



# THE Hans India



**Payal Rajput: I may fail, but I won't give up!**  
It may be recalled that last year, the actress had penned a post, expressing concerns about favoritism and nepotism overshadowing talent in the film industry.

WOMENIA

**Prioritise rejuvenation of 'Buckingham Canal'**

This historic canal, which used to be bustling with activity, is now ravaged with multiple problems like emitting untreated wastes by the industries and urban populations, encroachment of the canal land, siltation, and damage caused by natural disasters like floods.

P6

AP

EDIT

**US tariff cut brings cheer to aqua sector: Atchchanna**

Welcoming the decision, taken under the India-US trade agreement, the minister said the tariff cut would significantly ease the burden on seafood exporters, particularly those engaged in aquaculture.

YOUNG HANS

**You can't build Viksilt Bharat without innovation: IIT Hyd Director**  
At a time when AI is rapidly reshaping careers and Indian students remain caught in a relentless cycle of grades, rankings, Prof. B. S. Murty, Director of IIT Hyderabad, is quietly steering one of the country's boldest experiments in higher education.

P5

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**WINDOWS**



**NASA Artemis II launch put off to March**

WASHINGTON: NASA has pushed back the Artemis II mission launch from February to March following technical hurdles during a critical wet dress rehearsal (WDR) of its Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, Administrator Jared Isaacman announced on Tuesday. "With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal on Tuesday, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II," he posted on X. With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal today, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II. The test, conducted at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, successfully filled the core stage and interim cryogenic propulsion stage tanks with liquid hydrogen and oxygen. However, teams paused operations multiple times to address a liquid hydrogen leak at a core stage interface, requiring hardware warming and propellant flow adjustments.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

## 'INDIA GOT BEST DEAL'

- Goyal hails trade pact with US
- Credits Modi for landmark deal
- Blasts Rahul for baseless talk



Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal addressing the media on the progress of the India-US trade deal in New Delhi on Tuesday

**...in final stages: Goyal  
Sheds few details on India-US pact amid unanswered questions**

NEW DELHI: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal appeared on TV on Tuesday evening, purportedly to share some details and clear the air around the India-US trade deal but mainly heaped praises on the agreement. And then he said the final bits are still being worked out. The

deal will be formally inked thereafter. "Today, 140 crore Indians are celebrating a trade deal which is under final stages of detailing between the negotiating teams of both countries," Goyal said, hailing the "friendship" between PM Modi and US President Trump. **Continued on Page 7**



**India-US trade deal is a big decision: PM**

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the India-US trade deal is a "big decision" that will benefit everyone in the country and asserted that his government always works in favour of the nation. The Prime Minister made these remarks at the meeting of the NDA Parliamentary Party, coalition MPs present at the meeting said. NDA coalition members congratulated Modi for the trade deals with the EU and the US. India and the US have agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from a total 50 per cent.

**Naidu calls US trade pact historic**

**HAILS PM MODI FOR VISIONARY APPROACH**

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday described the trade agreement between India and the United States as a historic milestone for global economic stability and growth.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on signing the landmark agreement with the United States. He said the deal reflected India's growing stature in the global economic arena under Modi's leadership.

Naidu stated that the decision to reduce tariffs to 18 percent would further strengthen ties between the world's two largest democracies. He noted that the move would deepen economic cooperation and promote long-term mutual prosperity.

Calling the agreement a visionary step, the Chief Minister said it was aimed at ensuring sustained global growth and enhancing India's competitiveness in international markets.

Continued on Page 7



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu chairs Cabinet meeting in Amaravati on Tuesday

## Cabinet nod for panel to probe TTD laddu issue

**Inquiry aims to bring out truth, ensure strict action against guilty: CM**

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

**► Ministers express concern over investigation's failure to fix responsibility**

while the SIT had named some individuals, several serious omissions were found in its final findings. Ministers expressed concern that the investigation failed to clearly fix responsibility and bring the main culprits to justice.

Continued on Page 7

## New baggage rules come into effect

**Duty-free limit hiked**

NEW DELHI

THE Central government has introduced the Baggage Rules, 2026, along with the New Customs Baggage (Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2026 and a Master Circular. The new rules came into effect from midnight on February 2 and replace a decade-old baggage rules.

The key points are: Duty-free allowance for foreign tourists increased from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 and duty-free jewellery allowance for



**Markets rally on US trade deal**

Sensex up 2,073, rupee soars

MUMBAI: Indian equity markets ended sharply higher on Tuesday as investors welcomed the finalisation of the long-awaited India-US trade deal, triggering broad-based buying across sectors and lifting the rupee to its strongest single-day gain in more than six years. The benchmark BSE Sensex surged 2,072.67 points, or 2.54 per cent, to close at 83,739.13, while the Nifty 50 climbed 639.15 points, or 2.55 per cent, to settle at 25,727.55.

returning residents is 40 grams for female passengers and 20 grams for others. Jewellery, for the purpose of this rule, means articles of adornment ordinarily worn by a person, made of gold, silver, platinum or such other precious metals, whether studded or not.

Continued on Page 7

## Oppn stages walkout demanding debate on deal

NEW DELHI: Members of several Opposition parties on Tuesday staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha while raising the issue of the Indo-US trade deal and demanding a discussion on it.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh raised the issue of the Indo-US trade deal soon after the zero-hour ended and alleged that the information about the deal was being received from Washington instead.

Continued on Page 7

**PM buckled under pressure to sell out farmers' blood: Rahul**

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi buckled under US pressure to finalise a trade deal and "sold out" the hard work of the Indian farmers through the agreement. **Continued on Page 7**

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POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Eight Oppn MPs suspended from LS for 'unruly behaviour'

NEW DELHI

over various issues, including Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi being denied an opportunity to cite an article based on excerpts from an unpublished 'memoir' of former Army Chief M M Naravane on India-China conflict of 2020. The Opposition has also raised concerns about American President Donald Trump announcing the India-US trade deal. As soon as the House met at 3 pm following multiple adjournments, Dilip Saikia, who was in the Chair, named the eight Oppn members. Subsequently, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju read out a resolution seeking suspension of the eight members for the remaining period of the Budget Session. The suspended members are Gurjeet Singh Auja, Hibi Eden, C Kiran Kumar Reddy, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Manickam Tagore, Prashant Padole and Dean Kuriakose (all Congress) and S Venkatesan (CPI-M).

**India-US trade deal being 'papered': Greer  
US trade rep echoes Goyal's remarks**

WASHINGTON: Day after announcing a trade deal between India and the US, the Trump administration has stated that the exact details of the deal is still being "papered". In an interview on Tuesday, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the details and specifics of the deal are in place but it still being finalised. "We'll finish papering it, but we know the specifics, we know the details," Greer said, adding that India is maintaining some protection around agricultural goods. He echoed Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal comments on the trade deal between India and the US in New Delhi. The minister stated that the deal is in its final stages.

Continued on Page 7

**'FATHER OF ALL DEALS'**

P7

## You can't play with right to privacy of this country: SC

### Tells WhatsApp, Meta to 'exit India if you can't abide by the rule of the land'

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday told WhatsApp's parent company Meta that it should leave India if it cannot follow the Constitution and protect users' data privacy.

The court was hearing Meta's plea against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) order that imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore over WhatsApp's privacy policy. A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya



Bagchi and Vipul Pancholi made it clear that "not a single digit" of user data should be shared if it goes against the public interest. According to a report by Bar and Bench, the top court also questioned the lack of a clear option for users to opt out of WhatsApp's privacy policy. "Where is the question of opting out? Show me on your mobile. This is a decent way of committing theft of private information! You know your commercial interest, and you also know how you have made

consumers addicted to the app," it said. "Everybody uses it. If the user has a right to opt-out, how will the users know this right exists? Let us see the option and the situation with the user. When it comes to opting out, the information is in a newspaper. How will a person know?" The Chief Justice asked the

Meta representative. CJI Kant said, "You can't play with the right of privacy of this country, in the name of data sharing. You are making a mockery of the constitutionalism of this country. How can you play with the right to privacy of people like this? People pay you for this. Consumer has no choice you have created a monopoly!"

The Bench suggested that WhatsApp file an affidavit explaining its privacy policy and how data sharing works under it. The court

adjourned the hearing till February 9 and added the Central government as a party to the case.

"For the purpose of issuing interim directions, post the matter for next Monday. On the joint request made by senior counsel, the Union of India is impleaded as a respondent. Union may also file its counter affidavit," the court said. In January 2021, WhatsApp announced updates to its terms of service and privacy policy, to be effective from February 8, 2021. Users were told they

must accept the new terms to continue using the app.

Earlier, WhatsApp's 2016 privacy policy allowed users to opt out of data sharing with Facebook. The 2021 update made data sharing with Meta mandatory.

The CCI investigated the matter and in November 2024 ruled that WhatsApp had abused its dominant position under the Competition Act, 2002. It ordered WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with Meta and its products for five years and imposed the fine.



I know for sure  
nobody can quote from a  
book in Parliament.  
I read it on WhatsApp



## ELURU URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Rukmini Nivas, Chandragupta Colony, D.No.16B-16-34, Eluru-534002  
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No: 8-15/ ELUDA-General Work/2025-26, DATED: 02.02.2026.

The Vice Chairman, Eluru Urban Development Authority, Eluru invites tenders from interested, eligible bidders for "Construction of RCC Outfall/ Storm water Drains at various places in Eluru City." Total No of works is 8 with an amount of **Rs.516.95 Lakhs**.

Tender schedules are available on e-procurement market place from **04.02.2026**. Last date of receipt of tenders is **18.02.2026**. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place at [www.apeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.apeprocurement.gov.in) or contact Assistant Engineer, Eluru Urban Development Authority, Eluru District (Phone: 8978999933).

Sd/- Executive Engineer (FAC),  
Eluru Urban Development Authority, Eluru

## ANDHRA PRADESH INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION LIMITED

(An undertaking of A.P. Govt.)  
O/o, Chief Engineer (North), APIIC Ltd, 9th floor, APIIC Tower-1, Autonagar, IT Park, Mangalagiri, Guntur Dist-522503 web:[www.apic.in](http://www.apic.in)

e-Procurement Notice

iom.no.ce(n)/apiic/ e- PROCUREMENT/2021-22 Dt:02.02.2026

Sub: APIIC - H.O-EV-CE(N)-Tenders -Invitation of Tenders on "e-Procurement" platform - Reg.

Ref: Tender Notice No.113/CE(N)/APIIC/2025-26, Dated: 02.02.2026

Tender Notice No.113: Repairs & Strengthening of existing road No.3 & 11 at IP, Vakalapudi, Kakinada District with IALA Funds. Bid Download starts from 02.02.2026 at 08:00 PM and last date for submission of bids, Dated:17.02.2026 at 3:00PM. Tender documents download starts from: 02.02.2026 at 08:00 PM. Last date for submission of Tender: 17.02.2026 upto 3:00PM. Technical bid opening: 17.02.2026 at 3:30PM. The details of short tender notice and bid documents can be downloaded from [www.apeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.apeprocurement.gov.in) or <https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in>

Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER (North), APIIC Ltd., MANGALAGIRI

DIPR.R.O.No.4794PP/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22 Dt: 03/02/26

## ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act, XLII of 1951)

Kurnool Branch, D.No.50/706C, B - CAMP, KURNOOL-518002.

(Phone No.08518-229056, Email: [kurno@apsfc.com](mailto:kurno@apsfc.com))

## POSSESSION NOTICE (SYMBOLIC POSSESSION)

(Appendix-IV under the Act Rule-8(1))

Whereas, the undersigned, as the Authorized officer of the Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 09.10.2025 calling upon the

1) The borrower Dr. R K Sunil Babu, and also owner of the property/surety to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.53.82 Lakhs (in words Fifty Three lakhs and Eighty Two thousands) as on 30.09.2025 with further interest from 01.10.2025 and Other Expenses debitable to the loan account within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. [AND]**

2) The borrower Dr. K.Udaya Bindu and also Dr. R K Sunil Babu, owner of the property/surety to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.48.16 lakhs (in words forty eight lakhs and sixteen thousand rupees only) as on 30.09.2025 with further interest from 01.10.2025, Other Expenses debitable to the loan account within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice**

The borrowers/surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/owner of property and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this 31st Day of January 2026

The borrowers/surety of the property in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation, Kurnool Branch for an amount of **Rs.53.82 lakhs (outstanding in loan account of Dr. R. K. Sunil Babu) and Rs. 48.16 lakhs (outstanding in loan account of Dr. K. Udaya Bindu) as on 30.09.2025 and interest thereon, costs etc.**

Description of the Immovable Property (secured asset for above two loan accounts): All that part and parcel of the property consisting Residential Building (G+2 Floors) bearing D.No.28/852-A7-4, Viswa Nagar, Ward No. 28, CPM Office area, Nandyal Town and District located in a piece of land measuring 161.36 Sq.Yards together with buildings constructed.

Bounded: North : Land belongs to others - South : Road, East : Property belongs to Segu Rama Subbaiah, West : Site belongs to Linga Reddy

Date : 31.01.2026 Sd/- Authorised Officer

Place : Kurnool Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation

## ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Project Office, Rayapudi(V), Thullur (M) Amaravati - 522237

## MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

(ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY)

FILE.NO: MAU61-PLGOCMP/38/2025-PLG

NOTIFICATION: Certain amendments to the Zoning Regulations (ZR) of the Capital City.

GAZETTE NOTIFICATION NO:41 AMARAVATI, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026 G.1037

## Public Notice

(Section -39 & 41 of APCRDA Act, 2014)

In exercise of the powers conferred under section 39(1) and 41(3) of APCRDA Act, 2014 the APCRDA, Vijayawada here by proposes certain amendments to the Zoning Regulations (ZR) for the Capital City.

Any person/organization having any objection/suggestion with respect to said notification may send in writing to the Commissioner, APCRDA, Project Office, Rayapudi, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh-522237 with in a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this public notice. The person making the objections or suggestions shall also give his/her name and address, telephone/fax, e-mail address. Without contact details, the objection/suggestions shall not be entertained.

## SCHEDULE

S. No	Description	As per Amaravati Zoning Regulation (ZR)	Proposed Amendment to Amaravati Capital City Zoning Regulations
1	Parking norms for Hotels in Capital city Zoning regulation as 1 stall for 100 sqm in Amaravati Capital city area on par with Amaravati Government complex (AGC)	The Appendix-II of the Amaravati Capital City Zoning Regulations- 1 stall for 50 sqm gross floor area.	Resolved that the Authority hereby authorizes to take up process for Amendment to parking norms for hotels in Amaravati Capital city zoning regulations on par with Amaravati Government complex area. Resolved further that the Authority hereby authorizes Commissioner, APCRDA to take necessary action to implement this Amendment. Authority further directed Commissioner, APCRDA to ensure double stacked parking to accommodate future parking demand.
2	Revision of allowable built-up area within P1-Passive recreational zone in Capital City.	Development shall be allowable in only 10% of the plot area or 500 m <sup>2</sup> (whichever is smaller)	Resolved: That the Authority do and hereby approve that provision for development in P1-Passive recreational Zone stands Modified as 'Development shall be allowable in only 10% of the plot area' and any such development in P1 require approval by the review panel.
3	Increasing permissible height of the building to be considered excluding parking floor height for the buildings of an extent 300 Sq.m and above.	The Appendix-II of the Amaravati Capital City Zoning Regulations under Building type, the Maximum Building Height (m) in Residential use excludes height of parking floors in plots having extent of 300 Sq. mts and above. Height of parking floor shall not be less than 2.5m. In case of parking floors where mechanical system and lift are provided, height of such parking floor shall not be less than 4.5 m. Parking floors in high rise buildings are also excluded from calculation of height of building.	Resolved: That the Authority do and hereby approve following amendment to Amaravati capital city zoning regulations: The Appendix-II of the Amaravati Capital City Zoning Regulations under Building type, the Maximum Building Height (m) in Residential use excludes height of parking floors in plots having extent of 300 Sq. mts and above. Height of parking floor shall not be less than 2.5m. In case of parking floors where mechanical system and lift are provided, height of such parking floor shall not be less than 4.5 m. Parking floors in high rise buildings are also excluded from calculation of height of building.
4	Amendment to Zoning Regulations with respect to P2 zone in Amaravati City.	The Appendix- I & II of the Amaravati Capital City Zoning Regulations.	RESOLVED That Zoning Regulations with respect to P2 zone are amended at chapter viii Appendix I (use matrix) of Zoning Regulations and chapter ix appendix II of zoning regulations matrix of Zoning Regulations to allow low density housing units (G Plus 2 floors) and group development with an FSI of 1:1 leaving most of the area as greenery subject to the conditions that the coverage shall be 50% maximum, the maximum FSI shall be 1:1 minimum plot area shall be 300 sq yards, minimum setback shall be 2.5m, and maximum height of the building shall be 10m and essential commercial area in APCRDA land nearby and community facilities within the scheme area are permitted.

Sd/- Commissioner, APCRDA.

## 'TTD high schools should achieve outstanding results'



## Decision on Nandi awards, theatre fest soon

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

CINEMATOGRAPHY minister Kandula Durgesh on Tuesday said that the coalition government is fully committed to the development of the Telugu film industry in Andhra Pradesh and would begin a structured action plan from April. He also announced that discussions are underway with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and a formal announcement on the revival of the prestigious Nandi Awards and Nandi Theatre Festival would be made soon.

He directed that students who are lagging behind in various subjects should be identified and given special coaching through simple and effective methods to improve their understanding.

He noted that quality facilities are available in TTD educational institutions and asked teachers to deliver instruction with dedication and the highest standards.

He further instructed that daily and weekly tests be conducted to enhance students' performance and that their academic progress be continuously monitored. TTD DEO Venkata Sunil, SGS High School Headmaster Chandrayya, SE Manoharam, Additional Health Officer Dr Sunil, teachers, and other officials were present.

with a clear objective of securing top ranks at the State and District levels.

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## Jagan to console Ambati's family today

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
GUNTUR

office furniture. YSRCP leaders condemned his arrest.

Jagan will console his family members and extend his support. He already enquired about Rambabu's arrest. YSRCP state general secretary Sajala Rama Kishna Reddy, former MP Modugula Venugopal Reddy visited Rambabu's house and consoled his family members.

Meanwhile, the police registered the case against the TDP activists who attacked Rambabu's house

and party office and burnt his car. Responding to the complaint lodged by Rambabu, the police registered the case. Following the orders of the AP High Court, the police set up pickets at his house to provide security to his family members.

Party state secretary Srinivasa Rao released the resolution to the media here on Tuesday. He said that RTC occupancy has increased dramatically from 67 per cent to 98 per cent after the launch of the

any entry fee. He said such initiatives play a key role in nurturing grassroots talent and strengthening the film ecosystem in the State.

Addressing the gathering, the minister stated that the government aims to develop Amaravati into a major hub for the film industry on par with Hyderabad. He reiterated that the state government would extend all necessary support for the growth of cinema and creative industries.

Durgesh appreciated the efforts of the festival organizer, Maa-AP founder and film director Dilip Raja, for successfully conducting the state-level festival on January 11 at Tenali without charging

tries in Andhra Pradesh.

As many as 203 short films were received from across the state for the festival, with nearly 2,000 actors participating.

Addressing the gathering, the minister stated that the government aims to develop Amaravati into a major hub for the film industry on par with Hyderabad. He reiterated that the state government would extend all necessary support for the growth of cinema and creative industries.

Speaking on the occasion, director Dilip Raja said government encouragement would enable Andhra Pradesh youth to achieve remarkable success and noted that the Short Film Festival had infused new confidence and determination among aspiring filmmakers.



Cinematography minister Kandula Durgesh with the award winners of short films in Vijayawada on Tuesday

- Cinematography minister Durgesh says a formal decision on reviving the Nandi Awards and Nandi Theatre Festival will be taken soon
- Reiterates the govt's goal to develop Amaravati as a major film hub on par with Hyderabad, with full support to cinema and creative industries
- At the AP Short Film Festival-2026 felicitation, 'Mahavriksham' won first prize among 203 entries, highlighting strong grassroots talent across the state

third prize. Cash awards of Rs 1 lakh were presented to the top three winners.

Special awards were also presented to Sujitha (Best Actress-Manam), Sai Prakash (Best Character Actress-Abdaddam vs Nijam), Pawan Sarma (Mannu-Minnu), child artist Harshathunisa, young talent Rithvik Reddy (Astra), debut director Trivikram, villain Meesala Bhaskar and Telugu script reviewers Manjuluri Lakshminath Master and Jagadish, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, director Dilip Raja said government encouragement would enable Andhra Pradesh youth to achieve remarkable success and noted that the Short Film Festival had infused new confidence and determination among aspiring filmmakers.

THE CPM state committee, which met on February 2 and 3 at MB Vignana Kendram in Vijayawada, demanded an immediate increase in RTC buses in view of the sharp rise in passenger traffic following the implementation of the Stree Shakti free bus travel scheme for women.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of party central committee member K Loka Natham and was attended by politburo members B Raghavulu and U Vasuki, along with state secretary V Srinivasa Rao. The committee unanimously adopted a resolution highlighting the severe inconvenience being faced by passengers due to overcrowding.

Party state secretary Srinivasa Rao released the resolution to the media here on Tuesday. He said that RTC occupancy has increased dramatically from 67 per cent to 98 per cent after the launch of the



Picture for representational purpose only

Stree Shakti scheme. However, the government failed to deploy additional buses to meet the growing demand, he said.

## Party's two-day state committee meet flags overcrowding, commuter hardships after Stree Shakti scheme implementation

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

As a result, buses are running beyond capacity, skipping stops, and frequently breaking down due to poor maintenance and ageing fleets, he commented.

Further, he said the two-day state committee meeting expressed its concern over harassment faced by women passengers and the difficulties encountered by students who are unable to reach schools and colleges on time.

The party also pointed out that RTC staff are under heavy pressure, with workload rising by over 30 per cent, leading to an increase in in-service deaths, he said. Despite the corporation seeking permission to recruit 11,000 staff, the government has not responded, he noted.

Meanwhile, he said his party urged the government to ensure RTC services in villages still lacking bus connectivity, strictly regulate private buses, allow digital Aadhaar verification for women passengers, and immediately strengthen the public transport system to safeguard the Stree Shakti scheme and commuter safety.

## Five Eagle teams to curb drug menace in EG dist

- The teams have been provided with two-wheelers to ensure swift mobility and effective monitoring
- For the first time in the State, one Eagle team has been allotted to each sub-division

POS

## RLIP not unfair to any region: YSRCP

- Prakash Reddy accuses Chief Minister of deliberately halting RLIP works, causing severe hardship to farmers
- Calls upon farmers from across district to participate in a public meeting scheduled for February 5
- Condemns attempts to divert public attention through controversies and criticise attacks on opposition leaders

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
ANANTAPUR

Former MLA Prakash Reddy during a press conference in Anantapur on Tuesday

FORMER Raptadu MLA and YSRCP constituency coordinator Thopudurthi Prakash Reddy alleged that the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project (RLIP) was not unjust to any region and accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of deliberately halting its works, causing severe hardship to farmers.

Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP district office on Tuesday Prakash Reddy called upon farmers from across Anantapur district to

participate in a public meeting scheduled on February 5 near the Pothireddypadu Regulator, urging them to fight for their rightful irrigation water.

He said that during the tenure of former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, welfare schemes were implemented every month with clearly announced schedules, benefiting people across the State.

In contrast, he alleged that the present government had failed to honour its promises and stalled key welfare and housing schemes.

Accusing Naidu of turning Amaravati into a hub of large-scale land profiteering, Prakash Reddy claimed that only a select few, including the Chief Minister, his ministers, and close associates, benefited, while no real wealth

was created for the State. He further alleged that the State government had failed to deposit its mandatory share for schemes such as MGNREGS, AMRUT, Jal Jeevan Mission, and housing projects, risking the discontinuation of central assistance.

He said that several irrigation projects, including Handri-Neeva and Galeru-Nagari link works, which were partially completed during the previous government, had been stopped, causing major losses to drought-prone Rayalaseema districts.

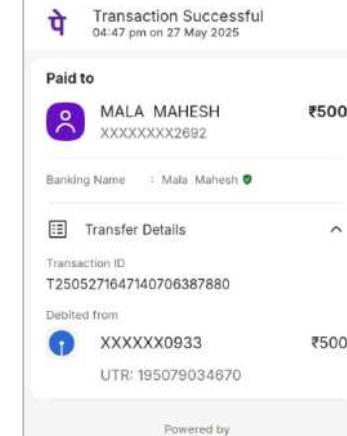
Prakash Reddy also condemned attempts to divert public attention through controversies and criticised attacks on opposition leaders, asserting that criticism should be met democratically and not through intimidation.

- Villagers claim that bribes are being demanded for routine public services
- Expresses concern that lack of effective supervision has allowed such practices to continue unchecked
- Assured that the matter would be looked into and that she would pursue the issue

NARENDRA KUMAR  
VARKUNTALA  
KURNOOL

SERIOUS allegations of corruption have been raised against the Devanakonda Village Secretariat in Kurnool district, with residents claiming that bribes are being demanded for routine public services. Villagers allege that the Secretariat, meant to provide hassle-free governance at the grassroots level, has turned into a centre of illegal collections, causing hardship to the common people.

Speaking to The Hans India on Tuesday, local residents Talaru Dastagiri and Ramesh alleged that



bribes are being collected openly for issuing birth and death certificates.

They claimed that amounts ranging from Rs.1,000 to Rs.3,000 are being demanded and that applications are deliberately delayed if payments are not made.

According to them, the computer operator, identified as Mala Mahesh, is allegedly collecting the money from applicants, while fixed rates are said to have been decided



Talaru Dastagiri and Ramesh.

for different services.

The villagers further alleged that similar payments are being demanded for corrections in certificates, Aadhaar-related services for children, and other administrative works.

They also claimed that an organised system involving intermediaries is operating in and around the Secretariat, facilitating the collection of money and assuring applicants that their work would be completed swiftly after payment.

Residents expressed concern that the lack of effective supervision has allowed such practices to continue unchecked. When The Hans India contacted Devanakonda MPDO Jyothi for her response, she stated that she was unaware of the allegations. However, she assured that the matter would be looked into and that she would pursue the issue.

The Hans India also tried to speak to the computer operator Mala Mahesh over phone to get his version but there was no response.

## Sevala Maharaj Jayanti held

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
PUTTAPARTHI

The birth anniversary celebrations of Sevala Maharaj were held with great fervour and traditional splendour at the spiritual town of Puttapparthi in Sri Sathya Sai district, under the aegis of the All India Banjara Bhakta Seva Sangh (ABBSS).

The event stood as a vibrant symbol of devotion, cultural heritage, and social unity. District Collector A Shyam Prasad attended the celebrations as the chief guest.

He paid floral tributes to the portraits of Sevala Maharaj and Sathya Sai Baba, and ceremonially inaugurated the Sevala Jayanti Rath Yatra by breaking a concomit, in keeping with tradition. The colourful procession, reflecting the customs, culture, and spiritual beliefs of the Banjara community, added a festive aura to Puttapparthi.

A key highlight of the programme was the Collector's participation in traditional tribal dances alongside Banjara women, drawing appreciation from



Collector A Shyam Prasad flagging off the Sevala Maharaj Jayanti Rath Yatra during the ABBSS-organised celebrations at Puttapparthi in Sri Sathya Sai district on Tuesday

the public for his gesture of respect towards tribal art and culture. Later, the Collector joined the Rath Yatra, walking alongside devotees. The procession commenced from Sathyamma Circle and proceeded up to Ganesh Circle, accompanied by traditional drums, folk songs, tribal dances, and devotional chants. The streets resonated with enthusiasm and cultural vibrancy as devotees celebrated the ideals and teachings of Sevala Maharaj. The celebrations transformed the town into a hub of devotion and festi-

tivity, leaving a lasting impression on participants and onlookers alike, while reaffirming the cultural richness and unity of the Banjara community.

## Family counselling centre opened to address women's issues

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
PUTTAPARTHI

A Family Counselling Centre has been inaugurated at Puttapparthi to provide effective support and resolution for women facing domestic and social issues, said Satish Kumar, Superintendent of Police, Sri Sathya Sai district.

The centre was inaugurated on Tuesday morning at the DSP office premises in Puttapparthi.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP said the police department would extend all possible support to women approaching the centre and work towards resolving their grievances through counselling. He noted that after revenue-related issues, family disputes account for a significant number of complaints received through grievance platforms. To address this, a dedicated counselling team comprising



Police officials interact with women during a counselling session at the newly inaugurated Family Counselling Centre at Puttapparthi in Sri Sathya Sai district on Tuesday

a lawyer, a representative from a voluntary organisation, a police officer, and a women's representative has been constituted. He said counselling would help couples resolve differences amicably and lead a peaceful life. The SP stated that the Family Counselling Centre at the district headquarters would serve as a model for the entire district by instilling confidence among women and homemakers.

He expressed gratitude to donors who extended support for setting up the centre and said special focus was being placed on preventing crimes against women.

He added that similar counselling centres have already been established at Kadiri, Penkonda, and Dharmavaram, with staff available for two days a week and round-the-clock services if required.

The SP specially congratulated Vijay Kumar and his team for their efforts in establishing the fully equipped counselling centre.

DSP Vijay Kumar, Circle Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and police personnel were present at the programme.

## Farmers express happiness over quick solutions at revenue clinic

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
DHARMAVARAM

FARMERS are expressing their happiness as the Revenue Clinics, conducted under the auspices of the Revenue Department, are providing quick solutions to their land-related problems.

A piece of land in Survey Number 369-B, measuring 4.60 acres in Pulletipalli village of Chennekothapalli mandal, had been under a notional account for some time due to a partition dispute among four brothers.

After an inquiry into the matter, the Joint Collector sent a report, based on which Lakshminarayana, Akkulaappa, Satyanarayana and Ramanjaneyulu

were issued 1-B certificates according to their respective shares.

In this context, the brothers mutually resolved the partition dispute, submitted an application at the Revenue Clinic, and requested that the said patta land be registered as a regular account and that 1-B certificates be issued in their respective names.

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- Instructs that the festival arrangements be implemented effectively through close coordination among all concerned government departments
- Inspects key parking locations and traffic-prone areas in and around Srisailam
- Also reviews arrangements at the Lingalagattu bathing ghats and issued specific directions to officials to prevent congestion



Nandyal SP Suneel Sheoran inspecting traffic parking locations in Srisailam on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NANDYAL

IN view of the upcoming Maha Shivaratri Brahmotsavams at Srisailam, Nandyal District Superintendent of Police Suneel Sheoran, has directed police officials to take stringent measures to ensure the safety of traffic devotees and prevent traffic disruptions or any untoward incidents. Emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts, the SP instructed that the festival arrangements be implemented

effectively through close coordination among all concerned government departments.

As part of the preparations, the District SP convened a review meeting with senior police officers on Tuesday to discuss security and traffic management plans. Subsequently, he personally inspected key parking locations and traffic-prone areas in and around Srisailam, including the ring road parking areas, RTC bus stand, Sakshi Ganapati area, Hatakeswaram, Lingalagattu and other designated zones.

He also reviewed arrangements at the Lingalagattu bathing ghats and issued specific directions to officials to prevent congestion

bathing ghats and issued specific directions to officials to prevent congestion and ensure smooth movement of devotees.

The SP stressed that adequate parking facilities have been identified to manage the expected influx of pilgrims visiting the Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna temple.

Police personnel have been instructed to regulate traffic efficiently so that devotees can have a hassle-free darshan without inconvenience to others.

Special attention is being paid to avoid bottlenecks on approach roads and within the temple town during the

peak festival days.

Appealing directly to devotees, SP Suneel Sheoran urged them to strictly follow police instructions and park their vehicles only in designated parking areas without causing inconvenience to others.

He cautioned that parking vehicles on either side of the roads would not be permitted under any circumstances, as it could lead to severe traffic obstruction.

The SP expressed confidence that with public co-operation and inter-departmental coordination, the Maha Shivaratri Brahmotsavams would be conducted peacefully and successfully.

## Devanakonda secretariat faces corruption charges by villagers

## Amount sent through phonepe to computer operator Mahesh



Talaru Dastagiri and Ramesh.

for different services.

The villagers further alleged that similar payments are being demanded for corrections in certificates, Aadhaar-related services for children, and other administrative works.

They also claimed that an organised system involving intermediaries is operating in and around the Secretariat, facilitating the collection of money and assuring applicants that their work would be completed swiftly after payment.

Residents expressed concern that the lack of effective supervision has allowed such practices to continue unchecked. When The Hans India contacted Devanakonda MPDO Jyothi for her response, she stated that she was unaware of the allegations. However, she assured that the matter would be looked into and that she would pursue the issue.

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## Govt committed to protect farmers' land rights: Collector

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
GORANTLA

THE State government is firmly committed to providing complete security to farmers' land rights, District Collector A Shyam Prasad said on Tuesday.

The Collector participated in a programme organised at Javakuladinne village in Gorantla mandal, where he distributed newly issued Pattadar Passbooks bearing the official government emblem to farmers.

Addressing the gathering, the Collector said the government is distributing authenticated Pattadar Passbooks across all villages in the district to strengthen land ownership security and improve transparency in land records.

He cautioned that many land-related disputes arise due to the failure to conduct proper surveys at the time of purchase. Farmers and the public were advised to ensure land surveys are carried out before registration and to register only the surveyed extent.

He explained that discrepancies often emerge between land records and ground realities when surveys are ignored, a problem prevalent not only in the State



Collector A Shyam Prasad distributing a newly issued pattadar passbook to a farmer during a land records distribution programme held at Javakuladinne village in Gorantla mandal on Tuesday

but across the country. The Collector noted that surveyors are available in every village and that surveys will be completed within a week if applicants attend on the notified date. Sub-division surveys are mandated to be completed within 15 days, while new Pattadar Passbooks must be issued within 30 days.

## Revenue issues reviewed in state-level video conference

ANANTAPUR

A State-level review meeting on key revenue-related services was held on Tuesday through video conference from the CCLA office, Vijayawada, covering issues related to the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS), IVRS, mutations, revenue survey, and distribution of Pattadar Passbooks scheduled for February.

The review was chaired by Sai Prasad, Principal Secretary (Revenue), along with Jayalakshmi, CCLA & Special Chief Secretary, with participation from District Collectors, Joint Collectors, DROs, and RDOs from across the State. From Anantapur Collectorate, Joint Collector C Vishnu Charan, DRO A Malola, and other revenue officials participated in the review via video conference from the Mini Conference Hall. The officials discussed measures to strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms, expedite land-related services, and ensure timely distribution of Pattadar Passbooks, with emphasis on transparency and efficient service delivery at the district level.



Collector O Anand chairing a review meeting with revenue officials during a video conference on key land and grievance redressal issues at the Anantapur Collectorate on Tuesday

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**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, NAGARAJA PULLAJA RACHAMADUGU (Old Name) R/o/H.No:45-24K-44-1, Flat No.404, Sai Teja Enclave, Kurnool District: 518004, AP, have changed my name as RACHAMADUGU NAGARAJU PULLAJU (New Name) S/o.RACHAMADUGU RAMAIAH (TH\_RJSKR)

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Anupama Mehta (Old Name) W/o Gandluri Venkatesh Babu, Residing at D.No. 28-4-13, Vincent Ferrar Nagar, 7th Cross, Anantapur City & Anantapur Dist: 518001, AP, have changed my name from ANUPAMA MEHTA (Old Name) to ANUPAMA MUNJATHA (New Name) hence forth. My Name being called as ANUPAMA MUNJATHA for all purposes. (TH\_RJSKR)

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I am venkatamma vadda (old name) w/o V. M. Lakshmana R/o H.NO 1-1-123, Sunita Nagar, Anantapur, City and Dist, Changing my name from Venkatamma vadda (old Name) to V.M. Venkatamma (New Name) Hence forth, I am being Called as V. M. Venkatamma for all purposes. (TH\_HEERALA)

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effectively through close coordination among all concerned government departments.

# US tariff cut brings cheer to aqua sector: Atchchanna

- Minister says tariff on Indian seafood exports to US reduced from 25% to 18%, easing burden on aquaculture sector.
- Export volumes expected to rebound by 10-15% with profit margins recovering to 7-8%
- Andhra Pradesh set to benefit with higher farmer incomes, employment and sectoral growth

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

THE reduction of the United States tariff on Indian seafood exports from 25 per cent to 18 per cent has come as a major relief to exporters and the aquaculture sector in Andhra Pradesh, said minister for agriculture, cooperation, marketing, animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries K Atchannaidu said on Monday.

Welcoming the decision, taken under the India-US trade agreement, the minister said the tariff cut would significantly ease the burden on seafood exporters,



particularly those engaged in aquaculture. He recalled that earlier, Indian seafood exports to the US were subjected not only to a 25 per cent tariff but also additional punitive duties, pushing the total tariff burden to 50-58 per cent.

As a result, between April and November 2025, India's seafood exports to the US fell by about 15 per cent in volume to 2.01 lakh metric tonnes, while export value declined by 6.3 per cent to 1.72 billion dollars.

Frozen shrimp, India's principal seafood export to the US, was the worst hit during this period, the minister noted. With the

tariff now reduced to 18 per cent, the competitiveness of Indian seafood products in the US market has improved considerably. Stalled export orders are being revived, and favourable conditions have emerged for releasing consignments held up in bonded warehouses.

Atchannaidu said seafood exports to the US are expected to grow by 10-15 per cent in the coming months, with export volumes likely to

return to pre-tariff levels by the second half of 2025-26. Profit margins in the seafood processing sector, which had shrunk to 5-5.5 per cent during the high-tariff phase, are also expected to recover to 7-8 per cent following the tariff reduction. Duty concessions on key inputs announced in the Union Budget 2026 would provide additional support to the sector, he added.

While the US market

shows signs of revival, exports to non-US markets such as the European Union, China, Vietnam, Russia and the United Kingdom have remained stable. In early 2025-26, non-US markets accounted for around 57 per cent of shrimp exports, reflecting effective market diversification.

For Andhra Pradesh, the country's leading seafood-producing state, the tariff cut is a boon, the minister said. The recovery in exports will enhance income stability for farmers and fishermen, create more employment opportunities, and improve gross value addition (GVA) in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Citing MPEDA estimates, he said India's total seafood exports are likely to reach 14-15 lakh metric tonnes in 2025-26, underlining the significance of the US tariff reduction for the sustainable growth of the sector.

DEPUTY Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday directed the excise officials to maintain continuous surveillance on liquor shops and take action against those selling booze at inflated prices.

The Deputy Chief Minister received complaints that liquor is being sold at prices higher than the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) across the state. He asked liquor shops not to bring a bad name to the government by selling liquor at higher prices.

According to a statement from the Deputy Chief Minister, complaints are coming in from Kakinada district and other parts of the state. After examining the complaints, he stated that selling liquor at inflated prices is against the rules. It also brings a bad name to the government.

The Jana Sena leader said shopkeepers must strictly adhere to the regulations regarding liquor sales.

Opposition YSRCP has been targeting the coalition

- Orders strict surveillance and action against liquor outlets selling above MRP, citing complaints from Kakinada and elsewhere
- Says overpricing violates rules and tarnishes the government's image; directs shopkeepers to strictly follow excise norms
- Directions come amid YSRCP allegations of rampant illegal liquor sales, even as the Cabinet's recent Rs 10 per bottle hike aims to boost state revenue



government over illegal liquor sales. Its leaders alleged that the government is allowing rampant violations.

According to YSRCP leaders, the shopkeepers are selling liquor at inflated prices.

The state Cabinet in January decided to increase the maximum retail price of all sizes of India-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) brands and foreign liquor by Rs 10 per bottle, while withdrawing additional retail excise tax imposed on bars.

It was announced that the increase of Rs 10 per bottle will not be applicable to

cheaper liquor (180 ml bottle costing Rs 99), beer, wine and ready-to-drink (RTD) varieties.

The Cabinet also decided to increase the retailer margin by approximately 1 per cent of the MRP on IMFL and FL, including 180 ml IMFL bottles, beer, wine and RTDs. The price hike is expected to generate approximately Rs 1,391 crore in additional annual revenue for the state. At the same time, the withdrawal of additional retail excise tax will reduce the financial burden on bars by about Rs 340 crore a year.

## Home minister slams Jagan, stresses TDP's discipline

- Anitha says Naidu's governance is incomparable to Jagan's, highlighting restraint among TDP cadres
- Accuses YSRCP chief of inciting violence and abusive language, contrasting it with TDP's focus on development
- Warns of strict police action against YSRCP attempts to create unrest, promising a tough stance on political rowdies

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA



## Mohan Babu, Vishnu booked for SFI leaders abduction

- Tension prevails after SFI leaders Akbar and Vinod were attacked and abducted while heading for a protest against Mohan Babu University
- Police rescue the two student leaders within an hour and take the accused and vehicles used into custody

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI  
TIRUPATI



CPM leaders protesting before Tiruchanoor police station on Tuesday



SFI leaders Akbar and Vinod

TIRUPATI witnessed tension on Tuesday after two student leaders were allegedly attacked and abducted while they were on their way to the Collectorate to stage a protest against alleged irregularities at Mohan Babu University (MBU). About 30 persons reportedly attacked SFI district general secretary Akbar and SFI SV University leader Vinod and took them away in vehicles. The incident led to the filing of cases against Cine action Manchu Mohan Babu and Manchu Vishnu along with others.

The sudden incident shocked SFI students. CITU state vice president Kandarpa Murali immediately brought the matter to the notice of district SP L Subba Rayudu and ASP Ravi Manoharachari.

Murali warned that any threat to student leaders would lead to serious consequences and demanded strict action from the police and the state government.

He questioned whether violence was the answer when students were only seeking correction of alleged wrongdoings.

Police acted swiftly and rescued the two SFI leaders

within an hour of the incident. The accused were taken into custody and the vehicles used for the abduction were seized. SP Subba Rayudu said criminal cases would be registered not only against those who carried out the abduction but also against those who planned it. He assured a comprehensive investigation and stated that no one would be spared for taking the law into their own hands.

Meanwhile, Tiruchanoor police have registered a case against those involved in the abduction of SFI student leaders Akbar and Vinod.

The case has been booked as Crime No 23/2026 under Sections 191(2), 115(2), 140(1), 126(2), 351(2) R/w 190 and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita (BNS) at Tiruchanoor police station.

CPM state secretary V Srinivasa Rao demanded stringent punishment for those involved in the attack and abduction. He recalled that the higher education de-

partment had issued notices to the university earlier, but no effective action was taken. He condemned the alleged use of criminal elements to intimidate students and demanded that the university be blacklisted.

Student organisations have been raising concerns for the past several months over alleged irregularities at Mohan Babu University, particularly regarding fee collections. They had submitted several representations to the state government seeking an inquiry and justice for students.

CPI Tirupati city secretary J Viswanath also demanded immediate action and warned that protests against the alleged irregularities would continue.

AP Parents Association state president S Narahari condemned the attack and urged the Chief Minister to intervene. He demanded implementation of APHERMC inquiry committee recommendations, cancellation of university permissions, refund of Rs 26,17 crore allegedly collected illegally from students, enforcement of the Rs 15 lakh penalty, and withdrawal of false cases against parents and students.

## NTRUHS to launch India's first AI-based medical edu system

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

NTR University of Health Sciences (NTRUHS) will soon introduce India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) system, marking a major step towards modernising medical education in Andhra Pradesh, vice-chancellor Dr P Chandrasekhar said on Tuesday.

Addressing a WebEx meeting with principals, vice-principals, professors and students from 38 medical colleges across the state, Chandrasekhar said the initiative would provide world-class, technology-enabled learning infrastructure for medical students.

Speaking during the webinar, Dr Chandrasekhar Bondugula, creator of EdMedAI and Chairman of the Graduate Medical Education Committee in the United States, said he was committed to contributing to India's medical education system. He said the AI-powered application was designed to prepare future-ready and highly competent doctors capable of meeting global healthcare standards.

Principal secretary for health department Saurabh Gaur said the State government was keen on promoting Artificial Intelligence in healthcare and education. He stated that AI-based services could significantly improve knowledge acquisition and precision in medical training and added that the government would soon frame comprehensive policies and guidelines in this regard.

NTRUHS registrar Dr Sai Sudheer, director (R&D) Dr Srilakshmi Suryapraba, director (publications) Dr K Sudha, medical education advisor Dr Lokesh Idara and AI team members from SHC Technologies Private Limited.

- AI-enabled platform to strengthen competency-based medical training

ity and effectiveness of medical training in India.

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He said the university, in collaboration with EdMedAI developed by Dr Chandrasekhar Bondugula, a US-based medical professional with over 25 years of experience, was working to implement structured competency tracking, continuous assessment and digital learning modules. These measures are in line with the Competency-Based Medical Education framework mandated by the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Chandrasekhar noted that the NMC has stressed the adoption of AI-driven and technology-enabled learning methods to enhance the qual-

## JSP's Bolisetty quits party role over environmental PIL

VASU POTNURU  
VISAKHAPATNAM

IN a move to ensure that political commitments should not come in the way of fighting for the people and society, general secretary (environment) of the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and national convenor of Jal Bidarai, Bolisetty Satyanarayana decided to step down from all party-affiliated responsibilities with immediate effect.

Citing ethical and legal considerations linked to ongoing environmental public interest litigation, the announcement was made in this regard.

In a letter addressed to the JSP high command,

- Steps down from all party responsibilities citing conflict of interest with ongoing pollution-related PIL in AP High Court
- Notes that Pawan Kalyan, now holding the environment portfolio, is a prime respondent in the case
- Says the move ensures impartiality in judicial proceedings and keeps the environmental cause free from political complexity

Satyanarayana said his decision was made following a meeting with key leaders of the party and thoughtful deliberation regarding his dual responsibilities as a senior party functionary and the petitioner in WP (PIL) No. 248/2020, which is currently before the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

He noted that while the petition was initiated during the previous YSRCP's regime, the present political context has changed with the formation of the NDA



Jana Sena Party senior leader and national convenor of Jal Bidarai Bolisetty Satyanarayana

government and Jana Sena as a key alliance partner.

Satyanarayana pointed out that the state government and the ministry of environment are prime respondents in the case, and that the party president, Pawan Kalyan, now holds the environment portfolio.

Further, Satyanarayana stated that continuing in a high-ranking party position while pursuing litigation against the state government could lead to a perceived conflict of interest, potentially compromise the impartiality of judicial proceedings.

Being associated with the political party, he added that such circumstances could di-

vert attention from the core objective of environmental protection.

Emphasising his commitment towards political ethics, Satyanarayana said he had chosen to step aside from the political responsibilities to ensure that the 'cause of the environment' remained free from political complexity. However, he clarified that the move was temporarily intended to remain in force until the final judicial purpose of the PIL.

While extending his support to the ideology of JSP, Satyanarayana said that his responsibilities as a petitioner and as national convenor of Jal Bidarai required him to maintain a distance

from formal party roles to ensure that justice was served without prejudice. He expressed confidence in the present government and in Pawan Kalyan's leadership that it would deliver positive environmental outcomes.

Satyanarayana expressed gratitude to the party leadership's continued support for environmental causes and confirmed that the non-political initiative 'Manu Nudi Mana Nadi' would continue.

He added that his decision would enable him to engage with the public and the media on constitutional issues freely, including environmental degradation and human rights without political constraints.

## YOU CAN'T BUILD VIKSIT BHARAT WITHOUT INNOVATION: IIT HYD DIRECTOR

ARTI ADKE

**A**t a time when AI is rapidly reshaping careers and Indian students remain caught in a relentless cycle of grades, rankings, Prof. B. S. Murty, Director of IIT Hyderabad, is quietly steering one of the country's boldest experiments in higher education. From fractal academics and artists-in-residence to deep-tech startups and AI-powered engineering programmes, his vision challenges long-held assumptions about how engineers should be trained—and what success truly means.

"If somebody comes to me and tells me they have never failed in life," Prof. Murty says, "I tell them they have probably never learned anything—or never experimented enough."

That belief underpins the transformation unfolding at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Hyderabad). In an education system often criticised for rigidity, exam obsession and placement-centric thinking, the institute has emerged as a striking outlier—prioritising freedom, creativity and skills over conformity and fear. Here, students are encouraged to explore across disciplines, build products, create enterprises and think beyond conventional career paths.

In a wide-ranging conversation, Prof. Murty tells *The Hans India* about the future of jobs in the age of AI, why India must evolve from a service economy into a product nation, and how nurturing skills, innovation and purpose is central to building a truly Viksит Bharat.

### EXCERPTS:

**Q: You have often described Indian education as rigid. What do you believe is fundamentally wrong with it?**

Education in India has been quite straitjacketed for decades. Students are told what to study, how to study and often what they should become in life. But the current generation does not want to fit into such a structure. They want freedom. They want flexibility.

If you look at older IITs and engineering colleges, the curriculum is very straight. Even electives are often not real electives. Many times, only one elective runs. That means the student is forced to take it—it becomes a core course in disguise. There is no real choice.

When I studied B.Tech, we faced the same issue. That experience stayed with me. We felt it was time to break away from this model and create an environment where students can genuinely explore different interests.

**Q: You repeatedly stress the need for deep-tech innovation. Why is this so critical for India?**

India is currently known more as a service economy. We provide services to the world. But no country has ever become developed by being only a service economy.



Every developed nation—big or small—is known for its products. India must also be known for its products. Software and apps are important, I do not deny that, but deep-tech innovation is essential.

For me, Viksит Bharat is the day I go to a place like Tokyo or Melbourne and buy a product labelled "Made in India"—because it is high quality, globally competitive and reasonably priced.

**Q: Will degrees lose relevance in the coming years?**

I am sure that in the years to come, people will not care much about your degree. They will care about your skills. What matters is what you can do, what problems you can solve. Institutions must create environments where skills and ideas are nurtured. The success of our startups already shows that this shift has begun.

**Q: You frequently speak about Viksит Bharat. What does that term mean to you personally?**

For me, Viksит Bharat is not a slogan—it is a practical vision. A developed nation is one that is known for its products, technology and innovation. Today, India is largely known as a service economy. We provide services to the world, which is good—but it is not enough.

No country in the world has become developed by being only a service provider. Every developed nation—whether it is Germany, Japan, South Korea or the United States—is known for what it makes. For India to become Viksит Bharat, we must become a product nation.

**Q: How do student startups fit into the Viksит Bharat narrative?**

Startups are not just about valuation—they are about value creation. When a 19-year-old student tells me he has paid salaries to five employees, that is nation-building in action. That is economic activity, confidence and leadership. In six years, IIT Hyderabad students have created 330 startups with ₹1,500 crore in revenue. These are not just numbers—they represent ideas

becoming reality. If every IIT produces job creators instead of only job seekers, India's transformation will accelerate.

We introduced something called Fractal Academics, which is a very unique system in India. Typically, a full semester course is a three-credit course—about 42 hours of teaching spread over 14 weeks. We divided the semester into six segments. This allows us to offer courses worth 0.5 credits, one credit, 1.5 credits, two credits and, of course, three credits. A 0.5-credit course is about seven hours of teaching. A one-credit course is around 14 hours.

In the first year especially, we encourage students to explore many such short courses. I compare it to tasting food at a restaurant—you sample different dishes before deciding what you like. Once students discover a subject they enjoy, they can take full three-credit courses and go deeper. This kind of academic freedom—we are the first in the country to offer it at this scale.

**Q: IIT Hyderabad has made liberal arts and creative courses mandatory for engineers. Why was that mandatory?**

If India has to become Viksит Bharat, innovation is essential. And for innovation, intuition is just as important as intelligence. Engineers are trained to calculate everything. Out-of-the-box thinking does not come easily. Artists, on the other hand, think intuitively. That is why we decided that about 10% of a B.Tech student's total credits—out of roughly 130—must come from liberal arts and creative arts. These include anthropology, psychology, philosophy, music, dance, painting and even martial arts. We are now introducing sports as credit-based courses—cricket, tennis, hockey—where students study, practise and are evaluated. When students balance left-brain logic with right-brain creativity, you get far better innovation.

**Q: You strongly advocate student choice. Why does this matter?**

At 17 years of age, we allow citizens to decide who becomes the Prime Minister of India. Then why can't they decide what they want to become?

Why should someone be told, "You must become a mechanical engineer"? Many students later realise this is not what they wanted in life. Education should expand freedom, not curtail it.

When parents ask me, "What kind of job will my child get?", I ask them—why should every B.Tech graduate get a job? Let them create jobs. India needs job creators, not just

job seekers. We need leaders. Parents often measure success only through salary packages. How do you respond to that mindset?

I understand parental anxiety. It comes from concern for their children's future. But salary should not be the sole measure of success.

A student who builds a startup, creates employment, files patents or works on deep-tech innovation may

not earn the highest salary in the first year—but they contribute far more to the nation in the long run. At IIT Hyderabad, we have students who chose not to sit for placements because they are building companies, pursuing research or working on socially relevant technologies. That is also success.

We must broaden our definition of achievement beyond the first job or first salary slip.

### Recent and upcoming academic and institutional launches

#### New academic programmes with AI integration

This year, the institute is set to launch a new M.Tech programme in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Chemical Engineering. IIT Hyderabad already offers an M.Tech in Integrated Computational Materials Engineering (ICME), where AI and ML are applied to the design of advanced materials such as new-generation steels, alloys, and functional materials with enhanced properties. These programmes reflect the institute's academic approach of integrating AI across core engineering disciplines, rather than limiting it to computer science alone.

#### Digital transformation initiatives

As part of its move towards deeper digital integration, IIT Hyderabad has created the position of Dean of Digital Transformation. In the coming months, the institute plans to roll out a ChatGPT-based digital system designed to provide quick access to information related to research activities, faculty expertise, patents, startups, and technology transfers. The system is expected to help students, faculty, and industry

stakeholders gain a clearer understanding of the institute's work in areas such as quantum technologies, materials science, artificial intelligence, and clean energy within a short time.

#### Integration of arts and humanities

The institute is also preparing to announce the association of Padma Vibhushan and Padma Bhushan award-winning performing artists as distinguished professors. In addition, an Artists-in-Residence programme is being introduced, under which eminent artists will spend one to two weeks on campus interacting with students. The initiative aims to expose students to creative disciplines alongside technical education, encouraging broader perspectives and sensitivity beyond conventional engineering training.

#### Student-led innovation through BUILD projects

IIT Hyderabad has implemented BUILD projects—Bold and Unique Ideas Leading to Development—to encourage student innovation. Under this initiative, students submit brief proposals, sometimes as short

as half a page, which are evaluated by a committee for support. Over the past six years, students have launched around 330 startups, collectively generating approximately ₹1,500 crore in revenue. A significant number of these ventures were founded while the students were still enrolled at the institute.

#### BHARATI programme for engineering excellence

The institute has also introduced the BHARATI programme—Bold-Hearted Aspirants Raising to Transform India. The programme seeks to reinforce the importance of engineering excellence and product development, encouraging students to focus on building and creating solutions rather than viewing education solely through the lens of placement outcomes.

The initiative aligns with broader national goals of strengthening India's technological and manufacturing capabilities.

Together, these initiatives highlight IIT Hyderabad's focus on interdisciplinary learning, innovation, digital access, and the development of well-rounded professionals.

Today is Global School Play Day

## Encouraging creativity with screen-free childhood experiences



knowledge in later life.

Promoting screen-free play is especially important in early childhood. Excessive screen exposure can limit physical activity, imagination, and attention span. In contrast, play-based learning supports movement, sensory exploration, and hands-on experiences that contribute to healthy physical and emotional development.

Ensuring access to pre-school education through play for every child is vital for inclusive growth. Play-based learn-

ing environments create equal opportunities for children from all backgrounds to explore, express themselves, and build foundational skills. They also help children develop a positive relationship with learning, making the transition to formal schooling smoother and more meaningful.

By encouraging unstructured, screen-

A conclave Neev 2026 Chapter 2 examined how startups are responding to changing expectations of Gen Z and Gen Alpha, focusing on talent, workplace culture, and the future of work



ing environments create equal opportunities for children from all backgrounds to explore, express themselves, and build foundational skills. They also help children develop a positive relationship with learning, making the transition to formal schooling smoother and more meaningful.

such as communication, negotiation, and conflict management in professional growth. Startup founder Mukil Vannan, Founder of Kplor, observed that while Gen Z professionals are comfortable with artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, foundational skills remain essential. He stressed the importance of communication, creativity, and problem-solving, advising students to focus on building core capabilities rather than being driven by job titles. Shilpa Arora, Co-founder and COO of

Insurance Samadhan, spoke about changing attitudes toward work-life balance and flexibility. She noted that younger professionals tend to be more intentional in career planning and place value on meaningful work, customer engagement, and long-term relevance.

From an HR perspective, Sumedh Singh, AVP and Head of Human Resources at EPack Durable Limited, highlighted the analytical strengths of the new generation while pointing to the need for flexible work models, transparent communication, recognition, and continuous skill development.

The session was moderated by Gokul Ramanan, Manager – Business Strategy at Medinou. Faculty members and students attended the conclave, which reflected ongoing discussions around preparing youth for evolving workplace realities.

## How startups are adapting to GenZ workforce trends

The Indian Institute of Management Kashipur hosted Neev 2026 | Chapter 2 – The Startup Conclave, a discussion-driven event that examined how startups and emerging organisations are adapting to changes in workforce expectations, particularly among Gen Z and Gen Alpha. The conclave focused on themes of startup talent, workplace evolution, and the future of work in fast-growing environments.

Industry leaders, startup founders, and human resource professionals discussed how younger professionals are reshaping organisational cultures. Speakers noted that today's

such as communication, negotiation, and conflict management in professional growth. Startup founder Mukil Vannan, Founder of Kplor, observed that while Gen Z professionals are comfortable with artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, foundational skills remain essential. He stressed the importance of communication, creativity, and problem-solving, advising students to focus on building core capabilities rather than being driven by job titles. Shilpa Arora, Co-founder and COO of

## Reduction in US tariffs is big relief for Indian economy

Finally, the saga of Trump tariffs has ended on a happy note—at least from India's perspective. With US President Donald Trump announcing an agreement with India that reduces tariffs on Indian goods from 50 per cent to 18 per cent, the long-standing bilateral trade tensions are likely to subside. He had imposed two tariffs on India: a 25 per cent reciprocal tariff, and later a 25 per cent import duty on account of India's purchase of Russian crude oil. Trade had spilled over into the political and strategic arena, much to the detriment of the best interests of the world's biggest democracies. Trump and his officials made remarks about India that they should not have. They got closer to Paki-

stan, which said last month that it had inked a pact with a firm connected to World Liberty Financial, the main crypto business of Trump's family. The objective is to explore the use of World Liberty's USD1 stable coin for cross-border payments. The Trump administration also pampered the de-facto ruler of Pakistan-Army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir. He was allowed to indulge in loose talk from American soil, which was very hurtful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Trump repeatedly claimed that he had brokered peace between India and Pakistan during the four-day skirmish last May.

Trump should not have said and done the things he did vis-à-vis In-

dia in his second term as President. But, they say, all is well that ends well. With Indian goods to pay an 18 per cent tariff, they suddenly become much more competitive in comparison with the merchandise from other countries. China faces a 37 per cent tariff, Brazil 50 per cent, South Africa 30 per cent, Myanmar 40 per cent, and Laos 40 per cent. We also fare slightly better compared to our neighbours, with Bangladesh and Vietnam facing 20 per cent tariff, and Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, and Pakistan paying 19 per cent. There is also a serendipitous result: India gave up its reluctance to augment trade with the world and went into overdrive to finalise free trade agreements, the

recent one being with the European Union. The India-EU agreement is not just another trade deal; it is a statement of intent. It signals that India is willing to engage seriously with large, demanding markets, accept high standards, and open its economy in a calibrated manner. The EU, with its vast consumer base and technological prowess, offers India access to high-value markets, advanced manufacturing ecosystems, and cutting-edge green technologies.

In return, Europe gains a reliable partner in Asia at a time when geopolitical uncertainties are reshaping global supply chains. More importantly, the push towards FTAs reflects a growing realisation in New

Delhi that economic growth, job creation, and strategic influence are deeply intertwined. Trade is no longer viewed merely as an economic activity but as a tool of statecraft. By embedding itself in a dense network of trade agreements, India reduces its exposure to unilateral coercion, enhances its bargaining power, and anchors itself more firmly in the global economic order. If Delhi sustains this momentum—by concluding more FTAs, improving domestic competitiveness, and aligning regulations with global standards, the country could emerge stronger and more resilient from an episode that initially appeared deeply damaging. In India, it takes a crisis to force overdue reform.

## Prioritise rejuvenation of 'Buckingham Canal'



DR D SREENIVASULU

THE rapidity of transformation of human civilization increased manifold ever since inventions were made in transportation modes. Even in India, beginning with the colonial period and after independence, continuous efforts are made to improve the transportation networks in the country connecting the length and breadth of the subcontinent.

Presently, governments are developing road networks, highways, bullet trains, national and international flights. Because of their ease and swiftness, the preceding modes of transport overpowered waterways, which used to play a key role in the economy by providing transportation to goods and services, and people across regions. An outcome of this transformation, coupled with rapid urbanisation, encroachment of water bodies and pollution is the neglect of the several water canals in India which became victims of modernisation. It is the responsibility of the government to promote the waterways through the revival of the canals. One such canal whose plight calls for immediate attention and action by the government is 'Buckingham Canal'.

Designed by Western engineers, this 19th-century navigation canal passes parallel through the Coromandel coast and connects Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Its construction was taken up in several phases. This is a private

waterway that was planned and executed based on the 'design-build-operate' project delivery system. This was the predecessor of the present day much-acclaimed Build-Own-Operate-Transfer Model).

The construction of the canal began in 1806. Initially, the 16.5 km stretch of the canal from Madras Port to Ennore was built by the Basil Cochrane company. In remembrance of this contribution, this canal was called the 'Cochrane Canal' in 1806. Later, the British government took interest in extending this canal by stretching it northwards to Madras.

By connecting Kakinada Port via Vijayawada, the canal enabled continuous activity between Madras and Kakinada port. For a while, it was also called Lord Clive's canal. When the Great Famine hit this region during 1876-78, the British government provided relief for the people through the extension works of this canal. This canal was renamed as Buckingham Canal, after the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who was governor of Madras presidency at that time.

The 796-km long water navigation canal extending parallel to the Coromandel Coast, one kilometre from the coast, is extended till Villupuram in Tamil Nadu. It also connects with Pulicat Lake and at Chennai, it intersects through the city's three major rivers- Kosasthalaiyar, Cooum and Adyar. All these aspects make this canal a marvellous engineering creation and multipurpose project.

This canal was initially used for transportation of commodities, people and later, for fishing. Settlements cropped up on the banks for this canal. Many communities formed their livelihood by depending on this canal.

In his work 'History of the Buckingham Canal Project' (1898), A S Russell writes that the construction of the canal



This historic canal, which used to be bustling with activity, is now ravaged with multiple problems like emitting untreated wastes by the industries and urban populations, encroachment of the canal land, siltation, and damage caused by natural disasters like floods. The mega prawn farms situated at the banks of this waterway dump their diseased and dead stock directly into the canal. Cyclones, against which this canal acted as a buffer zone, have damaged the canal and only a few attempts have been made towards the reconstruction and maintenance of the canal

has placed erstwhile Madras Presidency "in cheap and easy communication with no less than five districts, and with the large and important towns of Cocanada, Bezwada, Masulipatam, Ongole and Nellore".

This canal earlier was a dreary waste of sand, but much of this barren and arid country has been greatly developed and improved owing to the remarkably cheap means of communication afforded by the canal; cultivation has been brought into existence or extended, owing to the facilities given by the canal for the drainage of low-lying land; numerous casuarina and other plantations have been formed along its entire length; a great increase in the wealth and prosperity of the population has taken place".

Beyond bringing prosperity for the people in the region, this canal has the potential to protect people against natural disasters like floods and tsunamis. The canal has mitigated the effects of the 2004 Tsunami by acting as a buffer zone for 310-km long coastal regions

from Pedaganjam in Prakasam district to Chennai, saving the lives of hundreds of fishermen and coastal villages.

Scientists believe the canal has the potential to act as a barrier to allow tidal waves to merge into the ocean in ten minutes.

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In some areas, the canal is filled with filth and debris, while at

some places, it completely disappears and will be visible after some distance. The need of the hour is the immediate restoration of this age-old canal. Whenever a huge hurricane or flood hits any region, the government releases millions of rupees in the form of relief. But if steps were taken to develop infrastructure to mitigate these disasters, loss of people and property could be easily mitigated. This canal offers an opportunity in that direction, and to provide for the livelihoods of many communities living across the canal. The restoration of the canal with medium- and long-term plans should be the priority of the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, along with the Union government.

It is a matter of great relief and hope that the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has announced its intention for the revival of the Buckingham canal by declaring it as National Waterways 4 (NW-4). Established in 1986, IWAI aims at the development, with

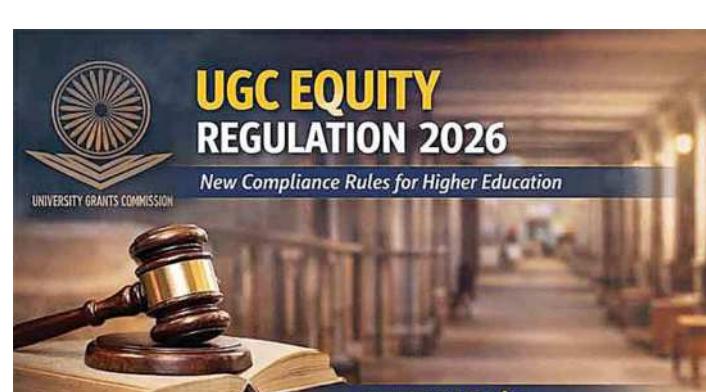
(The writer is a retired IAS Officer)

maintenance and restoration of Inland Water transportation on national waterways. Rejuvenation of Buckingham canal is placed under NW-4, which covers waterways from Kakinada to Kalapet in Pondicherry in three phases. But the rejuvenation plans under NW-4 are jeopardized due to the shifting of survey works in Phase-1 to Phase-2 and Phase-3. Despite the ambitious plan, the implementation works are going at a snail's pace. Governments have a responsibility to change the order of priority and expedite the work on this national canal waterway in the first place. The role of the State Water Resources Department is crucial for this.

Reviving Buckingham canal requires a concrete and swift plan of action, which involves dredging, removal of numerous bridges that were built on the route of the canal, recovering the encroached lands, and reconstruction of the walls wherever required. It is also necessary to check on the pollutants and untreated wastes that are being released into the canal throughout its stretch. Rejuvenation of the multipurpose canal would ease the environment-friendly transportation of commodities and people between states, reduce traffic woes, irrigation, provide for the livelihood for millions of people, fishing, and boating. It can also open the opportunity for developing more cordial relationships between Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which can share the benefits of this project by recognising dual responsibility for the states to protect this national heritage. A relentless resolve by the governments can ensure that the otherwise 'forlorn' Buckingham canal will start bustling with activity, like in the good old days.

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perceived exclusion has turned a tool for social harmony into a lightning rod for division.

Additionally, the broad and somewhat vague definition of 'indirect discrimination' has raised concerns among faculty that routine academic evaluations or disciplinary actions could be misconstrued as bias, potentially leading to a 'race to the bottom' where merit is sacrificed to avoid litigation. The removal of a previous draft's clause that penalised 'false or malicious complaints' is another glaring demerit, as it leaves the system vulnerable to weaponization for settling personal scores or campus politics.

This perceived lack of balance has sparked widespread resistance, particularly among student groups from

unreserved categories. The pushback, often coalescing under digital movements like #UGCRollback, is rooted in the fear of 'reverse discrimination'. Students argue that the current structure of Equity Committees, which mandates representation from reserved categories but remains silent on the inclusion of general category members, lacks the appearance of neutrality required for natural justice.

There is a palpable anxiety that campuses are being transformed into zones of surveillance. The deployment of 'equity squads' is seen by many as an intrusive overreach that could chill everyday social interactions, replacing organic peer bonding with a culture of suspicion. Resistance is not necessarily against the principle of equity but against a design that many

feel presumes guilt based on identity rather than evidence.

As we look toward the future of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), it is clear that the UGC Regulation 2026 is a necessary but imperfect instrument. The intent to purge campuses of the ancient poison of casteism is noble and constitutionally mandated.

However, for any regulation to be effective, it must be perceived as fair by all stakeholders it governs. To ensure the long-term success of these guidelines, the UGC should consider critical amendments. Reinroducing a safeguard against demonstrably false and malicious complaints would go a long way in building trust. Furthermore, the definition of discrimination should be made 'caste-neutral' in its language, ensuring that any student, regardless of their background, has a pathway to redress if they face identity-based harassment. Equity should be a bridge that connects the campus community, not a wall that segregates it into silos of permanent grievance and fortified privilege. Only by balancing accountability with due process can we create a truly inclusive academic environment that honors both social justice and individual merit.

(The writer is a former college principal and founder of Supporting Shoulders)



## LETTERS

### Let us join hands to tackle cancer

World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4 to raise awareness about the devastating impact of cancer and to encourage collective action against this deadly disease. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it accounts for nearly 10 million deaths annually. In many regions, including in India, lack of modern medical facilities, limited access to early detection and low public awareness worsen the situation. The World Cancer Day urges governments, health organisations and individuals to promote preventive measures, support patients and invest in healthcare infrastructure and research. This year's theme, "United by Unique," reminds us that while every patient's cancer journey is different, our collective action—supporting patients, funding research, and advocating for affordable treatment—is essential. Early detection is our strongest tool. Let us stand united to ensure that no one faces the burden of cancer alone.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai

### Quality health ensures longevity

Our editorial 'Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan' aptly calls for adding life to years and not the way round. Undoubtedly, life expectancy has risen due to advances in medical science and breakthroughs in disease management. Today's challenge lies elsewhere—sedentary lifestyles, excessive junk food consumption, rising obesity, and lifestyle-related ailments affecting the heart and other vital organs. Emerging trends like cancer, dementia and Parkinsonism are perturbing trends. Longevity, therefore, must now be matched with quality health and responsible living.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

### Need to focus on preventive health

THE "Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan" editorial (THI, Feb 3) rightly highlights how public health improvements have extended life expectancy in India. But as we cross 70 years on average, the focus must shift to quality of life in older age. Longevity without adequate geriatric care, social support, and financial security can strain families and systems. We need more investment in preventive health, age-friendly infrastructure, and pension coverage, especially in rural areas. Genetic research is valuable, but practical steps—clean water, nutrition, and accessible clinics—still make the biggest difference.

S M Jeeva, Chennai-32

### Protect all vulnerable groups

THIS refers to the editorial "Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan". It reminds us that longevity is shaped not just by genes but by living conditions that often hide genetic potential. For India, this has practical implications. While genetic research deserves support, policy attention must stay firmly on basics that still vary widely across regions. Clean air, safe roads, infection control, and early-life nutrition can reduce avoidable deaths that distort lifespan outcomes. Adding years to life is meaningful only if public systems ensure those years are healthier and more productive, especially for vulnerable groups.

M Barathi, Bengaluru-560076

### Healthy longevity: Onus on govt

A propos "Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan" (THI, February 3). The editorial highlights an important global study showing that genetics may account for over 50 per cent of human lifespan once extrinsic factors like accidents and infections are properly accounted for. The findings underscore the need to focus on controllable extrinsic risks. While genes play a larger role than thought, public health measures—improved sanitation, vaccination drives, road safety, and access to timely medical care—can still add meaningful years, especially in rural and lower-income groups. Policymakers should continue investing in these areas alongside emerging genetic research to maximise healthy longevity.

A Myilsami, Coimbatore-402

### Old-age homes and eroding humane values

THIS pertains to "Interesting insights emerge on human lifespan" (THI Feb 3). Paradoxically, even as human longevity improves, new and unfamiliar diseases continue to haunt and claim lives. Added years of life carry meaning only if accompanied by empathy, compassion, and a fellow feeling. Mushrooming of old-age homes and neglected parents is a sobering reminder that longevity without humane values reduces life to self-centred existence, marked by unfulfilled desires rather than shared fulfilment.

K Parvathy, Mysuru

thehansreader@gmail.com



## BENGALURU ONLINE

### Paperless property registration through Kaveri 2.0 now..

BENGALURU: Property buyers in Karnataka will no longer need to stand in long queues at sub-registrar offices for registration work. The Department of Registration and Stamps has launched a major reform by introducing a fully paperless property registration system. With the upgraded Kaveri 2.0 software platform, all registration procedures will now be carried out digitally, eliminating the need for physical documents.

Kaveri 2.0 is an advanced online property registration platform developed by the Karnataka government. It is an improved version of the earlier Kaveri software and is integrated with multiple government portals such as Bhoomi, E-Swathu, Khajane-2 and Sakala. The system enables citizens to complete the entire registration process within 10 minutes in a transparent and hassle-free manner without the involvement of middlemen. While digital e-stamping was already in use, the entire registration process has now been converted into a digital format. After successful registration, citizens will no longer receive physical documents. Instead, they will be provided with a login ID and password through which all property-related records can be accessed securely online.

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

DR BHASKAR NATH BISWAL

THE Indian higher education landscape is currently witnessing a tectonic shift with the notification of the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026. This landmark framework, notified last month, replaces the 2012 guidelines, marking a transition from advisory norms to a strictly enforceable legal mandate. The genesis of these regulations lies in a painful history of systemic failure and tragedy.

Following the heart-wrenching suicides of scholars like Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, their mothers petitioned the Supreme Court, seeking a robust mechanism to end the pervasive culture of caste-based exclusion. In response and under judicial pressure to address a staggering 118 per cent rise in discrimination complaints over the last five years, the UGC has introduced a framework designed to hold institutional leadership directly accountable for the social climate of their campuses.

At its core, the 2026 Regulation aims to institutionalise empathy through structural reform. One of its most significant merits is the expansion of the protective umbrella to explicitly include Other Backward Classes (OBCs), alongside Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). By



# CM targets natural farming expansion in state by 2031

- Aims to bring 40 lakh farmers under natural farming
- Launches Digi Rythu Bazaar, APAIMS, Kisan Drone apps
- Directs officials to counter El Niño impact

HAN NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launches apps related to agriculture and allied sectors at the Secretariat on Tuesday

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday directed officials to launch a comprehensive programme to make Andhra Pradesh the country's largest natural farming State. He said 1.8 million farmers were currently practicing natural farming on two million acres and set a target of covering four million farmers and five million acres by 2030-31.

Reviewing agriculture and allied sectors at the Secretariat, Naidu stressed the need to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers to cut cultivation costs and improve farmers' incomes. He called for certi-

cation and traceability systems to ensure product quality and market credibility.

He directed officials to implement these facilities by April and complete them statewide by June. He also suggested encouraging agriculture students to take up natural farming and said training programmes would be conducted with Subhash Palekar.

The Chief Minister emphasised that Andhra Pradesh's farm products must secure a strong presence in national and international markets. He instruct-

ed officials to take proactive steps to prevent losses due to the impact of El Niño and prepare alternative crop plans in drought-prone areas. He also directed the use of AI-based advisory services such as 'Bharat Vistar'.

Naidu said water scarcity in Rayalaseema had been addressed through efficient management and that major reservoirs were full, ensuring sufficient irrigation. Officials informed him that trade agreements with the US and EU had opened new export opportunities for shrimp, dried chillies, mangoes, rice,

and processed foods. He stressed strict adherence to quality standards.

The Chief Minister directed the establishment of a Cocoa City over 500 acres in Eluru district with international standards. He encouraged intercropping in mango, cocoa, cashew, and coconut plantations and called for increased focus on banana exports. He also approved saffron cultivation in Lambasingi under the PPP model with tribal participation.

He made registration of aquaculture farming mandatory and directed that egg

supply contracts for schools and Anganwadis be given to farmers. He said State policies should align with those of the Centre.

Naidu proposed organising crop-based festivals in different regions to promote tourism and stressed the need to reduce logistics costs. He suggested discussions with the Centre for special railway wagons to transport farm produce.

He directed the establishment and modernisation of Rythu Bazaars and approved a flower market in Vijayawada under the PPP model.

During the review, he launched the Digi Rythu Bazaar, APAIMS, and Kisan Drone apps, enabling farmers to book machinery and drones. About 9,512 machines have been made available. He instructed officials to educate farmers on crop registration and promptly resolve their doubts. Agriculture minister K Atchanna Naidu and senior officials attended.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu holds a review on Visakhapatnam steel plant at the Secretariat on Tuesday

achieved unprecedented progress in the last one-and-a-half years, moving from heavy losses to a profitable path. Hot metal production has risen sharply to 19,401 tonnes per day, compared to just 9,215 tonnes per day during the second quarter of 2024-25. The significant increase in output was attributed to the operation of all three blast furnaces.

The capacity utilisation of the plant has reached a record 94 percent, a sharp rise from about 45 percent during the second quarter of 2024-25.

Financially, RINL has staged a strong recovery, turning around from a loss of Rs 486 crore in September 2024 to a profit of Rs 54 crore in January 2026. Officials also noted that the Rs 11,000 crore

assistance extended by the Central government played a crucial role in stabilising the plant, and that RINL's credit rating has improved.

The Chief Minister advised the management to introduce new policies across all departments to further strengthen the plant. He emphasised the efficient utilisation of workers and employees to achieve better results and said that management, workforce and governments must work together to take Visakhapatnam Steel to greater heights. Recalling the reforms implemented in Singareni during the United States, he expressed confidence that similar cooperation would ensure sustained success. He assured full support from the State government to Visakhapatnam Steel.

## Cabinet nod for panel to probe TTD laddu issue

Continued from P1

Hence, the government ordered an independent inquiry and would direct the Commission to submit its report at the earliest.

Ministers discussed changes in tender norms for the procurement of ghee and questioned why former TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singh did not object to these relaxations. The Cabinet reviewed the 2022 Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) report indicating adulteration, which was allegedly ignored by officials Balaji and Subrahmanyam. It was also noted that the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) report confirmed the presence of animal fat in the ghee.

Several ministers questioned the alleged use of fake documents to secure tenders and the sidelining of cooperative dairies in favour of private and bogus suppliers. The Cabinet directed the Commission to examine these aspects in detail.

Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan sought clarification on whether former chairman YV Subba Reddy's role was mentioned in the SIT report and whether animal fat was cited in the charge sheet.

Officials said Page 35 of the charge sheet clearly referred to it. Ministers stressed that identifying the main conspirators was essential and said the SIT failed to expose the real masterminds. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said the inquiry was ordered to bring the truth before the public and ensure strict action. He assured that further action would be taken immediately after receiving the commission's report.

Addressing the media, Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav said the SIT had submitted a charge-sheet and a confidential 11-page report recommending action against erring committee members and senior TTD officials. He said the charge-sheet was filed in court and formal cognizance was awaited.

Keshav said the Cabinet found serious irregularities in tender relaxations, quality control failures, and dilution of safeguards. He said tender conditions were relaxed without proper technical evaluation or field assessment. Citing the SIT, he said action was recommended against Balaji, Dharma Reddy, and Singh for deliberate omissions. Ministers Kolu Parthasarathi, Nadendla Manohar, and Y Satyakumar Yadav also spoke.

He further said that the government decided to constitute a short-term administrative committee to examine procedural lapses and ensure natural justice. Officials facing allegations will be given an opportunity to explain before disciplinary action.

Keshav said the government was following due process and not acting out of political vendetta.

He said the SIT probe was nearing completion and that only extracts had been received so far. Conclusions could be drawn only after examining the full charge sheet. He clarified that the inquiry was not targeted at individuals but aimed at restoring the integrity of the TTD system. He also warned against politicizing Tirumala.

On whether the government still believed animal fat was present in the ghee, he said decisions were based solely on evidence, particularly the NDDB CALF report, and not on assumptions. Ministers Kolu Parthasarathi, Nadendla Manohar, and Y Satyakumar Yadav also spoke.

## NAIDU CALLS US TRADE PACT HISTORIC

Continued from P1

He observed that the pact would significantly boost Indian exports and open new avenues for trade and investment. "Under the leadership of PM Modi, India is steadily consolidating its position as a global economic powerhouse," Naidu said in his tweet.

He also highlighted that the agreement would generate immense opportunities for the country's youth and farmers, including those in Andhra Pradesh. According to him, improved market access and stronger trade relations would help create jobs, encourage entrepreneurship, and strengthen the agricultural sector.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the India-US trade partnership would play a key role in driving economic development and strengthening bilateral relations in the coming years.

- CII-AP and Yi Amaravati hold an interactive session with Australian Consul General Silai Zaki, following Minister Nara Lokesh's Australia visit that boosted bilateral engagement
- Talks focus on creating pathways for women entrepreneurs and young leaders in sectors like healthcare, green energy, clean tech, education, tourism, and sustainability
- Emphasis was laid on promoting AP's artisans, arts, crafts, and handlooms through cultural showcases, diaspora platforms in Australia, and global partnerships

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

THE Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-Andhra Pradesh, in association with the Young Indians (Yi) Amaravati Chapter, organised an interactive session with Silai Zaki, Consul General of Australia in Chennai, here on Tuesday.

The interaction gained added significance in the backdrop of the recent visit of Minister Nara Lokesh to Australia, which has given fresh momentum to strengthening bilateral ties between the State and Australia.

Discussions focused on building pathways for women entrepreneurs and young leaders from AP to engage with Australian institutions and innovation ecosystems. Key sectors such as healthcare, green energy, clean technologies, education, tourism, and sustainability were deliberated upon. In the tourism and cultural space, participants examined ways to empower local artisans of AP by enabling their participation in national and international platforms, particularly within Indian Diaspora communities in Australia. Cultural showcases, curated ex-



An interactive session of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-Andhra Pradesh, in association with the Young Indians (Yi) Amaravati Chapter, with Silai Zaki, Consul General of Australia, Chennai in Vijayawada on Tuesday

hibitions, and tourism-linked events were highlighted as avenues to enhance global visibility for the State's arts, crafts, handlooms, and creative industries.

CII-AP vice-chairman S Narendra Kumar and CII Vijayawada Zone chairman Dr V Nagalakshmi underlined the complementary strengths of Australia and Andhra Pradesh, particularly in sustainability and education, and reaffirmed CII's commitment to facilitating global partnerships. Yi leaders concluded the session by reiterating their resolve to strengthen international linkages that nurture talent, creativity, and entrepreneurship in Andhra Pradesh.

## 'India got best deal'

Continued from P1

"Rahul Gandhi ko kya mirchi lagti hai? (What is Rahul Gandhi's problem?)" The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha "will have to answer to the people about what he wants to achieve with his negative mentality," Goyal said. "I saw some Opposition leaders asking, 'Why did Donald Trump announce the deal?' The US imposed reciprocal tariffs on India, so it should have announced the removal," he added.

"Friends, we all know, and the entire country knows, how the Prime Minister consistently cares for the welfare of our farmers, our brothers and sisters involved in animal husbandry, and the dairy sector. He protects their interests at every step," he told the media. Describing the broader impact of the agreement, Goyal said the agreement unlocks unprecedented opportunities for farmers, MSMEs, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers to make in India for the world. Design in India for the world, and Innovate in India for the world," he said, adding that it would also help India access advanced technology from the US.

"It is not just a trade deal – it is a historic turning point that will reshape India-US relations and accelerate our journey towards Vitsit Bharat 2047," he added. The minister also took a swipe at the Congress, recall-

ing India's decision to stay out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). "We also remember the large-scale trade deal, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which Congress had pushed India into in 2011.

The Congress committed a grave mistake in negotiating an FTA with China, but PM Modi protected the country by refusing to join the RCEP. That decision brought relief across the nation," he said.

Goyal said the government had intended to make a statement in Parliament on the deal but was unable to do so due to disruptions. "Normally, we would have wanted to speak about this in Parliament, but we all witnessed that disgraceful scene," he said. Drawing a historical comparison, Dr Vohra likened US President Donald Trump's leadership style to that of Roman Emperor Caligula, quoting the Latin phrase "Oderint dum metuunt (Let them hate, so long as they fear)." According to him, President Trump prioritises respect and popularity over being loved. He said India responded to this leadership style with restraint and strategic engagement.

Dr Vohra added that India has largely achieved its core objectives in the trade agreement without compromising sensitive sectors.

"Wonderful to speak with my dear friend President Trump. Delighted that Made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18%," Modi said in a post on X, thanking Trump "on behalf of the 1.4 billion people of India."

## NEW BAGGAGE RULES COME INTO EFFECT

Continued from P1

Also, the government has raised the limit for passengers bringing duty-free imported goods into India from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000. Under the new rules, a resident or a tourist of Indian origin arriving in India other than by land, shall be allowed clearance free of duty articles, up to Rs 75,000, if such articles are carried on the person or in the bona fide accompanied baggage of the passenger. A tourist of foreign origin, not being an infant, arriving in India, shall be allowed duty-free clearance of articles up to the value of Rs 25,000.

## INDIA PLEDGED ZERO-TARIFF BARRIERS IN US DEAL: TRUMP

Continued from P1

A lot remains unclear about the terms of the deal, but Trump said New Delhi has agreed to several measures, including stopping Russian oil trade, reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to "zero", and buying over \$500 billion of US goods, including energy, technology, agricultural products, and coal. Tariff barriers are taxes levied on imported goods, making them more expensive to protect local industries. Non-tariff barriers, meanwhile, are indirect restrictions like quotas, subsidies, licensing, standards, and labelling rules that limit trade without direct taxes, often through complex regulations, costs, or delays, affecting

quantity, price, or market access. Both aim to support domestic economies, but tariffs are explicit taxes, whereas non-tariff barriers use policy and procedures, making them more subtle and complex. Trump's claim that India has agreed to "reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers against the United States, to ZERO", has not been confirmed by New Delhi. Moreover, both parties have not explained on which lines the barriers would be reduced, if at all, to zero. Largely, Trump's language signifies an in-principle commitment to lower or phase out duties on selected US products rather than an immediate elimination of all import duties.

## 'Father of all deals'

NEW DELHI

FORMER Ambassador of India to Poland Dr Deepak Vohra on Tuesday described the India-US trade deal as a significant diplomatic achievement, highlighting India's patience, strategic restraint and firm protection of key domestic sectors during negotiations and termed it the "father of all deals".

Speaking on the agreement, Dr Vohra said there were a few key takeaways from the development. He claimed that the American establishment had been strongly critical of India in recent years, but New Delhi

maintained restraint. "The first takeaway is that despite repeated criticism from the American establishment since 2023 and 2024, India has not reacted. We have been very patient and very resilient," he said. Explaining India's diplomatic approach, Dr Vohra referred to what he described as "duck diplomacy". He said the concept reflects calmness on the surface while intense efforts continue behind the scenes. "If you look at a duck on the surface, everything appears calm and quiet, but beneath the surface its feet are paddling furiously. That is how India has handled

## ...in final stages: Goyal

Continued from P1

"We will be shortly issuing a joint statement by both countries along with the details, which we will be shortly inking between the United States of America and India. And as soon as the final understanding of the deal is inked, and the joint statement is finalised, technical processes are completed, full details will be shared" he added. "But I can assure every Indian that the details of this deal will make every Indian proud," he further said. He did not share a timeline, but a government source said the joint statement is expected within this week.

## Oppn stages walkout demanding debate on deal

Continued from P1

As Opposition members started protesting in the House, Leader of the House J P Nadda said the US President was informed about the reduction in tariffs on Indian goods through a post on social media and also spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Nadda alleged that the Opposition's frustration was coming out, and it had started seeing bad even in good things. "I want to assure the house that the government is ready to discuss the Indo-US trade deal and provide all minute details of the deal. The government will come

out with a suo motu statement on the trade deal. As the Opposition members continued raising slogans alleging that the interests of the country were being bartered, Chairman C P Radhakrishnan said, when the government is making a statement, and they should listen. He said the government is ready to discuss, but the opposition members are creating an uproar. Opposition members were on their feet, raising slogans against the government, as they moved towards the front row. Nadda said the government will come out with a suo motu statement today itself.



Today is World Cancer Day 2026

# A simple vaccine, lifesaving impact

**World Cancer Day highlights the urgent need for prevention as much as treatment, especially against cancers caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Often silent and symptomless, HPV is linked to cervical, throat, and anal cancers that can turn deadly if detected late. Health experts say timely vaccination and regular screening could prevent up to 90% of these cases, making awareness the first line of defense**

D VAISHNAVI

**W**orld Cancer Day serves as a powerful reminder that many life-threatening diseases can be prevented with timely awareness and action. Among them is Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a silent but widespread infection linked to several cancers that often go unnoticed until it is too late. On February 4, radiologist-oncologist Dr. Sandeep Kumar Tula is urging families to take prevention seriously, calling vaccination and early screening the strongest weapons against HPV-related cancers.

Drawing from over four years of frontline cancer care, Dr. Tula says the biggest danger with HPV is how quietly it spreads. "People think of it as just another infection, but HPV is actually responsible for multiple cancers. High-risk strains like 16 and 18 alone cause nearly 70% of cervical cancers worldwide. These viruses silently integrate into cells and trigger mutations that lead to cervical, vaginal, vulvar, penile, anal, and throat cancers."

He explains that transmission is easier than most people assume. "Sexual contact is the primary route, and even a single exposure can transmit the virus. Smoking, weak immunity, poor diet, alcohol use, and obesity further increase the risk because the body struggles to fight the infection."

What makes the disease especially dangerous, he adds, is the absence of early warning signs. "Most HPV infections don't show symptoms initially. That's why it's so deceptive. By the time patients notice abnormal bleeding, unusual discharge, throat hoarseness, difficulty swallowing, or anal discomfort, the disease may already be advancing."



Dr. Tula highlights the dramatic difference early detection can make. "If we catch cancer at Stage 1, survival can be close to 90%. But by Stage 4, it drops sharply to around 15-20%. That's why screening is critical."



He recommends regular Pap smears and HPV DNA tests for women, especially after the age of 30, along with routine health check-ups for everyone. "Follow the screening guidelines every three to five years. Detect it early, and we can treat it effectively with surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy before it spreads."

For him, however, the most powerful tool remains prevention through vaccination. "The HPV vaccine is essentially a shield. It produces antibodies that neutralize the virus before it can infect you."

Explaining the options available in India, he says, "Gardasil protects against four strains and costs around Rs 3,800 per dose, while Gardasil 9 covers more strains at about Rs 10,300 per dose. Government programs are increasingly offering it free, though availability differs by region."

Vaccination at the right age, he stresses, offers maximum protection. "Children between 9 and 14 need just two doses. After 14, three doses are required. And it's not just for girls — boys must take it too because it prevents anal and throat cancers and reduces transmission. There's no strict upper age limit, but earlier vaccination works best."

Beyond medical advice, Dr. Tula has also been leading community outreach efforts to spread awareness. Since Republic Day this year, he and his volunteers have conducted campaigns

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1 Point a finger at? (6)
- 22 Wishful words (1,4)
- 7 Leaves high and dry (8)
- 23 Place of cultivation (4)
- 8 Horned goddess (4)
- 26 Harry Potter's professor (5)
- 10 Most sensible (6)
- 28 To free (3)
- 11 Three-fold (6)
- 29 The glasses in spectacles (6)
- 14 Some forensic evidence (3)
- 30 Female foxes (6)
- 16 Absolute (5)
- 31 Poker declaration (2,2)
- 17 Plant part (4)
- 32 Chewed the fat (8)
- 19 Spells (5)
- 21 Value (5)
- 33 Locomotive (6)

### DOWN

- 1 Is he trying his best to keep you entertained? (6)
- 2 Dispatched (6)
- 3 The orient (4)
- 4 Lie or fib (7)
- 5 Uncertainty or misgiving (5)
- 6 Escort courteously (5)
- 8 Our country, as a prefix (4)
- 9 International Standard Atmosphere (3)
- 12 Aliens? (3)
- 13 Crowbar (5)
- 15 Body of troops (5)
- 18 Or like sheep (5)
- 19 Jeering cry (3)
- 20 Red Indian tribe (3)
- 21 Like a car or a bus? (7)
- 22 Internet addresses (3)
- 23 Mending or repairing (6)
- 24 South Yemen port (4)
- 25 Royal city in Karnataka (6)
- 26 Injured-arm support (5)
- 27 "In at a" change for a girl's name? (5)
- 28 Outer edge (3)
- 30 Footnote word (4)



Solution to February 3

## SUDOKU



Solution to February 3

# Mental well-being tips for people living with breast cancer

**World Cancer Day** reminds us that healing from cancer isn't only physical — it's deeply emotional too. For women facing early breast cancer, fear, uncertainty, and stress often accompany treatment decisions. Prioritising mental well-being can be just as important as medical care in navigating the journey

ASKARI JAFFER



homemaker, remembers feeling overwhelmed after her diagnosis. Balancing family responsibilities with frequent hospital visits left her exhausted and anxious about the future. Gradually, she began prioritising her mental health along with medical care.

She joined a patient support group, practiced simple mindfulness exercises daily, and spoke openly with her doctors about her concerns and treatment choices. These steps helped her feel more grounded and better equipped to cope with uncertainty, restoring a sense of

Meera, a 47-year-old woman

calm during a difficult phase of life. Studies show that nearly four in ten people living with breast cancer experience significant anxiety or depressive symptoms at some point.

Emotional strain is often compounded by treatment side effects, lifestyle disruptions, and fear of recurrence.

More than half of patients report some level of anxiety by the end of chemotherapy, highlighting the need for holistic care that addresses both physical and emotional health.

Dr. M Vamshi Krishna, Director and Head of Department

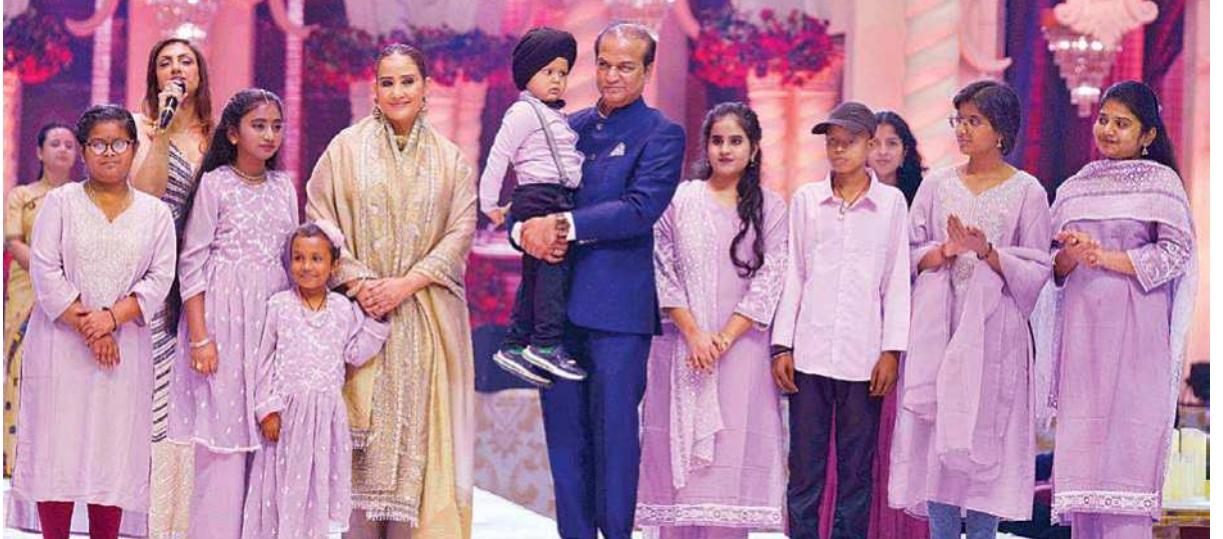
ment, Medical Oncology and Hematology at AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad, says, "Breast cancer treatments can take a heavy physical and emotional toll. Visible changes, frequent hospital visits, and uncertainty often intensify anxiety. Advanced therapies, along with counseling, support groups, and mindfulness practices, can ease these burdens and help patients focus on their overall well-being."

**Five ways to support mental well-being during early breast cancer:**

- **Choose the right treatment:** Discuss options and side effects with your doctor to reduce emotional stress and improve quality of life.
- **Address fear of recurrence:** Stay informed and proactive about therapies that may lower risk.
- **Seek professional help:** Therapists can provide coping tools and emotional guidance.
- **Join support groups:** Sharing experiences reduces isolation and builds strength.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Meditation, yoga, or breathing exercises can calm anxiety and restore focus.

Living with early breast cancer is challenging, but caring for your mental health can make the journey more manageable and empower you to move forward with hope.

## CELEBRATING STRENGTH, INSPIRING SURVIVORS



Manisha Koirala with Dr Vijay Anand Reddy, Founder, Cure Foundation, Hyderabad; with young cancer survivors, at the World Cancer Day Celebration - Light the Night & the 23rd Anniversary Celebrations of CURE Foundation; hosted by Cure Foundation; at Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club, Gachibowli

## Payal Rajput: I may fail, but I won't give up!

**W**ell known actress Payal Rajput, who has made a name for herself with her impressive performances in films like 'RX100',

'RDX Love' and 'Mangalavaram', has now revealed that there were people who wanted her to quit but that she was not going to give up.

Taking to her X timeline to pen a post, Payal Rajput said, "They want me to quit, and I find myself questioning whether I should. But then I think about the hard work I've put in over the last 12 years. So I tell myself no. I may fail, but I won't give up. #justthinking."

It may be recalled that last year, the actress had penned a post, expressing concerns about favoritism and nepotism overshadowing talent in the film industry.

Taking to her timeline on the social media platform X, Payal Rajput had then said, "Being an actor is one of the toughest careers out there. Each day starts with the weight of uncertainty, as I step into a world where nepotism and favoritism often overshadow talent."

The actress went on to admit that there were times when she wondered if her hard work and dedication would even get noticed in a world that was dominated by those with privilege.

She wrote, "There are moments of doubt when I question whether my hard work and dedication can truly shine through in a landscape dominated by privilege. I watch as opportunities slip away to those with famous last names or a powerful agent, wondering if my talent is enough to break through."

The actress had also added the hashtag #Struggleisreal to make it clear that the problem indeed existed in the film industry.

Currently, Payal is working on a number of films including the Telugu film titled 'VenkataLachimi', which is being directed by Muni and which the makers intend to release in three languages — Telugu, Tamil and Hindi.

Payal also plays the lead opposite Legend Saravanan in his second Tamil film that is



being directed by well known director R S Durai Senthilkumar.

While Payal Rajput stars opposite Legend Saravanan, the Tamil film will also feature actors Shaam and Andrea in pivotal roles.

The yet-to-be-titled film is a grand-budget venture directed by R S Durai Senthilkumar, known for his blockbusters like 'Kakkai Sattai', 'Kodi', and the recent success 'Garudan'.

The first phase of shooting was completed in Chennai, while the second phase was in and around Panikka Nadar Kudiyiruppu in Thoothukudi, which happens to be Legend Saravanan's hometown.

Sources say the new film promises to deliver a thrilling action-packed experience based on real events, set against the backdrop of Thoothukudi.

Music for the film will be composed by Gibran, with cinematography by S. Venkatesh and editing by Pradeep. The art direction is managed by Durairaj, while Ambikapathi is the executive producer.

The government is in discussions with mobile phone makers, IT firms and other electronics manufacturing companies for the next version of the production linked incentive scheme before getting approval from the Cabinet

-Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Electronics and IT Minister



## BIZ BRIEFS

### Skoda clocks sales milestone

Skoda Auto India, has announced that the Kylaq has emerged as a strong pillar of Skoda Auto's growth story in India. The Kylaq has been a major contributor to Skoda Auto India's best-ever sales performance, in the brand's 25th year in the country. Ashish Gupta, Brand Director, Skoda Auto India, said: "The Kylaq is a strong testament to our long-term commitment to India and saw us enter the market's most competitive segment."

### Amazon's RD sales grew 2.5X

Amazon India reported strong customer participation and robust demand for the company's first big shopping event - the Great Republic Day Sale 2026. Same-day delivery orders by Prime customers increased 2.5x compared to last year. Saurabh Srivastava, VP, Amazon India, said: "The Amazon Great Republic Day Sale reinforced several key trends, including strong participation from first-time customers - particularly those from tier 2 and 3 cities. We also continue to see a clear shift towards premiumization."

### EPAM at Agentathon

EPAM Systems, Inc., a leading global digital and AI transformation company, played a pivotal role in enabling Agentathon, the world's largest annual AI hackathon, hosted by Google Developer Groups (GDG) Hyderabad. As a strategic technology sponsor and enabler, EPAM supported the developer community with engineering rigor and enterprise-grade AI product thinking, helping teams strengthen their architectures and consider the scalability, reliability and real-world applicability of agentic AI systems.

### CareEdge's new report

According to CareEdge Ratings, the Union Budget 2026-27 reflects a steady policy hand at a time when India's economy is transitioning from recovery-led growth to a phase of consolidation and medium-term planning. Meenal Pandya, MD, CareEdge, said: "The Union Budget for 2026-27 comes at a time when India's economy is undergoing a period of consolidation and planning. What stands out this year is not just the scale of announcements but the steady hand guiding them."

### KMAMC's new scheme

Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Ltd. (KMAMC) announced the launch of the Kotak Services Fund, an open-ended equity scheme designed to tap into India's fast-expanding services sector, which contributes about 55 per cent to the country's Gross Value Added (GVA) and employs nearly one-third of the workforce. The New Fund Offer (NFO) is open for subscription through February 4 and 18, it follows a services-led investment theme and seeks to benefit from structural growth.

## Rupee skyrockets 122ps to close at 90.27/\$

The local unit rose to the highest levels in two and a half weeks and rallied by around 1.5% on the trade deal between India and the US

MUMBAI: The Indian rupee emerged as the best-performing Asian currency on Tuesday, registering a gain of 122 paise or 1.33 per cent in a single trading session to settle at 90.27 (provisional) against the US dollar, after India and the US agreed to a trade deal. Forex traders said the Indian rupee rose to the highest levels in two and a half weeks and rallied by around 1.5 pc on the trade deal between India and the US. Domestic indices also surged by around 2.75 per cent, boosting domestic market sentiments. Further, weakness in crude oil prices and expected foreign inflows also favoured investor sentiment.

India and the US agreed on a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian

goods to 18 per cent, lower than that for countries like China, Bangladesh and Vietnam. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 90.30 against the US dollar, then gained some ground to touch an intraday high of 90.05 and a low of 90.52 against the greenback. At the end of the trading session on Tuesday, the rupee was quoted at 90.27 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 122 paise from its previous close. The rupee gained 44 paise to close at 91.49 against the US dollar on Monday, a day after the Union Budget 2026-27 was presented. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the India-US trade deal is a "big decision" that will benefit everyone in the country and asserted

that his government always works in favour of the nation. Forex traders said the India-US trade deal will reopen the door for FII participation, and if capital flows recover in CY26, it would ease some pressure on the rupee. "With the 'reciprocal' tariffs on India's exports to the US now lowered, we estimate the current account deficit to narrow by around 0.25 per cent of GDP in CY26 to 0.8 per cent of GDP. In addition, if capital flows recover in CY26 on the conclusion of the India-US trade deal, which would ease some pressure on the INR, and result in downside risk to our current USD/INR 12-month forecast of 94," Goldman Sachs said in a research note.

However, things may not be completely smooth sailing for the INR, some experts believe. "There could be hiccups along the way with this trade agreement" for example, it may not be easy for India to divert its Russian oil purchases quickly.



## STT hike effect on markets to subside soon

MUMBAI: Markets are used to tweak in taxation and the adverse impact of the steep hike in securities transaction tax (STT) will not last long, leading bourses said. NSE, the largest stock exchange, feels that the move to curb volumes will not have any impact on its upcoming initial public offering (IPO) plans, its Managing Director and Chief Executive Ashish Kumar Chauhan said.

"What has been raised is the STT has been increased in a minor way. Broadly, markets are used to having STT on options and this time it has also been increased on futures but broadly, I do not see any large impact on the IPO of NSE or otherwise asset valuations in the stock market going forward," Chauhan told.

Rival BSE's Managing Director and Chief Executive S Ramamurthy said markets react in a "bit adverse" way whenever any such changes are proposed by the government and exuded confidence that gradually things will settle down. "This is not the first time that STT is increased. When any such move is an-

nounced, the market reaction is a bit adverse to start with and then it stabilises," he said. The proposal to increase the STT on futures and options will also encourage long-term equity investments, he said, adding that it may also lead to a shift of money from the arbitrage funds to banks' fixed deposits as the returns one stands to make get on par.

The moves to hike the STT on the F&O segment was attributed as one of the key reasons that led to a sharp correction in the equity markets after the Budget speech by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

It can be noted that as per studies by Sebi, over 90% of retail investors' trades in the F&O segment lead to losses, and the capital markets regulator has also taken steps to reduce the volumes in the past.

The government is required to offload another 6.5 per cent stake in the public sector life insurer to meet the mandated 10 per cent public shareholding requirement by May 2027.

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"Having Gukesh D return to Norway Chess as reigning World Champion is something we truly value. India has become one of the strongest chess nations in the world today, and we know many fans will be following Gukesh D closely. We hope chess audiences across India will tune in as he competes in Oslo in 2026,"

-Benedicte Westre Skog, COO of Norway Chess.

## T20 WC BOYCOTT ROW

# Broadcasters may move court against PCB

KARACHI/NEW DELHI

THE ICC has warned the Pakistan Cricket Board that it faces the prospect of legal action from T20 World Cup's official broadcasters JioStar for boycotting its February 15 game against India, a PCB source said on Tuesday.

Pakistan decided to boycott the match in Colombo on February 15 on instructions of their government but haven't yet officially specified the reasons to ICC. As reported by PTI, there is a possibility that the ICC will withhold the entire annual revenue share of Pakistan, which is around USD 35 million and pay the broadcasters from that purse.

A PCB source informed that although chairman Mohsin Naqvi had taken advice from the board's legal experts before briefing PM Shehbaz Sharif on the issue last week, the board is bracing for some serious consequences.

"If Pakistan doesn't relent and play against India, not only will they face financial penalties, perhaps a lawsuit from broadcasters but also any efforts to go to the ICC Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) are likely to fail," a PCB source told PTI.

ICC's DRC is an internal committee which doesn't hear appeals against the decisions made by its own board. "The PCB might face problems regardless of their government directive to not play India as they are playing all their matches at a neutral venue (Sri Lanka) as per their wishes and not in India," another PCB source said.

"Secondly, while the In-



## ICC, PCB open 'back-channel talks'

NEW DELHI: Pakistan's decision to boycott their T20 World Cup group match against India has reportedly prompted "back-channel talks" between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board amid concerns over potential financial fallout.

Pakistan's boycott decision could reportedly cost world cricket more than 250 million dollars.

As per The Dawn report, a few other cricket boards have also extended support to the ICC in its attempt to reach an understanding with PCB.

It is currently unclear whether Pakistan will be sanctioned for the move, with the ICC urging the PCB to consider the significant and long-term implications if the boycott were to go ahead.

"While the ICC awaits official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), this position of selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule," the ICC said.

dian government has not given permission to its team to play in Pakistan, it has not stopped them from playing against Pakistan at neutral venues in Asia Cup or ICC events even after the May conflict," the board source, who tracks Naqvi closely, added.

"When the ICC signed its four year deal with the broadcasters for all ICC events, the contract included Pakistan and India matches based on

which the broadcaster made the payments to the ICC," the source explained.

"So the broadcaster will be within its rights to take the PCB and ICC to court over a major breach of the contract." It is reliably learnt that the PCB approached other members boards for support on the matter but failed to find any backers.

There is a school of thought that Naqvi, who is also the interior minister of his coun-

## T20 WC: Ticket sales of third stage begin

NEW DELHI: The BCCI announced the commencement of the third stage of ticket sales for the upcoming T20 World Cup following the two successful ticketing windows, with Phase 1 launched on December 11, 2025, and Phase 2 on January 14, 2026.

This latest phase provides fans with a further opportunity to secure seats for matches across the tournament, which will bring together the world's leading teams, the BCCI said in a release.

The T20 World Cup, starting on Saturday, will be staged at some of India's most recognised cricketing venues, creating an environment where fans can witness elite international players and the intensity that defines the T20 format throughout the competition.

As preparations across host cities move into final stages, the BCCI, in close coordination with the stakeholders, continues to focus on venue readiness, operational planning, and match-day experience.

try, might just make a U-turn once the general elections are held in Bangladesh on February 12 and a democratic government takes charge instead of the present one headed by Mohammed Yunus.

"There would still be two days before the India game and things could just change. Else he knows that Pakistan could be ostracised," another source tracking Pakistan cricket said.

HARARE: Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a confident and all-round India will be overwhelming favourites against Afghanistan in the semifinal of the ICC Under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday. India are the most successful team in the history of the event, having annexed the title five times (2000, 2008, 2012, 2018, 2022), followed by Australia, who have won the trophy four times. Come Wednesday, India will look to take one step forward towards a record sixth title.

India have had a great run in the tournament, having won all their five matches quite comfortably, including a 58-run win over arch-rivals Pakistan in the Super Six stage.

Afghanistan too has had a fairly good tournament, winning four out of their five games, their only loss coming against Sri Lanka by four wickets.

Going by form and overall composition, India will hold an edge over the Afghans in the knock-out game. Wicket-



Match starts at 1 pm IST

keeper batter Abhigyan Kundu has been the star performer for India with the bat as the left-hander has so far amassed 199 runs from five games with two half centuries to his name.

Big-hitting opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi (196 runs in 5 matches with 2 fifties) too has been in good form but the team management would want him to convert his half-centuries into three-figure scores.

All-rounder Vihann Malhotra (172 runs from 5 games) is the other Indian batter to look out for. He struck the lone century (109 not out) against Zimbabwe in group stages. Skipper Ayush Mhatre has been consistent with the ball in hand, picking up six wickets with his off-break.

India are in a strong position to win the tournament, having won all their five matches quite comfortably, including a 58-run win over Pakistan in the Super Six stage.

India will look to take one step forward towards a record sixth title.

from five games but there is room for improvement on the batting front. He managed just 99 runs from five games with 53 being his highest. Opener Aaron George's form, however, is a cause of concern for India as the right-handed batter could manage only 46 runs from three outings.

### TEAMS

India U-19: Aaron George, Abhigyan Kundu, Harvansh Pangalia, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Vedant Trivedi, Ayush Mhatre (c), Vihann Malhotra, RS Ambrish, Kanishk Chouhan, Khilan Patel, Deepesh Devendran, Henil Patel, Mohamed Enaan, Udhav Mohan, Kishan Singh.

Afghanistan U-19: Mahboob Khan (c), Azizullah Miakhil, Faisal Shinwazai, Khalid Ahmadzai, Osman Sadat, Uzairullah Niazai, Abdul Aziz, Aqil Khan, Khatir Stanikzai, Nazifullah Amiri, Nooristani Omarzai, Roolullah Arab, Salam Khan, Wahidullah Zadran, Zaitullah Shaheen.

"We are confident that, under your leadership, the championship will be organised to the highest standards and will be a great success," the letter, which is in PTI's possession, stated.

## ICC Under-19 World Cup

# India favourites against Afghanistan in semis clash

## Unbeaten Men in Blue in pursuit of record 6th U-19 WC title

HARARE: Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a confident and all-round India will be overwhelming favourites against Afghanistan in the semifinal of the ICC Under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday. India are the most successful team in the history of the event, having annexed the title five times (2000, 2008, 2012, 2018, 2022), followed by Australia, who have won the trophy four times. Come Wednesday, India will look to take one step forward towards a record sixth title.

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## India to host next year's Asian Rifle/Pistol C'ship

NEW DELHI: India will host next year's Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship in Delhi where eight quota places for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics will be up for grabs, marking a historic first for the country's shooting calendar which already features an Olympic qualifier in the World Cup. The eight slots in the Asian competition will be in addition to the 12 quota places that will be on offer in the World Cup (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) from April 21 to 30 next year, also to be held in Delhi. The allotment of the Asian event was confirmed by the Asian Shooting Confederation in a letter to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Kalikesh Singh Deo.

The NRAI stated that the dates for the Asian qualifier will be finalised in due course. "We congratulate National Rifle Association of India for winning the hosting rights of Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027 where eight Quota Places will be distributed for the LA 2028 Olympics.

"We are confident that, under your leadership, the championship will be organised to the highest standards and will be a great success," the letter, which is in PTI's possession, stated.

## Vasavi College of Engg wins OU inter-college chess title

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD



ath, Shyam and Sai Vardhan delivering consistent performances.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar College finished runners-up with

place with 14 points, while Bhavans Vivekananda finished fourth with 13.5 points.

Prof Bala Bhaskar, Joint Director of Collegiate Education, attended as chief guest and distributed prizes to the winners. Dr K Prabhu, Principal, Vivekananda Government Degree College, Prof Rajesh Kumar, Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof K Deepa, Director, DPE, and Prof S Jagann Mohan, Organising Secretary, were present. The tournament was inaugurated by philanthropist Nakka Srinivas Yadav.

# Punitive demolitions persist in UP despite SC ban on bulldozer action: Allahabad HC

PRAYAGRAJ

TAKING a stern note of alleged demolition drives in Uttar Pradesh, the Allahabad High Court has observed that punitive demolition of structures continues to take place in the state despite the Supreme Court's November 2024 ruling that "bulldozer justice" is simply unacceptable under the rule of law.

A two-judge bench of Justices Atul Sreedharan and Siddhartha Nandan

also asked the state government whether demolishing a structure immediately after the commission of an offence was a colourable exercise of executive discretion.

The bench observed that it came across various cases in which the notice for demolition was issued to the occupants immediately after the commission of an offence.

Thereafter, the dwelling places were demolished after the ostensible fulfilment of statutory requirements, it said.

Therefore, bearing in mind the "overarching" nature of the case, spanning the right of the state to demolish a structure and the rights of its occupants under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India, the court fixed February 9 as the next date for hearing.

In the order passed on January 21, the court observed, "Preliminary submissions have been made by both sides. The case of the petitioners appears to be that

though the petitioners are not co-accused in the FIR, the respondents issued a notice to Petitioner No. 2, who owns the residential house in which they dwell, immediately after the commission of the offence and registration of the FIR."

The court said the respondents have sealed a commercial property registered in the name of Petitioner No. 3 as 'Indian Lodge', and a saw mill, the licence of which was renewed in the name of Petitioner No.

2 on February 11, 2025, and its renewal is pending. The petitioners have expressed an apprehension that their properties have been marked for "destruction by mechanical means" (a euphemism for bulldozer action).

"The obvious primary prayer is judicial intervention to prevent the anticipated destruction of the properties," the court said. The bench was hearing a petition filed by Faimuddeen and others, who claimed that their relative,

Aafan Khan, was booked under various sections of the BNS, POCSO Act, IT Act and the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act. The petitioners claimed that though they were not co-accused in the FIR, they were targeted by a mob allegedly in collusion with the police.

The Uttar Pradesh government, however, termed the petition "premature" and said the petitioners must respond to the notices issued to them.



## Relief for our exporters': Abdullah welcomes US' tariff cut

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday welcomed the US government's decision to bring down reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods, saying this would bring relief to many exporters in the country who were facing difficulties in view of the increased tariff.

US President Donald Trump on Monday announced that India and the US have agreed on a trade deal under which Washington will reduce the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from the current 25 per cent.

The announcement is crucial for India as the US imposed a steep 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering American markets from August 27, 2025. "These tariffs were proving to be quite burdensome for us, and we also know very well why these tariffs were imposed. The United States was not happy with the fact that we buy oil from Russia.

Trump announced that the Indian government has now stopped purchasing oil from Russia, and because of that, the tariffs will no longer be imposed on us," the chief minister told reporters in the Assembly lawns here.

## Sabarimala gold case

### Uproar in Kerala Assembly as UDF alleges CMO interference

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

DRAMATIC scenes unfolded in the Kerala Assembly on Tuesday over the Sabarimala gold loss issue after a Congress MLA tried to climb onto the Speaker's Chair that forced an adjournment, the opposition declaring non-cooperation in the House and the government calling it "unfortunate" and "deplorable".

Alleging interference by the Chief Minister's office in the SIT probe into the Sabarimala gold loss cases, the Congress-led UDF opposition boycotted Assembly proceedings, declaring that it would no longer cooperate with the House.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed the opposition conduct as "unfortunate" and "deplorable". Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, V.D. Satheshan, informed Speaker A.N. Shamseer about the UDF's boycott decision as the House proceedings commenced. As the opposition protest continued in the House amidst the question hour, Congress MLA Anwar Sadat sud-

denly attempted to climb onto the Speaker's dais, leading to Shamseer stopping the proceedings for around 30 minutes and leaving for his chamber. Satheshan alleged that there was government interference in the probe and that even the Kerala High Court observed there was delay in filing of charge sheet in the Sabarimala gold cases by the Special Investigation Team (SIT). He said that the High Court also observed that there was a "laxity" in the SIT probe.

The LoP claimed that conditions were being created so that the accused in the two cases can come out on statutory bail and thus, "stone-wall" the investigation. He said that if the accused are released from jail, there was every possibility that the evidence in the cases would be destroyed.

## MP cough syrup deaths

# 4-yr-old dies months after being in coma

BETUL



A four-year-old boy died at AIIMS-Nagpur, months after he fell critically ill and slipped into a coma after allegedly consuming Coldrifl cough syrup in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district, an official said on Monday.

According to the official, Harsh, from Tikabari village of Betul district bordering Chhindwara district, had been in a coma for more than four months and was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU), but died during treatment on Sunday night. Betul Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) Dr Manoj Hurmade confirmed the child's death and said the post-mortem examination was conducted in Nagpur on Monday, and the body was handed over to the family.

The cause of death would be ascertained after the post-mortem report, Dr Hurmade said. Harsh's uncle, Shyam Yadav, said over the phone that the child's last rites were performed on Monday evening.

## US-India trade deal

# BJP attacking farmers again, govt must answer: Akhilesh

LUCKNOW

SAMAJWADI Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday slammed the government over the India-US trade deal, saying opening Indian markets to American agricultural produce amounted to "betrayal" of nearly 70 per cent of the country's population dependent on farming. His remarks came after India and the US agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from a total 50 per cent.

Yadav claimed that the BJP and its associates were "agents of foreign interests" even before Independence and continued to be so today.

Targeting the ruling party, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said BJP leaders should explain to the public how much "commission" they had earned by compromising the country's economy.

Yadav said such policies would not only harm farm-

**IN BRIEF**  
7,020 properties to be auctioned over tax dues

BENGALURU: The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has decided to auction 7,020 properties belonging to owners who have failed to pay property tax for several years across five city municipal zones. The move is aimed at cracking down on long-pending tax defaulters. Despite issuing multiple demand notices, property owners have not cleared dues amounting to Rs 437.55 crore. Along with the pending property tax, penalties and interest have also been levied on the defaulters. After repeated notices failed to yield results, the GBA issued property attachment orders. As tax payments were still not made even after attachment, authorities have decided to take final action by auctioning the properties.

The auction of the 7,020 properties will be held on February 17 at the offices of the respective zonal Joint Commissioners, officials said. Notices related to the auction have been published on the official website.

**No licence renewal for businesses violating zonal classification**

BENGALURU: The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has issued a circular allowing penalty-free renewal of trade licences for the financial year 2026-27 from February 1 to February 28 across its five municipal corporations. GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to facilitate licence renewal for a period ranging from one to five years, based on the preference of the business owners. Renewal fees must be collected only for the selected financial year. Payments can be made online or through bank challans at Canara Bank.

From March 1 to March 31, licence renewal will attract a 25% penalty, while renewals sought after April 1 will incur a 100% penalty, the circular stated. The authority has ordered that licences of businesses started after 2015 on roads less than 40 feet wide in residential areas must be withheld and rejected with reasons recorded. However, businesses operating on roads wider than 40 feet in residential zones and notified categories of businesses that commenced after 2015 will be eligible for renewal. All other such businesses will have their licence renewals rejected. Further, licences must be denied for businesses operating in buildings constructed in violation of approved plans, including those running partially or fully in unauthorised structures, parking areas, or rooftops, if complaints are received. Businesses generating more than 100 kg of waste per day must submit documents proving on-site waste processing and disposal. Those handing over waste to unauthorised vendors must submit copies of their agreements. Establishments must maintain separate waste bins—green for wet waste and blue for dry waste—and ensure scientific disposal. Officials warned that licence renewals will be strictly denied if these norms are not followed.

**'Experience the Magic of Bollywood' event in city**

BENGALURU: Main Hoon Bollywood, presented by Golden Orange Entertainment and founded by Maithili Kotnis, is excited to announce its inaugural event in Bangalore, reinforcing its commitment to celebrating the rich tapestry of Bollywood culture. After a successful launch in Mumbai, this talent-driven platform is making its mark in Bengaluru with a vibrant blend of singing, dance, and fashion. Now in its second season, Main Hoon Bollywood aims to encapsulate the spirit of Bollywood while engaging with the city's thriving creative community. With future editions set to take place in Dubai, Hyderabad, Goa, and Pune, this initiative is constantly evolving into a national and global movement.

# Paperless property registration through Kaveri 2.0 now...

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

PROPERTY buyers in Karnataka will no longer need to stand in long queues at sub-registrar offices for registration work. The Department of Registration and Stamps has launched a major reform by introducing a fully paperless property registration system. With the upgraded Kaveri 2.0 software platform, all registration procedures will now be carried out digitally, eliminating the need for physical documents.

While digital e-stamping was already in use, the entire registration process has now been converted into a digital format. After successful registration, citizens will no longer receive physical documents. Instead, they will be provided with a login ID and password through which all property-related records can be accessed securely online.



Citizens must first log in to the Kaveri 2.0 portal and enter details of the property, buyer, seller and witnesses. All required documents are uploaded in digital format.

Sub-registrars verify the information online and approve payment of fees. Registration charges can be paid through net banking or UPI. Both parties sign digitally

## SERVICES AVAILABLE ON KAVERI 2.0

- Online property registration: Citizens can book appointments online and avoid waiting at sub-registrar offices.
- Encumbrance certificate: Users can download certificates to verify whether a property has any legal or financial liabilities.
- Digital document verification: Land records can be checked online to confirm authenticity before purchasing property.
- Fee calculator: The portal provides an option to calculate stamp duty and registration charges in advance.
- Marriage registration: Marriages can be registered online with prior appointment scheduling.
- E-stamping services: Stamp duty payments can be made digitally to prevent fraud.
- Property valuation: Guideline values of properties can be verified online before buying or selling.

using Aadhaar-based e-sign. Finally, the applicant only needs to visit the office once for biometric verification and photograph, after which the registration is completed.

The time required for registration has been reduced to just 10 minutes. The new process minimizes corruption, prevents document loss and ensures safe digital storage. Every user will receive a unique document number to download records anytime. For further details, citizens can contact the helpline at 080-68265316.

## Excise dept involved in bribery, transfer racket, alleges Ashoka

MINISTER THIMMAPUR SHOULD RESIGN: LOP

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU



IN the Excise Department, bribes are being taken for granting licenses and for facilitating transfers. Related audio recordings have been released, and complaints have been filed with the Lokayukta. Therefore, Excise Minister R.B. Thimmapur should resign immediately, demanded Opposition Leader R. Ashoka.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, he said that in the state government, the Excise Department is the No. 1 department in corruption.

Irregularities are taking place in forms such as bribes for licenses and fixed amounts for transfers. Congress leaders who are opposing the

VBG Ramji scheme are talking about Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. However, the Congress party is not following Gandhi's ideals.

In a WhatsApp message from government officials, it has been officially instructed that since the CM and Dy CM are participating in a housing department program in Hubballi, more people will come, so liquor

shops should stock sufficient quantities of liquor and sell it. This is a program that ruins homes. CM Siddaramaiah talks about lessons in sensitivity. Telling people to drink liquor is their idea of sensitivity, he said.

The minister is silent because monthly fees come from officials in the scandal happening in the Excise Department.

The president of the liquor sellers' association, Guruswamy, has issued a press statement saying he will complain to Rahul Gandhi about the irregularities.

"In the department, targets are given every year to collect money, from licenses to

all stages, one has to grease palms, it has been detected that the Excise DC takes bribes when issuing licenses. Bribes have to be given from senior officials to juniors. A complaint has been given to the Chief Minister about this," Guruswamy has said.

Permission has been given to two thousand liquor shops, bribes of 50 lakh rupees for one and one crore rupees for another have been taken, if bribes are not given by the 10th of every month, shop owners are harassed.

Guruswamy is from CM Siddaramaiah's Varuna constituency itself. Even though Guruswamy has complained,

Siddaramaiah has not helped. He has said that Siddaramaiah is no longer a strong CM, he added.

An audio related to the Excise Department scandal has come out. In it, allegations have been made against Excise Minister R.B. Thimmapur and his son. Yet, the minister says it's not him.

Until June 2025, there are 3,267 hotel restaurants under CL-7, 4,342 MRP's under CL-2, 3,667 bars under CL-9, 1,088 under CL-11C, 316 clubs under CL-4, and 86 star hotels under CL-6. In total, there are 14,229 institutions supplying liquor. Bribes of Rs 15-20,000 are collected from each shop every month. That means, on average, 21 crore rupees per month and 252 crore rupees per year.

Money is fixed for transfers in the Excise Department. For Deputy Commissioners, 2.5 to 3.5 crore rupees, for Superintendents 25-30 lakh rupees, for Deputy Superintendents 30-40 lakh rupees, for Excise Inspectors 40-50 lakh rupees, for constables 5-8 lakh rupees have to be paid. Among these, the constables themselves run four to five bars, he said.

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HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

THE Karnataka Housing Board (KHB) has announced plans to develop a large-scale township spread across 500 acres in villages near Kengeri, offering fresh hope to thousands of middle-class families aspiring to own homes in Bengaluru.

As part of the initiative, the KHB has invited tenders for land acquisition and appointment of an architectural and engineering firm (AEF) to develop an international standard township and housing project. The tender has been floated through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPP).

The proposed township will be developed in B.M. Kaval and surrounding villages of Kengeri Hobli in Bengaluru South taluk, falling within the Bengaluru Urban district. The last date for submission of bids is February 3, by 4 pm.

Officials said the project aims to provide houses and residential plots to people without property ownership, with a focus on economically weaker sections (EWS), low-income groups (LIG), and middle-income groups (MIG).

B.M. Kaval village, located along Mysuru Road, has been identified as a high-growth zone due to its proximity to the NICE Road and connectivity through the Purple Line extension of Namma Metro. Urban planners believe the project will significantly enhance residential infrastructure in the western corridor of Bengaluru.

### Land acquisition and compensation model

The land acquisition process was initiated in July 2025, with a notification already issued for acquiring land in B.M. Kaval. The project will follow a 50:50 compensation model, under which landowners will receive 50% of the developed plots as compensation, while the remaining land will be utilised by the Housing Board for its housing schemes.

According to KHB officials,



the project covers three identified blocks in B.M. Kaval village. Of the total land, 41 acres of government-owned 'kharab' land have already been identified, while the remaining private land is in the process of acquisition.

"The township will particularly benefit economically weaker, low-income and middle-income groups. It will help many families realise their dream of owning a home in Bengaluru," a senior KHB official said. The state government has set a target of providing 10,000 houses to the landless in urban areas, and the KHB plans to construct several housing complexes as part of this broader objective.

Urban development experts have termed the project a significant step towards addressing Bengaluru's housing shortage and promoting planned urban expansion.

## Fatal fall of minor: Pub owner, staff booked for serving him alcohol

BENGALURU

THE owner and staff of a pub here have been booked for allegedly serving alcohol to a 15-year-old boy who fell from the seventh floor of an apartment building and died, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred at an apartment located on Dr Vishnudevadas Road on the night of January 31, they said.

The action was taken based on a complaint

filed by the boy's father, police said. According to police, the complainant claimed that at around 9.40 pm on January 31, his 15-year-old minor son, fell from the seventh floor of the apartment, where he was residing, and died.

In this regard, a case has been registered at Rajarajeshwari Nagar police station. "During the course of investigation, the police examined the matter from various angles and

found that on January 31, the deceased minor, along with his friends, had consumed alcohol and smoked at the establishment (pub)," a senior police officer said.

Therefore, for allowing a minor to consume alcohol, a case has been registered against the owners and staff of the concerned company

under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act and the Karnataka Excise Act.

The investigation is on, police added.

## CM directs officials to grant tax exemption to 'Landlord' movie

BENGALURU

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday instructed the authorities concerned to grant tax exemption to the recently released Kannada film 'Landlord', which he said is based on the themes of social inequality and caste-based exploitation.

Taking to social media platform 'X', the chief minister expressed hope that this decision will inspire the making of more films like 'Landlord' that shed light on social issues in the days to come.

"I have instructed the concerned authorities to grant tax exemption to the film 'Landlord', starring Duniya Vijay, which is based on the themes of social inequality and caste-based exploitation," he said.

The chief minister said it is his belief

that cinema is a highly effective medium to convey meaningful messages to the public, shape public opinion, and bring about social transformation.

"When films address social concerns, it is our moral responsibility as a govt

to stand by and support such efforts," he added. The Kannada action-drama movie 'Landlord', starring Duniya Vijay and directed by Jadesha K Hampi, was released in theaters on January 23.

## Govt moves resolution to repeal VB-G RAM G Act, reinstate MGNREGA

BENGALURU

The Congress government in Karnataka on Tuesday moved a resolution in the Legislative Assembly urging the Centre to immediately repeal the new rural employment legislation VB-G RAM G Act and reinstate the UPA-era MGNREGA in its original form, amid strong objections from opposition BJP.

The resolution moved by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the 'VB-G RAM G Act, "unilaterally" enacted by the Centre, is "detrimental to the basic ideals of



federalism and the right to livelihood of the rural people".

"With a view to protecting the right to life of the rural people of Karnataka, this House urges the central government to immediately repeal the VIKSIT Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeekika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAM-G) Act, which is against the federal principle, is a severe burden on the state exchequer and is against the principle of decentralization, and has taken away the powers and rights of the Gram Panchayats; and to reinstate the Mahatma

which are the bedrock of Indian democracy, it said, "This House takes serious view of the repeal of the MGNREGA, which was a Sanjeevini (something that gives life) for the rural poor and an integral part of rural life."

"This House strongly opposes this move of the Centre (of bringing in the VB-G RAM G act repealing MGNREGA)" it added. BJP members led by Leader of Opposition R Ashoka immediately took strong objection to it and said, "Don't say the House opposes, say the Congress government opposes.

Don't make us party to

this." However, the chief minister, repeatedly asserting "this House", continued reading the resolution, asking the opposition members to raise their objections during the discussion. This angered the opposition members, who shouted slogans against the government, some even accused the Congress of "loot" under MGNREGA.

The constant sloganneering by the BJP members disturbed Siddaramaiah, who initiated the debate in favour of the resolution. Enraged CM asked the

ruling Congress members to react, leading to chaos. Speaker U T Khader then adjourned the House for lunch.

The resolution reads the VIKSIT Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeekika Mission (Gramin) Act's abbreviation as "VB-GRAM-G" Act, instead of the actual VB-G RAM G Act. BJP criticising this has said, the ruling party has an "allergy" to name 'Ram'.

The Karnataka cabinet had earlier decided not to accept the VB-G RAM G Act, replacing the MGNREGA, and to take up a legal battle against it.



## Rebel Star Prabhas praises the 'Couple Friendly' trailer, shares it on Instagram

THE trailer of 'Couple Friendly', starring Santosh Soban and Manasi Varanasi in the lead roles, was released recently. Rebel Star Prabhas appreciated the trailer, calling it well-made, and shared it on his Instagram account. He described it as a love story told straight from the heart.

The 'Couple Friendly' team has expressed their happiness over receiving praise from Prabhas for the trailer. This recognition is a huge boost for the entire team and has raised the buzz surrounding the film.

Presented by the renowned production house UV Creations, the film is being grandly produced by UV Concepts in both Telugu and Tamil. Ajay Kumar Raju P. serves as the co-producer, and the film is directed by Ashwin Chandrasekhar. Made as a musical romantic love



story, 'Couple Friendly' is set to release on February 14, on the occasion of Valentine's Day, in both languages. The film will be distributed in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by passionate producer and distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni.

## Kayadu Lohar returns to Malayalam; New poster of 'Pallichattambi' released

A new poster of 'Pallichattambi', directed by Dijo Jose Antony and starring Tovino Thomas in the lead role, has been released. The latest reveal is a single-character poster featuring the film's heroine, Kayadu Lohar. The poster also confirms the film's release date. Posters have been unveiled in five languages, including Malayalam. 'Pallichattambi' is set for a worldwide theatrical release on April 9. Kayadu Lohar's announcement video as the female lead in 'Pallichattambi' had earlier drawn significant attention. She became a favorite among South Indian cinema audiences following her performance as the heroine in the Tamil superhit 'Dragon'.

In 'Pallichattambi', Tovino Thomas will be seen in a never-seen-before look. The film is produced by Noulal and Brijesh under the banner of Worldwide Films, along with Chanukya, Chaitanya, and Charan under C Qube Bros Entertainments. It will be released in five languages, including Malayalam. The screenplay has been written by S. Suresh Babu.

Apart from Kayadu Lohar in the female lead, 'Pallichattambi' also features an ensemble cast that includes Vijay Raghavan, Sudheer

Karamana, Baburaj, Vinod Kedamangalam, Prashanth Alex, and several other prominent actors. The film is set in the 1950s-60s period.

The cinematography is handled by Tijo Tomy, while the music is composed by Mollywood's music sensation Jakes Bejoy. Megha Shyam and Thanseer serve as co-producers. Costumes are designed by Manjusha Radhakrishnan, and makeup is by Rasheed Ahmed. Alex E. Kurien is the line producer, Anil Ambalur the finance controller, and Rajesh Menon the production controller. Renith Raj and Kirash Raphael are the chief associate directors. Sound design is by Sync Cinema, and art direction is by Rajesh Menon. Casting is handled by Binoy Nambala. Digital marketing is managed by Akhil Vishnu V.S., with PR by Akshay Prakash. Stills photography is by Rishabh Unnikrishnan, and the poster design is by Yellow-tooths.



## Ravi Teja cheers Team 'Sumathi Sathakam'

PRODUCED under the Vision Movie Makers banner by Sai Sudhakar Kommalapati and directed by M.M. Naidu, 'Sumathi Sathakam' is a wholesome family entertainer gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on February 6. The film stars Amardeep Chowdary and Sayli Chaudhary in the lead roles. Renowned production house Mythri Movie Makers will release the film across the Telugu states.

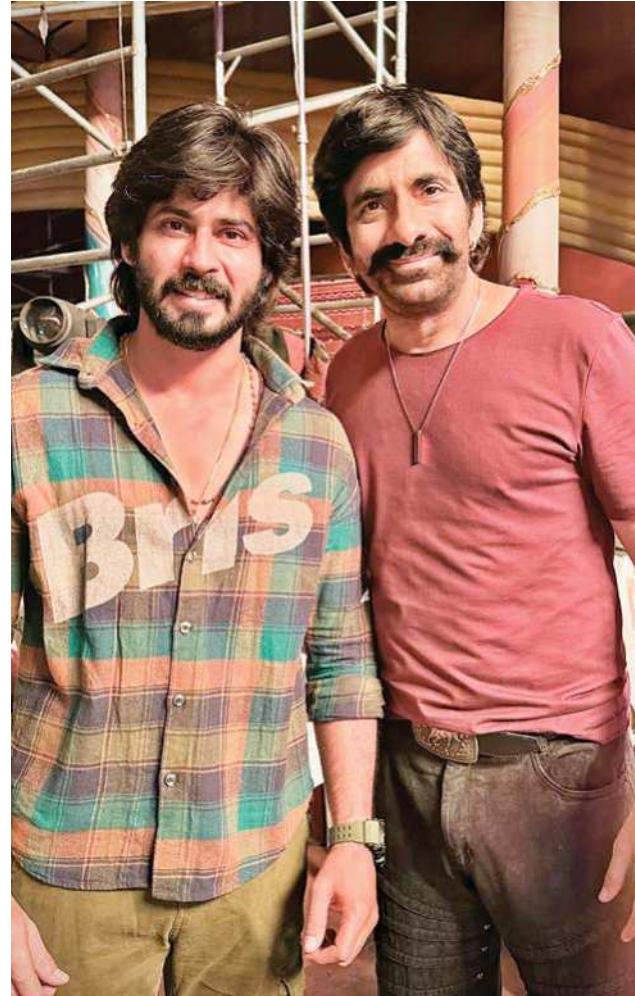
The first look, teaser, songs, and promotional content of 'Sumathi Sathakam' have already received an encouraging response from audiences. Amardeep Chowdary's energetic dance moves in the songs have been widely appreciated, while Subhash Anand's music adds strong emotional and entertainment value to the film.

As part of the promotions, the film's team conducted an extensive tour across the Rayalseema region, receiving an overwhelming response. The trailer launch event held at a college in Tirupati turned out to be a grand success, with students enthusiastically responding to the film's hook steps and youthful content.

Popular actor and Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, who is widely known as Amardeep Chowdary's inspiration, watched the teaser, trailer, and other promotional content and shared his appreciation. He said,

"I have watched the teaser, trailer, and content of Amardeep's film 'Sumathi Sathakam'. I really liked it. I wish the film great success and hope Amardeep has a bright future ahead."

During the college

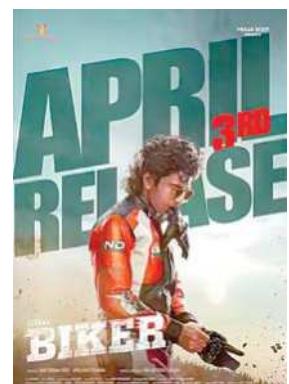


## Sharwanand's 'Biker' to hit screens worldwide on April 3

THE makers of director Abhilash Kankara's eagerly awaited sports action film, 'Biker', featuring actor Sharwanand in the lead, on Tuesday announced that their film would now hit screens worldwide on April 3 this year.

Taking to its X timeline, the production house producing the film, said, "The engine's revved up. The track is ready. Now, THERE IS NO STOPPING HIM. #BIKER grand release worldwide on April 3rd, 2026. #BIKERMovie #GoAllTheWay #BikerOnApril3rd." It may be recalled that the film was originally scheduled to hit screens on December 6 last year. However, in November, the makers issued a statement saying they were postponing the release of the film as they wanted to give audiences not just a film but an "experience like never before."

Taking to its X timeline, UV Creations, the production house producing the film, had, in November last year, said, "#Biker stands postponed! A new release date



will be announced soon. A bigger, better experience is being crafted with care and being assembled with passion. #Biker will be releasing in 3D, 4DX, and many more formats."

In its statement, the production house called the film "An experience beyond the screens!" and said that to ready this "beast," the cast and crew had worked hard and were continuing to work hard on countless nights.

"Trust us, this film is much more than the little laps we

showed, and it is bigger than what Telugu Cinema has seen until now! To this kind of an experience, to this kind of a scale," it said, and further added, "We want to give you a product that races in your hearts, pumps up your adrenaline, and makes you breathless! Biker stands postponed, not just to give you a film but an experience like never before. BIKER is coming to theatres in 3D, 4DX and many more formats. Tighten your helmets. You are in for a ride of a lifetime." For the unaware, actor Sharwanand plays a bike racer in this upcoming film, which was initially being referred to as 'Sharwa36'. Sources close to the unit of the film say that Sharwanand will be seen as a skilled motorcycle racer in the film.

A source had, in September last year, said that the shooting of the film was going on in Hyderabad and that key scenes related to the race on Sharwanand and the team had been shot. "These scenes are

going to be the highlight of the film," the source had said then. "He (Sharwanand) is going to impress audiences with stunts that will give viewers an adrenaline rush like never before."

Malavika Nair plays the female lead in this film, which will also feature well-known character artistes Brahmaji and Atul Kulkarni in pivotal roles. Produced by Vamsi and Pramod, this high-energy film is set against the backdrop of motocross racing. Sources say it is a thrilling story of a family that is spread over three generations and set against the exciting motocross backdrop of the 90s and early 2000s. Cinematography for the film is by well-known cameraman J. Yuvraj. Music for the film has been scored by famed Tamil music director Ghibran. Anil Kumar P is the editor of the film, which has N Sandeep as its executive producer. Rajeevan is the production designer, and A. Panneerselvam is the art director.

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## Sai Pallavi thanks #D55 director Rajkumar Periasamy for his welcome; discloses she is 'nervously excited'

A day after the makers of director Rajkumar Periasamy's upcoming film, featuring actor Dhanush in the lead, welcomed her on board the unit of the film, actress Sai Pallavi on Tuesday thanked the film's director Rajkumar Periasamy and disclosed that she was "nervously excited."

Taking to her Instagram stories to thank Rajkumar Periasamy, the director of Dhanush's upcoming film 'D55', for his post in which he had accorded her a warm welcome to the unit, Sai Pallavi wrote, "Thank you so much sir. Nervous excitement!"

It may be recalled that Wunderbar Films, the production house of actor Dhanush and one of the production houses producing the film, had taken to its X timeline to welcome actress Sai Pallavi on Monday. It wrote, "She's about grace and strength – all at once. Welcoming everybody's favourite @Sai\_Pallavi92 on board 'D55'. The hit combo returns to the big screen."

This will be the second time that Sai Pallavi will be working with Dhanush. She had earlier worked with him in director Balaji Mohan's 'Maari 2'.



It may also be recalled that the makers of the film, being tentatively referred to as 'D55', had already welcomed actress Sreeleela on board the unit of the film, tentatively referred to as 'D55'. Taking to its X timeline, he wrote, "You are a Wonder-kid Sai! Excited to have you on board for 'D55' as the music composer my brother. God bless you dear @SaiAbhyankar. Thank you dear @DhanushKraji sir. D55 – A #SaiAbhyankar Musical. @theSreyas @wunderbarfilms @RTakeStudios @Shra2309 @az905 @sandy\_sashr @vishurams."

The makers had also welcomed young music sensation Sai Abhyankar on board the unit. Taking to its X timeline to make the announcement, Wunderbar Films had said, "Time's up. The SAI-ience breaks. Excited to have the sensational @SaiAbhyankar as the music composer for 'D55'. D55 – A #SaiAbhyankar Musical. A brand new collaboration loading."

Sai Abhyankar responded to the post of the production house, saying, "Super excited and pumped working with @dhanushkraja sir on 'D55'! My dream collaboration @Rajkumar\_KP, dear sir thank you so much!! This is gonna be a very special cooking and thank you dear @theSreyas anna. @wunderbarfilms @RTakeStudios GIG."

Director Rajkumar Periasamy also welcomed the young music sensation on board the unit of the film, tentatively referred to as 'D55'. Taking to its X timeline, he wrote, "You are a Wonder-kid Sai! Excited to have you on board for 'D55' as the music composer my brother. God bless you dear @SaiAbhyankar. Thank you dear @DhanushKraji sir. D55 – A #SaiAbhyankar Musical. @theSreyas @wunderbarfilms @RTakeStudios @Shra2309 @az905 @sandy\_sashr @vishurams." The film has triggered huge excitement. As the makers have already disclosed that this film will be a magnum opus. It may be recalled that only a week ago, another production house called R Take Studios had announced that it was joining hands with Wunderbar Films to produce this film.

#AGS27. The director had made it clear that all nine members he had picked in his team didn't have any personal connection with him or with anyone he knew and that he had kept the process very clean.

The director, last year, had taken to his X timeline to list all those who had been picked to his assistant directors. Putting out a poster on his timeline that read, "Team Ashwath Marimuthu. Welcome onboard assistant directors!" he named Srikant, Mohamad Asif, Arun Kumar, Nithish S, Dhina, Nithish B, Krish, Srinath, Aniruth as his team members. Along with the poster, he wrote,

"It may be recalled that director Ashwath Marimuthu has already picked a team of assistant directors for his directorial team for his upcoming films #STR51 and

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