trail, which includes research on the sea



creature, we hope the research centre will be expedited with the assistance from the Central government,” said Rabindra Nath Sahu, secretary of the Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee, an organisation working on Olive Ridley conservation for several years.

Research on different aspects of sea turtles, including Olive Ridelies, could be carried out in the proposed research centre, Biswajit Mohanty of Wildlife Society of Odisha (WSO) said. He said it was high time the State government took steps to expedite work on the establishment of the research centre, which would be one of the few such centres in the country.

Berhampur MP Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy said he would take up the matter with the State government and the Union minister concerned and try to establish such a centre. A senior forest officer said they have already submitted the proposal to the government, which was under consideration.

Officials said a record number of around 9 lakh Olive Ridelies laid eggs at the Rushikulya rookery in two phases last year. Olive Ridley turtles visit Odisha’s coast near Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara district, the Devi river mouth in Puri district, and the Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district for annual mass nesting.

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 cor-

rect 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

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

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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>



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)

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)

UNION BUDGET PUTS TIRUPATI DISTRICT ON HIGH-GROWTH PATH

- Bird-watching towers proposed in the budget will make Pulicat lake to emerge as major eco-tourism hub
- High-speed rail corridors to put the district on national fast track
- Spiritual tourism to get a boost with temple town development plan

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

TIRUPATI district is set to benefit significantly from the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, with a series of proposals aimed at boosting spiritual tourism, improving transport connectivity, strengthening healthcare, promoting renewable energy and supporting education and small businesses. The budget measures are expected to accelerate development, create employment opportunities, and enhance quality of life for people across the district.

A major highlight for the district is the Centre's decision to develop Pulicat Lake as a



Flamingos at Pulicat lake

key eco-tourism destination. As part of this initiative, bird-watching towers have been proposed at Pulicat, a move expected to significantly enhance tourism in the region. The towers will offer panoramic views of the lake, attract more visitors, and help generate employment opportunities for local youth, thereby giving a boost to the local economy.

Pulicat Lake, spread across Sullurupeta and Tada mandals, is known for its unique blend of freshwater and sea water and its rich biodiversity. Every year, thousands of migratory birds, including flamingos, arrive from distant countries and stay for sev-

eral months. Despite drawing large numbers of visitors, the absence of proper viewing infrastructure has so far limited the tourist experience. The proposed bird-watching towers are expected to address this long-standing gap and allow visitors to fully appreciate the lake's natural beauty.

The budget has also brought major relief to Tirupati in terms of connectivity. Tirupati district will be covered in Hyderabad-Chennai high-speed rail corridor, which can significantly reduce travel time to two major cities. Further, efforts are underway to include Tirupati in Chennai-Bengaluru high-speed

rail corridor as well. If approved, Tirupati will become one of the few cities in the country to be connected by two high-speed rail corridors, marking a major milestone in its infrastructure growth.

The Budget has offered positive signals for Tirupati, one of the world's leading spiritual destinations.

Under a national plan to transform major temple towns into economic regions, the Centre has proposed strengthening infrastructure in prominent pilgrimage centres. For Tirupati, this could mean improved transport networks, better accommodation facilities for pilgrims,

and upgraded civic amenities. The budget has also extended support to MSMEs in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities through the proposed 'Corporate Mitra' initiative, which is expected to benefit small traders by simplifying licensing and tax-related procedures. The allocation of Rs 40,000 crore for the electronics manufacturing sector is seen as a major boost for Sri City and the industrial areas around Renigunta, providing stability to thousands of workers.

Renewable energy initiatives in the budget are expected to further strengthen the district's push towards solar power.

The removal of customs duty on key materials used in solar panel manufacturing is likely to reduce costs and encourage wider adoption of rooftop solar systems by households, institutions, and government bodies. With electric vehicle usage also rising in the district, reduced battery costs will add further momentum.

In agriculture, special support for crops like coconut, cashew and cocoa in coastal mandals such as Satyavedu and Varadaiahpalem is expected to improve farmers' incomes.

- Ships from 19 nations, 4,000 delegates to participate
- President, Governor, Chief Minister, defence minister will attend the event
- State govt assures full cooperation to ensure the successful conduct of both events
- Chief of staff, vice admiral along with senior naval officers met CS Vijayanand

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE International Fleet Review (IFR) will be held in Visakhapatnam on February 18, followed by Milan-2026 on February 19, with the participation of naval forces from several countries.

On Monday, Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral Sushil Menon (VSM), along with senior naval officers, met chief secretary K Vijayanand at the AP Secretariat to review preparations for the events.

During the meeting, Vice Admiral Menon informed that ships from 19 countries, including Sri Lanka and Iran, would take part in the IFR, along with nearly 4,000 delegates. He said three ships and about 150 delegates from the



Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command, the Vice Admiral Sushil Menon, along with senior naval officers, meet chief secretary K Vijayanand to review preparations for International Fleet Review, at the Secretariat on Monday

United States, Germany, and France would also participate. From India, around 90 ships, 45 aircraft, and nearly 600 delegates are expected to take part. The events will be held along the Visakhapatnam coastline on February 18 and 19. President Droupadi Murmu, Governor Justice S Abdul Nazeer, and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will attend the International Fleet Review, while defence minister Rajnath Singh will participate in Milan-2026. The Chief Minister and other dignitaries will also take part in the International City Parade.

Chief secretary K Vijayanand assured full cooperation from the State government to ensure the successful conduct of both events. He instructed officials of various departments to make necessary arrangements, especially in view of the presence of VVIPs. He also directed them

to ensure foolproof security and logistical facilities.

The President of India reviews the operational preparedness and capabilities of the Navy once during his tenure through the President's Fleet Review. In the International Fleet Review, warships from friendly and neighbouring countries also participate. Key warships and submarines take part in the programme.

Milan is a multinational naval exercise aimed at strengthening mutual cooperation and enhancing maritime capabilities. Naval forces from various countries participate in demonstrations and joint activities. Cultural programmes by participating nations are also held as part of the event.

Principal secretary, GAD, J Shyamala Rao, protocol additional director Mohan Rao, special chief secretary Krishna Babu, and IG operations CH Srikanth participated.

Two AP veterinarians bag national award



HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

TWO veterinary officers from Andhra Pradesh have been selected for the prestigious Dr C M Singh Sushrut Gaurav Ratna Samman 2025 national award by the Veterinary Association of India (VAI). The awardees are Dr Nallapati Jagat Srinivas, Deputy Director at On-

gole Veterinary Poly Clinic and Dr Madina Prasada Rao, Assistant Director in Visakhapatnam. Dr Damodar Naidu, state Director of Animal Husbandry, presented the award certificates at a ceremony attended by senior department officials. Both veterinarians have previously received numerous state and national honours for their service.

ICC mulls suspending Pakistan as T20WC 'India boycott' row deepens

Continued from P1

Meanwhile, Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha on Monday said the players will follow whatever instructions are given to them by the government or the cricket board with regards to boycotting the marquee T20 World Cup match against India on February 15 in Colombo.

Salman told the media before leaving with the team from Lahore to Colombo that the players had been informed about the decision by the team manager on Sunday immediately after the match

against Australia. "We are players contracted to the Board and whatever decision our government and Board have taken all the players are on board with it," he said.

Salman said that the T20 World Cup was not just about playing against India and the team was going to Sri Lanka with the aim to perform well and try to win all its matches against every side in the tournament. "We have three other group matches so we will try to win all of them and qualify for next round," he said.

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. She said that India's economy remains very strong, with the growth

rate rising to 7.2 percent. Dr Kulkarni said that the GST revenue has increased, and over the past few years, three crore new taxpayers have been added.

Digvijay Singh of Congress alleged that the government is anti-farmer and anti-labour. He also alleged that employment is declining in the country and despite the government's promise, farmers' income has not been doubled so far.

Sagarika Ghose of TMC alleged that digital systems are enabling cyber fraud and data scams. She said the air pollution and water pollution are increasing and causing financial losses.

Sanjay Singh of AAP criticised the government for allocating less funds for health and agriculture sectors in the Union Budget. AIADMK's M Thambidurai expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi for always highlighting Tamil culture and language. Sanjay Kumar Jha of JD(U), Tiruchi Siva of DMK, and Ram Gopal Yadav of Samajwadi Party also participated in the discussion, among others.

Indus water talks stalled as India rejects Hague arbitration

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. "Since we do not recognise the legitimacy of the CoA, we do not respond to any of its communications," a source said. India placed the IWT in abeyance on April 23, 2025, a day after 26 civilians were killed in Pahalgam by Pakistan-linked terrorists. For the first time since 1960, New Delhi explicitly linked water cooperation to Pakistan's continued use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

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.

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 takeoff, the plane's engine fuel control switches were switched off briefly, starving them of fuel.

CM NAIDU LAUNCHES PILLOO AI

Continued from P1

Chief secretary Vijayanand, MLA Prathipati Pulla Rao, Muthavarapu Suresh, Ram Mohan Locharla, co-founder of Pilloo AI, and company investors attended the event.

Pilloo AI enables business owners to generate invoices, record transactions, access financial reports, and manage accounts through simple voice commands in their native language. The platform eliminates the need for accounting knowledge, complex software, or manual paperwork. Designed for speed and ease of use, the

app targets micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that still depend on handwritten records or costly accounting systems. "Technology should simplify life, not complicate it," Naidu said at the launch. "Pilloo AI shows how digital tools can help small businesses manage finances easily, improve transparency, and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's vision of ease of doing business," he added.

During the event, the Chief Minister personally generated the first invoice on the platform using voice commands, demonstrating

how spoken instructions could instantly convert into business transactions.

Sai Praneeth G, founder of Pilloo AI, said the platform was created to remove fear and confusion around accounting. "Our aim is to help every entrepreneur run their business with confidence. Through conversational AI, we want small businesses to grow faster and participate in India's digital economy," he said.

Currently available in five Indian languages, the platform is designed to expand to more than 50 languages globally.

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 rose 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.

However, Defence Minister Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah strongly protested and asked Gandhi to clarify

whether the book had been published or not. The uproar went on for about 50 minutes with Speaker Om Birla repeatedly saying that no book or newspaper clipping can be quoted on a matter not related to the proceedings of the House, and Gandhi insisting that the document was authenticated and he could quote from it.

Government sources said Gandhi was reading "concocted things" on China. They said there was ample material in the public domain on the decisions taken by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on China, and alleged that he "surrendered thousands of acres of land just to further his own statesmanship". Rajnath Singh maintained that the book had not been published.

Gandhi then said he was quoting from a magazine article to put forth his views. Birla again disallowed it and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju called for the Speaker's ruling to be adhered to. Rijiju said if the Leader of Opposition repeat-

edly ignores the Speaker's ruling and flouts rules, the House will have to discuss what action should be taken against such a member.

When Gandhi persisted, the Speaker repeatedly warned him against quoting the book. Singh then got up and asked if the book was not allowed to be published as alleged, why didn't Naravane go to court against it. The Defence Minister also accused Gandhi of "misleading" the House. When the House reassembled at 4 pm, Gandhi said he was raising a matter of national security. "It is uncomfortable for the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister, I understand. I consider national security the most important issue. If it was not uncomfortable, they would have let me speak, but the fact that they are not allowing me to speak shows that they are uncomfortable," Gandhi said. Several Opposition leaders, including TMC's Mahua Moitra and Kalyan Banerjee, RJD's Manoj Jha and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, supported Gandhi on the issue.

Maintaining law & order paramount for govt: CM

Continued from P1

"The YSRCP has been caught red-handed in the Tirumala laddu adulteration case, and the entire state is disgusted with that party. To divert attention from their misdeeds, they are hatching conspiracies. Our focus is on attracting investments and developing the state, which they cannot tolerate," he said.

Naidu stated that all those who had committed crimes would be punished legally. He urged TDP ministers and leaders to ensure that party workers exercised restraint and did not take the law into their own hands. "Party workers should not fall into the YSRCP's trap. If we do, there will be no difference between them and us. The YSRCP was built on violence, destruction, and corruption," he said.

He alleged that criminal politics was the YSRCP's ideology and that their tenure reflected illegal governance. "Rule of law has been restored in the state after 2024.

Our ideology is to serve and empower people. As their real nature is being exposed, they are resorting to abuses," he added.

Meanwhile, Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra said that the attack on YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu was a result of public anger against corruption. Speaking to the media, he said public opposition to the YSRCP was growing and accused the party of trying to incite caste and religious sentiments to divert attention. Rajahmundry BJP MP Daggubati Purandeswari strongly condemned the remarks made by Ambati Rambabu against the Chief Minister. Speaking to the media in Delhi, she said the comments were unacceptable in any civilized society and alleged that they insulted Naidu's mother. She said women would not tolerate such remarks and accused YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his associates of deliberately creating unrest in the state.

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.

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 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



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

THE 26th edition of the biennial event INDIWOOD 2026 will be held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) from February 26 to March 2. Organised by NürnbergMesse India, the show is set to attract woodworking and furniture manufacturing industry players.

The event is further supported by EUMABOIS, the European Federation of Woodworking Machinery Manufacturers.

Set to be the largest edition in its history, the show will host over 1,000 brands from more than 50 countries, welcome 90,000 industry professionals, and span 85,000 sqm of exhibition space, marking a 15 per cent growth over the previous edition. The scale and diversity of participation reflect strong global confidence in India's manufacturing capabilities and align with the country's Viksit Bharat vision, where advanced manufacturing, exports and global integration are key growth drivers.

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, Angel 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



Silver nosedives ₹52,000, gold plunges by ₹12,800

NEW DELHI: Silver prices extended its steep fall for the third straight day, tumbling Rs 52,000 to Rs 2.60 lakh per kg in the national capital on Monday, while gold fell to Rs 1.52 lakh per 10 grams amid weak global trends and a firm US dollar. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal nosedived Rs 52,000, or nearly 17 per cent, to Rs 2,60,000 per kilogram. On Saturday, the metal tanked 19 per cent, or Rs 72,500, to Rs 3.12 lakh per kilogram. In the last three sessions, silver prices have fallen Rs 1,44,500, or nearly 36 per cent from Rs 4,04,500 per kg -- its all-time high -- recorded on January 29. Gold price of 99.9 per cent purity also bore the brunt of the sell-off, crashing by Rs 12,800, or 7.73 per cent, to Rs 1,52,700 per 10 grams. It had settled at Rs 1,65,500 per 10 grams in the previous session. Over the last three sessions, the metal has plunged Rs 30,300, or nearly 17 per cent, from its record high of Rs 1,83,000 per 10 grams on January 29, as investors rushed to book profits after a sharp rally.

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."

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

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.

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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.





Pan-India 'Nagabandham' teaser announced

A bhishek Nama's much-anticipated mythological action drama 'Nagabandham', starring Virat Karina, 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.

'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.



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."

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 'Racharikam', 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.

