



THE Hans India



WOMENIA
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.

EDIT
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 populates, encroachment of the canal land, siltation, and damage caused by natural disasters like floods.

BUSINESS
India-US trade deal to boost country's manufacturing: FM
The breakthrough follows a high-level telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump. In a reciprocal move, India has committed to reducing trade barriers for American goods.

YOUNG HANS
You can't build Viksit 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.

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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.

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Turkey ready to host high-stakes US-Iran talks

ISTANBUL: Turkey is preparing to host high-level talks between the United States and Iran in Istanbul this Friday, marking a significant diplomatic effort to ease escalating tensions between the two powers. The discussions are expected to be led by the US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, with Turkey playing a central mediating role-Bloomberg reported. According to Turkish officials, the priority of the planned Istanbul meetings is to de-escalate tensions and avoid conflict, as relations between Washington and Tehran have deteriorated in recent months. Several nations, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, have been invited to participate, possibly at the foreign minister level, underlining the broader regional effort to stabilise the situation.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

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

'INDIA GOT BEST DEAL'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

UNION Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday hailed the India-US trade agreement as a "tremendous opportunity" for the country, calling it "the best deal" New Delhi has secured compared to its neighbours.

Addressing a press conference a day after the agreement was announced, Goyal said, "This is the best deal India has received. It is a deal for all of us, bringing positive signals for the bright future of our citizens."

Goyal credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and his rapport with US President Donald Trump saying, "We all know that the Prime Minister, leveraging his friendly relationship and close ties with President Trump, has finalised a trade deal with the United States of America that is the best deal India has received compared to all our neighbours, all the surrounding countries, and all the countries that compete with us."

The minister criticised LoP Rahul Gandhi over claims that PM Modi had accepted the India-US trade deal under pressure. "Rahul Gandhi wants to mislead the public, he does not care about India's progress," the minister said.

Continued on Page 5

- 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 5

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 5

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 5

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



No more hosting of GOs on TG's official website

Depts not forwarding GOs for uploading under 'strict orders'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE state government has reportedly stopped uploading Government Orders (GOs) on its official website from February 1. It is learnt that even the General Administration Department (GAD) was not uploading GOs due to various reasons.

Unofficial instructions to all departments against uploading important GOs on goir.telangana.gov.in, that were given five years back, are being strictly followed. In a fresh development, the departments have stopped posting GOs pertaining to establishment orders.



In recent months, Roads and Buildings, Law and Order, Labour and Employment departments were posting only those GOs that were related to release of funds and clearance of pending bills like car and mobile allowances for secretaries of the departments. Not a single GO has been uploaded on

the official website in the last four days.

Top officials said that some GOs issued by the R&B department created political nuisance, mainly orders releasing funds for repairs of ministers' quarters, IAS officers' residences drew strong criticism from the opposition parties. Continued on Page 5

Revanth to launch civic poll campaign in Nalgonda today

REPORT: PAGE 5



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.

New baggage rules come into effect

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



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 5

Eight Oppn MPs suspended from LS for 'unruly behaviour'

NEW DELHI

IN escalation of the tussle between the government and the Opposition, seven Congress members and one CPI-M MP were suspended from the Lok Sabha on Tuesday for 'unruly behaviour' after they tore papers and threw them at the Chair. Their suspension from the House for the remaining part of the Budget Session that concludes on April 2 will intensify the face-off with the government

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 Aujla, Hibi Eden, C Kiran Kumar Reddy, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Manickam Tagore, Prashant Padole and Dean Kuriaokse (all Congress) and S Ventakesan (CPI-M).

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 users have 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.

Congress MLA challenges opposition to account for past development failures

• K R Nagaraj accuses BJP and BRS of spreading false propaganda in Waradhanapet

• Highlights Congress development works including 143 Indiramma houses and Rs 200 crore projects

• Appeals to voters to ensure victory for all 12 Congress-backed candidates

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

WARADHANAPET MLA K R Nagaraj has criticised the former MLA and leaders of the BJP and BRS, accusing them of indulging in politics based on lies, and said the people of Waradhanapet would teach them a fitting lesson. Speaking at a media



MLA K R Nagaraj addressing a press conference in Waradhanapet on Tuesday

conference on Tuesday at the Municipal Election Office, he also announced the names of 12 ward members supported by the Congress Party.

MLA K R Nagaraj alleged that opposition leaders, unable to accept the public support for Congress welfare schemes in Ward No. 12, are spreading falsehoods

and baseless propaganda. He said Congress leaders are campaigning door-to-door and receiving strong backing from residents, focusing on households that have benefited from government welfare programmes. He criticised former rulers for not spending on development during their ten-year tenure and

contrasted it with Congress achievements in the past two years.

Highlighting tangible development, Nagaraj stated that 143 Indiramma houses and new ration cards have been provided to the poor, and works worth Rs 200 crore, including an Integrated School, a 100-bed hospi-

tal, a mini stadium, a Munsif Court, a sub-jail, and a Banjara Bhavan, have been sanctioned. He also reaffirmed that the 100-bed hospital foundation stone was laid based on public opinion and assured its completion.

The MLA further criticised opposition parties for troubling tribals by merging hamlets into municipalities, while Congress fought to convert them into Gram Panchayats.

He highlighted feeder channel repairs during the rainy season and asserted that Congress is delivering genuine justice to weaker sections through its six guarantees. MLA K R Nagaraj appealed to voters to reject opposition propaganda and ensure a decisive victory for all 12 Congress candidates in the upcoming municipal elections.

Congress eyes clean sweep in Station Ghanpur as MP Kavya leads poll campaign

• MP Kavya distributes B-Forms to Congress candidates for municipal polls

• Congress targets victory in all 18 wards of Station Ghanpur

• Focus laid on welfare guarantees and urban development works

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

WARANGAL Member of Parliament Dr Kadiyam Kavya on Tuesday distributed B-Forms to Congress candidates contesting the Station Ghanpur Municipality elections and asserted that she would personally take responsibility for ensuring the party's victory in all 18 wards. The programme was held at the Congress Party office in Ghanpur town, where she asked candidates to immediately submit their nomination papers to the election authorities.

Addressing candidates and



Warangal Member of Parliament Dr Kadiyam Kavya distributes B-Forms to Congress candidates on Tuesday

party workers, the MP urged them to take the Congress government's welfare guarantees and development initiatives to every household and seek the blessings of voters. She directed party cadres to coordinate ward-wise, intensify election campaigning and effectively counter the strategies of rival parties, expressing confidence that Congress candidates would secure a clean sweep in the municipality.

Dr Kavya said the municipal elections should be treated as a prestigious responsibility

and highlighted the Congress Party's commitment to urban development and basic infrastructure. She recalled that Station Ghanpur was declared a municipality soon after Revanth Reddy assumed office as Chief Minister and pointed to ongoing works on roads and drainage systems to address flooding issues that previously affected the town.

Calling for unity within the party, she appealed to workers and voters to ensure that the Congress flag flies in all 18 wards.

Karimnagar deaf students win big at National Athletics meet

• They win 28 medals at national athletics meet

• Collector Pamela Satpathy urges training for international competitions

• District administration promises full support for students' development

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARIMNAGAR

STUDENTS of the Government Residential School for the Deaf in Karimnagar emerged as All India Overall Champions at the national-level athletics competitions, "The Silent Olympiad - 2026," held in Mumbai from January 29 to February 1. A total of 28 students won gold, silver, and bronze medals.

District Collector Pame-



District Collector Pamela Satpathy congratulates the medal-winning students at the Collectorate on Tuesday

la Satpathy congratulated the medal-winning students at the Collectorate on Tuesday and urged that they be provided training and support to compete at the international level.

She assured that the district administration would

extend all possible assistance to help students excel further.

District Welfare Officer M. Saraswathi, Principal G. Kamala Udaya Kumari, and several teachers participated in the felicitation programme.

Tejas Academy students shine in armed forces selections

• 30 students from Tejas Academy selected for defence sector jobs

• New defence coaching to be launched for girls from 2026-27

• "Elevate" programme launched for IIT-JEE and NEET preparation in collaboration with Sri Chaitanya Hyderabad

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARIMNAGAR

A total of 30 students from Tejas Academy, Karimnagar, have successfully secured positions in the defence sector. Among them, 15 students have been selected for Senior Secondary Recruit (SSR) posts in the Indian Navy and are required to report to their respective training centres in February. Another 15 students have been selected for SSC GD



posts in various central armed forces, including CISE, BSF, CRPF, and Assam Rifles, with reporting also scheduled for February. The management of Tejas Academy expressed delight over the continuous success of its students in competitive examinations and their achievement of prestigious government jobs.

Looking ahead, the academy announced that from the 2026-27 academic year, defence coaching will be offered for girls. Additionally,

to help students prepare for IIT-JEE and NEET, Tejas Academy has launched a new initiative named "Elevate" in collaboration with Sri Chaitanya Infinity Learn, Hyderabad. The programme will include scheduled classes, dedicated study hours, and regular examinations under the guidance of Sri Chaitanya Hyderabad faculty, said Tejas Academy Chairman CH Satish Rao.

AP deputy CM's wife Anna Lezhneva visits historic Bhadrakali temple



HANS NEWS SERVICE
HANUMAKONDA

ANNA Lezhneva, wife of Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, visited the historic Sri Bhadrakali Ammavari Temple in Warangal city on Tuesday and offered special prayers to the presiding deity. On her arrival, she was accorded a warm reception by temple trustee Thonupunuri Veeranna. She first offered prayers at the shrines of Adi Shankaracharya and Vallabha

Ganapati before proceeding to the main sanctum, where she performed special pujas to Goddess Bhadrakali.

Following the completion of the rituals, chief priest Cheppela Venkata Nagaraja Sharma, along with Vedic scholar Pradeep Kumar Sharma, conducted the Mahadashirvachanam at the temple's Snapana Mandapam. The priests later presented the sacred silk garments of the Goddess and offered prasadam to Anna Lezhneva.

Forest officials arrest two for hunting wild boar in Mancherial



HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANCHERIAL

FOREST officials on Tuesday arrested two men for hunting, killing and consuming a wild boar in Karnapeta village. Acting on reliable information, the authorities apprehended Mareneni Bhoomayya and Guniganti Laxman and produced them before the court, which remanded them to 14 days of judicial custody. Of-

ficials said the accused had illegally killed the wild boar by setting up an electric wire trap in a paddy field near Pellimadugu.

During searches of their residences, forest officers seized wild boar meat, electric wires and J-wire used in the act.

The arrest highlights the continued efforts of forest authorities to prevent poaching and protect wildlife in the region.

Religious fervour marks Abhayanjaneya Swamy annual festival at Kumaram Bheem Asifabad



HANS NEWS SERVICE
KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

THE 15th annual festival of the towering 41-foot Abhayanjaneya Swamy idol, situated on the banks of the U-taravahini Peddavagu river at the district headquarters, was celebrated with great religious fervour and devotion on Tuesday.

Under the guidance of the temple's chief priest, Vaj-

jala Shirish Sharma, a series of sacred rituals were performed by Vedic scholars Madugula Narayanamurthy, Nimmakanti Mahesh Sharma and Delhi Vijay Kumar. The ceremonies included Swasti Punyahavachanam, Navagraha Sthapana pujas and Rudrabhishekam to the deity, followed by Manyusukta Havan and Purnahuti conducted as per scriptural traditions.

Oil palm cultivation ensures long-term income for farmers: Collector



HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJANNA SIRCILLA

DISTRICT In-charge Collector Garima Agrawal on Tuesday said that oil palm cultivation offers farmers a stable and long-term source of income, citing assured returns and government support for the crop.

She was addressing farmers during an Oil Palm Mega Plantation Programme held at Vallampatla village in Illan-

thakunta mandal, where she planted saplings along with beneficiaries. The Collector said oil palm saplings were planted over 110 acres in the district in a single day, involving 32 farmers.

Explaining the economic benefits, Garima Agrawal said oil palm starts yielding from the fourth year and currently has a support price of Rs 20,456 per tonne, making it a profitable option.

Collector's hospital visit exposes gaps in patient care

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

DISTRICT Collector K. Haritha on Tuesday emphasised the need for improved medical services at government hospitals, stating that patients, particularly those from common and tribal communities, must receive respectful and quality healthcare.

The District Collector made a surprise visit to the government hospital at the district headquarters, where she inspected various wards and departments. She interacted with patients under-



District Collector K. Haritha interacting with patients during the inspection on Tuesday

going treatment and sought details regarding the medical facilities and services being provided.

During the inspection, Haritha reviewed the functioning of the blood bank and enquired about the services rendered by doctors, nurses and other hospital staff.

She later held a review meeting with the doctors, stressing the importance of punctuality and diligence in duty.

She directed hospital authorities to maintain cleanliness in wards and hospital, ensure quality standards in the food supplied to patients

and provide clean drinking water. She also instructed doctors and staff to continuously monitor patients' health conditions and avoid any form of negligence.

Stating that government hospitals cater largely to economically weaker sections and tribal populations, the District Collector underlined the responsibility of medical staff to treat every patient with dignity and care.

Hospital Superintendent Praveen, Medical College Principal Subodh Kumar, along with doctors and other staff members, were present during the inspection.

Hans India Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANGA NARSIMULU (OLD NAME) S/O SANGA MALLAIAH, age 41 yrs, H. NO. 4-62, Yadav colony, VTC: Donur, mandal: Dharmapuri, Dist: Jagtial (T.G.). Have changed my name as **SANGA NARSHIMLU** (new name) (TH. 44949)

AS PER OLD PAN & ADHAR CARD MY SURNAME (MOHAMMAD MOINUDDIN S/O MOHAMMAD KHASIM) R/O: 2-3-153, NIZAMUDDIN COLONY, KAGAZNAGAR, KOMARAMBHEEM ASIFABAD, TELANGANA CHANGE SURNAME INTO (MOHAMMED MOINUDDIN S/O MOHAMMED KHASIM) (TH. 44949)

I POTHANNA GARI NARESH (old name) H NO 1-76 VENKATAPUR (VI) (M) MAKLORU NIZAMABAD (DIST) NIZAMABAD, T. G. I have changed my name as **POTHANNA GARI NARESH KUMAR S/O BHOMA RAO** (new name) (TH. 44949)

I, DOGIPARTHI SHIVAPARVATI, (Old name) HNO: 1-51/38/3, Bank colony, Pangra, Nizamabad. Hence changed my name as **DOGIPARTHI SHIVAPARVATI, W/O, DOGIPARTHI RAMESH BABU**, (New name) (TH. 44949)

CHANGE OF NAME & D.O.B

VICKY MANDAL S/O GURUDAS MANDAL ARMY NO. 6395629X, ASC Records (South). R/O H.No. 4-33/6, Guvvalaguda, Nagampet, Rasipalli post, Mandal: Kagaznagar, Dist: KB Asifabad, Telangana, I have changed my name and date of birth **BICKY KUMAR MANDAL** from 23-02-1998 to **VICKY MANDAL S/O GURUDAS MANDAL 28-02-1998** (TH. ODELU)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, S PADMAVATHI, W/O R. SOMASEKAR, EX-NO. 14299311N, RANK-HAV, R/O. H.NO. 10-3-182/1, VIDYA NAGAR, KARIMNAGAR, TELANGANA STATE. (MY NAME ENTERED IN MY HUSBAND'S ARMY SERVICE RECORDS AS S PADMAVATHI). I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM S PADMAVATHI TO R PADMAVATHI AS PER ADHAR CARD & PAN CARD AND MY D.O.B IS 31-12-1966 AS PER MY ADHAR CARD & PAN CARD. (TH. KM GOUD)

CHANGE OF NAME & D.O.B

I, GOUTU LALITHA, W/O. GOUTU SRINIVAS, EX-NO. 14441648P, RANK: HAV, R/O. H.NO. 1-2-216/2, KORUTLA VILLAGE & MANDAL, JAGTIAL DISTRICT. TELANGANA STATE (MT DATE OF BIRTH ENTERED IN MY HUSBAND'S ARMY SERVICE RECORDS AS 05-06-1986) I HAVE CHANGED MY DATE OF BIRTH FROM 05-06-1986 TO 05-06-1987 AS PER MY ADHAR CARD, PAN CARD & SSC MEMO. (TH. KM GOUD)

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ALL INDIA BREAKDOWN

App-based transport workers to go off roads on February 7

AGGREGATOR COMPANIES CONTINUE TO ARBITRARILY DETERMINE FARES, WHICH PUSHES DRIVERS INTO INCOME INSECURITY, DEBT, AND UNSUSTAINABLE WORKING CONDITIONS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

APP-based transport workers across India, associated with platforms - Ola, Uber, Rapido, Porter, UNCL, Mover, and other aggregator companies, have announced an All India breakdown on February 7 to protest continued government inaction and rampant fare exploitation by app-based aggregator platforms.

According to the Workers union, despite the notification of the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines, 2025, aggregator companies continue to arbitrarily determine fares, openly violating the spirit of the guidelines. "This unchecked practice has pushed drivers into severe income insecurity, mounting debt, and unsustainable working conditions. Additionally, the commuters are also adversely affected due to unpredictable pricing, surge manipulation, and lack of effective regulatory oversight," said Shaik Sa-



lauddin, Founder President, Telangana Gig and Platform Workers' Union (TGPWU).

App-based transport workers' unions have repeatedly highlighted that the failure of Central and State Governments to notify minimum base fares has allowed platforms to unilaterally slash driver earnings while

increasing commissions. Rising fuel prices, vehicle maintenance costs, insurance, and operational risks are being entirely shifted onto drivers, making dignified livelihoods impossible.

The workers' union demands - immediate notification of minimum base fares for all app-based transport services—including autos, cabs, and

bike taxis—by Central and State Governments, finalised in consultation with recognised driver unions.

Strict prohibition on the use of private (non-commercial) vehicles for commercial app-based rides or mandatory conversion of such vehicles into the commercial category in line with existing Motor Vehicles laws and regulations.

The unions have urged both the Central and State Governments to initiate immediate dialogue with elected worker representatives to ensure fair, lawful, and sustainable regulation of the app-based transport sector. "Continued delay will only deepen the economic crisis faced by millions of app-based transport workers and their families across the country," said Salauddin.

Other members - Nagesh Kumar, Abdul Rawoof, Ali Baqri, Satish Kumar, R K Reddy, Venkatesh and other app-based transport workers' unions were present.



AIIMS Bibinagar to be completed by year-end: Kishan Reddy

HYDERABAD

UNION Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Tuesday reviewed the progress of construction works at AIIMS Bibinagar and announced that the hospital would be completed by end of this year.

Addressing a press conference after inspecting the site, the Minister said the 750-bed AIIMS, spread over 202 acres and built at a cost of Rs.1,110 crore, was progressing rap-

idly with 86 percent of works completed. So far, Rs.831 crore has been spent on the project. He noted that Bibinagar is the country's only "Brownfield AIIMS", making it unique.

Emergency services have been operational since January 1, with 220 beds currently available. Around 1,800 patients are availing OP services daily. The institute presently has 880 students across MBBS, nursing, and specialty

courses, supported by UG and PG hostels, including 24-floor hostel towers under construction.

Further, Kishan Reddy said free treatment would be provided under Ayushman Bhava and Arogya Sri schemes, with nominal charges for others. He added that steps were underway to improve connectivity, including a proposed railway station and an MMTS stop near the AIIMS campus.

Kagaznagar civic polls see 130 contestants across 30 wards

- Nominations initially filed by 170 candidates across 30 wards
- Contestants include from major parties and independents

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAGAZNAGAR

A total of 130 candidates are set to contest the upcoming municipal elections in Kagaznagar, following the withdrawal of nominations by 40 candidates, election officials announced on Tuesday.

Initially, 170 nominations were filed across the 30 wards of Kagaznagar Municipality.

The contestants include



representatives from major political parties such as the Indian National Congress, Bharat Rashtra Samithi, Bharatiya Janata Party, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, along with candidates from other par-

ties and independents.

After the completion of the nomination withdrawal process, 40 candidates withdrew, leaving 130 candidates in the fray across all wards of the municipality, officials added.

Preparations in full swing for CM's public meeting in Bhupalpally

- Collector and SP inspect venue and facilities ahead of CM Revanth Reddy's visit
- Emphasis on security, traffic management and public convenience

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

DISTRICT Collector Rahul Sharma and District SP Sankeerth on Tuesday inspected the venue opposite Ramappa Colony in Chelpur gram panchayat ahead of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's public meeting scheduled in Bhupalpally district on 8 February.

During the inspection, the officials reviewed the meeting grounds, VIP and public



District Collector Rahul Sharma and District SP Sankeerth inspect the venue ahead of CM's public meeting on Tuesday

galleries, parking, road facilities, drinking water, septic arrangements, power supply, medical facilities, and fire fighting measures. Collector Rahul Sharma directed all departmental officers to coordinate and complete preparations in a timely and orderly manner to ensure the visit proceeds smoothly without causing inconvenience to the public.

District SP Sankeerth stated that stringent security measures would be implemented, with special focus on traffic control and deployment arrangements. RDO Hari Krishna, R&B Engineer Ramesh and other officials were also present, urging all departments to finish preparations on schedule for a successful and trouble free public meeting.



Hyd Press Club manager donates RO plant to ZPHS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

WITH the intent of providing some support to students studying in rural schools, Hyderabad Press Club manager Lakshmi Ramachander donated and inaugurated an RO mineral water plant recently at ZP High School, Suraram, in Chinna Shankarampet mandal, Medak district - the school where he himself studied; also his native village.

The donation was made in memory of his parents, Shyamamma and Narahari. He also distributed exam pads to 152 students. Ramachander stated that he would continue to extend his cooperation for the village development.

The students expressed gratitude to Ramachander for installing the plant. Those present included local sarpanch Chiluka Nagaraju, his deputy Mallesh, headmaster Sai Reddy, villagers.

Defection case: Kadiyam Srihari to appear before Speaker

HYDERABAD

ANOTHER significant development has occurred in the MLA defection case. Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar issued notices to Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiyam Srihari on Tuesday. The Speaker ordered him to appear for a hearing at 11 AM on Wednesday, February 4.

It is already known that BRS MLA Vivekananda has filed a complaint with the Speaker, alleging that Kadiyam Srihari, who won on the BRS party symbol, has defected to the Congress party.

In this context, the Speak-



er has also issued notices to Vivekananda, directing him to appear for the hearing scheduled for 11 AM on Wednesday. Speaker Prasad Kumar will hear the arguments of both Kadiyam Srihari and Vivekananda.

Meanwhile, as part of the

party defection case, when the defection petitions of 10 MLAs came before him, Speaker Prasad Kumar has already given a clean chit to seven of them. He ruled that they remained in the BRS party and had not joined the Congress party.

However, MLA Danam Nagender's petition is under investigation. The Speaker has not yet taken any decision on the case of another MLA Sanjay. There is considerable interest within political circles regarding the decision that the Speaker will render following the investigation of Kadiyam Srihari.

Cong releases B Forms in Alampur constituency

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GADWAL

THE Congress has officially finalised its candidates for three municipalities in the Alampur Assembly constituency of Jogulamba Gadwal district. The 'B' Forms pertaining to Municipalities of Aiza, Waddepally, and Alampur were released at the camp office in Shantinagar.

The Forms were handed over to the party's candidates by former Alampur MLA and AICC Secretary Dr SA Sampath Kumar.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sampath emphasised the party's commitment to strengthening grassroots de-



mocracy and assured that the selected candidates would work for the development of their respective municipalities. He expressed confidence that the Congress Party candidates would secure the trust and support of the people by addressing local civic issues and implementing welfare-oriented policies.

Party leaders, local Congress functionaries, and supporters from the three municipalities were present at the event.

Ponguleti targets BRS: Earlier oppression, now desperation

HANS NEWS SERVICE
EDULAPURAM (KHAMMAM)

REVENUE Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy launched an attack on the BRS, alleging that the party neglected the housing needs of the poor during its decade-long rule and is now "desperate for votes" with elections approaching.

Addressing election roadshows in Wards 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13 of Edulapuram Municipality on Tuesday, the Minister said previous rulers acted irresponsibly by ignoring the long-standing demand for house sites for the poor. "Those who ruled for ten years without caring for the housing needs of

the underprivileged are now making tall promises out of desperation," he said.

Assuring people of the Congress government's commitment, Reddy said providing house sites to eligible poor families and constructing 'Indiramma Houses' for them was his personal responsibility. He stated that once the election comes to an end, house sites would be allotted to all eligible beneficiaries, followed by construction of permanent houses.

The Minister said that in the first phase itself, the government has sanctioned 4.5 lakh Indiramma houses across the State and added that from April onwards,



houses would be constructed in phases until every poor family owns a permanent home.

Appealing to voters, the Minister urged people to extend the same support given to him in the Assembly elections to Congress candidates contesting the municipal polls, stating that their victory would ensure accelerated development and welfare in the town.

Municipal polls: Komatireddy's campaign brings cheer to Cong

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NALGONDA

AS part of the campaign for the Nalgonda Municipal Corporation elections, Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, carried out extensive electioneering in several divisions in support of Congress corporator candidates.

He appealed to voters to cast their votes for the Congress Party by choosing the hand symbol and ensure the victory of Congress candidates.

At every step of the campaign, the people of Nalgonda town warmly

welcomed the minister, expressing their support for Venkat Reddy and the Congress Party. His campaign infused fresh enthusiasm among Congress cadres.

The minister began his campaign at Bodrai Chowrasta in Charlapalli in support of Division 15 candidate Perika Nagaraju and Marriguda Division 14 candidate Bojja Shankarayya. Later, he conducted wide-ranging campaigns for Mamidi Karthik (12th Division), Sattu Nagamani Shankar (27th Division), Gundaboyina Pushpalatha Venkanna (28th Division), Gulab Mohammed Shafiq (29th Division), Aseema Sultan (Basheer) from the

The minister assured higher funds if Congress achieves a clean sweep in all 48 divisions and vowed to deliver welfare schemes to every household

26th Division, and Maragoni Naveen Goud from the 30th Division.

He explained to the public the benefits of upgrading the municipality to a corporation and the development and welfare initiatives possible with elected corporators and a new mayor.

Addressing the people, Venkat Reddy recalled his bond with Nalgonda, stating that the debt he owes to the people who elected him

MLA five times can never be repaid. He said Nalgonda is his home, life, family, and soul, and expressed his love for being among the poor.

He assured support to the poor in times of hardship and said he sees his own son in every student.

He highlighted the construction of government schools and colleges in the name of Prateek, the development of Bottuguda Government School to



Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy's Nalgonda Municipal corporation election campaign

international standards, and plans to transform 18 government schools into model institutions.

He assured higher funds if Congress achieves a clean sweep in all 48 divisions and vowed to deliver welfare schemes to every household, making Nalgonda a model of development. He urged voters not

to believe false promises by opposition parties and appealed for full support to Congress candidates, assuring peace, harmony, and inclusive development for all sections of society.

Several Congress leaders, candidates, former councilors, and party workers participated in the program in large numbers.

Jagadish confident of BRS victory in Suryapet

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SURYAPET

FORMER minister and Suryapet MLA Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy addressed the media and expressed confidence in the party's prospects after the release of the BRS candidates' list for the Suryapet municipal elections on Tuesday.

He stated that BRS tickets were given only to "winning candidates" and assured that fairness was maintained in selection. He thanked former municipal chairpersons, senior leaders, and all those who cooperated in the process.

Criticising the Congress party, Jagadish Reddy said the people of Suryapet are waiting to teach Congress a fitting lesson. He claimed that BRS had developed Suryapet on par

with major cities, but in the last two years, Congress had damaged a once clean and well-planned town. Highlighting development after 2014, he said Suryapet was made a district as promised.

He listed major achievements such as the medical college, collectorate, SP office, Mahaprasthanam, improved roads, central lighting, tank bund, boating facilities, and parks, which transformed Suryapet into a model town.

Meanwhile, former Municipal Chairperson Ganduri Pravalika and her husband Ganduri Prakash have withdrawn their nominations, creating political discussion. Ganduri Prakash had filed his nomination from Ward No. 34, while Ganduri Pravalika filed her nomination from Ward No. 36.

PRE-RAMZAN ARRANGEMENTS

Govt ratchets up efforts to spruce up Mecca Masjid, other mosques

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

WITH just two weeks remaining before the commencement of the holy month of Ramzan, the historic Mecca Masjid, Shahi Masjid, and other prominent mosques are being spruced up for the faithful. The authorities have arranged 2,250 kg of high-quality dates for iftar as over 5,000 worshippers are expected to break their fast daily at Mecca Masjid alone. Following reported delays in renovation works that triggered public concern on 31 January, the Telangana State Minority Welfare Department has accelerated all necessary arrangements to ensure a peaceful observance of the month.

According to the department, prayer mats and essential supplies have been secured. Specifically, 1,500 kg of dates have been allocated to Mecca Masjid, with 500 kg for Shahi Masjid and 250



kg for the Secretariat Masjid. District Minorities Welfare Officer Mohammed Ilyas Ahmed confirmed that the supply contract was awarded to Gulzar Cuisine at a rate of Rs 418 per kg. He noted that high-quality Shukri dates are being provided this year to enhance the experience for the public. Furthermore, existing carpets are being refurbished or replaced with new ones to accommodate the large crowds.

In coordination with the

GHMC, water works, and electricity departments, several auxiliary tasks are underway.

Tents have already been installed at Mecca Masjid and Shahi Masjid to provide shade. While major renovation and conservation works on the four-century-old structure are now fully completed, the reconstruction of the ablution tank and washrooms has also been finalised under the supervision of the Department of Heritage.

SHE Teams secure convictions for 5 involved in sexual offences

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Hyderabad SHE Team, through sustained investigation and effective prosecution, has secured convictions in five cases involving grave sexual offences against minor girls. These cases, registered at Begumpet, Banjara Hills, Bhavani Nagar, and SR Nagar stations, involved charges including aggravated penetrative sexual assault, child enticement, and criminal intimidation. The verdicts were delivered by Sessions Courts and Fast Track Special Courts under the IPC and POCSO Act, reflecting the stringent approach of the city police towards child safety.

The court awarded rigorous imprisonment for life until death in a case where a father assaulted his twelve-year-old daughter. Other sentences included twenty-five years for a neighbour who assaulted a nine-year-old girl, and twenty years for the luring and assault of an eight-year-old. Furthermore, two separate cases involving victims aged four and eight resulted in five-year prison terms. Alongside imprisonment, the courts imposed fines and directed victim compensation ranging from Rs 2,00,000 to Rs 5,00,000.

Lavanya, DCP of the Women Safety Wing,

stated that the victims, aged between four and twelve, were assaulted by known individuals. In every instance, the minors disclosed the offences to guardians, leading to prompt complaints and referral to the Bharosa Centre for child-friendly statement recording. The centre provided psychological counselling, medical care assistance, and trial support to ensure the families remained confident throughout the legal proceedings.

The DCP noted that despite pressure from the accused to compromise, Bharosa personnel ensured the cases reached their logical conclusion.

Currently, all survivors are continuing their education and performing well academically. This coordinated effort between the police, the prosecution, and support centres highlights the commitment to delivering justice and rehabilitating victims of such heinous crimes. The authorities reiterated that the safety of children remains their highest priority, and they will continue to pursue maximum penalties for offenders to deter such violence in society and ensure a secure environment for every minor. The successful convictions serve as a vital warning against those targeting the most vulnerable members of the community.

Over 2.5 cr devotees attended Sammakka Jatara: Seethakka

Panchayat Raj Minister elated over hassle-free arrangements at the sprawling Jatara venue

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

PANCHAYAT Raj Minister Dhanasri Anasuya Seethakka on Tuesday stated that over 2.5 crore devotees attended the Sammakka Sarakka Medaram Maha Jatara this year. During an informal interaction with the media, the Minister announced plans to widen roads before the next Jatara to effectively overcome persistent traffic problems. She described the festival as a grand success, noting that arrangements and temple works proceeded smoothly despite false propaganda spread by certain individuals.

The Minister clarified that the event concluded without any untoward incidents, dismissing misinformation regarding a single theft. Seethakka highlighted that

even opposition leaders praised the management. People from all walks of life arrived in large numbers for the darshan of the goddesses. The Tirugu Jatara is scheduled to take place within a day or two.

Furthermore, the Minister confirmed she would soon review ongoing works in the Mulugu district with officials to prepare for the ensuing Godavari Pushkarams. This proactive approach aims to ensure better infrastructure and crowd management for all future religious congregations in the region. The government remains committed to enhancing devotee facilities while maintaining the spiritual sanctity and safety of these massive tribal gatherings across the state of Telangana.



CS directs officials to secure maximum central funds in Union Budget 2026-27

Ramakrishna Rao demands systematic action plan to claim Telangana's ₹25,000 crore share from centrally sponsored schemes while prioritising pharma and semiconductor sectors for state development

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

STATE Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao has instructed top officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan to secure pending central funds for Telangana in the Union Government's budget for the 2026-27 financial year. At a meeting with secretaries from all departments, he emphasised that officials must work systematically to obtain the maximum possible allocation from centrally sponsored schemes. He clarified that the central government has proposed a budget of Rs 5 lakh



crore under these schemes. Based on population figures, the Chief Secretary noted that Telangana should receive at least Rs 25,000 crore as its rightful share.

Ramakrishna Rao pointed out that the central budget prioritises the development of the pharma sector, semi-

conductor manufacturing, and various agricultural aspects, suggesting that the state take appropriate measures in these directions. He identified a significant opportunity

to develop a temple corridor connecting Khammam, Warangal, and Karimnagar districts. With the Mamunoor

airport project progressing in Warangal, he highlighted the substantial potential for tourism, industrial, and commercial growth in these specific regions.

Furthermore, the Chief Secretary stated that the state is yet to receive another Rs 10,000 crore during the

current financial year. He briefed officials on the 16th Finance Commission, noting that fund allocations are based on 2011 population data alongside criteria such as demographic area, implementation capacity, and fund utilisation. Priority is given to development-oriented indicators. He suggested that special measures be taken to ensure that surplus unutilised funds remaining with the central government are made available to the state. Secretaries have been directed to make special efforts to ensure no funds are lost due to administrative delays.

‘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 the negotiations," 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 metuant" (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.

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.

No more hosting of GOs on TG's official website

Continued from P1

These orders were extensively circulated in the social media.

It may be mentioned that the Telangana High Court has instructed the state government to immediately upload all Government Orders, circulars, rules and notifications on official websites and to strictly follow existing guidelines in December last

year. Information obtained under the Right to Information Act, 2005 showed that (between December 7, 2023, and January 26, 2025), 19,064 GOs were issued by various departments, but only 3,290 were available online. The court observed that the failure to upload GOs deprived citizens of access to information and affected transparency and accountability.

When contacted, GAD officials maintained that the High Court orders are being implemented and the GOs are being uploaded regularly. Departments are supposed to forward the GOs for uploading but of late they were not doing so. Officials suspect that "strict orders to the secretaries to stop uploading GOs may have been issued by the CMO".

‘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 Viksit Bharat 2047," he added.

The minister also took a swipe at the Congress, recalling 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 Parli-

ament, but we all witnessed that disgraceful scene," he said, strongly criticising the Opposition's conduct and adding that it forced the government to brief the media instead.

The India-US agreement comes a week after New Delhi signed a landmark trade pact with the European Union. PM Modi on Monday confirmed the breakthrough after speaking with Trump. "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."

Trump, in a social media post, said India would "likewise move forward to reduce their Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers against the United States, to zero," and claimed that PM Modi had agreed to significantly increase purchases of American goods, including energy, technology, agricultural products and coal.

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

Continued from P1

Addressing reporters in the Parliament House complex after he was not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi also said that it is for the first time in history that

the Leader of Opposition has not been allowed to speak on the President's address. In a post on X, Gandhi said, "PM Modi is Compromised. PM is too afraid to let me speak in Parliament about Naravane,

Epstein Files and how he has surrendered on Tariffs." Gandhi said the issue is not Naravane's statement, "that is a side show", but the main thing is that "our Prime Minister has been compromised".

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.

...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.

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 populates, 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.

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 populates, 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. The advent of faster modes of transportation contributed to the deterioration of the canal. 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,

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.

(The writer is a retired IAS Officer)

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

Your 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

APROPOS “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 Feb3). 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 R 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>

The two faces of equity: Navigating the UGC Regulation 2026

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.

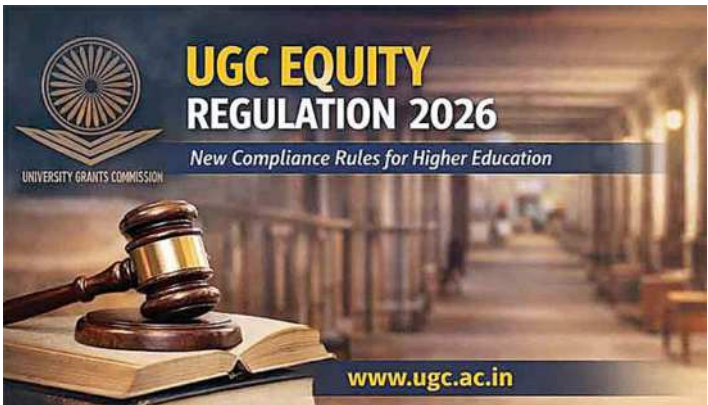
Following the heart-wrenching suicides of scholars like Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadi, their mothers petitioned the Supreme Court, seeking a robust mechanism to end the pervasive culture of caste-based exclusion. In response and under judicial pressure to address a staggering 118 per cent rise in discrimination 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

mandating the establishment of Equal Opportunity Centres (EOCs) in every university and college, the UGC is attempting to create a ‘standard operating procedure’ for social justice. These centres are not merely symbolic; they are backed by Equity Committees and ‘equity squads’ proactive units tasked with monitoring ‘vulnerable spots’ on campus to prevent discrimination in real-time. Furthermore, the regulation introduces a revolutionary time-bound grievance redressal system.

The requirement for an Equity Committee to meet within 24 hours of a complaint and submit a full report within 15 days is a direct attempt to combat the ‘delay and deny’ tactics that have historically silenced victims. For the first time, institutional heads are liable and non-compliance carries the heavy threat of losing UGC funding or even derecognition.

However, the very stringency that makes the regulation promising has also exposed significant demerits that threaten to undermine its legitimacy. The most contentious issue is the ‘unidirectional’ definition of victimhood. Regulation 3(c) defines caste-based discrimination exclusively as acts committed against members of SC, ST, and OBC categories. Critics argue that this phrasing creates a legal vacuum where students from the ‘General Category’ are effectively deemed incapable of being victims of bias. This



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. Reintroducing 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 redressal 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)

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

ARTI ADKE

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. 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 Viksit 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, Viksit 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 Viksit Bharat. What does that term mean to you personally?

For me, Viksit 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 Viksit Bharat, we must become a product nation.

Q: How do student startups fit into the Viksit 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 Viksit 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?



I want IIT Hyderabad to be remembered as a place where innovation flourished

Prof B S Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad

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 Rs 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.

Encouraging creativity with screen-free childhood experiences

The idea behind learning through play is to give children the freedom to explore, imagine, and discover at their own pace. When children are placed in unstructured and spontaneous environments, they naturally develop creativity, problem-solving abilities, and social skills. Free play allows learning to happen organically, without pressure, rules, or predetermined outcomes.

Unstructured play encourages children to think independently and make their own choices. As they build, pretend, explore, or invent games, they learn to experiment, take risks, and solve problems in real time. These experiences strengthen cognitive development while fostering curiosity, confidence, and resilience. Without constant adult direction or digital distractions, children gain a deeper sense of ownership over their learning.

Social interaction is another key benefit of free play. When children play together, they learn essential life skills such as sharing, cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution. These interactions help build emotional intelligence, empathy, and teamwork—skills that are just as important as academic



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-free play, we nurture confident, creative, and socially aware individuals—laying the foundation for lifelong learning and well-rounded development.

How startups are adapting to GenZ workforce trends

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

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



youth place greater emphasis on purpose-driven work, flexibility, continuous learning, and meaningful engagement, rather than viewing compensation as the sole measure of career success.

Harsh Kumar Sarohi, Senior Vice President – Technology at TradeIndia, highlighted the growing demand among young professionals for clarity of purpose and structured mentorship. He spoke about the role of organisational values and leadership in career development, while underlining the importance of soft skills

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 Radhakrishnan, Manager – Business Strategy at Medinious. Faculty members and students attended the conclave, which reflected ongoing discussions around preparing youth for evolving workplace realities.



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

World 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

at public spaces, traffic signals, villages, and colleges to educate families and students about HPV risks. "We want awareness to reach people who may never walk into a hospital for preventive care. Education at the grassroots level can save thousands of lives," he says. As World Cancer Day spotlights prevention, Dr. Tula leaves people with a straightforward message: "Quit smoking, practice safe habits, eat healthy, screen regularly, and vaccinate early. HPV-related cancers are up to 90% preventable. We have the tools — we just need to use them."

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

World Cancer Day is a reminder that cancer care goes beyond treating the body — it also means nurturing the mind. For women diagnosed with early breast cancer, one of the most common cancers in India, the journey often brings emotional uncertainty alongside medical decisions, including fears about recurrence and quality of life. While advances in early detection and treatment have significantly improved survival rates, many patients continue to face anxiety, stress, and emotional vulnerability throughout treatment and recovery. Supporting mental well-being is therefore essential to helping women regain confidence, control, and resilience.

Meera, a 47-year-old



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

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 Depart-

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!

Well 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.

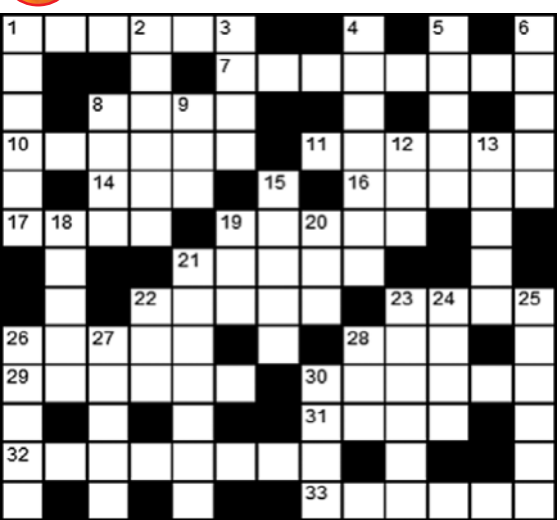
The yet-to-be-titled film is a grand-budget venture directed by R S Durai Senthilkumar, known for his blockbusters like 'Kakki Sattai', 'Kodi', and the recent success 'Garudan'.

The first phase of shooting was completed in Chennai, while the second phase was in and around Panikka Nadar Kudiyruppu 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.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Point a finger at ? (6)
- Leaves high and dry (8)
- Horned goddess (4)
- Most sensible (6)
- Three-fold (6)
- Some forensic evidence (3)
- Absolute (5)
- Plant part (4)
- Spells (5)
- Value (5)
- Wishful words (1,4)
- Place of cultivation (4)
- Harry Potter's professor (5)
- To free (3)
- The glasses in spectacles (6)
- Female foxes (6)
- Poker declaration (2,2)
- Chewed the fat (8)
- Locomotive (6)

DOWN

- Is he trying his best to keep you entertained ? (6)
- Not dispatched (6)
- The orient (4)
- Lie or fib (7)
- Uncertainty or misgiving (5)
- Escort courteously (5)
- Our country, as a prefix (4)
- International Standard Atmosphere (3)
- Aliens? (3)
- Crowbar (5)
- Body of troops (5)
- Of or like sheep (5)
- Jeering cry (3)
- Red Indian tribe (3)
- Like a car or a bus? (7)
- Internet addresses (3)
- Mending or repairing (6)
- South Yemen port (4)
- Royal city in Karnataka (6)
- Injured-arm support (5)
- "In at a" change for a girl's name ? (5)
- Outer edge (3)
- Footnote word (4)



Solution to February 3

SUDOKU



Solution to February 3



“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 broadcaster 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.

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.

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 Vihaan 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

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 Geroge'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 Sooryavanshi, Vedant Trivedi, Ayush Mhatre (c), Vihaan 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 Shinozada, Khalid Ahmadzai, Osman Sadat, Uzairullah Niazi, Abdul Aziz, Aqil Khan, Khatir Stanikzai, Nazifullah Amiri, Nooristani Omarzai, Roohullah Arab, Salam Khan, Wahidullah Zadran, Zaitullah Shaheen.

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

Vasavi College of Engineering emerged champions at the OU Inter-College Chess Championships, organised by Vivekananda Government Degree College, Vidyanaagar, here on Tuesday. The two-day tournament was conducted in a Round Robin League format and witnessed keen competition among leading city colleges.

Vasavi College topped the standings with 15.5 points, with Varshith, Sainath, Shar-



ath, Shyam and Sai Vardhan delivering consistent performances.

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

14.5 points, led by strong outings from Akshay Kumar, Nelson, Nikhil, Manish Kumar and Kumar Raj Thota. C.B.I.T. secured third

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 Jagan 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.



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 Coldrif cough syrup in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district, an official said on Monday.

According to the official, Harsh, from Tikabbari 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.



Yadav said his nephew was undergoing treatment under Dr S S Thakur in Parasia, Chhindwara, and the child's condition deteriorated after consuming the cough syrup prescribed by him.

Harsh remained admitted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for months, his uncle said. In October 2025, children in Parasia town of Chhindwara district began falling ill after consuming Coldrif cough syrup, with complaints of vomiting, inability to urinate and fever. Investigations revealed that the syrup contained diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical that causes kidney failure.

Around two dozen children from Chhindwara and Betul districts had died in the incident, following which the Drug Controller General of India also conducted a probe.

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-



ers but also adversely impact the lower middle class and middle class by encouraging profiteering in foodgrains and agricultural products and creating a new class of middlemen, leading to a rise in prices. He alleged that the BJP would also collect donations from corporate entities, making food items even costlier.

These steps would gradually reduce farmers' income, forcing them to sell their land to wealthy individuals and corporates, Yadav said. "Capturing the land is the ultimate objective of the BJP and its associates," he alleged.

Referring to the proposed Seed Bill, Yadav described it as "fatal for Indian agriculture" and alleged that it was

the product of an anti-farmer mindset of the BJP government. He accused the ruling party of bringing land acquisition laws, humiliating people by forcing them to stand in fertiliser queues every year, and promoting corporate interests linked to seeds, pesticides, storage silos, crop insurance and agricultural trade.

Yadav called for organised resistance against such policies, asserting that farmers already troubled by issues such as stray cattle would no longer tolerate the government's actions. He alleged that the BJP had been, and would remain anti-farmer, and said it was time to "remove BJP, save fields, farming and farmers."

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 Satheesan, 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 Sadath 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. Satheesan 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.

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.

Dy CM warns liquor shops against overcharging

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

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

HOME minister Vangalapati Anitha on Tuesday said there was no comparison between the governance of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and that of former chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, asserting that people were closely watching recent developments in the state.

Speaking to the media during an informal interaction at the Secretariat, Anitha said the government had taken steps to ensure that party cadres exercised restraint and did not allow anger to spill over, keeping the state's development as the top priority. She said leaders were briefed on facts and reminded of development goals to prevent them from falling into what she termed the "YSRCP trap."

The home minister claimed that TDP cadres had been kept under control for the past 20 months, which helped maintain a positive atmosphere in the State. While acknowledging the frustration among party workers, she said Chief Minister Naidu had consistently

counselled them against unlawful actions and guided them at the right time.

Recalling past incidents, Anitha alleged that Jagan had provoked attacks on the TDP office by giving obscene meaning to 'bosadiki', and later justified the outrage among his supporters by citing their anger. She said that despite continued use of offensive language by YSRCP leaders, the TDP leadership was still advising restraint.

Accusing Jagan of promoting violence and vandalism to intimidate people, Anitha questioned whether he had ever reprimanded his leaders for abusive language or violent acts. She said people had understood the difference between what she described as "criminal thinking" and "visionary thinking."

Warning of strict action, the home minister said any attempt by the YSRCP to create unrest in the state would be dealt with firmly under the law.

She cautioned that the police would adopt a tough approach against political rowdies, adding that such deterrent action would ensure that even the thought of wrongdoing instilled fear.

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

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 Kandarpu 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



CPM leaders protesting before Tiruchanoor police station on Tuesday



SFI leaders Akbar and Vinod

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, Tiruchanuru 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 Sanhita (BNS) at Tiruchanoor police station.

The accused named in the case include A1 Satheesh, A2 Mohan Babu and A3 Manchu Vishnu Babu. In addition to them, cases have also been registered against around 20 other persons in connection with the incident.

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. Citing no response, SFI had called for a protest at the collectorate demanding immediate government action and criminal cases against the university management. CPM leaders alleged that the protest was deliberately foiled by a group of assailants allegedly employed by the university.

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.

Congress Tirupati city president Gowdaperu Chittibabu condemned the abduction and said intimidating students to protect vested interests was unacceptable. 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.

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-

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

ity and effectiveness of medical training in India.

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 Suryaprabha, director (publications) Dr K Sudha, medical education advisor Dr Lokesh Idara and AI team members from SHC Technologies Private Limited.

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 convener of Jal Biradari, 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.

Satyanarayana wrote to JSP chief Pawan Kalyan

that the PIL, filed in 2020, concerns critical pollution issues, including untreated sewage, pharmaceutical effluents and industrial contamination in north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

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 convener of Jal Biradari 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 convener of Jal Biradari 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 'Mana 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.



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

THE trailer of 'Couple Friendly', starring Santosh Soban and Manasa 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 film 'Dragon'.

In 'Pallichattambi', Tovino Thomas will be seen in a never-seen-before look. The film is produced by Noufal 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 Amballur the finance controller, and Rajesh Menon the production controller. Renith Raj and Kiran 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 Rishlal 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 Chowdhary 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 Chowdhary'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 Rayalaseema 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 Chowdhary'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

promotions, the film's catchy hook steps strongly connected with students, and both the teaser and trailer received a positive response from the youth across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The title 'Sumathi Sathakam' has also created strong recall among audiences.

Adding to its high-lights, 'Sumathi Sathakam' received a U/A certificate with zero cuts, which is considered rare. The Censor Board members appreciated the film, stating that it is a feel-good entertainer that audiences will enjoy after a long time.

The film will be released in the Telugu states by Mythri Movie Makers, while overseas distribution in North America will be handled by Vibrant Cinemas, with releases in Dallas managed by Ravi Kollipara and Jai Pakala.



Ashwath Marimuthu: Title of my film with Simbu will start with 'I'

WISHING actor Silambarasan a happy birthday on Tuesday, director Ashwath Marimuthu has now disclosed that the title of his film with Simbu will begin with the letter 'I'.

Ashwath Marimuthu, who will be directing Simbu's next film after the actor completes director Vetrimaran's 'Arasan', took to his X timeline to pen a birthday wish to the actor. He wrote, "Happy birthday ST(A)R. This year is going to be magnificent for you sir. Cannot wait to start our film post 'Arasan'. To all his fans, 'konjam poruthukonga'. An entertaining film specially for the fans is loading! Title will start with 'I'."

It may be recalled that Ashwath Marimuthu, who delivered a blockbuster called 'Dragon' last year, had said last year that his next film, featuring actor Simbu in the lead, would definitely release next year (in 2026), irrespective of when they began shooting.

Ashwath, had in March last

year, disclosed that the script for the film had already been completed. "It is a script that has already been finished. Only screenplay and dialogues have to be written. Overall treatment is all over," he had said then.

When asked what kind of film his film with Silambarasan would be, Ashwath had replied, "What all you liked in my films 'Dragon' and 'Oh My Kaduvule', you will find in this film. At the same time, this film will also have all that you admired in him. Basically, it will be a vintage STR in my kind of films."

The film is being produced by AGS, the same production house that produced 'Dragon'.

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



#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 be his assistant directors. Putting out a poster on his timeline that read, "Team Ashwath Marimuthu. Welcome onboard assistant directors!" he named Srikanth, Mohammed Asif, Arun Kumar, Nithish S. Dhina, Nithish B. Krish, Srinath, Aniruth as his team members. Along with the poster, he wrote, "To all the talented people who applied but couldn't make it, wish you a great future and am sure you will find a better place to work."

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, UV Creations, 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. #BIKERMov #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 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 Pannerselvam is the art director.

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 on January 30 this year. The production house had welcomed Sreeleela, saying, "You didn't see this coming. Welcoming the dazzling damsel @sreeleela14 on board 'D55'."

The makers had also welcomed young music sensation Sai Abhyankkar on board the unit.

Taking to its X timeline to make the announcement, Wunderbar Films had said, "Time's up. The SA1-lence breaks. Excited to have the sensational @SaiAbhyankkar as the music composer for 'D55'. 'D55' - A #SaiAbhyankkar Musical. A brand new collaboration loading."

Sai Abhyankkar responded to the post of the production house, saying, "Super excited and pumped working with @dhanushkraj 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 @theSreyaas 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 his 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 @SaiAbhyankkar. Thank you dear @DhanushKRaja sir. 'D55' - A #SaiAbhyankkar Musical. @theSreyaas @wunderbarfilms @RTakeStudios @Shra2309 @azy905 @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.