



# THE Hans India



**NATION SPORTS**  
Copter carrying 7 crashes into sea, all rescued  
A Pawan Hans helicopter carrying seven people, including two crew members, crashed into the sea just 300 metres away from its scheduled landing at Mayabunder helipad in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday. **P10**

**FINANCE**  
NMP 2.0 is a bold step; it can unlock resources for reinvestment  
The government has done well to set a target of Rs 16.7 lakh crore for National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0. The objective is to monetise assets of more than 2,000 projects in 12 sectors till 2029-30. **P6**

**BUSINESS**  
Markets in red as tariff fears rattle IT stocks  
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Tuesday, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over artificial intelligence-led disruption and renewed trade-related uncertainties. **P11**

**ENTERTAINMENT**  
Mrunal Thakur grabs fashion lovers attention  
Bollywood actress Mrunal Thakur's latest release Do Deewane Seher Me, produced by celebrated filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali and co-starring Siddhant Chaturvedi, has opened to a modest response at the box office. **P12**

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**RAMZAN TIMINGS**  
IFTAR (Wed) 06:27 PM  
SEHAR (Thu) 05:15 AM

**WINDOWS**  
13 of family sentenced to life in UP

SAHARANPUR : A local court has sentenced 13 people of the same family to life imprisonment for killing two brothers about 10 years ago in a land dispute, officials said. The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Vikas Gupta also imposed a fine of Rs 10.73 lakh. Additional District Government Counsel (ADGC) Deepak Saini told PTL. Saini said that on November 12, 2016, the police registered an FIR based on a complaint from Israr stating that his father, Yasin and uncle Tasin were murdered by a group of people over a dispute regarding approximately 20 bighas of land. After the investigation, the police arrested the accused and collected evidence. Upon hearing the case, the court sentenced all 13 people to life imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10.73 lakh.

**Bride dies two days after wedding in Gorakhpur**

GORAKHPUR: Celebrations turned into mourning after a 21-year-old woman died under alleged suspicious circumstances just two days after her wedding in P P Ganj area here, with her family accusing the in-laws of murder. The deceased, identified as Seema, was married on February 20 to Manoj, a resident of Badhni village under P P Ganj police station area, an official said on Tuesday. According to police, Seema, daughter of Kamal Prabha Devi of Ratanpur village in Pipraich area, reached her in-laws house on February 21. On February 22 evening, her family was informed that her health had suddenly deteriorated. She was taken to BRD Medical College, where she died during treatment. Seema's parents alleged by the time they reached the hospital, her in-laws had fled, leaving the body behind.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL  
Not a 'naked protester'...  
A Dalal Street player

- The programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11
- The drive would be a special vaccination campaign and not under the government's Universal Immunisation Programme. It is in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations

## Centre set to launch HPV vax against cancer for girls aged 14

HANS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

IN a major step towards eliminating preventable cancers among women, the Union government will soon launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 years, official sources said on Tuesday.

According to sources, the programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent

HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11.

The drive would be a special vaccination campaign and not under the government's Universal Immunisation Programme. It is in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations, which identify HPV vaccination as a central pillar of the Global Strategy to Eliminate

Cervical Cancer. "Strong global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protection when administered to girls in the recommended age group," an official source said.

The nationwide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus. In the open market, quadrivalent

Gardasil-4 is a two-dose vaccine -- each costing Rs 3,927 -- for girls below 15 years. For those above 15 years, three doses of the vaccine are required. Gardasil-4 vaccine is manufactured by MSD India.

"Vaccination under the national programme will be voluntary and free of cost, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups. By prioritising prevention at the right



age, the programme is expected to provide lifelong protection and significantly reduce the future burden of cervical cancer in the country," the source said. The vaccine has an excellent safety record, supported by more than 500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006. Widespread vaccination has

led to substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and cervical cancer incidence in several countries. Once the vaccination programme is launched, India will join 160 countries that have introduced HPV vaccination in their national immunisation schedules.

## RENAMING POLITICS: KERALA TO KERALAM

BJP-CPM understanding helped Kerala get new name; Centre never considered Bengal's case: Mamata

HANS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

THE Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to change the name of the state to Keralam, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The decision, which comes ahead of the assembly elections in the state, was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first meeting held at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex.

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday alleged that an "understanding" between the BJP and the CPI(M) helped Kerala get a new name, while accusing the Centre of repeatedly ignoring her government's proposals to name the state



'Bangla'.

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for altering the name of Kerala to Keralam, Vaishnaw said. Prime Minister Modi hailed the Cabinet decision, saying it reflects the will of the people of the state. "It is in line with our efforts to

strengthen the connect with our glorious culture," he said in a post on X.

The Kerala assembly elections are due in April this year, with the tenure of the 140-member current assembly ending on May 23. After the Union Cabinet's approval,

the president of India will refer a Bill, namely the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the Kerala Assembly for expressing its views under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India. After receipt of the views of the Kerala Assembly, the government of India will obtain the recommendation of the president for the introduction of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to alter the name of Kerala to Keralam in Parliament, an official release said.

Asked why a decision like this was coming just ahead of the assembly elections in Kerala, Vaishnaw said decisions are taken by the Union Cabinet under Prime Minister Modi without keeping elections in view.

## Rs 275 hike in MSP of jute

HANS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

THE Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved a hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of raw jute by Rs 275 to Rs 5,925 per quintal for the marketing season 2026-27.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, in its first meeting at the PMO new office, Seva Teerth.

The new MSP will ensure a return of 61.8 per cent over the all-India weighted average cost of production.

"The announced MSP of raw jute for Marketing season 2026-27 is in line with the principle of fixing MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

## 'The Kerala Story 2' depicts State in wrong light: HC

HANS NEWS SERVICE KOCHI

THE Kerala High Court on Tuesday observed that 'The Kerala Story 2 - Goes Beyond' depicts a state like Kerala where everyone lives in communal harmony in a wrong light. The court also observed that using the state's name and claiming the film is based on true facts can lead to communal tensions in the state.

The observations came from Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas while hearing arguments on three separate pleas seeking to quash the certificate for public viewing granted to 'The Kerala Story

2 - Goes Beyond'. When the matter came up again in the post lunch session, the court was told that the producers of the film were willing to withdraw the teasers of the film.

The court, thereafter, said it will hear the matter again on Wednesday when it is likely to decide whether to see the movie before its scheduled release on February 27. Earlier in the day, during the arguments, the court indicated it was inclined to watch the film before passing an order. It also asked the censor board whether the movie complies with all the mandatory guidelines.



## Sensex plunges 1,000 pts

HANS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Tuesday, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over artificial intelligence-led disruption and renewed trade-related uncertainties. Rising global crude prices amid escalating US-Iran tensions and sluggish global cues also hit investor sentiment, traders said.

Snapping its two-session rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,068.74 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,225.92. During the day, the benchmark plunged 1,359.93 points,



or 1.63 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 81,934.73. A total of 2,802 stocks declined, while 1,422 advanced and 143 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty fell 288.35 points, or 1.12 per cent, to close at 25,424.65. In the intraday session, it depreciated by 385.4 points, or 1.49 per cent, to hit a low of 25,327.60. As many as 32 of its components ended in the red while 18 settled in the green territory.

## Rekha lays foundation for Rs 264 cr works in Mundka

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister

Rekha Gupta on Tuesday laid foundation stones of works worth Rs 264 crore in Mundka, saying her government is bringing the villages neglected so far in the mainstream of development.

The development works initiated in Mundka include 49 projects for bringing urban facilities to the rural pocket of the city, said a Delhi CMO statement.

In the last year, the Delhi government has initiated development works worth Rs 1,600 crore in the rural areas of Delhi, Gupta said, addressing a gathering in Mundka. The chief minister



said that once these projects are completed, the Mundka Assembly constituency will witness smooth connectivity, access to clean drinking water, improved sewerage systems, and strengthened education and healthcare facilities. These initiatives are significant steps towards

bringing rural Delhi on par with urban standards, she said. North West Delhi MP Yogender Chandolia, Development Minister Kapil Mishra, local MLA Gahender Drall, and chairman of Delhi Gramin Vikas Board Raj Kumar Chauhan were present in the programme.

## INDIA-US TRADE DEAL SKM announces nationwide stir

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURUKSHETRA

THE Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Tuesday announced a nationwide agitation against the proposed India-US trade agreement and other key policy issues, stating that protests will continue until the Centre accepts farmers' demands. The decision was taken at the SKM National Council meeting held at Jat Dharamshala in Kurukshetra, according to a press release issued by its media cell. More than 150 representatives from nine states - Punjab, Haryana,

Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Maharashtra and Kerala - attended the meeting. SKM said a joint Kisan Mazdoor Parliament will be organised at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on March 9, the opening day of the next Parliament session. From March 10 to April 13, the Morcha will hold Mahapanchayats across the country, beginning from Barnala in Punjab, to raise awareness about what it described as the "dangers" of the proposed trade pact and other "corporate-friendly" policies of the Centre.

## US customs rolls out new 10% tariff, lower than Trump's promised 15%

TEXAS

THE United States Customs and Border Protection has rolled out the 10 per cent tariff duties imposed on all imports which are not covered by exemptions.

After the US Supreme Court's ruling deemed earlier tariffs imposed by Trump using emergency powers as "illegal", the President had announced 10 per cent additional tariffs on imports from all countries on Friday. The next day, Trump decided to increase

**Modi should scrap 'anti-farmer' Indo-US deal approved under pressure: Rahul; 'the agreement an arrow in the heart of farmers; I challenge PM to scrap it if he has courage, but he won't be able to do so'**



this to 15 per cent.

A US Customs notice, which is described as intended to "provide guidance regarding the February 20, 2026

Presidential Proclamation", said imports would be subject to "an additional ad valorem rate of 10%", Reuters reported.

A White House official,

quoted by The Financial Times, has said the increase to 15 per cent will come later. This has, however, not been officially confirmed. The collection of the new

tariffs began at midnight, while the earlier tariffs were annulled.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the Indo-US interim trade deal was sealed under pressure and dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi to scrap the "anti-farmer" agreement, following the US Supreme Court ruling. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha described the agreement as "an arrow in the heart of farmers". "After the US Supreme Court ruling on the trade deal

(global tariffs), I challenge PM Modi to scrap it if he has courage...but he won't be able to do so," said the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Gandhi alleged that the Prime Minister approved the agreement under external pressure linked to the threat of releasing "Epstein files" and an ongoing criminal case involving industrialist Gautam Adani in the US. "Narendra Modi is compromised. He has been trapped. He has signed

this agreement under pressure. This is not a deal, it is an arrow in the heart of the farmer," Gandhi said, claiming that the pact had been stalled for months before being cleared suddenly.

He questioned that the India-US trade agreement had been stalled for four months, but what happened that made Prime Minister Modi suddenly agree to it? "There are two reasons for this. The first reason is the lakhs of Epstein files lying in America.

# 575 trees face felling for 'Reshme Bhavan' in Okalipuram; proposal before GBA

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

THE Department of Sericulture has proposed felling 575 trees to construct a 'Reshme Bhavan' complex on 4.2 acres of land in Okalipuram, close to Majestic and near Lulu Mall Bengaluru. The proposal is currently under examination by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

According to official documents, the project is planned on land located at Survey Nos. 12, 14 and 17

in Muddenahalli, Okalipuram, within the premises of the Joint Director's office. The site reportedly has 628 trees in total, of which 575 are proposed to be removed, leaving only 53 trees to be retained.

The Sericulture Department has described the project as a prestigious government initiative and has sought an early No Objection Certificate (NOC) for clearance. It has also informed that its existing office has been shifted to the



Mysore Sugar Company Reshme Bhavan has been entrusted to the Public Works Department (PWD). In October 2024, the State Cabinet approved approximately Rs 528 crore for the project. Subsequently, the PWD approached the GBA for necessary clearances.

While GBA has permitted land clearance in principle, the Karnataka High Court has laid down specific guidelines governing tree felling in Bengaluru.

Under Section 8(3) of the Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act, no tree within GBA limits can be cut without approval from the Dep-

uty Conservator of Forests (DCF), who has jurisdiction over trees in the area. As part of the process, an expert tree committee will inspect the site. Citizens have been invited to submit suggestions and objections within 10 days.

The trees listed in the proposal include Silver Oak, Neem, Tabebuia, Mahogany, Jackfruit, Gulmohar, Rain Tree and Ashoka. Environmentalists warn that if permission is granted, one of Okalipuram's last remaining

green pockets could soon disappear.

## Environmental Concerns Raised

Environmental activist express concern over the shrinking green cover in Bengaluru. "The city's green cover has reportedly declined drastically over the decades. There must be zero tolerance for tree felling. Globally accepted standards suggest that cities should aim for at least 30% green cover. We cannot afford to

lose even a single tree; instead, we must focus on restoration," they said.

They also questioned the need to locate Reshme Bhavan within central Bengaluru. "Why should Reshme Bhavan be in the heart of the city? Establishing it outside Bengaluru could help distribute development more evenly across the state," they argued. With public objections now invited, the final decision on the proposal rests on statutory approvals and environmental scrutiny.

## GOVT JOB VACANCY BACKLOG

# K'taka CM blames BJP as Dharwad protests intensify

BENGALURU

AS protests by government job aspirants intensified in Dharwad, with many taken into preventive custody, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday blamed the previous BJP regime for the large backlog of vacant posts.

According to protesters, who staged a massive demonstration in Dharwad earlier in the day, around 2.8 lakh posts remain vacant across various government departments in Karnataka, while fewer than 5,000 recruitments have been made in the last three years. In a press statement, Siddaramaiah said that when the Congress assumed office in 2023, over 2.64 lakh government posts were vacant.

He said the backlog was the result of "prolonged inaction under the previous BJP government, which failed to initiate timely recruitment or create a



structured roadmap to fill vacancies." "It is deeply unfortunate that BJP leaders are choosing to mislead innocent students even now to serve their narrow political interests," the CM said.

He alleged that, instead of encouraging aspirants to stay focused on their preparation and future, opposition leaders were "attempting to instigate unrest."

The chief minister said the current situation was largely due to recruitment irregularities and alleged

corruption during the BJP regime between 2019 and 2023, which eroded trust in the system and led to a significant backlog. "Our government is committed to restoring credibility, transparency, and stability in the recruitment process," he said.

Siddaramaiah added that several recruitment processes had to be temporarily stalled due to legal challenges related to internal reservation, which are under consideration in courts. He said

the government had chosen to act responsibly within the framework of law rather than rush decisions that could jeopardise the careers of thousands of candidates.

"Despite these structural and legal constraints, our government has moved with determination and integrity. In the last 2.5 years alone, more than 40,000 recruitments have been completed across departments," he said. Siddaramaiah said the government was conscious that many aspirants had waited

for years due to delays beyond their control. Recognising this hardship, he said the government had relaxed the upper age limit by more than five years for upcoming recruitments to ensure that deserving candidates are not excluded due to systemic delays.

"I want to assure that the process of filling the remaining vacancies is ongoing and will be further accelerated in a transparent, systematic, and time-bound manner," he said.

On the protests, the chief minister said he had taken serious note of the situation. "I understand the anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty that many government job aspirants are experiencing," he said.

He reiterated that the government is taking necessary administrative and policy measures to accelerate recruitment and strengthen institutions to prevent such backlogs in the future.

## Penalty for vacant sites

# BDA unveils new graded slabs from 2.5% to 10%



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

THE Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has revised the penalty structure for owners of vacant sites who fail to commence construction within the stipulated time. Under the new framework, a graded penalty slabs ranging from 2.5 per cent to 10 per cent will be imposed depending on the size of the plot.

According to a circular issued on February 11, the revised penalty will apply to all allottees who have not be-

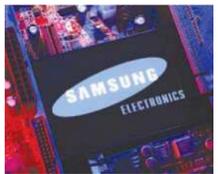
gun construction within the timeframe specified in their lease-cum-sale agreement. The decision was taken at the Authority's meeting held on December 30. As per the revised structure, the 'vacant site penalty' will be calculated as a percentage of the prevailing guidance value of the property, based on the plot size.

Sites measuring up to 600 square feet will attract a penalty of 2.5 per cent. Plots between 601 and 1,200 square feet will face a 5 per cent penalty, while those between 1,201 and 2,400 square feet will be charged 7.5 per

cent. For sites larger than 2,401 square feet, the penalty will be 10 per cent. The new rates will come into effect retrospectively from September 23, 2024.

Site owners who are unwilling to pay the penalty may surrender their plots to the Authority. In such cases, 12.5 per cent of the amount paid will be deducted and the remaining balance will be refunded. However, the revised penalty structure will not apply to sites allotted in Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout and Arkavathi Layout, the BDA clarified.

## Consumer panel orders Samsung to repair phone at half cost



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
CHIKKAMAGALURU

IN a consumer rights ruling, the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has ordered Samsung India Electronics Private Limited to repair a defective premium smartphone by charging only half of the Rs 39,041 originally demanded for motherboard replacement.

The complainant, K S Rathan Kumar from Mudigere taluk, had purchased a Galaxy S24 Ultra handset which allegedly became non-functional during the warranty period. When he approached the service centre, he was informed that the motherboard had failed and that repairs would cost Rs 39,041.

Claiming that the refusal to repair the phone free of cost amounted to deficiency in service, he approached the Commission last August. The complaint named Samsung Smart Plaza in JP Nagar, Sara Mobiles and Electronics in Bengaluru, and Samsung India Electronics Pvt Ltd.

After hearings, the Commission directed the company to complete the repair by collecting only 50 per cent of the estimated amount from the complainant.

The order was delivered by Commission President N R Chennakeshava along with members E Prema and Dr Manjunath M Bamanakatti.

# Mangaluru Int'l Airport bags top global honour

ADJUDGED 'BEST AIRPORT AT ARRIVALS - GLOBALLY' FOR 2025

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
MANGALURU

IN a major boost to Karnataka's aviation profile, Mangaluru International Airport has been adjudged the 'Best Airport at Arrivals - Globally' for 2025 by Airports Council International World.

According to a press release here today from the airport, the prestigious Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award is based entirely on passenger feedback gathered in real time under ACI's global survey programme, widely regarded as the aviation industry's most credible yardstick for service excellence.

The arrivals category measures the end-to-end inbound journey — from immigration



clearance and baggage delivery to terminal ambience, cleanliness, signage and overall passenger comfort.

This is the second year in a row that the airport has secured the global distinction, placing it among just six airports worldwide recognised in this category for 2025.

Managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited, the airport has in recent years invested

in digital initiatives, process optimisation and service training to enhance passenger experience. Officials said the focus on operational efficiency and infrastructure modernisation has significantly improved arrival processes and turnaround times.

The award will be formally presented at ACI World's Airport Experience Summit in Istanbul in September 2026.

# 'Mahadevappa may have information on CM change'

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU

DEPUTY Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday said that Minister HC Mahadevappa may have some information regarding a possible change in the Chief Minister in the State, which could be the reason behind his remarks on the issue of a Dalit Chief Minister.

Responding to questions from the media near his official residence at Kumara Park and Suttur Mutt in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said he had seen Mahadevappa's statement but had no other information about any leadership change. "Mahadevappa is also part of our high command. He may have some information about a change in the Chief Minister. But I have no such information," he said.

When asked whether the party high command had summoned him or the Chief



Minister to Delhi, Shivakumar clarified that he had not received any call. "I have to go to Delhi in connection with my department's work. Funds to the tune of Rs 1 lakh crore are being discussed under the Urban Development Ministry, but it is being said that major cities may not be covered. I will discuss this with our Urban Development Minister and ask officials to prepare proposals for second- and third-tier cities," he said.

On being questioned about remaining silent over statements made by some Ministers despite being KPCC president, Shivakumar said it was the Chief Minister's responsibility to control Ministers and MLAs. "The Chief

Minister must control Ministers and legislators. As far as party matters are concerned, I am conveying information to Delhi," he said.

Asked about remarks made by senior leader Rajanna regarding G. Parameshwara, Shivakumar responded briefly, saying, "He is a senior leader."

On reports that the high command might call him for discussions, Shivakumar said he was currently in Kumarapura and had no further information.

Speaking about senior leader Satish Jarkiholi, Shivakumar said they shared similar views and discussed party matters every week. "He is a senior leader who has worked as a working president with me. We speak weekly. We are like-minded and are working on plans to bring the party back to power," he said.

Commenting on demands by newly elected MLAs seek-

ing at least five ministerial berths for first-time legislators, Shivakumar said he had read about the letter in newspapers but had not received it personally. "Everyone aspires to become a Minister. Even Narendra Modi did not become Chief Minister without being an MLA. There is nothing wrong in asking. I too became a Minister when I was first elected. A new generation must grow. How long can we continue holding on to positions? I have been a Minister for 36 years. New ideas and new faces must enter the Cabinet. The party will take a decision on this," he said.

He clarified that he had not claimed to be forming the Cabinet and that the Chief Minister had spoken about Cabinet expansion. "Whenever expansion is discussed, some write letters, some go to Delhi, and some express their aspirations. That is natural," he said.

# Great backyard bird count: St Aloysius' Mangaluru campus tallies 32 bird species

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
MANGALURU

ST Aloysius (Deemed to be University) in Mangaluru wrapped up its Campus Bird Count 2026 between February 13 and 16, joining the countrywide Great Backyard Bird Count coordinated by Bird Count India and eBird. The exercise, held on the university's 145-year-old, 37-acre campus in the city centre, recorded a total of 32 bird species.

Since earning Deemed to be University status two years ago, the institution has taken part in this citizen-science effort every year starting from 2019, steadily feeding observations into national databases.

This year's survey was led by assistant professors Kiran Vati K and Glavin Thomas Rodrigues from the zoology department, with enthusiastic involvement from faculty and students



who methodically surveyed varied habitats across the grounds.

Sightings included familiar city and woodland residents like Rock Pigeon, Greater Coucal, Asian Koel, and Asian Palm Swift. Raptors such as Black Kite and Brahminy Kite were seen gliding overhead or resting in trees. Water-associated birds—Little Cormorant and Eastern Cattle Egret—highlighted the campus's links to surrounding ecosystems.

Among arboreal species noted were White-throated Kingfisher, White-



cheeked Barbet, Malabar Flameback, and Rose-ringed Parakeet. Seasonal migrants Ashy Drongo and Green Warbler appeared during the count window.

Evidence of active breeding stood

out: nests belonging to Red-whiskered Bulbul were located, and the Indian Golden Oriole, a periodic breeder in peninsular India, was spotted making use of the campus's suitable cover.

Gardens and dense tree canopy supported insect-eaters and nectar seekers, including Common Tailorbird, Gray-breasted Prinia, Pale-billed Flowerpecker, Purple-rumped Sunbird, Purple Sunbird, and Loten's Sunbird. Additional highlights encompassed Chestnut-tailed Starling, Common Myna, Jungle Myna, Orange-headed Thrush, Oriental Magpie-Robin, and White-rumped Munia.

The university's unbroken participation since 2019 has built a robust record of long-term avian trends. The ongoing presence of resident birds, passage migrants, and nesting pairs demonstrates how carefully maintained urban green pockets can sustain diverse wildlife.

# K'taka HC bars coercive action against Ranveer

BENGALURU

IN a relief to Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday directed police not to take any coercive steps against him in a case related to allegedly mocking a local deity.

Hearing his petition seeking quashing of an FIR for allegedly mocking the deity of coastal Karnataka during an event in Goa, the bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna gave the direction to the Bengaluru police.

The bench also reprimanded the actor for his behaviour and said hurting religious sentiments will not be tolerated. It directed him to cooperate with the investigation.



During the Filmfare Awards event in Goa, Singh imitated actor-director Rishabh Shetty's role showing him under the 'Avesham' of Goddess Chavundi in 'Kantara Chapter-1'.

He even called Chavundi Goddess as a ghost. Alleging that this act of the actor has hurt his religious sentiments, a lawyer approached a city court to book a case against the actor. On the court's direction the city police registered an FIR against the 'Dhurandhar' lead.

## IN BRIEF

**Dakshina Kannada to hold 48-hr traffic survey from tomorrow**

MANGALURU: The Public Works Department (PWD), Government of Karnataka, will conduct a two-day traffic census on state highways and major district roads across Dakshina Kannada district from 6 am on February 26 to 6 am on February 28.

According to the Mangaluru Division of the PWD, 139 enumeration centres have been identified on key road stretches in the district for the exercise. The survey is part of the state-wide road traffic assessment for 2026 and aims to gather data for infrastructure planning and road development. Authorities have appealed to motorists and the public to cooperate with officials during the survey period.

**Seminar on writer Niranjana's birth centenary on Feb 27**

MANGALURU: A seminar marking the birth centenary of noted Kannada writer and journalist Niranjana will be held on February 27 at Mangalagangothri campus here. The programme is being organised jointly by the Sahitya Akademi and the S.V.P. Kannada Study Centre of Mangalore University. Vice-Chancellor P.L. Dharma will inaugurate the event. Scholars and postgraduate students from various colleges in coastal Karnataka and neighbouring Kerala are expected to participate.

**Women-centric music concert in Mangaluru**

MANGALURU: A unique women-themed music concert was held at Ambedkar Auditorium, Urwa, under the aegis of Sangeet Bharati Foundation, showcasing classical excellence by leading women artists. The programme was inaugurated with a ceremonial lamp lighting by music gurus Smt Basti Kavita Shenai, Smt Vibha Nayak and Smt Srilatha Prabhu. Foundation president Ustad Rafiq Khan, vice-president Narendra L Nayak, secretary Dr Usha Prabha N Nayak, trustee Ramesh KG, Treasurer Karunakara Balkoor and member Soumya Kamath were present. The first half featured a classical jugalbandi by Vibha Hegde and Shivani Mirajkar, accompanied by Medha Bhat (harmonium), Vijeta Hegde (tabla), Prateeksha Prabhu (tanpura) and Shaavari. The second half presented a violin trio recital by Sangeeta Shankar, Nandini Shankar and Ragini Shankar, with tabla support by Anuradha Pal. The event was sponsored by Union Bank of India, the Tourism Department, Canara Bank, Dr Dayananda Pai, Karnataka Bank and Mudra Printers.

**AESL, Indian Army sign MoU to offer scholarships to soldiers' families**

BELAGAVI

AAKASH Educational Services Limited (AESL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army to provide scholarships and academic support to serving personnel, veterans and their families across the country.

The agreement aims to extend educational welfare benefits to wards of serving and retired Army personnel, gallantry awardees, personnel with disabilities and families of soldiers who died while in service. Officials said the initiative seeks to ease financial barriers and expand access to qual-



ity test preparation services nationwide.

Under the MoU, Army wards enrolling in AESL's programmes at centres

across India will be eligible for a range of fee concessions. Families of personnel who died while in harness will only need to pay the

registration fee, with a 100 per cent waiver on all other fee components. Wards of personnel with more than 20 per cent disability and

**Aakash Educational Services Limited signs MoU with Indian Army, offering fee waivers, scholarships and mentoring support for serving personnel, veterans, gallantry awardees and families of soldiers who died in service**

gallantry awardees will receive a full tuition fee waiver. Children of serving and retired personnel will be eligible for a 20 per cent tuition fee concession, applicable after adjusting other scholarships.

The agreement was signed by a senior representative overseeing ceremonial and welfare functions on behalf of the Army and Dr Yash Pal, Chief Academic and Business Head (Delhi-NCR), AESL.

Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of AESL, said the partnership reflects the institution's commitment to honouring the sacrifices of defence personnel by investing in the education of their children.

"Education is the strongest foundation for a brighter future. Through scholarships, mentoring and coun-

selling, we aim to empower the wards of Army personnel to realise their full potential," he said.

In addition to financial support, AESL will provide structured mentoring and career counselling through virtual and physical platforms during the tenure of the MoU.

The company had earlier entered into a similar understanding with the Central Reserve Police Force Family Welfare Association to offer academic assistance and scholarships to families of CRPF personnel, expanding its outreach to the armed and paramilitary forces community.

**Boseraju pushes for BRICS Quantum Summit****Seeks deeper tech ties with Brazil**

BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology N.S. Boseraju on Tuesday called for closer cooperation among BRICS nations in quantum technology and proposed convening a dedicated BRICS Quantum Summit to accelerate collaboration in emerging technologies.

Speaking after a high-level bilateral meeting at Vidhana Soudha with a Brazilian delegation led by Esther Dweck, Brazil's Minister of Management and Innovation in Public Services, Boseraju said structured global partnerships were essential to harness the transformative potential of quantum technologies.

He noted that other international blocs such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have begun organising dedicated quantum forums, and said BRICS countries should adopt a similar approach.

"As BRICS nations, we must collaborate to apply quantum technologies in agriculture, pharmaceutical research, water resource management, climate forecasting and flood

mitigation," Boseraju said. "A BRICS Quantum Summit could serve as a strategic platform to jointly address shared developmental challenges."

Highlighting Karnataka's progress, the minister said the state is home to India's first indigenously built commercial quantum computer and is positioning itself as a national hub for advanced technology research.

He pointed to the state government's announcement of a \$100 million Quantum Innovation Fund and plans to establish a dedicated Quantum City in Bengaluru. "Our goal is to build a \$20 billion quantum economy by 2035 and generate two lakh jobs in the sector," he said, adding that quantum applications are being explored in agriculture, flood management and healthcare delivery.

Beyond quantum computing, discussions between the two sides also covered Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), artificial intelligence and space technologies.

Boseraju highlighted the implementation of a Digital Water

**Karnataka Minister N.S. Boseraju calls for a BRICS Quantum Summit during talks with Brazilian delegation, outlines state's \$100 million quantum fund and plans for a \$20 billion quantum economy by 2035**

Stack under the Minor Irrigation Department, which integrates satellite surveillance and AI tools to monitor water bodies, prevent encroachments, assess water quality and track groundwater levels.

The Brazilian delegation included senior technology leaders such as Rodrigo Assumpção, President of Dataprev, and representatives of the Brazilian AI Observatory.

On Monday, Boseraju also held talks with a Bolivian delegation led by Omar Alfredo Peñalosa Escalera, Vice Minister for Science and Technology, to explore cooperation in AI and quantum computing for improving education, healthcare and public services. Senior state officials, including IT/BT Secretary N. Manjula, were present at the meetings.

**Upcoming Bellandur Metro station****BMRCCL signs Rs 90-cr naming rights deal with Prestige Group**

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

BANGALORE Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCCL) has signed a Rs 90-crore agreement with Prestige Group for the naming rights and associated facilities of the upcoming Bellandur Metro station on the Outer Ring Road.

Under the agreement, the station will be officially named "Prestige Bellandur Metro Station" for a period of 30 years from the date of commencement of commercial operations, BMRCCL said in a statement.

The total value of the agreement stands at Rs 90 crore. Of this, Rs 80 crore is allocated towards naming rights and other associated facilities within the station premises.

An additional Rs 10 crore will be paid for the construction of a dedicated skywalk connecting the Metro station to the Prestige campus.



BMRCCL clarified that provisions have been included in the agreement to allow for design modifications to the skywalk at the project stage, if required.

**Advertising and Commercial Space**

As part of the deal, Prestige Group will receive 1,000 sq. ft. of advertising

rights inside the station premises, 3,000 sq. ft. of commercial space within the station campus.

However, BMRCCL emphasized that the station will remain an asset under its ownership and control. Speaking on the occasion, Prestige Group Executive Director Jaggi Marwaha said, "We are committed

to supporting Bengaluru's rapidly growing transport network and contributing to the city's infrastructure development."

The agreement marks one of the significant naming rights deals undertaken by BMRCCL as it seeks to boost non-fare revenue streams while expanding metro connectivity across the city.

**Cyber fraud aided via mule accounts****Engineering student among two arrested**

HANS NEWS SERVICE DAVANAGERE

IN a major breakthrough against mule account operators supporting cyber fraud, the city's Cyber Crime Police have arrested two individuals, including a 19-year-old engineering student. The duo allegedly opened fake bank accounts using forged documents and helped fraudsters siphon off large sums by acting as intermediaries.

The first arrest involved Parashurama from Kunkuv village in Honnali taluk. He had set up a firm named Talented Squad Solution in Bengaluru's Rajajinagar, posing as a job placement agency. Investigations revealed he opened six bogus accounts across nationalised and private banks.

These mule accounts were used to transfer crores of Rupees obtained through online



cheating. As many as 95 cases linked to these six accounts have been registered across the country. Parashurama is now in custody, with cyber police continuing detailed interrogation.

In a separate but related case, officers nabbed the 19-year-old engineering student who maintained mule accounts in two different banks. Scrutiny of his accounts exposed details of his involvement.

Fraudsters, using a Telegram ID named "Bhumika", first contacted the student

and lured him with promises of easy earnings through an "Earn While You Learn" scheme. They assigned him the task of receiving money into his account and immediately forwarding it to UPI IDs provided by them.

The young man carried out these transfers regularly and received a commission for each transaction. Driven by greed, he later opened additional bank accounts to handle more volume. Eight cases from various parts of the country have now been traced to these accounts.

**Boy killed in Shivamogga, 7 minors held**

SHIVAMOGGA

A 16-year-old boy was murdered outside a government school in Sulaebailu here, sparking tension in the area, police said on Tuesday. Following the incident, a large police force was deployed in the city.

The incident occurred after Sanketh (16), an SSLC student of the Government High School at Urugadooru, attended a special class ahead of examinations.

Superintendent of Police Nikhil B told reporters that Sanketh intervened in an argument involving a group of boys outside his school. They were discussing a cricket match.

"Some friends who were known to him - they had earlier studied in the same school - were involved. They are also minors. They hit him with their hands. Immediately after being struck, he collapsed. After he fell, by the time he was taken to the hospital, we came to know that he had died."

"... he was struck near the chest. Due to that blow, he collapsed on the spot," the SP said. All seven minors involved in the incident have been taken into custody in this connection, he said. On the possible motive, the SP said the exact cause is yet to be ascertained.

"We do not have complete information about that. Once we conduct a detailed inquiry, we will know. Some people are saying it may have been over a trivial matter. However, we cannot confirm that at this stage," he said.

**Narayana Health City crosses 10K orthopaedic surgeries, says senior specialists**

HANS NEWS SERVICE KALABURAGI

SENIOR orthopaedic specialists at Narayana Health City on Tuesday said the hospital has completed 10,000 orthopaedic surgeries over the past three years, marking a significant milestone in advanced joint, spine and reconstructive care in the region.

Addressing reporters, Dr Suman M Byregowda, Senior Consultant, Orthopaedics, said the achievement reflects the growing need for high-end musculoskeletal care in Kalaburagi and neighbouring districts.

"We are seeing increasingly complex revision cases, including failed joint re-

placements with severe bone loss. Our focus has been on combining surgical expertise with technologies such as customised 3D-printed implants to restore mobility at the earliest," Dr Byregowda said. He cited the example of a 70-year-old patient who had undergone total hip replacement decades ago but later developed implant loosening and metallosis, a rare reaction to metal debris that caused extensive bone damage.

The team performed a staged revision procedure, first removing the failed implant and diseased tissue, and later reconstructing the hip with a customised prosthesis. The patient was able to stand and walk with support soon

**Senior orthopaedic specialists at Narayana Health City say the hospital has completed 10,000 surgeries in three years, driven by robotic navigation and customised implants for complex spine, joint and oncology cases**

after surgery, he added. Dr Vinu Raj, Consultant-Spine, Department of Orthopaedics, said the integration of robotic-assisted navigation and real-time neuromonitoring has strengthened outcomes in complex spinal deformity surgeries.

"In severe congenital scoliosis and other deformities,



precision is critical. Robotic-assisted navigation allows pre-operative planning and highly accurate implant

placement during surgery, while neuromonitoring enhances patient safety," Dr Raj said. He referred to a recent

case of a 13-year-old girl with a spinal curvature exceeding 80 degrees who underwent robotic-assisted correction

surgery. She was mobilised on the second post-operative day and discharged with significantly improved alignment and balance.

The hospital has also handled complex orthopaedic oncology cases, including limb-salvage surgery for a 19-year-old diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma. Following chemotherapy, surgeons removed the affected bone and reconstructed the shoulder with a metallic prosthesis.

Both doctors said the milestone underscores the institution's emergence as a regional referral centre for advanced orthopaedic and spine care, enabling patients to access specialised treatment closer to home without travelling to metropolitan cities.

# Major eviction drive: 600 families now homeless

- 1,500 police personnel from Khammam and neighbouring districts deployed at the site
- Eviction drive was carried out in Velugumatla area
- 600 families had reportedly been residing on about 60 acres of Bhoodan land
- Authorities state land belongs to the govt
- They said notices had been issued on multiple occasions asking the occupants to vacate

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KHAMMAM

TENSION prevailed in Khammam town on Tuesday after revenue authorities, backed by a heavy police force, demolished huts erected on Bhoodan land in the outskirts of the town.

The eviction drive was carried out in Velugumatla area, where nearly 600 families had report-

## TENSION IN KHAMMAM AS POLICE DEMOLISH HUTS ON BHOODAN LAND



edly been residing on about 60 acres of Bhoodan land for the past several years. According to official sources, around 1,500 police personnel from Khammam and neighbouring districts were deployed at the site in the early hours to prevent any law and order issues.

Earthmovers were pressed into service to clear the huts. Residents, including women and elderly persons, attempted

to resist the demolition, leading to tense scenes. Police, however, brought the situation under control and ensured that no major untoward incident occurred, officials added.

Authorities maintained that the land belongs to the government and that notices had been issued on multiple occasions asking the occupants to vacate. "As they allegedly failed to com-

ply, the administration proceeded with the eviction as per due process," they said.

The displaced families expressed anguish over the action, alleging that they were not provided alternative accommodation. They claimed to have been living there for nearly a decade and had even approached the courts seeking regularisation and house site pattas.

The district unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

demanding that the government immediately allot alternative house sites to the affected families.

Meanwhile, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi strongly condemned the demolition. BRS Parliamentary Party Deputy Leader and Rajya Sabha member Vaddiraju Ravichandra termed the action "unjust and inhuman" and alleged that poor families who had been seeking pattas were

rendered homeless.

In a statement, he urged the government to halt the demolitions and grant pattas to eligible beneficiaries. He further alleged that influential persons and real estate interests were eyeing the

land and that using police force against the poor reflected an "authoritarian approach".

Heavy police deployment continued in the area as a precautionary measure, officials said.

## Lands taken over as per Board orders: AC

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KHAMMAM

THE district administration said that lands in Velugumatla were taken into government possession as per the directions of the Telangana Bhoodan Yagna Board, and clarified that only unauthorised constructions were removed.

Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, along with Law and Order Additional DCP Prasad Rao, said the action was taken following due process and in compliance with the Board's orders.

The Additional Collector said that in 1953, Kalvala Raja Ramarao had donated 31 acres and 7 guntas of land in Survey Nos. 147, 148 and 149 under the Bhoodan movement. Over the years, the land had allegedly been encroached upon.

He said that notices were first issued in 2019 by the Khammam Urban Tahsildar asking encroachers to vacate the land. The notices were challenged in the High Court, which observed that the Tahsildar lacked

### Temporary shelter arranged for displaced persons



jurisdiction in matters concerning Bhoodan lands and granted interim relief, while making it clear that the nature of Bhoodan land should not be altered.

"In 2023, certain petitioners approached the High Court seeking protection from demolition of structures constructed on the land. The court issued status quo orders with regard to specific constructions of

the petitioners and directed that no new constructions be taken up on the remaining land," he said.

Srinivasa Reddy said the Bhoodan Yagna Board conducted an inquiry and, on January 17, 2026, concluded that no allotments had been made to the petitioners.

He clarified that five acres each had been earmarked for a Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

and a Model School, and no other allotments were made.

According to the Additional Collector, the Board issued notices on January 17, 2026, directing 308 encroachers to vacate the land. He stated that claims circulating on social media that the government had allotted house sites to the occupants were not supported by official records.

The Additional Collector said the government had not made any allotments in the Velugumatla Bhoodan lands and that the land would be utilised for public purposes as per government directions in future.

He added that temporary shelter had been arranged for displaced persons at the Kammaravari Sangham building and that belongings of the occupants were safely stored at Ambedkar Bhavan. The items would be handed over to the respective persons upon request.

Additional DCP Prasad Rao said cases had also been registered against individuals who allegedly collected money from people illegally in the name of land allotments.

## BJP condemns demolition

"Where should they go without being shown alternative land or temporary shelter?"

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KHAMMAM

THE Bharatiya Janata Party condemned the demolition of huts belonging to poor families residing on Bhoodan land in Velugumatla area of Khammam, terming the action "unjust and inhuman". Bharatiya Janata Party state treasurer Devaki Vasudeva Rao said hundreds of poor families who had been living on the land for nearly a decade were evicted with heavy police deployment and their huts razed.

In a statement on Tuesday, he expressed anger over the authorities allegedly demolishing houses built by the poor "with their hard-earned money" without providing alternative accommodation. "Asking families who have been living there for ten years to vacate overnight is not justified. Where should they go without being shown alternative land or temporary shelter?" he asked.

Rao said that when a similar situation arose earlier in the Gollapadu channel area, the BJP had intervened and ensured that eligible families were provided alternative housing under the leadership of former National BC Com-



mission chairman Tallozu Achari.

He asserted that the BJP has always stood by the poor in safeguarding their housing rights.

Alleging that several double-bedroom houses constructed in the state were lying vacant, he said it was unfortunate that the government had failed to distribute them to eligible beneficiaries while demolishing huts of the poor. Rao demanded that the Congress government immediately change its approach towards the poor and allocate house sites to all eligible families. He also urged the authorities to provide temporary shelter, food and drinking water to those who had lost their homes.

The BJP leader called upon the government to act with humanity and address the concerns of the affected families without delay.

## Self-Governance Day celebrated

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NAGARKURNOOL

SELF-Governance Day was celebrated in a grand manner at Sripuram Primary School in Nagarkurnool mandal. On this occasion, students took charge of school administration and showcased their leadership qualities.

According to Headmistress V. Sujatha, Saikiran served as DEO, Meenakshi as MEO, Oliva Grace as Complex HM, and Lasya as HM, taking up administrative responsibilities for the day.

MEO Bhaskar Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and appreciated the performance of the students. Along with HM Sujatha, teachers Chalapathi Rao, Prasanna Lakshmi, Pranee-



tha, and the students actively participated and made the event successful.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest said that such programmes help develop leadership, responsibility, self-confidence, and decision-making skills among students. He advised students to actively participate not only in academics but also

in co-curricular activities to become responsible citizens in the future.

As part of the programme, students conducted mock meetings, supervised classes, and shared their experiences in school administration. Teachers guided them and explained the importance of discipline, teamwork, and self-governance.

## Advocates launch relay hunger strike

### Demand ups for implementation of Advocates' Protection Act

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
WANAPARTHY

THE Wanaparthi Bar Association launched a relay hunger strike at the District Court premises on Tuesday, demanding the enactment of the Advocates' Protection Act to curb attacks on members of the legal fraternity.

Speaking at the protest camp, Bar Association President D. Kiran Kumar said the agitation would be intensified until the Act is implemented. He urged the government to respond promptly to what he described as a legitimate and long-pending demand of advocates across the State.

Kiran Kumar recalled that advocates had earlier undertaken a padayatra from the Jogulamba Temple in Alampur, which was halted



at Bhoothpur due to unavoidable reasons. He said the march resumed on the 23rd of this month from Bhoothpur under the call of "Chalo Secretariat." In solidarity with the advocates participating in the padayatra, the Wanaparthi Bar Association has organised relay hunger

strikes that will continue until the 27th.

Expressing concern over recurring attacks on lawyers, he said the proposed Advocates' Protection Act would not create any difficulty for either the Central or State governments. However, he alleged that the government

has not taken concrete steps toward its enactment.

He appealed to the government to introduce and pass the Advocates' Protection Act in the forthcoming Assembly sessions. Failing this, he warned that advocates across the State would continue peaceful and united

protests until the legislation is achieved.

On the first day of the relay hunger strike, Bar Association President D. Kiran Kumar, Secretary Venkataramana, and advocates Brahmam, Ashok Rao, Dhara Venkatesh, Shyam, Narendra Babu, Trinath, Raghuvamsi, Rahul, and others participated.

Senior advocates Vanaganti Nageshwar, Mohan Goud, Mohan Kumar, Venkateshwar Reddy, Umamaheshwari Reddy, Tirupatayya Goud, Krishnavardhan Reddy, Chandrasekhar Rao, Manmohan Rao, Shashibhushan, Dinesh Reddy, Tirupatayya, along with women advocates Pushpa Latha, Kalyani, Renuka, Lakshmi, junior advocates, and others, were present.

## Drainage works draw flak in Nizampet

Locals alleged that the drain was constructed at a higher level than the road surface, preventing rainwater from flowing into it and instead causing water to stagnate on the road

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KHAMMAM

RESIDENTS of Nizampet 42nd Division in Khammam have alleged official apathy over faulty side-drain construction that has led to severe waterlogging and traffic inconvenience on a key stretch of road in the locality. The problem has surfaced



### Residents allege official apathy

on the busy road leading towards Rohith Test Tube Baby Hospital, where the municipality recently undertook side-drain works.

Locals alleged that the drain was constructed at a higher level than the road surface, preventing rainwater from flowing into it and in-

stead causing water to stagnate on the road.

As a result, even light showers have been leading to water accumulation, turning the road into a virtual pond and causing inconvenience to motorists and pedestrians. Residents said the stretch is frequently used as a diver-



sion route during protests or traffic disruptions on the main road, making it a crucial link for commuters.

They further alleged that the drain construction has reduced the effective width of the road, leading to increased congestion. Two-wheelers, autos and cars have report-

edly been skidding due to slippery conditions, raising safety concerns. With stagnant water remaining on the road, locals fear an increase in mosquito breeding and potential health issues in the area.

Residents claimed that complaints were earlier lodged through the municipal grievance mechanism, but no corrective action has been taken so far.

They demanded that authorities reconstruct the road in alignment with the drain's height and ensure proper levelling to facilitate smooth water flow. The residents urged municipal officials to intervene immediately and resolve the issue before the road becomes completely unusable.

## Khammam girl selected for nat'l volleyball tourney

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KHAMMAM

GD Hansini, a resident of Guttala Bazar, Khammam, and a student of 12th grade at Harvest Public School, has been selected to participate in the 46th National Sub-Junior Volleyball Championship. The tournament, organized by the Volleyball Federation of India, will be held in Hooghly, West Bengal, from February 24 to March 1.

Hansini has been training in volleyball since her childhood under

coach Akbar Ali at Sardar Patel Stadium. Over the years, she has steadily showcased her talent and has participated in three consecutive national-level competitions, earning recognition as a promising national-level player.

Speaking on the occasion, Khammam District Youth Services and Sports Officer Tumburu Sunil Kumar, Harvest Public School Principal Parvathi Reddy, correspondent Ravi Marut, stadium coaches, and local dignitaries congratulated Hansini on her achievement.



## TIRUMALA GHEE ROW

# Pawan Kalyan targets Jagan, questions silence on TTD Board

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

DEPUTY Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday sharpened the attack on former chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy during a short discussion in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly on the alleged use of adulterated ghee in the preparation of Tirumala laddu prasadam.

Pawan questioned why Jagan was "shielding" members of the then Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) board.

"It would have been enough if he had said an investigation should be conducted and action taken," Pawan said. "If you are holding them back, then are you not involved?"

He accused the YSRCP of misleading the public by claiming there were no chemicals in the ghee used for Srivari laddu prasadam.

- Cites SIT, NDDB reports; says contracts were relaxed
- 'If you shield them, are you not involved' he asks former CM

"That is why they are now forced to give explanations," he said.

The Deputy CM alleged that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) had concluded there was a conspiracy behind the supply of adulterated ghee. He claimed tender rules were relaxed to award contracts to favoured firms and said the then TTD governing body failed to discharge its responsibility. "We are not accusing blindly. The lapse occurred during the tenure of the board appointed then," he said.

Referring to investigation findings, Pawan said the NDDB report indicated the presence of animal-



related substances in the ghee. He also cited the CBI-monitored SIT probe, stating that the report concluded the product supplied was not genuine ghee.

He alleged that laddus were prepared using the adulterated ghee and claimed that about one

lakh such laddus were sent to Ayodhya. "Only Srivari knows what was mixed in that ghee," he said, adding that anyone found guilty must face strict punishment. "If something like this had happened to any other religion, the entire country would have reacted strongly," he said.

# Council witnesses clash over crime and women's safety

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

A heated debate unfolded in the Legislative Council on Tuesday during a short discussion on law and order, with the treasury and opposition benches trading sharp charges over women's safety, crime statistics and the alleged spread of drugs.

Home minister V Anitha told the House that crimes against women have fallen by 4.4 per cent since the formation of the NDA coalition government. She asserted that the government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards crimes against girl children.

According to her, overall crime in the state has declined by 6.6 per cent in the past 20 months due to measures initiated by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. She said POCSO cases dropped by 8 per cent, murders of women fell by 45 per cent and gang rape cases declined by 64 per cent.

- Home minister Anitha claims overall crime fell 6.6% in 20 months, citing sharp drops in POCSO, murders of women, and gang rape cases
- Accuses the previous YSRCP gov't of law-and-order failure, highlighting lost Central funds and pledging one lakh CCTV cameras plus anti-drug drives
- Opposition MLC Kalyani counters with data showing harassment cases and rising NDPS cases, linking violent crimes to drugs and illicit liquor



Anitha blamed the previous YSRCP government for what she described as a breakdown of law and order. She alleged that industries and investments retreated during that period and claimed there was a time when families feared for the safety of women stepping out of their homes.

The minister also alleged that Rs 180 crore in central

funds was lost earlier due to the absence of a proper action plan. She said the present government plans to install one lakh CCTV cameras across the state to strengthen surveillance. Under a special anti-drug drive, 96,940 kg of marijuana has been seized so far, she added.

Anitha further stated that SC and ST atrocity cases have come down by

25 per cent and accused the previous regime of politicising such cases. She also referred to the arrest of a village sarpanch belonging to YSRCP in a theft case at the residence of a TDP MLA.

However, YSRCP MLC Varudu Kalyani contested the government's claims. Citing official data, she said 16,288 women were reportedly subjected to harassment and alleged that crimes against women had increased in 10 districts, including Guntur, Nellore, Vizianagaram and Tirupati.

She linked violent crimes to ganja, drugs and illicit liquor, and pointed to a recent case in Madanapalle involving the rape and murder of a minor girl. Kalyani also claimed NDPS cases had risen sharply in districts such as Srikakulam and Nellore.

As the debate grew heated, the Chairman repeatedly urged members to maintain decorum and stick to the subject.

## ₹6,000-cr scam alleged in 'Housing for All' under YSRCP rule

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

REVENUE minister Anagani Satya Prasad on Tuesday alleged in the Assembly that massive irregularities amounting to nearly Rs 6,000 crore took place during the previous YSRCP government under the 'Housing for All' scheme.

Responding to a question raised by TDP MLA Maddipati Venkata Raju, the minister said that although the previous government claimed to have distributed 22 lakh house site pattas, nearly seven lakh beneficiaries did not even take conveyance deeds. He alleged that lands unfit for habitation — including low-lying areas, burial grounds, remote locations far from villages, and flood-prone lands — were acquired at two to three times the market price for distribution under the scheme.

Due to the non-habitable nature of these lands, nearly 2.5 lakh beneficiaries reportedly refused to accept house site pattas, he said. The minister further stated that upon inquiry by the present coalition government, 43,948



Revenue minister Anagani Satya Prasad speaking on housing in the Assembly on Tuesday

- Revenue minister Satya Prasad says nearly Rs 6,000 cr irregularities took place under the previous YSRCP regime with unfit lands being acquired at inflated prices and seven lakh beneficiaries did not take conveyance deeds

ineligible beneficiaries were identified in the distribution process. Additionally, another 1,11,037 beneficiaries are still under verification.

After assuming office, the coalition government decided to allot three cents of land in rural areas and two cents in urban areas under the housing scheme, he said, pointing out that the previous government had allotted only 1.5 cents or even one cent in some cases.

Satya Prasad revealed that

a total of 4,08,876 fresh applications have been received for house site pattas. Of these, 1,03,494 applications have been approved, 1,41,928 rejected, and 1,56,454 are currently under scrutiny.

He asserted that the present government is committed to ensuring transparency and providing genuinely eligible poor families with proper, habitable land for housing, unlike the alleged irregularities during the previous regime.

# SYNTHETIC MILK THREAT PROMPTS TIGHT CHECKS

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI  
TIRUPATI

THE suspected link between adulterated milk and the recent deaths of four persons in Rajamahendravaram has triggered a wave of caution across AP's dairy-rich Rayalaseema region, with officials tightening checks in Tirupati and Chittoor districts.

Authorities say the tragedy has raised fresh concerns about synthetic milk entering regular supply chains, particularly through informal and cross-border routes. Tirupati and Chittoor, known for their strong dairy base after agriculture, witness heavy milk procurement for both domestic consumption and bulk supply to chilling centres and private dairies. The steady movement of milk across the Andhra Pradesh-Karnataka border has further heightened vigilance.

The alert follows recent enforcement action near Ballagiri in Karnataka, close to the Kuppam border, where officials reportedly uncovered a synthetic milk preparation unit. Three in-

- Inspections are underway in key dairy producing districts with large-scale milk movement in Tirupati and Chittoor districts



dividuals — two from Santhipuram mandal and one from Ramakuppam mandal in Chittoor district — were allegedly found producing artificial milk by blending expired milk powder with palm oil, urea and water. Investigators said the mixture was designed to imitate the thickness and fat content of genuine milk before being circulated in local markets.

Food safety officials explained that adulteration often involves adding substances such as urea, starch, detergents, maltodextrin and vegetable fats to enhance whiteness and density.

Preservatives and neutralisers may also be used to prolong shelf life. In extreme cases, officers said, a single litre of pure milk can be stretched into two litres of synthetic product, significantly boosting illegal profits. Authorities also flagged the

sumers to be alert to basic warning signs. Nearly 90 percent of locally produced milk in the region is cow milk, which typically carries a slight yellowish tinge, whereas buffalo milk appears whiter.

If milk sold as cow milk looks unusually white or excessively thick, adulteration should be suspected. Changes in taste, smell or fat consistency are also considered red flags. Simple household tests, such as adding iodine drops to check for maltodextrin or observing the texture of heated milk when rubbed between fingers, may provide preliminary indications of tampering.

Testing facilities are available at the College of Dairy Technology in Tirupati, where milk samples can be examined scientifically. Officials have advised dairies, bulk purchasers and consumers to utilise these services and promptly report suspicious supplies, stressing that public cooperation will be vital to safeguarding the integrity of the dairy sector in the wake of the Rajamahendravaram incident.

Officials have urged con-

## Pensions to be distributed on February 28

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government will distribute NTR Bharosa pensions on February 28, a day in advance, as March 1 falls on a Sunday, minister for MSMEs, SERP and NRI empowerment and relations Kondapalli Srinivas said in a statement on Tuesday.

The government will disburse Rs 2,725.79 crore to a total of 62,76,322 pensioners across various categories. The amount will be delivered at the doorsteps of beneficiaries by Swarna Gramam and Swarna Ward staff.

Of the total beneficiaries, 8,977 are newly sanctioned widow (spouse) pensioners, for whom Rs 3.59 crore has been released. The minister stated that pensions will be distributed on February 28, and any remaining payments will be completed on March 2, 2026, with Secretariat staff ensuring doorstep delivery.

He further said that since the coalition government assumed office, a total of Rs 57,808.68 crore has been spent on pensions, reflecting the State government's commitment to social security and welfare.

## CPI criticises 'laddu' obsession in Assembly session



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA/NEW DELHI

CPI national secretary K Ramakrishna strongly criticised the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and Legislative Council budget session, stating that they have been reduced to endless debates over the 'laddu controversy' instead of meaningful discussions on the Rs 3 lakh crore state budget.

Addressing the media in the national capital on Tuesday, he expressed concern that both ruling and opposition parties — including TDP, Jana Sena, BJP, and YSRCP members — spent hours debating the laddu issue while ignoring pressing matters such as welfare schemes, development projects, and public grievances. Ramakrishna noted that allegations of adulteration and corruption in laddu distribution are widely known. He insisted that if corruption is proven, those responsible must face strict legal action and imprisonment. "Only then will people appreciate the government's seriousness," he said.

# AP pushes green investments with ₹408 cr energy projects

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

APGENCO In-charge managing director (MD) and chief executive officer of the AP State Energy Conservation Mission (APSECM), P Pulla Reddy, emphasised that timely action is crucial for sustainable growth. He urged industries and financial institutions to actively mobilise public and private capital for energy-efficiency projects.

Addressing an Investment Bazar Workshop held at Hotel Murali Fortune in Vijayawada on Tuesday, he called upon stakeholders to convert the state's identified technical potential into bankable, time-bound investments that would enhance industrial competitiveness while advancing climate and energy-efficiency goals.

The workshop brought together senior officials, representatives from industries and MSMEs, financial institutions, and technology providers to accelerate green investments across the state. Among those present were NREDCAP vice-chairman and Managing Director M Kamalakar Babu and Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE),



AP State Energy Conservation Mission CEO P Pulla Reddy addressing the Investment Bazar Workshop on energy-efficiency projects in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Government of India, Director P Shyam Sunder. Around 50 industries and banking institutions participated in the workshop.

Pulla Reddy said the state has already identified over Rs 408 crore worth of viable energy-efficiency projects through five earlier Investment Bazar events and stressed the need for swift financial closure and implementation. Referring to the State Energy Efficiency Policy 2024-2028, he noted that compliance with the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017 has been mandated across 123 Urban Local Bodies, with more than 1,800 ECBC-compliant

buildings already approved. He also encouraged industries to utilise the ADEETIE scheme, which offers interest subvention of 5% for micro and small enterprises and 3% for medium enterprises across 14 key sectors, including fisheries and glass and refractory clusters in East and West Godavari districts. Stating that this was the sixth Investment Bazar event under BEE's Energy Efficiency Financing Platform initiative, he said the State has achieved energy savings of 1.356 million tonnes of oil equivalent across 59 industries under the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) mechanism up to Cycle VI.

He said that the APSECM has also formed a Financial Institutions Committee comprising 11 banks and two NBFCs to facilitate project financing. He added that Andhra Pradesh recently received the National Energy Conservation Award 2025 (First Prize) for the fourth consecutive time. He said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Energy minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar and chief secretary K Vijayanand are committed to maintaining the state's leadership in energy efficiency through coordinated and result-oriented efforts.

BEE Director P Shyam Sunder interacted with MSME representatives and explained the benefits of the ADEETIE scheme, including interest subvention, technical support from audit to implementation, and facilitation through a nodal bank and project management unit. NREDCAP VC & MD Kamalakar Babu highlighted the synergy between renewable energy and energy efficiency, outlining plans to develop green industrial clusters powered by clean energy and modern efficient systems.

## Illegal dairy unit sealed after fatal milk adulteration incident

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

THE adulterated milk tragedy in Rajamahendravaram has escalated, with police registering murder charges against trader Addala Ganeswara Rao after five deaths and 16 cases of severe kidney complications. Investigations linked the crisis in Chowdeswari Nagar and Swaroop Nagar to contaminated milk supplied by his Varalakshmi Dairy, which was sealed for operating without mandatory permissions.

DSP Devakumar said preliminary findings revealed adulteration with urea, detergent powder, and oil to thicken milk, compounded

by coolant oil leakage from a refrigerator. Officials believe financial distress and profit motives drove the practice.

Health authorities reported a surge in acute renal failure cases among residents consuming milk from the Korukonda dairy chain. A contaminated batch is suspected to have caused widespread toxicity. Three victims — Radhakrishnamurthy, N. Seshagiri Rao, and Tadi Ramani — died on Monday, raising the toll to five. Controversy surrounds the exclusion of B Kanakaratham, whose family insists her death was linked to the incident.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu ordered a comprehensive inquiry, directing district collec-

tor Kirthi Cherkuri and SP Narasimha Kishore to probe thoroughly. Eluru range IGP Ashok Kumar confirmed severe charges, elevating the case from food safety violation to criminal act.

Health commissioner Veerapandian announced government coverage of treatment expenses and urged residents with symptoms to seek immediate care. Forensic analysis of seized samples is underway, while citizens demand stricter monitoring of dairy operations to safeguard public health.

Meanwhile, district collector Kirthi Cherkuri along with MLA Adireddy Srinivas handed over cheques of Rs 10 lakh each to the bereaved families.



District collector Kirthi Cherkuri along with MLA A Srinivas distributes cheques to bereaved families in Rajamahendravaram on Tuesday

## NMP 2.0 is a bold step; it can unlock resources for reinvestment

THE government has done well to set a target of Rs 16.7 lakh crore for National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0. The objective is to monetise assets of more than 2,000 projects in 12 sectors till 2029-30. The Prime Minister-headed NITI Aayog, after consultation with infrastructure ministries, has developed NMP 2.0, which Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched on Monday. A NITI Aayog paper said in 2021, "Asset monetisation, based on the philosophy of 'Creation through Monetisation', will tap institutional investment and long-term patient capital into stable mature assets, in turn generating financial resources for new infrastructure asset creation. This will enable economic growth, generating employment opportunities and better prospects for the

country's growth." At the launch, the Finance Minister complimented all ministries and departments and NITI Aayog for meeting nearly 90 per cent of the target of Rs 6 lakh crore, which was set for four years in the implementation of NMP 1.0. On the face of it, praise for falling short of the target seems awkward. However, if the polarised political situation and the perverted public discourse (which equates processes like privatisation and asset monetisation as cheaply selling off national treasure) are considered, we find that her comments are not off the mark.

Highlighting the significance of asset monetisation, she rightly pointed out that NMP enables recycling of productive public assets, thereby unlocking resources for reinvestment in new projects and

capital expenditure. She noted that this approach facilitates efficient mobilisation of funds for capex in public assets while minimising the budgetary outgo of the government. While the Centre has the courage to go ahead with the programme, it must ensure that it doesn't result in corruption and monopolies. Six points need to be considered regarding this. First, the government must ensure transparency in valuation. Public assets must be priced realistically and competitively. Independent advisors, transparent bidding processes, and robust disclosure norms are essential. All contracts should be made public, barring commercially sensitive details, so that citizens and oversight bodies can scrutinise them. The credibility of NMP 2.0 will rest on the perception that assets are neither under-

valued nor selectively awarded. Second, competitive bidding must be genuine, not cosmetic. If a handful of large conglomerates dominate most sectors, the risk of concentration increases. This can lead to a situation where the state replaces a public monopoly with a private one. Third, the contract design must balance investor incentives with public interest safeguards. Concession agreements should include performance benchmarks, service quality standards, and penalty clauses for non-compliance. For instance, toll road operators must adhere to maintenance and safety norms; power transmission operators must ensure reliability; airport operators must maintain passenger service standards. Regulatory oversight cannot be lax once assets are monetised. The objec-

tive is efficiency, not abdication. Fourth, revenue-sharing and user charges need careful calibration. While private operators must earn a fair return, excessive user fees can generate public resentment and fuel political backlash. Transparent tariff-setting mechanisms, ideally overseen by independent regulators, can mitigate such risks. Fifth, strong audit and accountability mechanisms are indispensable. Institutions such as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and parliamentary committees should periodically review monetisation outcomes. And, finally, the government must effectively explain the difference between monetisation and privatisation, emphasising that ownership remains public and that funds raised are earmarked for new infrastructure.

## LETTERS

### 'Keralam' was long overdue

REchristening of Kerala as Keralam following an unanimous resolution to that extent by the State Assembly and Centre's approval is a cause for great rejoicing. It is only a matter of time before it gets parliamentary approval. It is an emphatic reaffirmation of the State's distinct cultural and linguistic identity. In fact, it restores the original name found in Malayalam and its literature. Literally, Keralam means the 'land of coconuts'. Etymologically, Keralam could have been a derivative of 'Chera-alam', meaning 'land of the Cheras'. According to Dr Herman Gundert, "keram" is the Canarese (Kannada) form of "cheram" and Cheram. Keralam extended from Gokarna to Kanyakumari. The move is unlikely to pay electoral dividends to any political party as the demand for a change of name has been made by all parties. It is hoped that north Indians will now stop referring to the state as "Keral" and start calling it "Keralam".

G David Milton, Maruthancode (TN)

### MPs, MLAs must work for people's welfare

THE Sri Lankan government presently in financial doldrums has found a way out, by way of regulating the salaries and perks of its MPs and MLAs. This is a welcome move whereas Indian MPs and MLAs continue to seek enhanced pensions reflecting the purpose for which the individuals have entered the 'political arena' – not to serve, but to be served, to ensure that their lives are safeguarded by way of unhindered pensions and perks. The lawmakers must understand the responsibilities for which they are elected. It is imperative to bring legislation in this direction. The 'will' of the people, must not merely end after casting of the vote, but go in for course correction, when the lawmakers err in their duty.

Sakunthala KR, Hyderabad

### India should emulate the Lankan example

THIS has reference to your editorial 'Sri Lankan Parliament shows the way for India'. It is time India implements the Sri Lankan model about salaries and perks of MPs and MLAs. In fact, this is an issue dominating the minds of the people of the country for a long time. The lawmakers unabashedly and unilaterally attempt to enhance their perks and salaries, forgetting the purpose for which they have been elected. The situation assumes significance when these elected members have no compunctions to stall the proceedings in the Parliament for no reason at all – except to score brownie points. The Sri Lankan model can infuse a sense of responsibility and purpose in the minds of Indian lawmakers, once it is implemented.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

### TSSPDCL's chatbot is a timely move

THE Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited (TSSPDCL) has done well by launching its own WhatsApp chatbot, which is aimed at providing faster, more convenient, and accessible power-related services to consumers. Through this platform, users can easily register complaints, check billing details, and obtain power supply information on 8712441912. This initiative reflects a thoughtful adoption of modern technology to enhance customer service. The chatbot reduces the need to make countless calls or office visits. Such forward-thinking measures highlight TSSPDCL's commitment to efficiency, transparency, and the digital transformation of public utility services in the state. This development is not only a practical improvement for everyday users but also a significant step toward building a more user-friendly, technology-driven public service ecosystem.

Dr Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, Hyderabad-45

### Adulterated milk is the new killer

It is quite ironic that incidents of adulterated milk have become light even as there are unending debates over adulterated Tirumala laddu. It is reported that 106 families from Rajamahendravaram, who get milk from a private dairy located in Narasapuram, have developed 'anuria' (absence of urine). In an unfortunate development, four persons died and several others are undergoing treatment in various hospitals. It is a known fact that milk is wholesome food and so it is one of the staple items in the plate in various forms. Presently, private dairies are resorting to different ways to adulterate the milk to capitalise on the demand. At the same time, monitoring by agencies like FSSAI has been inactive and, as such, there is no quality check. The government must toughen its stand and ensure uncontaminated milk, which is ever in demand and by almost all households.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru (AP)

thehansreader@gmail.com

## BENGALURU ONLINE

### K'taka CM blames BJP as Dharwad protests intensify

BENGALURU: As protests by government job aspirants intensified in Dharwad, with many taken into preventive custody, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday blamed the previous BJP regime for the large backlog of vacant posts. According to protesters, who staged a massive demonstration in Dharwad earlier in the day, around 2.8 lakh posts remain vacant across various government departments in Karnataka, while fewer than 5,000 recruitments have been made in the last three years. In a press statement, Siddaramaiah said that when the Congress assumed office in 2023, over 2.64 lakh government posts were vacant. He said the backlog was the result of "prolonged inaction under the previous BJP government, which failed to initiate timely recruitment or create a structured roadmap to fill vacancies." "It is deeply unfortunate that BJP leaders are choosing to mislead innocent students even now to serve their narrow political interests," the CM said. He alleged that, instead of encouraging aspirants to stay focused on their preparation and future, opposition leaders were "attempting to instigate unrest." The chief minister said the current situation was largely due to recruitment irregularities and alleged corruption during the BJP regime between 2019 and 2023, which eroded trust in the system and led to a significant backlog.

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

## Rich brats cause fatal accidents but go scot-free

DR HYMA MOORTY

A rich 'brat' in Pune, son of a construction tycoon, killed two young IT professionals snatching away their promising careers. Another rich 'brat' was arrested from Virar, Mumbai, after mercilessly and consciously murdering a mother of two young children, while a third killed two promising young boys. In the recent Lamborghini hit and run case in Kanpur, the spoilt brat at the wheel brought the car driver to the driving seat. It was the presence of mind of the socially conscious by-passers that ensured that the rich guy responsible for the accident was booked. In Delhi's Dwaraka locality, a juvenile boy was speeding a Scorpio without a license, and his sister was filming a social-media 'reel' and the vehicle killed a 23-year-old and severely injured a cab driver. His mother, a single parent, was devastated.

Looking back, one finds that such reckless incidents are happening too often, especially with young drivers hungry for social media fame. All these 'killers' brazenly wear up their sleeve tattooed inscriptions like 'Mera baap amir hai'. These are offspring of stinking rich parents, who drive high-end cars and question the law by flaunting the clout of their

father. The list is long and endless. Justice hinges on courts where cases are overly delayed. The system is in cahoots to help relieve the accused of any punishment.

It is a harsh reminder of how money and power can call the shots, leaving the victims powerless. It's a serious issue and needs more awareness and stricter enforcement.

But public outcry and media pressure often push authorities to act, compelling vigilance matters. It is not easy to cope with the sudden loss of a family member.

These recent cases of drunk driving involving youngsters and unlicensed juvenile drivers, often referred to as 'rich brats' by the media and society, have been alarming. It highlights the pressing issue of underage drinking and its fatal consequences. Drivers aged between 21 and 24 years, under the influence of alcohol, account for most fatal accidents.

This trend calls for strict enforcement of laws and public awareness campaigns on responsible drinking. It's a common concern that wealth and influence can lead to unequal treatment under the law, with ordinary citizens facing harsher consequences for similar of-

### PARENTS MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE



After all, money can 'fix' almost everything these days. Power always twists, and when money becomes absolute, it smothers conscience. Compassion, pity, help, fear and support get buried deep while ego, pride and wealth surface and dominate. No rules and regulations can resolve such problems.

fences. Cases like the Lamborghini one in Kanpur often spark public outcry and intense calls for justice highlighting the need for unbiased accountability in investigation.

Let us analyze the reasons why many of these rich 'brats' fall and flash their 'borrowed' riches. The most important reason is to have the privilege of growing up in affluent surroundings. This leads to reckless behaviour, including excessive drinking and reckless driving unmindful of the consequences.

The social circles they move around normalises excessive drinking and un-

heeding conduct, be it at home or on road, creating an environment where such actions are seen as acceptable or even as status symbols. They experience a high-stress environment despite external perceptions of luxury; the pressures and expectations placed on wealthy individuals can lead to stress and coping mechanisms that lead them to substance abuse. Lack of responsibility towards themselves, family and society and personal accountability add to the intoxication. Parents are to be held accountable and answerable to varying extents for accidents and killings caused by their juveniles

and addict children. If they fail to spend some time and educate their children about the damage of drinking and driving, they are morally and ethically responsible. They are supposed to supervise their children, especially when they are underage and not legally allowed to drink or drive. If they are aware of their child's brash and erratic behaviour but fail to take any timely action, they should be held liable for the consequences. Parents have a significant role in shaping their children's behaviour.

Most of the accidents in our country are caused by human error, carelessness and being casual at the wheel. It is necessary to be cautious and sincerely obey traffic rules, irrespective of who and what you are.

Meanwhile, some accidents are caused even if one is careful, especially at choked traffic interjections like Ameerpet junction in Hyderabad, where the bikers squeeze to cross and hit the waiting vehicle. While driving, distraction is the worst thing to happen and nowadays everyone is super pleased with their distracted driving, which has been on the rise for the last 15 years or so. The worst distractions include being under the influence of drugs or alcohol

## THE RISE AND FALL OF EL MENCHO

B V KUMAR

NEMESIO Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho", died on Sunday while being taken to the capital Mexico City, after being seriously injured in clashes between his supporters and the Mexican army. Four CJNG members were killed in the town of Tapalpa, the central-western Jalisco state. Three army personnel were also injured. The US had given Mexico tactical Intelligence that assisted the operation.

Over the past year, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, President of Mexico has come under intense pressure from US President Donald Trump, who threatened military intervention and higher import tariffs if Mexico fails to demonstrate concrete gains in curbing drug trafficking. However, Sheinbaum has rejected the notion of US strikes in Mexico, characterizing them as a violation of Mexico's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

According to its 2023 Annual Threat Assessment, the US intelligence community cited Mexico-based Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) as the dominant producers and suppliers of various illicit drugs destined for the domestic U.S. market. Mexican TCOs, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG) remain the most predominant and sophisticated groups overseeing the transportation and distribution routes from Mexico to the United States.

Both groups have consolidated control over drug corridors from Mexico and are heavily involved in trafficking of fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Both have a history of establishing drug trafficking hubs, strong criminal partnerships, and using violence and corruption to gain control over the territory where they operate.

The Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels pose the greatest criminal drug threat the United States has ever faced. These ruthless, violent, criminal organizations have associates, facilitators, and brokers in all 50 states in the United States, as well as in more than 100 countries around the world. The Sinaloa Cartel, the Jalisco Cartel, and their affiliates



'EL MENCHO', THE LEADER OF ONE OF MEXICO'S MOST POWERFUL CARTELS, DEAD AFTER MILITARY OPERATION

control most of the fentanyl global supply chain, from manufacture to distribution.

The Jalisco Cartel maintains illicit drug distribution hubs in Los Angeles, Seattle, Charlotte, Chicago, and Atlanta. Internationally, the Jalisco Cartel has a presence and influence through associates, facilitators, and brokers on every continent, except Antarctica.

In Milenio Cartel, El Mencho started as a member of the assassin squad that protected the drug lord Armando Valencia Cornelio ("El Maradona"). On 12 August 2003, his boss was arrested by Mexican authorities. Around the same time, a rival criminal group known as Los Zetas, with the backing of the Gulf Cartel, carried out an armed offensive against the Milenio Cartel in Michoacán. The attack forced the Valencia family to exile in Jalisco.

El Mencho relocated to the state capital, Guadalajara, with his father-in-law José Luis González Valencia (alias "El Quini") and Román Caballero Valencia. In Jalisco, El Mencho and the Milenio Cartel formed an alliance with the Sinaloa Cartel subgroup headed by Ignacio "Nacho" Coronel, a high-ranking drug lord and ally of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Under Coronel, El Mencho and his group managed the Sinaloa Cartel's drug operations, finances, and murder activities in the states of Colima and Jalisco.

The Milenio Cartel split into two. One

Part of El Mencho's success in the drug trade had to do with his ability to strategize market and consumer changes. Initially, the CJNG produced methamphetamine, but then he moved to heroin production when the consumer demand changed. In a series of highly coordinated tactics to prevent El Mencho's arrest, the CJNG blocked several highways and roads by setting at least 37 vehicles on fire. The purpose was to place them as blockades and give him ample time to escape

side was known as La Resistencia (The Resistance), the other was Los Mata Zetas (The Zeta Killers), headed by El Mencho. La Resistencia accused Los Mata Zetas of turning in Oscar Orlando to the authorities. A war ensued, and the two groups fought for the drug smuggling turf in Jalisco.

As leader of the CJNG, El Mencho consolidated his position and strengthened his organization through territorial expansion and established himself as one of Mexico's most-wanted criminals. His rise to fame was due to several factors, including the aggressive and sensationalist displays of public violence by CJNG. The direct attacks of the CJNG against Mexico's security forces earned El Mencho a reputation among authorities as "principal enemy" of the state and as a dangerous criminal. In addition, the fall of Mexico's former top crime bosses cleared the way for El Mencho to gain visibility and status.

He consolidated his operations in Jalisco and its adjacent states by fighting off incursions from criminal groups like Los Zetas and the Knights Templar Cartel. According

to government sources, he was responsible for overseeing the CJNG's entire drug trafficking operations in the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Guanajuato, where he created a bastion for methamphetamine production and trade.

Between 2014 and 2016, the only region in the country where the CJNG lost its territorial presence was in Mexico City. Internationally, the CJNG reportedly has ties with criminal groups in the U.S., the rest of Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. On an international scale, CJNG is mainly focused on trafficking cocaine and methamphetamine.

The government estimated that El Mencho's group has about \$50 billion in total assets. Part of El Mencho's success in the drug trade had to do with his ability to strategize market and consumer changes. Initially, the CJNG produced methamphetamine, but then he moved to heroin production when the consumer demand changed.

In a series of highly coordinated tactics to prevent El Mencho's arrest, the CJNG blocked several highways and roads across the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area by setting at least 37 vehicles on fire. The purpose was to place them as blockades to impede the security forces from traveling across Jalisco's capital and giving El Mencho ample time to escape. The blockades were placed in strategic routes to prevent police reinforcements from coming in or leaving Guadalajara. After the attacks were over, the government confirmed that El Mencho was in the area and had evaded capture. The US government announced US\$ 10 million as reward to capture El Mencho, which was increased to US\$ 15 million.

Sheinbaum has pursued a direct approach to combating organized crime by increasing cooperation with the US security agencies. In a major operation launched by the Mexican Army the most wanted man and the leader of the feared Jalisco New Generation (CJNG) drug cartel have been killed during a security operation to arrest him, the Defence Ministry has said.

(The writer is a former DG of DRI and NCB)

## Joint Secy commends Kendriya Vidyalaya for following PM Shri objectives

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

DR. Ishitha Ganguli Tripathy, Joint Secretary, Government of India, conducted a review inspection of PM SHRI Schools at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kurnool as part of the nationwide assessment of the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India initiative on Tuesday. The visit aimed at evaluating the effective implementation of academic, infrastructural, and co-curricular components envisaged under the PM SHRI framework.

During the inspection, Dr. Tripathy reviewed key facilities including science laboratories, computer labs, the library, and the Innovation and Skill Development



Dr. Ishitha Ganguli Tripathy, Joint Secretary, at a meeting in Kurnool on Tuesday

Centre. She also examined the digital infrastructure and recent upgrades provided under the scheme. A primary section demonstration class, conducted using an interactive panel, drew special appreciation for showcasing

technology-enabled teaching, student participation, and activity-based learning aligned with modern pedagogical practices.

Addressing students and staff, Dr. Tripathy commended the school for

translating the objectives of the PM SHRI initiative into classroom practice and encouraged students to embrace experiential and skill-oriented learning.

Principal Payal Priyadarshani highlighted the holistic focus of the scheme, citing support from the Government of India in strengthening infrastructure, introducing interactive learning tools, organising exposure visits, and conducting self-defence training. The programme, attended by senior education officials and academicians, concluded with appreciation for the institution's commitment to quality education, innovation, and all-round student development under the PM SHRI vision.



## KVR college holds seminar on drone tech

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

A three-day training seminar on drone technology was conducted at KVR (Women's) Degree College under the joint auspices of the Departments of Physics and Biotechnology, with financial support from the Central Government.

IIT-DM Professor Krishna Nayak, the chief guest,

highlighted the growing career prospects in drone technology, tracing its origins from Australia in 1849 to its military use in the US and later by DRDO in India in 1995. Principal Dr K Venkat Reddy said drones are transforming sectors such as agriculture and disaster management. Participants received certificates. Faculty members and students attended the programme.

## YSRCP opposes shifting of R&B div office from Kalyandurg



YSRCP Anantapur district president Anantha Venkatarami Reddy addresses a press conference in Anantapur on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

YSRCP Anantapur district president Anantha Venkatarami Reddy has opposed the proposed shifting of the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Divisional Office from Kalyandurg to Sri Sathya Sai district. Addressing a press conference at the party's district office on Tuesday, along with Kalyandurg constituency coordinator Talari Rangayya, he said the R&B Divisional Office was established in Kalyandurg during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy to ensure administrative accessibility for the people of Kalyandurg and Rayadurg constituencies.

He recalled that key offices, including those of the DSP and RDO, were also set up in Kalyandurg headquarters to strengthen govern-

ance. Additionally, he noted that the Sriram Reddy drinking water scheme was implemented through a dedicated pipeline from PABR to serve Kalyandurg, Rayadurg and Madakasira constituencies during that period, when he was serving as MP and Raghuvendra Reddy as Minister.

Criticising the move to relocate the R&B office and staff to Hindupur, he said that instead of shifting existing facilities, the government should consider establishing additional offices if necessary. With the Assembly session underway, he urged Minister Keshav and the MLAs of Rayadurg and Kalyandurg to intervene and take appropriate steps.

He demanded that the R&B Divisional Office should not be shifted from Kalyandurg under any circumstances.

## Accurate census forms backbone of devt: Collector

Systematic data collection will provide clear direction, she says

HANS NEWS SERVICE NANDYAL

ACCURATE and reliable census statistics form the backbone of national development planning, said District Collector G Rajakumari. She was addressing officials as the chief guest at a census training programme held at SVR Engineering College, Ayyalur Metta, in Nandyal town on Tuesday. Emphasising transparency and completeness, the Collector said systematic data collection would provide clear direction for effective implementation of government welfare schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector underlined that census data directly influences policy formulation in key sectors such as education, healthcare, employment, housing and infrastructure. She instructed all officials involved in the exercise to discharge their duties with utmost responsibility and to record household-level information strictly in accordance with government guidelines. Any scope for error must be



Collector Rajakumari addressing a meeting in Nandyal on Tuesday

eliminated, she said, as even minor inaccuracies could adversely impact planning and resource allocation.

Detailing operational guidelines, the Collector stressed the need to prevent duplication by ensuring that every individual is enumerated only once, particularly students and employees residing away from their native places. Residents of hostels, ashrams and NGO-run shelters should be covered under institutional enumeration. She advised field staff to accord census training the same importance as election training and to clearly ex-

plain the questionnaire comprising 33 questions while collecting information on housing type, drinking water sources, sanitation, cooking gas connections, and socio-economic conditions. Caste details, she clarified, must be recorded strictly as stated by respondents, without seeking any documentary proof.

The Collector further directed that data collection be carried out with complete coverage, ensuring no individual or habitation is left out, including remote hamlets and Chenchu habitations. Each unit of approximately 1,000 population should be

systematically mapped and enumerated within the stipulated timeline, while maintaining confidentiality of personal information.

She assured that honorarium and admissible expenses would be paid to staff as per norms upon completion of duties.

Senior census officials, including Joint Director and Chief Principal Census Officer Jagannath Majhi and Deputy Director Dibakar Barhi, along with district and divisional officers, participated in the training programme and extended guidance to field-level personnel.

## Albendazole distributed to children as part of National Deworming Day



HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

PROGRAMME Officer Dr. S.B. Vishnu Murthy visited the RBSK District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) in Anantapur on Tuesday and reviewed the ongoing health services and outreach programmes. He inspected facilities and issued necessary instructions to medical staff.

As part of the National Deworming Day mop-up cam-

paigned, Albendazole 400 mg tablets were administered to follow-up cases at the DEIC centre, benefiting several children. At Sri Chaitanya English Medium School, Albendazole tablets were distributed to 51 students out of a total strength of 1,231 as part of the drive. District Immunisation Officer Dr. Naga Shashibhushan Reddy participated in the programme.

ROP (Retinopathy of Prematurity) screening was also

conducted at the DEIC centre. A total of 28 cases were examined, including 15 new and 13 follow-up cases. Two children requiring advanced care were referred to Pushpagiri Eye Hospital, Kadapa, for further treatment.

Additionally, 10 students from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Gurukula School, Korrapadu, were transported to the DEIC centre through the Child Health Transport Vehicle. They were provided free medical services and safely returned to their school. Other referred cases were also examined and treated accordingly.

Officials stated that such initiatives will continue to ensure comprehensive healthcare and early intervention services for children in the district.



## Steps Initiated to develop tourism facilities at Gollapalli reservoir

HANS NEWS SERVICE GOLLAPALLI

THE district administration has initiated measures to promote tourism at the scenic Gollapalli Reservoir.

District Tourism Officer K N Narasayya, along with his team, conducted a field inspection at the reservoir on Tuesday to assess the feasibility of developing tourism infrastructure.

Officials examined the potential for establishing a boating facility to attract visitors. Suitable locations were also identified for constructing modern resorts and accommodation facilities to enable tourists to stay at the site. The government aims to transform the naturally picturesque reservoir area into a major tourist destination in the district.

During the visit, tourism department staff and local officials reviewed the existing infrastructure and discussed the improvements required to enhance visitor amenities. Emphasis was laid on ensuring sustainable development while preserving the natural surroundings of the reservoir.

Officials stated that a comprehensive proposal outlining the development plan, infrastructure requirements and estimated costs will be prepared and submitted to the government shortly for approval.

## Ensure flawless conduct of SSC exams: Collector



District Collector Dr S Venkateswar reviewing the arrangements for SSC public examinations at the Collectorate in Tirupati on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI

DISTRICT Collector Dr S Venkateswar has directed officials to take strong measures to ensure smooth and secure conduct of the SSC examinations scheduled from March 16 to April 1. He reviewed the arrangements at a meeting held at the Collectorate on Tuesday with officials from various departments.

The Collector said the examinations will be conducted from 9.30 am to 12.45 pm and must be held in a strict and peaceful manner without any lapses. A total of 31,334 students from the district have registered to appear for the Class 10 examinations. This includes 29,165 regular students, 1,178 students who failed last year, and 991 students from open schools. The examinations will be conducted at 179 centres across the district.

Dr Venkateswar instructed officials to ensure tight security while transporting question papers to strong rooms. A district-level review meeting should be conducted with police, postal department, and other concerned officials regarding the transportation of question papers.

He directed that strong police security be arranged at all examination centres. CCTV

cameras should be installed at sensitive centres along with special security measures. Section 144 should be implemented at all examination centres. Internet and xerox centres near the exam centres should remain closed during examination hours.

The Collector said that no electronic devices or mobile phones should be allowed inside the examination centres by candidates, invigilators, or any staff. Police officials were asked to conduct checks in advance. He stressed that there should be no mass copying under any circumstances.

Officials were instructed to ensure that students reach examination centres on time. Basic facilities such as drinking water, toilets, lights, fans, electricity, first aid centres, and availability of medical officers must be provided at all centres. He also directed officials to ensure that APSRTC buses are made available for students attending the examinations.

DRO G Narasimulu, DEO KVN Kumar, Education Department Assistant Commissioner B Sudha, Tirupati Municipal Additional Commissioner Sarada Devi, DPO Susila Devi, DM&HO Dr V Balakrishna Naik, Transport Officer K Murali Mohan and other district officers attended the meeting.

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

GROUNDBREAKING ceremony for the construction of a cement concrete (CC) road was held at Budaga Jangala Colony in Devanakonda, with works estimated at Rs 5 lakh.

Alur Assembly constituency in-charge Ternakal Venkappa speaking to *The Hans India* on Tuesday has said the CC road works are being taken up under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) with an allocation of Rs.1.10 lakh in the mandal.

As part of the initiative spearheaded by the Jana Sena Party, similar road works are being launched in Devanakonda, Kothapeta, Kunkunuru and Ternakal villages.

Venkappa said CC road works worth Rs 3.80 lakh



Alur Assembly constituency in-charge Ternakal Venkappa participated at the groundbreaking ceremony at Devanakonda

are being initiated across the Alur Assembly Constituency. He stated that discussions are being held with the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and district officials to secure additional funds, assuring that sustained efforts are underway to strengthen basic infrastructure and ac-

celerate development in the constituency.

Referring to the larger development agenda, he said Andhra Pradesh is emerging as one of the fastest-developing states in the country under the coalition government, with progress on the Super Six

programmes, large-scale investments, job creation for youth, completion of the Polavaram project, metro planning, port construction and rapid development of the capital city.

The groundbreaking ceremony programme was attended by Andhra Pradesh

Valmiki Corporation Chairperson Bojjamma, MPDO Jyothi, Divisional Engineer Manohar, TDP mandal convener Vijayabhaskar Goud, market yard director Saroja, and leaders from the TDP and Jana Sena Party, besides local representatives and residents.

## Sunitha seeks funds for drinking water

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI/RAPTADU

RAPTADU MLA Paritala Sunitha met Deputy Chief Minister Konidela Pawan Kalyan during the ongoing Assembly sessions and submitted a memorandum seeking urgent funds for drinking water and road infrastructure in her constituency.

Highlighting the worsening summer water crisis,

Sunitha requested ₹50 crore for 52 villages under Anantapur Rural and Atmakur mandals, which continue to depend on the decades-old Sathya Sai water scheme. She also sought ₹55 crore for summer storage tanks, pipeline repairs, and the replacement of 2 MLD slow sand filters with 6 MLD rapid sand filters in Anantapur Rural. Additionally, she urged sanction of ₹180 crore for a CPWS project



from Gollapalli reservoir to supply drinking water to villages in Ramagiri, Kanaganapalli and Chennekothapalli mandals of Sri Sathya Sai district.

For badly damaged roads in Ramagiri, Kanaganapalli, CK Palli, Rappthadu and Atmakur mandals, she sought ₹11.50 crore.

The Deputy CM responded positively, assuring action to address drinking water needs and approvals

for pending road works, including those under Jal Jeevan Mission.

Separately, Sunitha met Ministers Nara Lokesh, Mandali Ramprasad Reddy and Janardhan Reddy, seeking funds for educational institutions, sports infrastructure and major road projects.

The ministers assured support after reviewing the proposals with concerned officials.





## What recruiters will truly seek from 2026 data science graduates

RECRUITERS NOW PRIORITISE STRATEGIC THINKING, ETHICAL AI AWARENESS, AND PRODUCTION-READY SKILLS OVER TECHNICAL BASICS ALONE

DR. ABHIJIT DASGUPTA

The data science landscape is not merely evolving; it is undergoing a profound transformation. The graduate of 2021, equipped with Python, SQL, and regression models, no longer represents the ideal profile for 2026. As artificial intelligence becomes deeply embedded across industries, regulations tighten, and business challenges grow more complex, recruiters are redefining expectations. For the class of 2026, securing a leading role will depend not only on technical expertise but on adaptability, ethical judgment, and strategic business understanding.

### The foundational bedrock: Mastery of the modern stack

Core technical skills remain essential, but expectations have advanced. Python and SQL are baseline requirements rather than differentiators. Recruiters increasingly expect familiarity with orchestration tools such as Dagster and Prefect, MLOps platforms like MLflow and Kubeflow, and cloud ecosystems including AWS SageMaker, Google Vertex AI, and Azure ML. The ability to transition a model from experimentation to a scalable, monitored production environment is now fundamental.

Large Language Models



(LLMs) are reshaping the field. While pre-training massive models is not mandatory, graduates must understand transformer architecture, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and fine-tuning methods such as LoRA. Beyond simple API usage, recruiters value candidates who can customise LLMs for business workflows while understanding cost, limitations, and bias implications.

### The strategic shift: Problem discovery and translation

The role of a data scientist has expanded beyond technical execution. Recruiters now prioritise "problem discovery." Graduates must demonstrate the ability to navigate ambiguity in business contexts, identify high-impact opportunities, and collaborate with domain experts across functions.

Equally important is "executive fluency"—the ability to translate model performance into business value. Communicating improvements in terms of revenue growth, risk reduction, or customer experience distinguishes strong candidates. While tools like Tableau and Power BI support visualisation, the core capability lies in articulating measurable business outcomes.

### Ethics and governance as core competencies

As AI systems influence high-stakes decisions, ethical awareness has become integral. Recruiters increasingly assess knowledge of regulatory frameworks such as the EU AI Act and practical approaches to fairness, accountability, and transparency. Graduates should be



prepared to explain how they evaluate bias, ensure reproducibility, and maintain data lineage. Familiarity with explainability tools like SHAP and LIME, along with human-in-the-loop design principles, demonstrates readiness to build trustworthy systems rather than isolated algorithms.

### Systems thinking and collaboration

The era of standalone models has passed. Data scientists must adopt a systems mindset, recognising that models operate within broader ecosystems involving pipelines, deployment frameworks, user interfaces, and feedback loops. Awareness of data quality, retraining cycles, and performance monitoring is critical.

Cross-functional collaboration is equally essential. Successful candidates show experience working with engineers on CI/CD processes, product managers on defining KPIs, and designers on user-centric solutions. Evidence of multidisciplinary teamwork strengthens

employability.

### Learning agility in a rapidly changing field

With the rapid pace of technological advancement, learning agility has become one of the most valued traits. Recruiters seek individuals who continuously update their knowledge, experiment with new tools, and critically assess emerging trends.

A dynamic portfolio often speaks louder than a resume. GitHub repositories showcasing evolving projects, engagement with new research, or contributions to open-source initiatives reflect adaptability and initiative.

### The graduate portfolio: A blueprint

- Portfolio Over Resume: A dynamic GitHub with well-documented projects, including a production-like end-to-end pipeline, an LLM application addressing a real problem, and a clear analysis of ethical considerations.
- The "T-Shaped" Depth: Deep,

hands-on expertise in one or two advanced areas complemented by broad business and communication skills.

- Narrative-Driven Interviews: Prepared not just to solve a coding test, but to articulate the "why" behind past projects, the trade-offs made, the business impact achieved, and the lessons learned from failure.

The ideal 2026 graduate presents a holistic profile: a well-documented project portfolio, deep expertise in selected areas, and strong communication skills. Beyond solving technical problems, they articulate the reasoning behind decisions, the trade-offs considered, the measurable impact delivered, and lessons drawn from challenges. In this transformed landscape, success belongs to those who combine technical excellence with strategic insight, ethical responsibility, and continuous learning.

*(The author is Director – Bachelor of Data Science, SP Jain School of Global Management)*



CBSE Class 12  
Accountancy  
Exam Analysis

Accountancy exam rated moderate, balanced

The CBSE Class 12 Accountancy board examination was rated moderate in difficulty and largely aligned with the prescribed syllabus, according to feedback from teachers and students.

Rajan Dutta, PGT Accountancy at Silverline Prestige School, said the question paper reflected a balanced mix of theory and practical components. Most questions were drawn from the NCERT textbook and topics emphasised during classroom teaching. The paper included case-based and application-oriented questions designed to assess conceptual clarity rather than rote learning. Numerical questions were generally straightforward, though a few required careful calculations and step-by-step presentation.

"The Accountancy paper was fair and tested students' understanding of core concepts. Those who practised consistently and revised class materials found it manageable," Dutta said.

Students described the examination as moderate overall. While many found the structure familiar and manageable, some noted that certain case-study questions were slightly time-consuming. Overall, the paper was viewed as a well-balanced assessment that effectively evaluated students' conceptual understanding, analytical ability, and application skills in Accountancy.

## CIM 2026 highlights AI, research ethics and industry-ready methodologies

The International Conference on Contemporary Issues in Management (CIM) 2026, hosted by the International School of Management Excellence in Bengaluru, brought together academicians, researchers and industry professionals to deliberate on artificial intelligence, research ethics and evolving industry expectations. The conference was the conferring of the Lifetime Achievement Award on T. V. Rao, a pioneer in human resource development and co-founder of the National HRD Network. In his address, Dr. Rao emphasised the need to balance technological advancement with human judgment. He noted that while AI can perform tasks efficiently, creativity and contextual decision-making remain uniquely human strengths.

Panel discussions throughout the conference examined how AI is reshaping research practices in management education. Speakers observed that AI tools are increasingly being used for literature reviews, data organisation and drafting support. However, concerns were raised about unverified outputs, fabricated references and plagiarism risks. Participants stressed that AI should serve as an aid rather than a substitute for independent analysis and



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Ethical considerations emerged as a central theme. Faculty members highlighted the importance of transparency in AI-assisted research and the responsibility of academic supervisors in ensuring originality and integrity.

The conference also reflected changing research trends among students. Session chairs noted a shift from traditional statistical tools such as ANOVA and

regression towards advanced techniques including structural equation modelling (SEM), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and machine learning models like Random Forest and XGBoost.

Another recurring discussion focused on bridging the gap between academia and industry. Panelists underscored the need to align research methodologies with practical business applications to enhance employability and relevance.



## IIT Roorkee to develop AI-driven BMS for energy storage

Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MaxVolt Energy to collaborate on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven Battery Management Systems (BMS) for energy storage and electric mobility applications.

The partnership will focus on integrating AI and Machine Learning (ML) algorithms into next-generation BMS platforms. The proposed systems aim to enable real-time monitoring, predictive diagnostics, adaptive charging protocols, and improved thermal management for lithium-based batteries.

According to officials, the research initiative will also work on enhancing the accuracy of State-of-Charge (SoC) and State-of-Health (SoH) estimations. The objective is to improve battery lifecycle management, reduce degradation, and support performance under varying operational and climatic conditions.

A key component of

the collaboration includes incorporating predictive maintenance features. By analysing battery performance data and estimating remaining life cycles, the system is expected to assist in decisions related to battery reuse, refurbishment, or recycling. The research will be aligned with Indian grid and environmental conditions.

The joint programme will involve faculty members, research scholars, and engineering teams from both institutions. The teams will work on designing, prototyping, and validating AI-enabled BMS solutions. Vishal Gupta, Co-Founder and Technical Director at MaxVolt Energy and MaxVolt ReEarth, stated that the collaboration aims to strengthen research and development efforts in advanced battery technologies. He also indicated that a Centre of Excellence is proposed to be set up at the IIT Roorkee campus to support research on second-life battery reusability detection using BMS technologies.

## HOW TO MASTER MOCK TEST ANALYSIS

How structured analysis can sharpen accuracy, speed, and exam strategy

Taking mock tests is an essential part of exam preparation, but their true value lies in how effectively they are analysed. Many students focus only on the final score, overlooking the deeper insights that mock tests provide. A structured analysis can transform mistakes into learning opportunities and significantly improve overall performance.

The first step in analysing a mock test is to go beyond marks and examine accuracy. Identify how many questions were attempted correctly, incorrectly, and left unanswered. This helps in understanding whether the issue lies in conceptual clarity, careless errors, or poor time management. A high number of incorrect answers may indicate guesswork or gaps in understanding, while too many unattempted questions may suggest slow problem-solving speed.

Next, conduct a topic-wise analysis. Break down performance according to subjects and chapters. This will reveal strengths and weak areas clearly. For instance, you may perform well in theory-based questions but struggle with numerical or application-based ones. Recognising such patterns allows you to plan targeted revision rather than revisiting the entire syllabus. Time analysis is equally



important. Review how much time was spent on each section or question. Did you spend too long on difficult problems? Did you rush through easier ones and make careless mistakes? Effective time allocation is crucial in competitive exams, and mock tests provide the perfect opportunity to refine this strategy.

Another critical aspect is reviewing mistakes carefully. Do not just note the correct answer — understand why your response was wrong. Was it due to a conceptual gap, misinterpretation of the question, calculation error, or overconfidence? Maintaining an error log can help track recurring mistakes and ensure they are not repeated in future tests.

Comparative performance tracking also plays a role. Instead of focusing on one test score, observe trends over multiple mocks. Consistent improvement in accu-

racy and percentile ranking indicates progress, while stagnation signals the need for strategy adjustments.

### Practical tips for effective mock test analysis

- Analyse the test within 24 hours while the paper is still fresh in your mind.
  - Categorise mistakes into conceptual, calculation, and time-management errors.
  - Revise weak topics immediately after identifying them.
  - Reattempt incorrectly answered questions without time pressure.
  - Track progress through a performance journal or spreadsheet.
- When approached systematically, mock test analysis becomes a powerful tool for improvement. It shifts preparation from random practice to strategic learning, helping students steadily convert effort into measurable success.

"Giving Sachin Tendulkar out leg before wicket, and it's a matter of knowing that it was a mistake, but until this day, every day, people talk about it. "Why did I give him out? Was he out and so on? But then in life, mistakes happen. I have accepted that it was a mistake, and life goes on,"

-Steve Bucknor, legendary umpire

# Bucknor regrets wrong LBW call against Tendulkar after 22 years

NEW DELHI

MORE than two decades after making what was then widely seen as a "dreadful" decision against Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, legendary umpire Steve Bucknor has finally expressed regrets and accepted that "it was a mistake."

2009, was one of the most respected umpires in world cricket for over two decades. However, he did a make a few contentious calls involving Tendulkar, the most shocking being an LBW dismissal during an India-Australia Test match at Brisbane's Gabba 22 years ago.

In an interview with the West Indies Cricket Umpires' Association, when Bucknor was asked about one of the



Association, when Bucknor was asked about one of the

most difficult decisions he had to live with as an umpire, he said, "Giving Sachin Tendulkar out leg before wicket, and it's a matter of knowing that it was a mistake, but until this day, every day, people talk about it. "Why did I give him out? Was he out and so on? But then in life, mistakes happen. I have accepted that it was a mistake, and life goes

on." In that match at Gabba in the 2003-04 series, Tendulkar was given out LBW by Bucknor following a loud appeal from Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie and his teammates. Batting on 3, Tendulkar had attempted to leave the ball, which struck him high on the pads, but Bucknor was convinced by the Australian appeal. Television replays

later confirmed the ball was clearly going over the stumps. In the commentary box, the late Tony Greig had referred to it as "a dreadful" decision and he was not the only one who thought that way at the time. The match, the first of a four-match series and in which India skipper Sourav Ganguly struck a fluent 144, ended in a draw. That was

not the only instance when Bucknor gave Tendulkar out wrongly. In a match against Pakistan at Eden Gardens in 2005, the Jamaican adjudged Tendulkar caught behind off Abdul Razzaq despite a half-hearted appeal. Replays, however, showed a wide gap between the bat and the ball.

During an interactive session with fans in 2024, Tendulkar was asked about his relationship with Bucknor, and in lighter vein, he had said, "When I am batting, give him boxing gloves to wear (so he can't raise his finger)." Bucknor, 79, officiated in 128 Test matches between 1989 and 2009 and also holds the record for standing in five consecutive World Cup finals from 1992 to 2007.

## T20 WC Super 8s India pushed to brink after WI's win rock Group 1

NEW DELHI: India's Super 8 campaign at the T20 World Cup 2026 has hit turbulence early, leaving them with no room for missteps in the matches to come. A crushing 76-run loss to South Africa in Ahmedabad on Sunday has pushed them onto the back foot in Group 1, where they are competing alongside South Africa, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.



Sunday has pushed them onto the back foot in Group 1, where they are competing alongside South Africa, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

While India were reeling from that setback, the West Indies tightened the screws further with a commanding 107-run victory over Zimbabwe. The result reshaped the standings: West Indies climbed to the top, South Africa slotted into second, and India slipped to third, with their net run rate taking a severe blow in the process.

Suryakumar Yadav and Co. found themselves outplayed across disciplines. South Africa's total of 187/7 was built on a measured 63 from David Miller and an enterprising 45 from De-

wald Brevis. Jasprit Bumrah delivered a standout spell of 3/15, but the remainder of the attack struggled to apply consistent brakes.

The chase never gathered traction. Wickets fell at regular intervals, partnerships failed to materialise, and scoreboard pressure mounted quickly. Marco Jansen's four-wicket burst dismantled the middle order, sealing India's collapse for 111.

Beyond the loss of two points, the damage to their Net Run Rate, now a troubling -3.800, could prove decisive.

With two fixtures left in the Super 8 stage, India's equation is starkly simple: they must win both to stay alive.

Two wins: Victories over the West Indies and Zimbabwe would take India to four points. If South Af-

T20 WC SUPER 8S TABLE					
TEAM	P	W	L	PT	NRR
<b>GROUP 1</b>					
WI	1	1	0	2	+5.350
RSA	1	1	0	2	+3.800
IND	1	0	1	0	-3.800
ZIM	1	0	1	0	-5.350
<b>GROUP B</b>					
ENG	1	1	0	2	+2.550
PAK	1	0	0	1	0.000
NZ	1	0	0	1	0.000
SL	1	0	1	0	-2.550

## Lanka eye turnaround in must-win clash vs NZ

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will need to improve their batting against slower bowlers when they take on New Zealand in a must-win Super Eight game of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.



The home team batters failed to chase a below par 147 against England on a slow turner in Pallekele. The pitches in Sri Lanka have been tougher for batting compared to co-hosts India and the trend is likely to continue at the Premadasa where bigger boundaries make six-hitting difficult.

Some of the shot selection was questioned following the heavy loss in the Super Eight opener and Sri Lanka will need to learn from their mistakes.

"It's a T20 game, so obviously you come into a game, so you are looking to score as many runs as you can. So when the ball is not coming on to the bat, it's easier said than done," Sri Lanka's Indian batting coach Vikram Rathour reflected on the side's poor performance.

"Are there better options? Yes, definitely could have been taken. I thought on a wicket where the ball is stopping, so pushing is not a great idea. A couple of our wickets lost out on guys pushing for a single. I don't think that was a great option in these conditions," he added.

While batting has been led by Pathum Nissanka, left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage has been impressive with the ball. To be fair, even the pacers have delivered thus far in the competition. New Zealand, who had to share a point with Pakistan following the wash-out at Premadasa, too have good spinners in their ranks including captain Mitchell Santner. With rain unlikely, both teams would be pushing for their first win of the Super Eight stage. New Zealand's opening duo of Finn Allen and Tim Seifert showed ominous form during the league stage and would be looking to extend that run. More runs are expected from the bat of Rachin Ravindra who got a much-needed fifty in his previous innings against Canada.

## Semis, final tickets to go live amid venue uncertainty

NEW DELHI: The tickets for the semi-finals and final of the T20 World Cup 2026 will go live at 7 pm IST on Tuesday, as announced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in a release.

Cricket fans can book seats for the first semi-final on March 4, the second semi-final on March 5 and the highly anticipated final on March 8 through the official booking sites.

However, the venue for Semi-final 1 remains subject to a floating arrangement. The match will be held either at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo or at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. While Semi-final 2 is confirmed to take place at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

As per tournament guidelines, if the Pakistan cricket team qualify for the semi-finals, they will play semi-final 1 in Colombo on March 4. If Pakistan fail to qualify but the Sri Lanka team reach the super 4 and are not drawn against India, then the match will be played in Colombo.

## Australia outplay India in opening Women's ODI

BRISBANE: Australia produced a clinical all-round performance to defeat India by six wickets in the opening ODI at Allan Border Field on Tuesday, chasing down a modest target of 215 with authority to take a 1-0 lead in the three-game ODI series and also level the overall multifarmat series' tally to 4-4.

After bowling India out for 214, the hosts made light work of the chase, riding on half-centuries from captain Alyssa Healy and the ever-reliable Beth Mooney. India had promised more at different stages, but ultimately fell short on a surface that offered seam movement early and grip for the spinners as the innings progressed.

## TG PECET-2026 notification to be released today

HYDERABAD: The Telangana Physical Education Common Entrance Test-2026 (TG PECET-2026) notification for admissions into Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed) and Diploma in Physical Education (D.P.Ed) courses will be released on February 25, 2026. The entrance test is being conducted by Satavahana University under the aegis of the Telangana Council of Higher Education for the academic year 2026-27.

TG PECET-2026 is meant for admission into B.P.Ed and D.P.Ed courses offered by State Universities in Telangana and their affiliated colleges. Eligible candidates can apply online through the official website <https://pecet.tgche.ac.in>

According to the schedule, online registration and submission of application forms will commence from March 2, 2026. The last date to submit applications without a late fee is May 5, 2026. The Physical Efficiency and Skill Tests, which form part of the entrance examination, will be conducted at Satavahana University, Karimnagar, from May 31 to June 3, 2026.

Candidates aspiring to pursue professional courses in physical education are advised to go through the detailed notification carefully and adhere to the timelines. Authorities have appealed to the media to give wide publicity to the TG PECET-2026 schedule to ensure maximum reach among eligible students across Telangana.

# Kanpur, Prayagraj at risk of severe damage if quake strikes: IIT study

Buildings can tilt or sink, roads and railway tracks may crack, and underground utilities can rupture. Riverbank and low-lying areas are particularly vulnerable: Dr Nihar Ranjan Patra

KANPUR

A 17-year study by the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) has warned that parts of Kanpur and Prayagraj could face severe damage if an earthquake of magnitude 6.5 or higher strikes the region. The research led by Dr Nihar Ranjan Patra, a

professor at IIT-K's civil engineering department, highlights the high liquefaction potential of the alluvial soil along the Ganga river belt -- a factor that can sharply amplify ground shaking and destabilise buildings.

The IIT-K research team analysed soil samples collected over nearly two decades

from Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Samples were taken from 43 locations, with boreholes drilled up to 30 to 40 metres and 80 metres deep at two locations in Kanpur and Prayagraj in select areas - far deeper than the usual 10-30 metres used elsewhere. In several parts of Kanpur and Prayagraj,

the top 8-10 metres of soil is loose, sandy and water-saturated - conditions highly prone to liquefaction during strong tremors.

The findings are concerning as in some pockets, the effect could extend as deep as 30-40 metres. Liquefaction occurs when intense shaking causes waterlogged soil

to temporarily lose strength and behave like a liquid, Patra told PTL. Buildings can tilt or sink, roads and railway tracks may crack, and underground utilities can rupture. Riverbank and low-lying areas are particularly vulnerable, he added.

Localities identified for detailed soil analysis include

Bithoor, Mandhana, Panki, Barra, Chakeri, Ratanlal Nagar, Naramao and areas around IIT-K, among others. Parts of Varanasi were also found to have similar soil behaviour. According to India's seismic zoning map, sections of Kanpur and Prayagraj fall under Zones III and IV - denoting moderate to high risk.



# Copter carrying 7 crashes into sea, all rescued

SRI VIJAYA PURAM

A Pawan Hans helicopter carrying seven people, including two crew members, crashed into the sea just 300 metres away from its scheduled landing at Mayabunder helipad in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday, and all of them were rescued, officials said. The crash occurred around 9.30 am, after the chopper took off from Rangat in the North and Middle Andaman district, they said.

All five passengers and the two crew members, rescued from mid-sea, have been admitted to a hospital, one of the officials said.

"The helicopter crashed into the sea around 9.30 am. A preliminary inquiry revealed that there was some technical snag, and the pilot made a crash-landing on the sea," a senior Civil Aviation official said. An inquiry has been initiated, he said. "On February 24, 2026, PHL Dauphin N3 helicopter (VT PHY) took off from Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) at around 8.30 am for a passenger flight from Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) to Rangat and fur-



Did plane carrying 7 pax crash due to bad weather?

RANCHI: Authorities are looking into the main factors, including weather conditions, that could have led to the fatal crash of an air ambulance that killed seven people in Jharkhand on Monday evening, according to officials. Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd's Beechcraft C90 aircraft VT-AJV enroute from Ranchi to Delhi crashed soon after takeoff. There were five people and two crew members onboard. One of the officials said a conclusion on what could have led to the crash is yet to be reached and from initial inputs, and the weather conditions at the time of the crash would also be looked into.

ther to Mayabunder. "The helicopter landed at Rangat helipad around 9.05 am. It further took off from Rangat to Mayabunder at around 9.10 am. The helicopter ditched about 300 metres short of

Mayabunder helipad in the sea (shallow water) at around 9.30 am," Pawan Hans Ltd, a central public sector undertaking based in Noida, said on X. Five passengers and two crew members were on board, it said.

## Meat shops near schools promote violence: Bihar Dy CM

PATNA: Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha has vowed



to clamp down on shops selling meat, fish and poultry in the vicinity of religious and educational institutions, claiming that these offend "purity of sentiments" and promoted "violent tendencies" among children. The senior BJP leader, who holds the urban development portfolio in the Nitish Kumar government, made a statement to this effect a couple of days ago when his views were sought on a recent circular issued by the department. "We are making a new Bihar and this is being reflected in all the steps we take. I issued directions to strictly implement the rules in a recent departmental meeting, which have been framed to ensure proper hygiene and social harmony," he said. "We are not against people's right to have food of their choice. But, selling such items in the open, especially in the vicinity of religious institutions, adversely affects the purity of our sentiments. Similarly, these need to be kept away from educational institutions to prevent violent tendencies among children," Sinha said.

## U'KHAND EDN DIRECTOR ASSAULTED EMPLOYEES DEMAND BJP MLA'S ARREST

'Employees closed education department offices across the state, except for the Uttarakhand Board of School Education in Ramnagar'

DEHRADUN

EMPLOYEE organisations, insisting on the arrest of BJP MLA Umesh Sharma Kau in connection with the assault on Uttarakhand Director of Elementary Education Ajay Naudiyal, have issued an ultimatum to close all state offices from Wednesday if their demands are not met.

On Monday, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami directed the chief secretary to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the safety of employees. Meanwhile, police arrested four accused, including a

history-sheeter, involved in the vandalism and assault incident at the Directorate of Elementary Education on Saturday.

Members of a joint front formed to protest the assault on Naudiyal met CM Dhami on Monday and demanded that SOPs be established for their safety and police deployment in the offices. Following this, Dhami directed Chief Secretary Anand Bardhan to prepare the SOP and DGP Deepam Seth to ensure adequate security arrangements in government offices.

Meanwhile, as per the Mocha's previously an-

nounced programme, employees closed education department offices across the state, except for the Uttarakhand Board of School Education in Ramnagar. "Like today, education department officials and employees will continue their work boycott on Tuesday, and if no solution is found to our demand by Tuesday, all offices across the state will be closed from Wednesday," said Sanjay Bhaskar, front's media in-charge. Bhaskar alleged that the MLA had brought a history-sheeter with him to the director's office.



## Seer moves All HC seeking anticipatory bail in POCSO case

PRAYAGRAJ: Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati on Tuesday moved the Allahabad



High Court seeking anticipatory bail after being booked for alleged sexual harassment of minor children and other offences. A notice has been sent to the office of the government advocate in this regard, before filing the application in court, sources said. The FIR was lodged at the Jhansi police station in Prayagraj against Saraswati and his disciple Mukundanand Brahmachari over allegations of sexual abuse of two persons, including a minor, over the past year.

According to the FIR, the complainants included Ashutosh Brahmachari Maharaj and two other persons, one of them a minor, who alleged sexual abuse by the accused at a gurukul and during religious congregations, including the recently concluded Magh Mela in Prayagraj.

The action on Saturday followed an order passed by the special judge (POCSO Act), Prayagraj, directing that a case be registered on the application moved by Ashutosh Brahmachari and others.

ICRA has maintained a Stable outlook for the Indian aviation industry, supported by expectations of modest growth in domestic air passenger traffic and a gradually improving operating environment, despite near term challenges

-Kinjal Shah, Senior VP and Co Group Head, ICRA

# Business

**BIZ BRIEFS**

**CSMVS' initiative**

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) unveiled 'Networks of the Past: A Study Gallery of India and the Ancient World' in Mumbai. Over 300 archaeological objects from more than 15 leading Indian and global museums will be showcased for three years until 2028. According to CSMVS: "These tell stories from the ancient cultures of India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, Persia, and China, alongside treasures from undivided India."

**Nikon unveils new product**

Nikon India Pvt. Ltd., has announced the release of the NIKKOR Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S II, a fast telephoto zoom lens compatible with full-frame/FX-format mirrorless cameras. The first NIKKOR lens to support the use of Arca-Swiss tripod heads, for smoother tripod mounting and dismounting. The tripod collar of this lens can be attached to Arca-Swiss screw-type quick-release clamps. However, please avoid using lever-type clamps, as they may not fix the lens firmly in place.

**Projects Today launches platform**

Projects Today introduced AI-Driven business opportunity platform to strengthen India's project ecosystem. The new positioning brings project lifecycle context, tenders and L1/order updates, and stakeholder intelligence into one convenient workflow - helping organisations engage the right projects at the right time. The upgraded platform introduces an AI-enabled evolution focused on practical outcomes, including BOQ search, sub-project tracking, tender-to-order journey visibility, bidder and participation insights, opportunity estimation tools, credibility and analytics dashboards, and richer stakeholder relationship mapping.

**Harpic rolls out new product**

Harpic, a home hygiene solutions provider has announced the launch of its latest product - New Harpic Bathroom Ultra Cleaner. The company also onboarded Bollywood Film-maker Rohit Shetty as brand ambassador. Rohit Shetty said, "I know what it's like when people associate you with a certain style, it means they trust you to deliver every single time. And that trust pushes you to do more, do better and to raise the bar."

**Policybazaar logs milestone**

Since 2018, Policybazaar has facilitated over ₹2,069 crore in term insurance claims across 2,660 cases. This milestone strengthens consumer confidence in an underpenetrated market often hindered by claim concerns. By leveraging a digital-first model, the platform ensures speed and transparency, partnering with insurers to transform the stressful claims experience into a seamless, empathetic, and guided process for nominees during their most critical time of need.

## iQOO launches 15R; Co sees good demand in India

It has been six years for iQOO in India and the company has been launching flagship products

**Flagship Features**

- Slimmest smartphone with a 7600 mAh battery
- Powered by the Snapdragon 8 Gen 5
- Has SuperComputing Chip Q2 with the 144 FPS gaming

HANS BUSINESS BENGALURU



Nipun Marya, CEO of iQOO



iQOO 15R smartphone

iQOO, the specialised mobile brand from Vivo stable, on Tuesday launched iQOO 15R in India as it eyes more young professionals' user base in the country.

The iQOO 15R has several innovative features that enable young professionals to seamlessly switch between work, gaming, and entertainment, the company said at the launch event in Bengaluru.

The new variant of the brand is powered by the Snapdragon 8 Gen 5, ensuring higher processing power,

speed and efficiency. iQOO 15R is India's slimmest smartphone with a 7600 mAh battery. It also used the company's proprietary SuperComputing Chip Q2 with the 144 FPS gaming. It is also equipped with a Sony LYT-700V OIS camera, a 1.5K 144Hz AMOLED EyeCare Display, along with IP68 & IP69 dust and water resistance, the company said.

"The new launch is the second one in the iQOO 15 series. We already have the flagship product iQOO 15, which has received good response. Given the kind of features in the new phone and the pricing, we believe

that the new variant is also going to get a very good response," Nipun Marya, CEO of iQOO told the BizzBuzz on the sidelines of the launch event.

"This is fastest smartphone in the market. It has a Snapdragon 8 Gen 5 processor. So, it is very fast and powerful. On the battery side, this is India's slimmest phone with 7600 mAh battery. It means, you can use your phone all day, do heavy tasks the whole day and there will be no issues with the phone at all. All of this, along with the camera, we believe that the price range of ₹40,000 to ₹45,000 for iQOO 15R is an amazing offer for our Indian users," Marya added.

## Markets in red as tariff fears rattle IT stocks

Infotech stocks plunge nearly 5% as renewed US tariff concerns dent risk appetite

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Tuesday, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over artificial intelligence-led disruption and renewed trade-related uncertainties. Rising global crude prices amid escalating US-Iran tensions and sluggish global cues also hit investor sentiment, traders said. Snapping its two-session rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,068.74 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,225.92. During the day, the benchmark plunged 1,359.93 points, or 1.63 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 81,934.73. A total of 2,802 stocks declined, while 1,422 advanced and 143 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell 288.35 points, or 1.12 per cent, to close at 25,424.65. In the intraday session, it



depreciated by 385.4 points, or 1.49 per cent, to hit a low of 25,327.60. As many as 32 of its components ended in the red while 18 settled in the green territory. "Investor sentiment weakened amid renewed concerns over global trade developments and rising geopolitical tensions, which kept crude oil prices elevated. Moreover, continued pressure on global technology stocks and fears of AI-led disruption further dragged domestic IT shares, amplifying the decline in the benchmark indices," Ajit

Mishra SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Tech Mahindra emerged as the biggest laggard, declining by 6.6 per cent, followed by HCL Technologies, Eternal, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics Ltd and ICICI Bank. On the other hand, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Titan, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, and Sun Pharmaceuticals were among the gainers. "Domestic markets registered a sharp decline, led

by significant weakness in IT stocks amid renewed global concerns over AI-driven disruption and margin pressures for traditional service providers. Global trade and tariff worries resurfaced as well, with additional pressure arising from Trump's warnings on trade deals and reports of possible national-security tariffs. "Meanwhile, escalating US-Iran tensions, marked by embassy staff evacuations and Iran's warnings of wider regional escalation, intensifying risk aversion. Overall, markets remain highly sensitive to geopolitical risks and sector-specific pressures, driving investors toward defensive, domestically focused segments," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Broader indices also ended in the negative territory, with the BSE Smallcap Select Index falling 0.68 per cent, while the Mid-cap Select Index slipped 0.54 per cent.

## Cabinet enhances equity investment limit of Powergrid to ₹7,500 cr per subsidiary

The approval will enable the Maharatna to expand its investment in its core business and support the evacuation of renewable energy capacity

NEW DELHI: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved enhanced delegation to Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), enhancing the permissible equity investment limit of the company from the current threshold of Rs 5,000 crore per subsidiary to Rs 7,500 crore per subsidiary -- while retaining the existing cap of 15 per cent of the company's net worth.

The approval came under the extant guidelines dated February 4, 2010, of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) on the delegation of powers applicable to Maharatna CPSEs.

According to an official statement, the approval will enable POWERGRID, the largest and most experienced transmission service provider in the country, to expand its investment in its core business and support the evacuation of renewable energy capacity, helping achieve the target of 500 GW from non-fossil-based sources.

The statement further said that POWERGRID can now participate in the bids for capital-intensive transmission projects, such as Ultra High Voltage Alternating Current (UHVAC) and High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission networks.

Additionally, it will broaden competition in the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) for the selection of bidders for critical trans-



POWERGRID logo and infrastructure

mission projects. "This ensures better price discovery, and ultimately leads to the availability of affordable and clean energy for consumers," the CCEA said.

The POWERGRID, the central transmission utility, recently announced its unaudited financial results for the third quarter of this fiscal. The public sector company reported robust growth in profitability.

Standalone profit after tax (PAT) stood at Rs 4,160.17 crore -- a 6.8 per cent increase from Rs 3,894.09 crore in Q3 FY25. Standalone revenue from operations was Rs 11,005.28 crore, up year-on-year from Rs 10,120.72 crore.

The Board of Directors approved several significant proposals, including a second interim dividend of Rs 3.25 per equity share (32.5 per cent on the face value of Rs 10) for FY 2025-26. The dividend will be paid on February 27, 2026.

## Clean Max's ₹3K-cr IPO subscribed 45% on day 2

NEW DELHI: The initial public offering (IPO) of Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions, a commercial and industrial renewable energy provider, received 45 per cent subscription on the second day of share sale on Tuesday. The company's IPO got bids for more than 97 lakh (97,59,106) shares against over 218 lakh (2,18,23,329) shares on offer, according to the NSE data. The qualified institutional buyers' category was subscribed 1.21 times, while the quota for non-institutional investors was booked 41 per cent. Retail Individual Investors part fetched a 4 per cent subscription. Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions raised Rs 921 crore from anchor investors on Friday. The public issue will close on February 25. The company has fixed a price band of Rs 1,000-1,053 per share, valuing it at Rs 12,325 crore at the upper end. The proposed issue comprises a fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 1,200 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of shares valued at Rs 1,900 crore by promoters and an investor shareholder.

## World shares trade mixed after heavy selling in AI scrips hit Wall Street

BANGKOK: World shares were mixed on Tuesday after US stocks slumped on heavy selling of shares in companies that could be losers in the artificial-intelligence boom. A report by Citirini Research, a New York-based financial services company, that outlined a future scenario in which AI's dominance caused the "human-centric consumer economy," to wither away with dire consequences for employment, was the latest hit to confidence for companies that might be displaced by fast expanding use of the technology. "Policy response has always lagged economic reality, but lack of a comprehensive plan is now threatening to accelerate a deflationary spiral," the report says. Still, Tuesday brought gains for computer-chip makers and other companies that profit from development of AI.



futures for the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average were up less than 0.1 per cent.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index surged 0.9 per cent to 57,321.09. Chip testing equipment maker Advantest rose 4.5 per cent, while machinery maker Disco Corp. added 2.1 per cent. Markets in mainland China advanced as they reopened following a weeklong holiday, but Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell as traders locked in profits from recent gains, slipping 1.8 per cent to 26,590.32. The Shanghai Composite index rose 0.9 per cent to 4,117.41. In South Korea, the Kospi picked up 2.1 per cent to 5,969.64, setting fresh records on gains for memory chipmaker Samsung Electronics, which jumped 3.6 per cent. SK Hynix, another chipmaker, closed 5.7 per cent higher.

## India's CV industry clocks robust sales in Jan

NEW DELHI: THE Indian commercial vehicle (CV) wholesale volumes reported a robust 27 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth to 99,544 units in January, along with a sequential growth of 1.9 per cent over 97,682 units recorded in December 2025, a report showed on Tuesday.

The year-on-year growth was primarily driven by the reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate to 18 per cent from 28 per cent, effective September 22, 2025 and was further supported by increased freight activity in the goods segment, according to ICRA.

Retail volumes in the medium and heavy commercial vehicle segment (M&HCV) witnessed a healthy growth of 15.4 per cent on a YoY basis in January while recording a sequential growth of 22.1 per cent.

The retail volume growth in the M&HCV segment during the 10 months of FY26 stood at 6.3 per cent, indicating improving volume momentum following the implementation of GST rate cuts.

Moreover, according to the report, retail volumes in the light commercial vehicle



Commercial vehicle (CV) in a parking lot

(LCV) segment grew by 14.9 per cent YoY in January.

The YoY growth in retail volumes of the LCV segment during 10 months of FY26 stood at 11.1 per cent.

Overall, the domestic CV wholesale volumes grew by 11.3 per cent (on-year) "during 10M FY2026, while retail volumes registered an 8.5 per cent growth during the same period", said the report.

The domestic CV industry is expected to register a moderate YoY growth of 7-9 per cent in wholesale volumes in FY26. Domestic CV wholesale volumes are further projected to register a moderate YoY growth of 4-6 per cent in FY2027.

The M& HCV (trucks) and LCV (trucks) segments are expected to witness YoY volume growth of 7-9 per cent and 9-11 per cent, respectively.

The buses segment is likely to see an 8-10 per cent YoY growth during the fiscal, said the report.

## Gold rises ₹400; silver stays flat

NEW DELHI: Gold prices rose by Rs 400 to Rs 1,63,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid persistent buying by stockists and a weaker rupee, according to the local marketmen. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,62,800 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver prices remained unchanged at Rs 2,72,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). Traders said increased offtake by local jewellers and stockists supported gold prices in the domestic market, even as international precious metal rates declined. In the international markets, spot gold was trading 1.35 per cent lower at USD 5,157.16 per ounce, while silver traded flat at USD 88.19 per ounce. Analysts said weakness in the rupee made gold costlier for holders of other currencies, offsetting the impact of a decline in global prices.



Gold bars and coins

## Cos should be cautious on AI usage claims: Sebi whole-time member

MUMBAI

SEBI'S whole-time member Amarjeet Singh cautioned against 'artificial washing', or the use of exaggerated claims as a marketing tactic, warning that such instances can erode the public's trust in the markets.

"We have seen instances of market participants making overstated claims about using AI to deliver exceptional returns," Singh said, addressing an event jointly organised by IIMK and NSE here.

Asking companies to be mindful of how they communicate claims on usage of AI, Singh warned, "exaggerated claims, or selective disclosures, the so-called AI washing can mislead markets and erode trust". He acknowledged that AI is a powerful tool for education, research and accessibility, but advised for certain care to be taken as adoption of AI grows because of its ability to generate "convincing misinformation at scale".

"Can we confidently say that today's true and fair reports truly reflect economic reality?" he asked, adding that such questions are more relevant in the current times.



Amarjeet Singh says such claims can erode the public's trust in the markets

There are newer forms of a shift to "narrative-led communication including purpose-washing and green-washing", Singh said, pointing out that the aspirational language used in such efforts can sometimes run ahead of "verifiable action and measurable outcomes".

There is a historic capital shift from "financial to intellectual capital" as seen in the explosive growth in the stock prices of seven tech giants in the US, he said, underlining that the intangibles are driving market value.

Singh rued that our reporting systems have not

kept pace and underlined the need for reviewing the ways in which the reporting captures the intangible aspects of value creation, including advantages of algorithm usage, human capital prowess and societal impact. "Until we do, we are navigating the future with yesterday's map," Singh said.

No one should be systematically disadvantaged by opacity, manipulation, hidden conflict or engineered confusion, Singh said, adding that there is a possibility for information acting as a bridge between households and capital markets, and savings and productive investments if we get it right. "At stake is not just market efficiency, but public trust in finance as a force for good," he concluded.

## ADB commits \$108 mn to Aavas Financiers

NEW DELHI: Asian Development Bank on Tuesday said it has signed a senior secured debt financing package of up to \$108 million (about Rs 983 crore) with NBFC Aavas Financiers to expand access to affordable housing loans for lower-income households and business loans for MS-MEs in underserved states across India. The package includes concessional debt financing of \$8 million (in Indian rupee equivalent) through the Canadian Climate and Nature Fund for the Private Sector in Asia (CANPA), Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a statement.

The financing will support housing loans for self-built and green-certified homes, promoting climate-resilient and energy-efficient housing solutions for lower-middle-income borrowers, it added. The transaction is also supported by up to \$1,50,000 in technical assistance to build institutional capacity and boost market awareness of green housing solutions, it said.



## Mahesh Babu heads to Georgia for next schedule of SS Rajamouli's 'Varanasi'

Superstar Mahesh Babu's next ambitious project Varanasi is shaping up as one of the biggest pan-world ventures in Indian cinema. Mounted on a monumental scale, the film is being directed by global blockbuster filmmaker S. S. Rajamouli, best known for Baahubali and RRR.

Mahesh Babu was spotted leaving Hyderabad from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport earlier today, heading to Georgia for the next major shooting schedule. This is a work trip, as the actor is set to join the upcoming international schedule of the film. Reports suggest that Priyanka Chopra and Prithviraj Sukumaran are

also expected to join the Georgia leg of the shoot, making this schedule one of the most crucial phases of production.

Music maestro M. M. Keeravani recently revealed that background score work will begin in September, after the entire shoot wraps up in June. The film also features Prakash Raj in key role. Produced by K. L. Narayana and S. S. Karthikeya, the massive pan-world action-adventure is being made on a grand budget and scale. Varanasi is officially slated for a worldwide theatrical release on April 7, 2027, and is already being positioned as one of the most ambitious Indian films ever made.

# What is your beef?

'Kerala Story' released in 2023 and claimed many things that were wrong with Kerala, including the theory of "Love Jihad." The state largely looked away. The film is back in the news as the makers release a trailer for Part 2; this time they have targeted beef curry. And now Kerala refuses to take the misrepresentation lying low, crying foul at what it sees as an attempt to fracture the secular fabric of society

RAJESHWARI KALYANAM

'Kerala Story 2' and the politics and propaganda around it, along with the hilarious reels mocking the beef scene in the trailer, take me back to my recent visit to Kochi. The port city—with its art, architecture, layered history, and melting pot of cultures—leaves an indelible mark. The sea, the fish, and most importantly the warmth of its people stay with you.

Our quest for authentic Kerala parota with some help from an auto driver led us to a simple but bustling hotel in Mattancherry. The owner sat



at the counter while we shared a table with two students waiting for their meal. First came pathimukham—the special Kerala root boiled water served hot. We were spoilt for choice: the menu included appam, stew, kadala curry, square parota, even Indian Chinese. The clientele was a mixed bag—foreign tourists, local businessmen, executives, college students, families. People of all classes and creeds sat together, united by love for food. And guess what was the most ordered dish—Beef Roast.

Beef is today in the news thanks to the recently released trailer of the film 'The Kerala Story 2'.

In the trailer, a jihadi is shown force-feeding a girl beef curry. The scene appears conceptualized with little understanding of local culture or culinary habits, seemingly

to shock and provoke. Instead, it led to widespread indignation, with Malayalees across religions proclaiming their love for beef curry. The internet is filled with memes and reels mocking what many see as a scene created in poor taste and poorer research.

The story of 'The Kerala Story' goes back to 2023 when Part 1 was released. It was widely accused of being propaganda, given its premise. The film tells the story of a Malayalee Hindu girl lured into conversion by her lover, married, and taken to a terrorist camp. It suggests that "Love Jihad" is widely prevalent in Kerala, quoting unverified numbers to substantiate the claim. In a technically weak film, several scenes present conspiracy theories and questionable information as fact.

Kerala did not agree with

'The Kerala Story.' A state that produces some of the finest films considered it too trivial to take seriously. "No one will watch it here," was the general consensus—and they were not wrong. The film failed to make an impact in Kerala, though it provided WhatsApp fodder elsewhere.

Now the team has released the trailer for Part 2. This time, among other things, they have targeted Kerala's most popular dish—beef curry. And that has clearly backfired.

"In Kerala, everyone has 'Left' blood regardless of religion or politics," shared Father Augustine Vattoly, whom I met during the Kerala visit. He was referring to a shared social conscience that reflects in how people respond to issues. You see it in small but telling incidents—like the recent viral video of

an elderly woman stopping a scooter rider from using the sidewalk. A responsible citizen taking a stand.

Augustine is a Catholic priest who supported Sister Ranit, who spoke against a Bishop and faced ostracism and legal battles. He convened "Save Our Sisters" (SOS) to stand by protesting nuns during the 2018 agitation. His experiences reflect Kerala's courage in expressing dissent. Sister Ranit and a few nuns now survive through tailoring and stitching cotton bags, sustained by community support. That solidarity, he says, is heartening.

The 'Me Too' movement from late 2017 and 2018 was an eye-opener across India. But perhaps only in Kerala did it trigger deep introspection in the film industry, leading to the dissolution of AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) after the Hema Committee report. The Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), formed after the abduction case involving actor Dileep, continues to grow stronger.

Actor Rima Kallingal, an active WCC member, said at a National Women in Media conference in Thiruvananthapuram that directors and writers sometimes reach out to check if their scripts represent women appropriately. Even occasional instances like these signal a shift in perspective.

The industry and society in the state remain male dominated. But when power is pitted against the powerless, a strong section speaks up for

the wronged.

Popularly known as God's Own Country, Kerala is in many ways People's Own Country—fiercely protective of its collective identity. People are proud of their clean roads, greenery, heritage, culture, and cuisine—and yes, the beef roast and curry enjoyed with parota or puttu.

Today, the response is not just about a beef scene. It reflects awareness of attempts to fracture a secular fabric where shared history takes precedence over divisive narratives. Onam, for instance, is celebrated by all communities. King Mahabali is welcomed with fervour, followed by the Onam sadhya—vegetarian in tradition, though some homes add non-vegetarian variations.

A case has now been filed in a Kerala court against the release of the film. As we await judgment, one wonders if 'The Kerala Story 2' will succeed in polarizing Kerala.

The film is being strategically released ahead of elections. It is worth recalling that on more than one occasion BJP candidates in Kerala have promised better quality beef in their manifestos. Hilarious but true.

Looking back at municipal elections in Thiruvananthapuram, BJP did see some success. Whether beef had a role is debatable—but the irony is unmistakable.

After all, if anything could sway a Kerala voter, it might just be the promise of good quality beef.

## 'Emi Raa Balaraju' from 'Vishnu Vinyasam' strikes a chord as breakup anthem

Actor Sree Vishnu, known for his effortless comic timing and relatable performances, is gearing up to entertain audiences with his upcoming film Vishnu Vinyasam, an out-and-out entertainer directed by debutant Yadunaath Maruthi Rao. Starring Nayana Sarika as the female lead, the film has already built strong buzz with its first two singles, especially the Valentine's Day release, which became a chartbuster.

Adding to the momentum, the makers have now unveiled the third single, Emi Raa Balaraju, a quirky breakup number that blends heartbreak with humour. Designed as a tribute to love failures who choose laughter over pain, the song opens on a playful note with comedian Satya counting numbers, setting the tone for the protagonist's comic rant on love, heartbreak, and emotional chaos. The



narrative humorously reflects a man's frustration with romance, wrapped in satire and relatable sarcasm, making it instantly connect with younger audiences.

Producer Sumanth Naidu also makes a fun appearance, adding extra humour to the track. Composer Radhan delivers a groovy, punchy composition, while Sarath Santos's vocals bring a smooth flow to the song. Lyricist Ramajogayya Sastry

cleverly transforms the hero's misery into mischievous fun through witty lines. Sree Vishnu's energetic lungi dance steps, choreographed by Bhanu Master, add mass appeal and crowd-pleasing moments. With music creating strong pre-release buzz, Vishnu Vinyasam is set to hit theatres on the 27th of this month, promising a laughter-filled entertainer with fresh flavour and youthful energy.

## 'D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadutaledhu' holds grand preview event

The Telugu web series D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadutaledhu is all set to premiere on ZEE5 from February 27, creating strong buzz ahead of its digital release. The series stars Rajeev Kanakala, Udaya Bhanu, Vasanthika, and Sriram Venkat in prominent roles. Produced by K.V. Sriram under the South India Screens banner and directed by Krishna Poluru, the series recently held a special media preview, followed by a grand launch event attended by the cast and crew.

Rajeev Kanakala described his role as one of the most defining performances of his career, stating that the character demanded emotional depth, modulation, and transformation unlike anything he has done before. He credited director Krishna Poluru for presenting him in a refreshing and intense new space, adding that the narrative maintains gripping tension and emotional engagement till the very end. Director Krishna Poluru revealed that the story evolved over nearly two years, shaped carefully to balance emotional depth with thriller elements. He thanked ZEE5 for supporting the vision and trusting the project's long-form storytelling approach.

Udaya Bhanu shared that she connected deeply with her role, especially the emotional layers, calling the character both strong and vulnerable. Producer K.V. Sriram expressed confidence that the series would resonate strongly with families and fathers, praising Rajeev's immersive performance and the consistent intensity across episodes.

ZEE5 Telugu Senior Vice President Jayanth Raghavan said the series adds emotional depth to the platform's Telugu originals, while the team also highlighted the strong contribution of cinematography by Mahesh and dialogues by Shruti.

Positioned as an emotionally intense thriller, D/O Prasad Rao Kanabadutaledhu promises a layered, suspense-driven narrative that blends family emotions with gripping storytelling.



## 'Haiku' wraps first schedule, targets September release

Vision Cinema House has officially announced the successful completion of the first shooting schedule of its upcoming film Haiku, marking a confident start to the project's production journey. The opening schedule was wrapped up smoothly and on time, giving the team strong momentum as the film moves forward.

The first phase of filming featured key sequences involving lead actors Aegan and Sridevi, along with impactful performances by Adrichi Arun and Kalaivani Baskar. According to the makers, the cast delivered emotionally layered performances that added depth and authenticity to the narrative right from the opening schedule.



Haiku is written and directed by Yuvaraj Chinnasamy, with additional screenplay contributions from Hariharan Ram. The creative collaboration has resulted in a script that blends sensitivity, realism, and strong cinematic storytelling, raising expectations within industry circles.

The production team has also expressed satisfaction with the visuals

captured so far, particularly praising cinematographer Priyesh Guruswamy for establishing the film's emotional tone and visual mood. The footage from the first schedule is said to have exceeded expectations.

Produced by Dr. D. Arulanandhu and Mathewo Arulanandhu under the Vision Cinema House banner, the film is progressing as planned. The next shooting schedule will begin shortly in Chennai, where major portions of the story will be filmed.

With strong creative energy and steady production progress, Haiku is slated for a grand worldwide theatrical release in September 2026.

## Mrunal Thakur grabs fashion lovers attention

Bollywood actress Mrunal Thakur's latest release Do Deewane Seher Me, produced by celebrated filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali and co-starring Siddhant Chaturvedi, has opened to a modest response at the box office. The film reportedly collected around Rs 1 crore on its opening day, followed by a slight growth on day two with earnings of approximately Rs 1.60 crore. Despite the marginal improvement, overall collections remain below industry expectations.

Even as the film faces a slow theatrical run, Mrunal has remained upbeat and focused, choosing to stay positive about her journey rather than dwell on numbers. The actress continues to engage her fans through social media, where she recently shared a set of stunning new pictures that quickly caught attention online. In the latest photos, Mrunal is seen in a chic white one-shoulder top paired with grey wide-leg trousers, creating a modern yet elegant silhouette. The outfit's soft drapes added a graceful touch, while her styling—straight open hair, bold eye makeup, and nude lips—gave her a confident and contemporary look. Keeping her accessories minimal with a statement ring and a sleek bangle, the actress let her outfit take centre stage, earning praise from fans and fashion lovers alike. On the professional front, Mrunal has a promising lineup ahead. She will next be seen in the upcoming film Dacoit, which is scheduled for release on April 10. The film stars Adivi Sesh in the lead role and is already generating buzz among audiences. While Do Deewane Seher Me struggles at the box office, Mrunal Thakur's confidence, consistent screen presence, and upcoming projects continue to keep her firmly in the spotlight.

