



Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Vijayawada | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi

For Advertisements PI Call: 8096967713

Follow @ / thehansindia / thehansindiaweb / thehansindia / TheHansIndiaWeb / thehansindia

Book your Copy: 97055 55551

WINDOWS



SC rules out blanket ban on firecrackers

Also not to allow fireworks throughout the day

NEW DELHI: Ahead of festival season, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will neither impose a complete ban on firecrackers nor allow their use round the clock, noting that a middle ground would require specifying the hours during which they can be used. A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and PB Varale said a total ban would affect people's sentiments, while allowing fireworks throughout the day would have a "huge impact" on others, including the elderly, sick and children. "We need to find a solution by which we can give a specified time," the bench observed orally. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati submitted a note stating that limited and conditional relaxation could be considered for specified "next-generation joined green crackers" recommended by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI), subject to applicable noise, emission and safety requirements.

TG's Chikitha strikes double gold on debut in Asian Games

K CHANDRASHEKAR
HYDERABAD

AN archer from the Peddapalli District in Telangana Taniparthi Chikitha has made the country proud by winning two gold medals in team events on her Asian Games debut.

The icing on the cake in India's golden hat-trick in compound archery was the mixed combination of Chikitha and Sahil Jadhav also securing an Olympic quota place

PEDDAPALLI PILLA'S BANAM FOR OLYMPICS

for the country following their top finish. Chikitha is India's first-ever Women's U-21 Compound World Champion.

Chikitha won the two gold medals in the women's team and mixed team on Wednesday. In the Compound Archery (Women's Team) Chikitha Taniparthi, along with Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Prithika Pradeep, defeated China 238-234, equal-



ling world record to grab the gold at the Asian Games. Repeating her marvellous performance on

the same day in a different event of Compound Archery of mixed team, Chikitha, along with Sahil Jadhav, secured gold. Altogether the Archery team had a stellar gold rush on Wednesday by bagging three gold medals. Despite being on her debut tournament, Chikitha held her nerves to contribute in the team's rush for gold at the games.

Continued on Page 7

Murmu pats archers

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu extended her congratulations to Indian archers Chikitha Taniparthi, Sahil Rajesh Jadhav, Prithika Pradeep and Jyothi Surekha Vennam following their gold medal victories at the Asian Games 2026.



EC revises SIR schedule in AP

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday extended the schedule for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in Andhra Pradesh and Meghalaya, fixing October 16 and October 26, respectively, for the publication of the final voter lists. Earlier, the date for the publication of the final voter list was October 9 for Andhra Pradesh and October 21 for Meghalaya.

Will complete 36 irrigation projects in 3 years: Naidu

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has declared that the state government proposes to complete 36 irrigation projects at a cost of Rs 35,000 crore over the next three years, with the objective of ensuring adequate drinking and irrigation water across the state. He also set the 2028 Krishna Pushkarams as the target for ensuring greater availability of Krishna and Godavari waters.

The Chief Minister on Wednesday addressed a gathering after distributing pattas conferring full ownership rights to 26,401 families under the 'Pedalaku Pattabishekam' programme at

- ▶▶ 26,401 poor families get land ownership rights in Vijayawada
- ▶▶ Plots worth Rs 28,112 cr distributed under 'Pedalaku Pattabishekam'
- ▶▶ AP government targets 11 lakh houses



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu distributing regularised house-site pattas at Ajith Singh Nagar in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Makineni Basava Punnaiah Stadium in Vijayawada.

Naidu said the implementation of the Godavari-Cauvery river-linking project

could help address water scarcity across southern India. Around 1,400 tmc of Godavari water had flowed into the sea this year, he

pointed out, and argued that diverting even 100 tmc for productive purposes could transform the region.

Continued on Page 7



Modi calls up Trump, discusses trade & energy

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that he had a "productive conversation" with US President Donald Trump and reviewed bilateral cooperation between New Delhi and Washington in various sectors.

In a social media post on X, Modi said: "Had a productive conversation with President Trump. We reviewed our bilateral co-operation in trade, defence, energy, critical technologies and other areas. We agreed to maintain close engagement to take our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership forward."

Continued on Page 7

INDIA bloc declares all-out war on SIR

- Announces protests on 'vote chori'
- To undertake march to EC on Oct 6
- Demands paper ballots in future polls



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge addresses a press conference following the INDIA bloc meeting, alongside LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, J&K CM Omar Abdullah and CPP chairperson Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi on Wednesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

PUTTING up a united front on the 'vote chori' issue, the Opposition INDIA bloc on Wednesday announced joint 'save democracy' marches in

all districts and five major rallies, demanded that future polls be held with ballot paper and appealed to the Supreme Court to expedite cases of SIR and electoral "malpractices".

Continued on Page 7

Zero vision, 100% frustration in Oppn, poohpoohs BJP

P7

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with **Kapil Chits**

KAPIL GROUP

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL

Indian sailor among 5 killed by pirates on hijacked tanker

NEW DELHI: An Indian sailor or was among five crew members killed during an anti-piracy operation on the hijacked fuel tanker MT Honour 25 in Somalia. Puntland Maritime Police Force successfully rescued MT Honour 25, apprehending 16 suspected pirates, and freed other vessels like MT Siblu 1 and MT Eureka. The High Commission of India in Kenya is providing assistance to the family of the deceased Indian national and ensuring the safety and repatriation of other Indian seafarers. The incident highlights a resurgence of Somali piracy, driven by regional conflicts and geopolitical instability in the Red Sea, impacting international shipping. Other hijacked vessels, including MT Eureka with Indian crew, were also released, though some were damaged and had cargo siphoned off.

CM Naidu calls for continuous skill training of govt staff



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at a review meeting on skill development in Amaravati on Wednesday

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has called for continuous skill development of government employees, directing officials to expand training programmes in collaboration with premier institutions such as the IITs and IIMs.

Naidu made the direction during a review meeting with senior officials at his camp office on Wednesday on the services being delivered by various government departments. Skill development, Anna Canteens, drinking water supply in urban areas and amenities in welfare hostels were among the issues discussed. The Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh was lead-

- ▶▶ CM asks officials to tie up with IITs, IIMs for specialised training
- ▶▶ No complacency over drinking water supply despite recent rains
- ▶▶ Public participation sought in govt initiatives & welfare programmes

ing the southern states in capacity building and skill training for government employees. He said employees were being trained through various courses on the iGOT Karmayogi platform to equip them to function effectively in real-time work environments. **Continued on Page 7**

Cabinet hikes MSP for all rabi crops

Green Energy Corridor, Delhi traffic mgmt system get nod

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved three major measures spanning agriculture, power infrastructure and urban mobility, including higher Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated rabi crops for the 2027-28 marketing season, a Rs 1.86 lakh crore Green Energy Corridor Phase-III scheme and a Rs 1,789.52 crore technology-led traffic management system for Delhi. **Continued on Page 7**

Hero Indian captain prevents flydubai hijack

Makes emergency landing in Saudi Arabia; saves 180 passengers

NEW DELHI

IN a dramatic mid-air incident, an Indian Captain of flydubai flight FZ1073 from Dubai to Tel Aviv carrying 180 passengers thwarted a hijack attempt by his co-pilot, averting what Israeli media described as a potential "second 9/11."

The flight made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia after an alleged violent altercation between the two pilots inside the cockpit triggering a mid-air emergency, with



videos purportedly capturing passengers screaming as the aircraft rapidly descended. The flight was diverted to Tabuk airport after transmitting emergency signals that briefly raised fears of a

aircraft and stab Captain Smit Machchhar during the flight. Despite sustaining injuries, the Captain fought back and prevented the plane from crashing. His quick thinking and courage ensured the safety of more than 180 passengers, most of them Israeli nationals.

hijacking. Israeli authorities scrambled fighter jets as they struggled to establish contact with the aircraft.

According to reports, the Omani co-pilot allegedly tried to seize control of the

The situation escalated when the Captain, injured but determined, managed to restrain the attacker long enough for two off-duty pilots traveling as passengers to intervene. **Continued on Page 7**

SIR update: No more parent, grandparent details, says EC

Changes Form 6 rule for new voters in 20 states

NEW DELHI

NEW voters in 20 states, where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) has been completed, will no longer have to provide details of their parents' presence on the electoral rolls. The Election Commission has amended Form 6 to allow applicants in these states to submit the form without the additional SIR-linked



declaration seeking details of parents and grandparents. However, in states where SIR is still underway, new voters will continue to be required to submit the declaration. The move comes days after reports of internal objections within

the three-member poll panel over changes made to Form 6. Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had reportedly raised objections to the addition of the declaration, with internal records cited by The Indian Express showing that they questioned its legality in the absence of an amendment to the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. **Continued on Page 7**

Job creation coalition govt's only agenda: Lokesh

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CREATING employment opportunities for the youth is the sole agenda of the Andhra Pradesh government, Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh has said, underlining that the coalition government has set a target of creating 20 lakh jobs to fulfil the aspirations of young people.

Participating in the 'India Today Conclave South 2026' in Kochi, Lokesh said the youth were seeking "jobs, jobs and jobs" and that the Chief Minister, Ministers,



HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh participating in the 'India Today Conclave South' in Kochi on Wednesday

and officials were working towards creating employment opportunities.

Responding to questions from senior journalist and

'India Today' Consulting Editor Rajdeep Sardesai, Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh was attracting investments across sectors and develop-

ing specialised clusters and ecosystems. He said nearly 25 per cent of the investments that came to India during the past year were in Andhra

We're in a hurry as we have only five years. And Gen Z is also in a hurry," HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh underlining his government's focus on delivering speedy governance in five years. He outlined AP government's ambitious plans to attract investments and build new economic hubs

Pradesh. Lokesh said the government was focusing on sectors ranging from energy and horticulture to quantum computing and was working with industries to equip youth with the skills required for emerging employment opportunities.

On allegations surrounding the recent DSC teacher recruitment examination, Lokesh said the examination was conducted transparently through a computer-based system and claimed that no allegation had been proved so far.

Continued on Page 7

76-yr-old gets 13-yr jail for 1988 bank robbery

KALPETTA

A 76-year-old man has been sentenced to 13 years in prison and fined Rs 16,000 for his role in the 1988 robbery at the Nallurnad Service Cooperative Bank in Wayanad. The sentence was handed down by Additional District and Sessions Court Judge L Jayavanth.

The convict, Abdul Samad, a Kollam native, was arrested by police in October 2024 and faced trial while in judicial custody. The court said he will have to undergo another 10 months in prison if he fails to pay the fine.

According to police, the robbery took place in the early hours of January 8, 1988, when a six-member gang arrived at the bank in a car, broke open the locks and entered the premises.

The gang took away a safe, nearly one kilogram of gold ornaments and Rs 5,544 in cash.

The prosecution said two people who reached the bank after hearing the noise were attacked with a crowbar. In the case,



four accused -- Subair, Suresh Babu, Alikkuttu and Naseer -- were arrested and sentenced in 1993. Another accused, OK Babu, who had remained absconding, surrendered before the court in 2017 and was later sentenced.

During the trial, the court examined around 40 witnesses. The prosecution produced 166 documents as evidence and 21 material objects seized under the mahazar before the court.

The initial investigation was carried out by the then Mananthavady police and was later taken over by the District CBCID. Public Prosecutor E R Santhosh Kumar appeared for the prosecution.



Economy is doing great. You need not look for a job. Just drive e-rickshaw

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

"e" Procurement Tender Notice
NIT No.11/2026-2027; Dated: 19.09.2026

Online Tender is invited for the work "Water Resources Department HNSS Project-Phase-11 Modernization of HNSS Main Canal with CC Lining & Shortcreting Construction of Balance CM & CD works from Km 400.500 to Km 458.975/463.000 including Tunnels (from Km 411.850 to Km 415.650 and Km 420.850 to Km 426.150) in Sri Sathya Sai District" for Amount Rs.487.489 Crores in Kadiri Constituency Limits in Sathya Sai District on LS Contract System under HNSS Phase-II". Tender Schedules available from 29.09.2026 to 18.10.2026. for further details please visit www.e-procurement.gov.in.

Superintending Engineer,
HNSS Circle No.2, Ananthapuram.

Union Bank of India
REGIONAL OFFICE, KADAPA
Beside Head Post Office, Trunk Road, Kadapa-516001

PREMISES REQUIRED ON LEASE

Union Bank of India requires a commercial premises admeasuring 1700 sq.ft. ± 10% carpet area (i.e.1700 sq.ft. to 1870sq.ft.) on lease at **Kotreddy Circle** (Near to Main Road) Kadapa Town, YSR Kadapa District-516001. Premises ready to occupy on ground floor will be preferred. Prospective landlords holding ownership may download application forms from our Bank's website www.unionbankofindia.co.in, e-procurement portal www.eprocure.gov.in from **01-10-2026**. Offers from Brokers/ Intermediaries will not be entertained. Last date for submission of bids in prescribed format is **21-10-2026 up to 04.00 PM**. The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Sd/- REGIONAL HEAD

Canara Bank
MR Pulli Branch(5611)
Tirupati, Call: 8332997102

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

The under mentioned persons are hereby informed that they have failed to pay off the liability in the loan accounts. Notices sent to them by Registered Post have been returned undelivered, to the Bank. They are therefore requested to pay off the liability and other charges and redeem the pledged securities on or before **15.10.2026(date)** failing which the said securities will be sold by the Bank in public auction at the cost of the borrower at the Bank's premises at 4.00 PM on **16.10.2026** on any other convenient date thereafter without further notice, at the absolute discretion of the Bank

Sl. No.	Account Number	Name & Address of the Borrower	Gross Wt (in gms.)	O/s Amount
1	180148650818	R.Ranga Reddy, S/o.R.Venkataramana Reddy 7-170, shanthi Nagar, M.R.Palli Tirupati - 517502	18.40	
2	125004729879	R.Ranga Reddy, S/o.R.Venkataramana Reddy 7-170, shanthi Nagar, M.R.Palli Tirupati - 517502		5,97,500.00

Tirupati, Date: 30.09.2026 Sd/- Branch Manager, Canara Bank

ANDHRA PRADESH GRAMEENA BANK
(A SCHEDULED BANK OWNED BY GOVERNMENT)
(REGIONAL OFFICE: CHITTOOR)

PREMISES REQUIRED FOR LEASE

Offers are invited from interested parties (no brokers or intermediaries) for leasing out their premises in the ground floor for a lease of at least 10 years with good/sufficient parking space with carpet area approximately 1200 to 1400 sqft and having a strong room facility at least 200 sqft inclusive of total Carpet area to our Existing **197 Ramapuram Branch, Gudipala Mandal, Chittoor District**. Premises should have sufficient water and parking facility. Preference will be given to location in main road. Rent will be paid on actual carpet area inclusive of total taxes. The offer shall be submitted in a sealed cover to **RO Chittoor** before **21-10-2026 by 5.00 PM** superscribing technical and financial bid. For further details and prescribed tender forms please contact Branch Manager at **197 Ramapuram Branch, Gudipala Mandal, Chittoor District**. **NOTE:** Bank reserves its right to reject any or all offers without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/- Regional Manager,
Andhra Pradesh Grameena Bank,
#4-219511-SG, 1st Floor, SGB Towers,
Vellore Road, Chittoor-517002

Date : 01.10.2026
Place : CHITTOOR

**FORM NO-1
CHITTOOR PALAMANERU KUPPAM URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CPKUDA), CHITTOOR DISTRICT, CHITTOOR**

Draft Notification of GIS based Master Plan for Nagari Municipality, Nagari Inviting of Objections and Suggestions
Roc No: 08/2026/CPK UDA Dated: 30-09-2026

(NOTICE UNDER SUB-SECTION (1) OF SECTION 12 OF THE ANDHRA PRADESH METROPOLITAN REGION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES ACT, 2016, READ WITH SUB-RULE (3) OF RULE 16 OF THE ANDHRA PRADESH METROPOLITAN REGION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES RULES, 2018.)

1) The Draft GIS based Draft Master Plan of Nagari Municipality, Nagari prepared by the Chittoor Palamaneru Kuppam Urban Development Authority (CPKUDA), a copy of which is attached here with for the area described in the Schedule below, is hereby published under sub-rule (3) of Rule 16 of the rules framed under the Andhra Pradesh Metropolitan Region and Urban Development Authorities Rules, 2018

2) The map depicting various Proposals in GIS based Draft Master Plan may be inspected without charge during office hours at the office of the Nagari Municipality, Nagari, CPKUDA and various Government Offices at Chittoor. The draft GIS based Master Plan is made available for viewing on all working days during the office hours for a period of 30 days from dt. 01.10.2026 to 30.10.2026

3) Any person interested in the Proposals in the GIS based Draft Master Plan may submit the objections and suggestions relating thereto in writing to the Commissioner, Nagari Municipality, Nagari Vice-Chairperson, Chittoor Palamaneru Kuppam Urban Development Authority (CPKUDA), Chittoor, or through email to chudachittoor@gmail.com / nagarinmc@yahoo.co.in within 30 days from dt. 01.10.2026 to 30.10.2026

SCHEDULE:
GIS Based Master Plan- NAGARI MUNICIPALITY, NAGARI.
I. EXISTING LANDUSE MAP
II. PROPOSED LANDUSE MAP

Planning Area Boundary:
EAST - NAGARAJAKUPPAM AND MANGADU
WEST - SATHIRAVADA, TERANI
NORTH - TIRUMALAKUPPAM
SOUTH - MELAPATTU & NETHAM KHANDRIGA

Sd/- Vice Chairperson,
Chittoor Palamaneru Kuppam Urban Development Authority, (CPKUDA), Chittoor.

Date: 01-10-2026
Place: Chittoor

Chola CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
Corporate Office: Chola Crest, Super B, C54 & C55, 4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600 032, T.N.

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("the Act") AND THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("the Rules")

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. (the Secured Creditor) under the Act and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sec. 13(12) of the Act read with Rule 3 issued Demand Notice(s) under Sec. 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that borrower(s) is / are avoiding the service of the Demand Notice(s), therefore the service of notice is being affected by affixation and publication as per Rules. The contents of Demand Notice(s) are extracted herein below :-

Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower/s	Loan Amt.	Dt. of Demand Notice & O/s. Amt.	Description of the Property / Secured Asset
1.	1. Mr. / Mrs. A. Nabeesa 2. Mr. / Mrs. M. Aamhaa (Alias) M. Amanullah Add. :- D. No. 2-1-11, Krris Tiyan Colony, T. R. Kandriga, Chittoor, Indian Petrol Bunk Back Side, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh-517 590. Also At : Door No. 2-1-11, Assessment No. 1118000376, Plot No. 21, Ward No. 2, Sy. No. 216/1, Indian Oil Petrol Station Street, Thirumalaraju Kandriga Area, Nagari Town & Municipality, Nagari Mandal, Chittoor District. A.P.-517 590.	Rs. 25,00,000/-	18.08.2026 Rs. 25,44,528/- (Rs. Twenty Five Lakhs Forty Four Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Eight Only) as on 18.08.2026	(As per the Read. Sale Deed Dt. 20.06.2011/Regd. Doc.No. 1451/2011) executed by D. Mariyamma in favour of A. Nabeesa) Andhra Pradesh, Chittoor Dist. Sri Balaji Reg. Dist. Nagari Sub. Dist. Nagari Mandal, Nagari Municipal area No. 94, Kakavedu Group- Thirumalaraju Kandriga Village accounts Dry Sy. No. 216/1 Ac. 2.88 Cents in this Approx Ac. 0.05 cents situated at Thirumalaraju Kandriga Village Residential area-Plots laid by C. S. I. in which Plot No. 21-Assessment No. 1012-D. No. 2-1-11, admeasuring an extent of 245 Sq. Yds. of site in this 770 Sq. Ft. of RCC Molding House and on Eastern side :- 35 Sq. Ft. of Bathroom etc. Bounded on :- East : Plot No. 31 site. South : Plot No. 22 site; West : 20 Ft. width, North to South Road leads from Nagapuram Road; North : Plot No. 20 Site. *In between this site measuring Measurements - East to West : 55 Ft. or 16.775 Mtrs. North to South : 40 Ft. or 12.192 Mtrs. Admeasuring 245 Sq. Yards of site in this 770 Sq. Ft. of RCC molding house & on Eastern side 35 Sq. Ft. of Bathroom etc., with Doors, windows, walls, bore, etc.

The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the Demand Notice(s) and to pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinabove within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of payment. The borrower(s) may note that **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd.** is a secured creditor and the loan facility availed by the Borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property / properties being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s). In the event borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, The Secured Creditor shall be entitled to exercise all the rights U/s. 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the secured asset(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder and realize payment. The Secured Creditor is also empowered to **ATTACH AND / OR SEAL** the secured asset(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the Sale of the secured asset(s), The Secured Creditor also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the mortgaged properties is insufficient to cover the dues payable to the Secured Creditor. This remedy is in addition and independent of all the other remedies available to the Secured Creditor under any other law.

The attention of the borrower(s) is invited to Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets and further to Section 13(13) of the Act, whereby the borrower(s) are restrained / prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the secured asset(s) or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business) any of the secured asset(s), without prior written consent of the Secured Creditor and non-compliance with the above is an offence punishable under Section 29 of the said Act. The copy of the Demand Notice is available with the undersigned and the borrower(s) may, if they so desire, can collect the same from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer Limited
For Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

Place : Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh
Date : 18.08.2026

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CIVIL supplies minister Nadendla Manohar on Wednesday launched a subsidised onion sale programme at Rythu Bazaar here, under which onions will be sold at Rs 35 a kg with the support of the Centre and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF).

Speaking on the occasion, Manohar said rising prices in the open market were not confined to Andhra Pradesh, attributing the trend to global factors, including the impact of wars, the oil crisis and El Niño. He said the coalition government was closely monitoring market prices and taking measures to keep essential commodities affordable.

The minister said the government had already started selling

• Civil supplies minister Manohar launches subsidised onion scheme in Vijayawada

• Each consumer can buy two kg by producing Aadhaar

BPT super-fine rice at Rs 48 and Rs 52 a kg through 400 special counters after noticing an increase in rice prices.

As onion prices crossed Rs 70 a kg in the open market, subsidised onions would be made available at all 115 Rythu Bazaars across the state. Each consumer would be entitled to two kg of onions on production of Aadhaar. Manohar said efforts were also being made to supply red gram and palm oil



Civil supplies minister Nadendla Manohar launches sale of subsidised onions at Rythu Bazaar in Vijayawada on Wednesday

at subsidised prices through ration shops. The Centre had agreed to supply 1.20 lakh metric tonnes of

red gram to AP. The minister said there was no shortage of rice in the country and adequate stocks were

‘BJP has no role in SIR’

MLA Nallamilli Ramakrishna says that genuine grievances could be raised before the competent authorities



BJP SIR State convener and Anaparthi MLA Nallamilli Ramakrishna Reddy addressing the media at BJP office in Rajamahendravaram on Wednesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

BJP SIR State convener and Anaparthi MLA Nallamilli Ramakrishna Reddy on Wednesday criticised opposition parties for making what he termed baseless allegations against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and said the BJP had no role in the exercise.

Addressing a media conference in Rajamahendravaram, Nallamilli said some political parties with no electoral relevance were making unnecessary allegations against the SIR by relying on what he described as fabricated reports appearing in a section of the media.

He also accused the Opposition of spreading misinformation over discussions among members of the Election Commission. He said SIR was a constitutionally mandated exercise and had nothing to do with the BJP.

According to him, the present exercise was the

14th Special Intensive Revision undertaken after Independence.

The Supreme Court, in its May 2026 judgment on the Bihar SIR, upheld the Election Commission's authority to conduct the exercise under Article 324 of the Constitution read with the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

Nallamilli said every political party has agents at polling booths and questioned why there should be apprehension about the revision process when representatives of all parties were involved in the electoral process.

He said political parties should raise specific objections through the prescribed mechanisms instead of casting aspersions on constitutional institutions.

Targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the MLA alleged that he was making politically motivated and inappropriate remarks as he was unable to accept his electoral setbacks.

He said people were observing such criticism and would respond appropriately. He also alleged that the Congress was attempting to create doubts about constitutional institutions.

Nallamilli further alleged that Sonia Gandhi

had voted despite not being an Indian citizen at the relevant time and said the Congress had no moral standing to question the electoral process. He said allegations against the Election Commission should be backed by facts and evidence.

He questioned the contention that the SIR process was designed to favour the BJP, asking how Prashant Kishor could have won in Bihar if the exercise was advantageous to the BJP. He said the Bihar experience showed that the SIR process was not designed to benefit any particular political party. The Supreme Court had upheld the validity of the Bihar SIR in May 2026, holding that the Election Commission had the authority to conduct the exercise and that the process was aimed at maintaining accurate and reliable electoral rolls.

MLA Nallamilli appealed to Opposition parties to respect constitutional institutions and allow the electoral revision process to proceed accordingly to law.

He said genuine grievances could be raised before the competent authorities and through the legal mechanisms available to voters and political parties.

Quarter-final race takes shape at Sub-Junior Nationals

• Boys' quarter-finalists: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

• Girls' quarter-finalists: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh

HANS NEW SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE quarter-final picture at the 51st Sub-Junior National Basketball Championship, being conducted in Vijayawada, became clearer on Day 4, with several teams officially securing their places in the knockout stage after impressive performances in the league phase.

The tournament is being conducted at Maris Stella College, Chennai. Ramakrishna Reddy, Chairman of the Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium, and KBC ZPH School at Patamata in Vijayawada.

In the boys' section, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have secured their places in the quarter-finals. In the girls' section, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have confirmed their quarter-final berths.

In boys Group A, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan confirmed their quarter-final berths. Rajasthan produced one of the day's closest contests, edging past Uttar



Action during the match between Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh boys at Maris Stella College in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Pradesh 73-71 in a thrilling encounter.

Harshwardhan Singh led Rajasthan with 21 points, while Robin Dhanka and Rajath Vyas contributed 19 and 18 points respectively. For Uttar Pradesh, Ayushman Kumar scored 14 points, while Vanish Tomar and Sahil Kumar added 12 each.

In boys Group B, Karnataka, Delhi and Maharashtra booked their places in the knockout stage. Delhi registered a convincing 72-29 victory over Karnataka, with Vanish Dalal scoring 17 points and Karthik adding 16.

Despite the defeat, Karnataka had already done enough in the league phase to secure its quarter-final spot.

In the girls' section, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu confirmed their quarter-final berths from Group A. Tamil Nadu strengthened its position with a dominant 62-17 victory over Telangana. V Anshika led the scoring with 13 points, followed by Dhanya M with 12 and Kavya IK with 10. Maharashtra were among the standout performers of the day in Girls Group B,

overpowering Kerala 103-45 to secure their place in the quarter-finals. Netra Damke was the star performer with a game-high 36 points, while Aarohi Kamble added 15 and Maitri Sha contributed 12.

Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have also confirmed their places in the Girls Group B quarter-final lineup. Kerala, despite its defeat to Maharashtra, had accumulated enough results during the league phase to progress to the knockout stage.

The Level 2 Boys competition also witnessed several high-scoring victories. Telangana defeated Goa 107-29, Chhattisgarh beat Tamil Nadu 82-19, West Bengal crossed the century mark with a 100-29 victory over Chandigarh, while Kerala defeated Puducherry 76-17.

With one day of league action remaining, the battle for the remaining quarter-final places and final group positions is set to reach a decisive stage.

Teams will look to finish the league phase strongly and carry their momentum into the knockout rounds.

Congress demands suspension of SIR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMALAPURAM

THE Congress has organised a large-scale dharna in Amalapuram, headquarters of Konaseema district, on Wednesday demanding immediate resignation and removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, suspension of the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and restoration of voter names allegedly deleted from the rolls.

Congress Working Committee member and former APCC president Gidugu Rudra Raju, who participated in the protest, alleged that the Election Commission

had compromised the sanctity of the electoral process and demanded that the CEC face legal action if violations were established. The Congress has been intensifying its protests over the SIR and its functioning.

Rudra Raju said the party had three immediate demands: resignation of Gyanesh Kumar as CEC, suspension of the SIR process and restoration of the names of around 13 crore voters, whom the Congress alleged were illegally deleted from electoral rolls. He alleged that important decisions relating to electoral rolls were being taken arbitrarily and claimed that the CEC had acted without the approval of the other Election Commissioners on several occasions.



CWC member Gidugu Rudra Raju, Konaseema district Congress president Kothuri Srinivas and others participating in a dharna at Clock Tower Centre in Amalapuram on Wednesday

YSRCP alleges large-scale corruption in NMC

NELLORE: YSRCP Nellore district president and former minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy, alongside MLC Parvathareddy Chandrasekhar Reddy, alleged large-scale corruption and financial irregularities within the Nellore Municipal Corporation (NMC) under Municipal Administration Minister Ponguru Narayana. Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP district office, leaders stated that the corporation's annual tax collection target has skyrocketed from approximately Rs 66 crore during the previous government to Rs 154 crore currently, placing an undue financial burden on residents.

MLC Chandrasekhar Reddy noted that water tax collection targets have similarly jumped from Rs 7 crore to Rs 30 crore, with poor families facing severe pressure and property attachment threats over dues.

Furthermore, the opposition alleged that garbage collection autos were discontinued in favor of 126 tractors belonging to Prithviraj Constructions—associated with a follower of Minister Narayana—incurring a monthly expenditure of Rs 1.67 crore.

AP pitches opportunities for investment at Mumbai roadshow

K VARAPRASADA RAO
AMARAVATI

THE state government, in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), organised a major investment promotion roadshow in Mumbai on Wednesday, showcasing investment opportunities in the State and seeking to forge new partnerships with domestic and international businesses.

Minister for micro, small and medium enterprises Kondapalli Srinivas was the chief guest at the roadshow, which was attended by representatives of prominent industrial associations, trade organisations, foreign trade bodies and business groups.

Addressing the gathering, Srinivas said Andhra Pradesh offered a combination of land availability, natural resources, infrastructure, ports and

● Govt, CII showcase opportunities across 10 key sectors

● Minister Srinivas highlights land, ports and logistics infrastructure

● Roadshow aimed at drawing Maharashtra investors to Vizag CII conference



Minister for MSMEs Kondapalli Srinivas with members of the business community at an investment promotion roadshow in Mumbai on Wednesday

logistics connectivity that could support large-scale industrial investments.

He said the State government was committed to facilitating investments through entrepreneur-friendly policies and ensuring a favourable business environment.

The roadshow focused on

investment opportunities in BFSI and FinTech, textiles, pharmaceuticals and life sciences, chemicals and petrochemicals, ports and shipping logistics, food processing and FMCG, Global Capability Centres (GCCs), data centres and renewable

energy. The minister said the government was pursuing a 3S approach — speed of doing business, service and stability — to improve the investment climate and provide greater certainty to investors.

The Mumbai event was

organised as part of the State government's broader investment mobilisation strategy and also served as the opening platform for the CII Partnership Conference, scheduled to be held in Visakhapatnam on November 12 and 13.

Srinivas said the government expected the Mumbai roadshow to encourage leading companies and investors from Maharashtra to participate in the Visakhapatnam conference. The interaction with the business community in Mumbai, he said, would help broaden the scope for investments and partnerships in Andhra Pradesh.

The government is using a series of investor outreach programmes to present sector-specific opportunities and build interest ahead of the Visakhapatnam conference.

State brings healthcare to seniors' doorsteps



● Health minister Satya Kumar says Andhra Pradesh conducted over 1.10 crore health check-ups for citizens aged above 60 during 2025-26, alongside more than 6 lakh physiotherapy services

● Special geriatric clinics are being held every Thursday at PHCs, with dedicated elderly wards in district hospitals and referral support for advanced treatment

M V SYAM SUNDAR
AMARAVATI

hospitals. He said special geriatric services were being conducted every Thursday at primary health centres for people aged above 60. Those requiring advanced treatment were being referred to higher-level hospitals. Special geriatric wards had been established at district hospitals, while area hospitals in places without district hospitals were also providing such services.

According to the government, 1,10,01,508 health check-ups were conducted among elderly people across the state during 2025-26, including 6,12,601 physiotherapy services. During 2026-27, 52,79,669 OP, IP, physiotherapy and other services have so far been provided to senior citizens.

As part of community-based healthcare, special medical teams visited 74 government-recognised old-age homes and conducted comprehensive health assessments.

The teams included specialists in general medicine, psychiatry, gynaecology and other areas.

The assessment identified depression-related problems in 18.8 per cent of the elderly, frequent falls in 9.8 per cent, and memory-related problems in 7.5 per cent.

About 2.1 per cent had

both memory problems and depression, while 6.4 per cent had more than one age-related health problem. Others reported difficulties with activities such as cooking, shopping, travelling, going outside and performing routine tasks independently.

Those identified with health or psychosocial problems were provided counselling, treatment and other support services. Mental health professionals also participated in the visits.

The minister said rehabilitation workers were being encouraged to visit at least five elderly people living near community health centres every week to provide physiotherapy and other services.

He said October would be observed as a special month for elderly healthcare, with awareness programmes on healthy ageing, early disease detection, hypertension, mental health, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and geriatric care.

A comprehensive geriatric assessment tool-based questionnaire would also be used at district and area hospitals to collect health information from at least 1,000 elderly people and provide treatment based on their needs.

BJP to host Khadi Mela in Vijayawada on Gandhi Jayanti

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

TO mark Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, the BJP will host a Khadi Mela at the IV Palace in Vijayawada. Organised under the banner 'Khadi for Nation, Khadi for Fashion', the event forms part of the party's Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, led by AP BJP state president P V N Madhav.

Announcing the event, state BJP spokesperson Mullapudi Renuka said that last year's exhibitions across Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and Rajamahendravaram received overwhelming support, including a visit from Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

This year's mela, located on the

- Mela to be held at IV Palace under the theme 'Khadi for Nation, Khadi for Fashion'
- Event will showcase varying handlooms and feature cultural programmes, with BJP urging families to support local weavers
- AP's handloom heritage, including Ponduru Khadi, Mangalagiri and Venkatagiri, will be highlighted as part of the 'Vocal for Local' push



BJP state unit official spokesperson Mullapudi Renuka speaking to the media in Vijayawada on Wednesday

grams. Renuka urged families to attend and support local weavers, emphasizing that Khadi is more than just a fabric—it is an enduring symbol of Swadeshi, self-reliance and national pride.

She pointed out that handloom and cottage industries remain India's

largest source of employment after agriculture, providing vital dignity and income to rural households, particularly women. Thanks to expanded digital marketing, financial aid, and modern outreach, the sector's national turnover has surged from Rs 33,000 crore in 2013-14 to nearly Rs 1.7 lakh crore today. Renuka also noted the Andhra Pradesh government's active support for weavers through initiatives like Nethanna Sevalo, power subsidies, pensions, and easy credit.

She also referred to the heritage of AP's textile tradition, pointing to Ponduru Khadi's prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag, alongside key handloom hubs in Mangalagiri and Venkatagiri.

Jagan assures legal support to farmers over 'Lanka lands'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

FARMERS from Lankapalli village in Pamidimukkala mandal of Krishna district sought the support of YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy over a dispute involving nearly 600 acres of 'Lanka (island) lands' or river island lands. The farmers, who met him at party central office here on Wednesday, told Jagan that their families had been cultivating the lands since 1952, but their rights were being ignored. They said local TDP leaders and revenue officials had issued pattadar passbooks in the names of TDP leaders and their benamis, and claimed Pamidimukkala tahsildar K Naveen Kumar had overseen the process.

They urged YSRCP to press for a comprehensive inquiry and stand by them until justice was delivered. After hearing their grievances, Jagan assured them that the party would provide the necessary legal assistance and support efforts to protect their rights. Speaking to the media, former MLA and YSRCP leader Kaile Anil Kumar said TDP leaders in Pamaru are attempting to take over nearly 350 acres of SC Society Lanka lands through resurvey, forged documents and pattadar passbooks issued in names not found in original records.



Lankapalli farmers meet YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy seeking his support on the land dispute, at Tadepalli on Wednesday

After meeting Jagan Mohan Reddy with affected farmers, he demanded immediate government action. Anil said Pamaru has about 1,200 acres, with genuine farmers cultivating around 250 acres, while another 350 acres are being transferred to others under the supervision of local leader Ganta Suresh and with the backing of MLA Varla Kumar Raja. He said 600 acres of SC Society land are also being shown as government land, including about 100 acres proposed for sand excavation. He said nearly Rs 300 crore worth of public resources are being targeted through land, sand and soil dealings. He warned that YSRCP would approach the courts and seek cancellation of illegal passbooks and a judicial inquiry.

Atchanna hails Centre's rabi MSP hike for 2027-28

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

AGRICULTURE minister K Atchannaidu welcomed the Centre's decision to increase the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for rabi crops for the 2027-28 marketing season, saying it would provide greater price security to farmers.

The decision was approved at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to the minister, the Centre has fixed the MSP at Rs 2,610 per quintal for wheat, Rs 2,286 for barley, Rs 5,958 for gram, Rs 7,390 for lentil (masur), Rs 6,613 for rapeseed and mustard, and Rs 7,215 for safflower.

Compared with the previous season, the MSP for safflower has been increased by Rs 675 per quintal, rapeseed



and mustard by Rs 413, lentil by Rs 390, barley by Rs 136, gram by Rs 83 and wheat by Rs 25.

Atchannaidu said the higher MSPs for pulses and oilseeds would encourage farmers to diversify their crops and help strengthen returns from agriculture.

He said both the Centre and the state government were committed to ensuring that farmers received remunerative prices that covered

their production costs and provided a reasonable return.

Increasing farmers' incomes, making agriculture more profitable and protecting farmers from market price fluctuations should remain key priorities, he said.

The minister said the state government was ensuring timely availability of seeds, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs. It was also prepared to intervene in markets whenever necessary to help farmers secure remunerative prices for their produce.

He said the state government was working in coordination with the Centre to promote farmers' welfare and the development of the agriculture sector.

The Centre and the state were moving forward together to provide greater financial security to farmers and make agriculture a more profitable livelihood, Atchannaidu said.

TER eyes integrated growth across key sectors

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

THE emerging space, defence, manufacturing, logistics and tourism sectors are set to play a key role in shaping the Tirupati Economic Region's (TER) development roadmap up to 2047.

The state government is preparing a comprehensive development plan for the region by incorporating inputs from elected representatives, industry, academia, officials and other stakeholders. TER CEO M Mukesh Kumar Meena said that the plan would focus on local requirements, development gaps and investment opportunities.

Addressing a stakeholder workshop at the Tirupati collectorate on Wednesday, Meena said the exercise should go beyond data collection and preparation of a report and result in an actionable plan reflecting ground-level needs. KPMG has been appointed as the

strategic support agency for preparing the TER Development Plan 2047.

Representatives from Tirupati, Chittoor and Nellore districts, including collectors, MLAs, industrialists, academicians and experts, participated in the day-long consultation.

Meena highlighted the potential of the region in space, defence, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, tourism and services. He proposed linking the emerging space and defence clusters in the Tirupati-Nellore belt with research, manufacturing, testing and launch facilities. With a space city coming up over nearly 2,500 acres, he suggested an R&D park involving IIT and IISER and called for policy support for land, buffer zones and infrastructure.

He also proposed examining a bonded corridor connecting ports, airports and industrial areas and integrating cargo, repacking and distribution facilities to

- Tirupati Economic Region CEO Mukesh Kumar Meena says the plan should address ground level needs and development gaps
- Space, defence, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, tourism and services identified as key growth sectors

improve logistics.

Planning department joint secretary Anantha Shankar said an assessment of the economic conditions, growth potential and per capita income of the nine districts forming the TER had been carried out up to the mandal level. Though the region accounts for more than half of the State's geographical area, it contrib-



TER CEO Mukesh Kumar Meena, planning department joint secretary Anantha Shankar, Tirupati collector S Venkateswar and MLA Arani Srinivasulu at the stakeholder workshop in Tirupati on Wednesday

utes around one-third of its GSDP, he said.

Tirupati collector Dr S Venkateswar said the district's industrial ecosystem covered nearly 15,000 acres and stressed the need for better connectivity between industrial areas and major highways. Chittoor collector Sumit Kumar said 2,000 to 2,500 acres was available for industrial parks and called

for advance planning of power, water and road infrastructure.

Nellore collector Himanshu Shukla sought industry-linked skill programmes in welding, solar ingot and wafer manufacturing, drone technology and gantry crane operations. He also stressed stronger power infrastructure for emerging sectors such as green hydrogen and

data centres.

Tourism proposals included a circuit covering Tirumala, Srikalahasti, Kanipakam, Talakona and Horsley Hills, besides improved accommodation, transport and digital booking facilities. Sullurpeta MLA Nelavala Vijayasree sought a master plan for Pulicat and Sriharikota, while forest officials stressed compliance with sanctuary regulations and required clearances.

MLC Kancherla Srikanth sought stronger college-industry links through internships and skill programmes. Satyavedu MLA Adimulam sought better infrastructure in the industrial belt, including a bypass to Sri City.

Officials said the TER plan would cover industry, healthcare, education, infrastructure, logistics, skills and innovation, with around 50 to 60 key projects likely to be identified based on regional gaps and opportunities.

PAWS ON THE BEAT State police induct 36 dual-skilled canines



Home minister V Anitha appreciates the skills of a police dog at the passing-out parade of the 23rd batch of canines and handlers at the ISW Canine Training Centre in Mangalagiri on Wednesday. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta is also seen.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

POLICE dogs play a crucial role in crime detection along with modern technology and forensic evidence, home minister Vangalapati Anitha said on Wednesday.

She was speaking at the passing-out parade of the 23rd batch of canines and handlers held at the ISW Canine Training Centre of the 6th Battalion in Mangalagiri. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta attended the event as the guest of honour.

The home minister said 36 dogs had undergone specialised training for 10 months and were now ready for deployment. The state police currently had 218 trained dogs in service, while around 78 dogs had been trained during the past two years.

She said trained canines could detect narcotic substances through smell even when they were packed in multiple layers. Their role in detecting narcotics also helped protect youngsters from the harmful effects of drug abuse. Anitha said the government was focusing on both visible and invisible policing, technology, forensic services and the canine wing to strengthen crime prevention and investigation. The objective was to ensure that offenders did not escape and that investigations were supported by timely forensic and scientific evidence.

DGP Harish Kumar Gupta said canines had become highly reliable partners in policing. He said the 36 dogs inducted

into the police force had been trained in dual skills to meet emerging crime and internal security requirements. Of the 23rd batch, 13 dogs were trained in explosive detection and tracking, while another 13 received dual training in narcotics detection and tracking. Seven dogs were trained in explosive detection, two in cadaver detection along with search and rescue (SAR), and one in assault and explosive detection.

For the first time, dogs trained in cadaver detection and search and rescue were being inducted into the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the DGP said. The training was conducted in coordination with the Taralu CRPF Dog Breeding and Training Centre in Bengaluru. Belgian Malinois and Dutch Shepherd breeds were also being introduced for dual-purpose duties.

Gupta said dogs of the 22nd batch, deployed in 19 units around 10 months ago, had already contributed to results in 97 cases. Home minister Anitha presented prizes to dogs that excelled in various areas of training. Senior police officials, including CID chief Ravi Shankar Ayyanar, ACB chief Atul Singh, intelligence chief Mahesh Chandra Laddha, additional DGP (law and order) N Madhusudana Reddy, IGs B Rajakumari, Kanthirana Tata and K V Mohan Rao, SP K Arif Hafeez, senior police officers, ISW personnel and veterinary surgeon Dr Pratap Surapaneni attended the programme.

India cautions US against Pak’s role in promoting terror

INDIA has rightly warned the United States against its growing bonhomie with Pakistan. Speaking at the Asia Society Policy Institute, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, “There are very few countries which have been subjected to the kind of terrorism that we have from a neighbour as part of a deliberate, conscious policy over many, many decades.” Though he didn’t name Pakistan, as such, the reference was obvious, especially because the US itself has suffered because of Pakistan’s dalliance with jihadist terror. It is a well-known fact that Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the political and military capitals of Pakistan, have played both sides of terror; they aided, armed, and abetted jihadists on both its eastern and

western fronts, while feigning to help the American efforts to fight Islamists like Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. “Now, if something which matters so deeply to us, there isn’t enough understanding or appreciation or empathy of that, I think that creates a problem too. That you know if... one of my primary concerns is not fully appreciated by my partner, then clearly there is an impact of that on the relationship,” Jaishankar said, alluding to India-US ties.

He has a point. Washington has been claiming, and rightly so, that Tehran has been promoting jihad in the region; in fact, this is one of the factors resulting in the US-Israel alliance’s attack on Iran. At the same time, President Donald Trump was

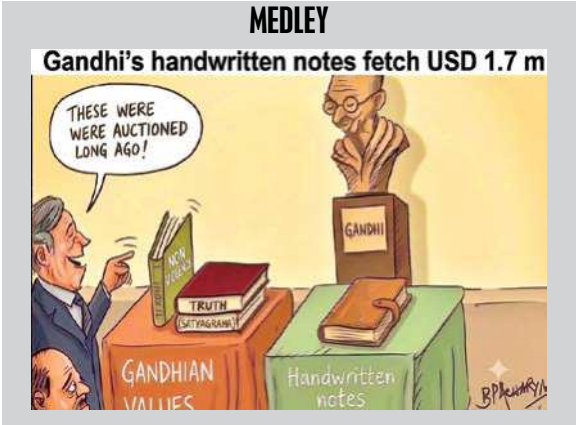
cosying up with Pakistan, especially its Field Marshal Asim Munir, who is the jihadist-in-chief of the notorious ‘terroristan’. Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders’ flattery and shenanigans fooled the world’s most powerful man. The dealings between Trump’s family members and the Pakistani establishment also reportedly cast their shadow on the US-Pakistan ties. While we have unambiguously conveyed our displeasure over the improving US-Pakistan relations, we must not go overboard, which we sometimes do—the recently concluded BRICS Summit in New Delhi being a case in point. Diplomacy is an exercise in balancing interests, not in expressing emotions. The US will pursue its own strategic, economic,

and geopolitical interests, just as India must pursue its own. Washington’s engagement with Islamabad may be uncomfortable for New Delhi, but it does not automatically follow that New Delhi should allow this discomfort to define the entire India-US relationship.

The two countries have substantial convergences in the Indo-Pacific, defence, technology, trade, energy security, and counterterrorism. These interests cannot be wished away because of fluctuations in America’s Pakistan policy. New Delhi should continue to remind Washington of Pakistan’s record of supporting and sheltering terrorist organisations, while avoiding the temptation to view every American-Pakistan in-

teraction as a diplomatic setback for India. At any rate, Americans are not so ignorant as to be unaware of Pakistan’s duplicity. India should also resist the urge to turn every multilateral forum into an arena for settling bilateral scores.

The BRICS Summit demonstrated the pitfalls of allowing geopolitical disagreements to overshadow larger economic and developmental objectives. India’s growing global stature demands strategic composure. One need to react to every move by another power; it must assess that move passionately, protect its core interests, and keep its diplomatic options open. That is the approach New Delhi should adopt towards the renewed US-Pakistan bonhomie.



LETTERS

Mining policy should think of affected communities

With reference to “Centre must pay heed to mineral-rich states” (THI, Sept 30). Mining can generate investment, employment and revenue, but the benefits should not come at the cost of communities living around mineral deposits. States hosting these resources face displacement, environmental degradation and pressure on local infrastructure. Any new mining framework should therefore include stronger safeguards for the affected communities. A defined share of mining-related revenue could be directed towards local health, education, roads and rehabilitation. Environmental clearances must remain rigorous and should not become a mere formality in the interest of faster extraction. The Centre and states should jointly monitor compliance and publish regular reports. A development model that combines mineral extraction with environmental responsibility and local welfare would make mining more sustainable and socially acceptable.

A Myilsami, Coimbatore-641402

Govt must spell out future mining arrangements

THIS refers to “Centre must pay heed to mineral-rich states” (THI, Sept 30). The disagreement over the proposed mining law also highlights the importance of policy certainty. Investors need clear rules, and governments must ensure that states are not suddenly deprived of legitimate revenue or decision-making space. Frequent changes in taxation, royalties or regulatory arrangements can create uncertainty for both industry and governments. The Centre should publish a clear framework explaining how existing and future mining arrangements will be treated. A formal consultation mechanism with mineral-producing states could prevent disputes before they reach the courts. Any retrospective financial implications should be handled carefully and transparently. Predictability, fair revenue-sharing and institutional dialogue can provide industry with confidence while respecting the constitutional position of states.

Swathi Senthilkumar, Coimbatore

Protect economic interests first

Regarding “Centre must pay heed to mineral-rich states” (THI, Sept 30), the proposed changes deserve examination from the standpoint of cooperative federalism. Natural resources may have national economic significance, but the states where minerals are extracted deal directly with the consequences of mining. Their participation in policy formulation is therefore essential. The Centre should convene a structured dialogue with mineral-rich states, industry representatives, local bodies and affected communities before implementing major changes. Differences over the law should be resolved through negotiation rather than prolonged political confrontation or litigation. At the same time, states should provide predictable approvals and ensure that regulatory processes remain efficient. A mutually agreed framework can protect national economic interests while giving states adequate fiscal space and communities a fair share of the benefits generated from their natural resources.

B A Neboba, Perundurai-638 052

Tech firms must adopt energy-efficient systems

THIS is further to the column “Creativity is destroying the environment” (THI Sept 30). Artificial intelligence is celebrated for the convenience it provides, but its environmental cost remains largely unexamined. Training GPT-3 alone is estimated to have evaporated about seven lakh litres of fresh water, and by 2027 global AI demand could equal the annual water use of 30 to 47 million people. In a country where nearly 60 crore people face severe water shortage, this cannot be ignored. Policymakers and technology companies must adopt energy-efficient systems, responsible water use and transparent disclosure.

Divyanshu Dhakad, Dhenkanal

thehansreader@gmail.com

BENGALURU ONLINE

Congress launches Bharat Jodo 2.0 padyatra from Shikaripura

SHIVAMOGGA: The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) on Wednesday launched its 'Bharat Jodo 2.0' padyatra from Shikaripura in Shivamogga district, targeting 84 Assembly constituencies where the Congress was defeated in the 2023 Karnataka elections. The padyatra is being led by KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad and is planned as an 84-day programme covering 29 districts. Congress leaders said the initiative is aimed at strengthening the party organisation and increasing direct interaction with people in constituencies where the party lost in the previous Assembly election. The programme was launched from Kittadahalli in Shikaripura taluk. The march proceeded through Mattikote, Hosanagar Cross and Nelavagilu before heading towards Shikaripura town. According to Minister Madhu Bangarappa, around 10 km will be covered during the first day's padyatra.

Read more at

https://epaper.thehansindia.com

Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home

WHILE many things are needed for people to lead happy and contented lives, food, shelter, and clothing are universally accepted as the basic minimum requirements of human beings. There is in fact this adage in Telugu, which says that to have a home of one's own and to perform a marriage in the family are the most important challenges in an individual's life. In what follows, an attempt has been made to understand the role played by a shelter.

A shelter protects living beings from rain, strong winds, extreme climatic conditions, predators, and environmental dangers.

A home, on the other hand, is much more than a mere shelter. It is vital because it provides physical safety, emotional comfort, and a stable foundation for personal and family life. It is also a place of love, acceptance, and deep emotional support and offers a secure environment for all living beings. A home also serves as a central gathering place that binds family members together.

Organisations like Habitat for Humanity work globally to help families secure all lasting benefits in one's house.

Primitive shelters have

evolved into modern homes through major shifts in materials, permanence, and technology driven by human civilization. Prehistoric humans used natural geological formations, while nomadic groups built lightweight temporary huts using wood branches, animal hides, bones, and grass that were easy to assemble and dismantle. Once humans mastered the art of creating fire, some 400,000 years ago internal hearths transformed shelters into social hubs for cooking, warmth, and art.

After farming led to permanent settlements around 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, communities began to use sunbaked mud bricks, clay, and stone to build stronger walls, multi-room layouts, and courtyards for privacy.

In the medieval ages, engineering led to innovations and complex multi-storied concrete structures came up with piped water, and civic planning. Housing later diversified into peasant cottages, urban timber-framed townhouses, and fortified stone castles.

The advent of the industrial and modern eras, marked by industrial mass production, steel, iron, mass-produced brick, and glass was marked by high-density urban housing and skyscrapers.

Functional planning led to the contemporary smart and sustainable homes.

Modern residences use smart technology and green architecture, informed by climate automation, energy management, and high-speed connectivity, with eco-friendly designs using solar power, sustainable composite materials, and green roofs to fight climate change.

Providing concessional

Homemakers are people who manage a household and care for a family as their main daily occupation instead of working for external income. Their responsibilities include raising children, supporting family members, and acting as primary care givers. They also take care of cooking meals, cleaning, organizing spaces, and handling day-to-day operations.

housing loans from banking and financial institutions besides providing subsidised homes for the poor are now important socio-economic priorities for the central and state governments.

The word 'home', by itself, or in conjunction with other words, is also used to stand for several other things in different contexts and situations. For example, the stadium where a local, or 'home', team plays its matches is known as the 'home-ground'. Also, idiomatically, an area, environment, or topic that people know very well is called the 'home' ground, as they feel secure and in control because they understand the surroundings or the topic. A 'home run' in softball is another similar term.

An 'At Home' invitation stands for a highly traditional, formal style of invitation used to indicate that the host is holding a social gathering. Historically popular in 19th and 20th century high society, the format has evolved over time. The President of India and the Governors of States traditionally host an At Home, every year on Republic Day.

That expression, incidentally, triggers a somewhat unhappy though amusing

breeding ground after traveling a long distance away.

Animals do not need a map or prior training, as they possess the innate ability to know how to return to their homes, using natural tools such as the sun, stars, the Earth's magnetic field, smells, and visual memory, to navigate. Pigeons, for instance, are famous for flying hundreds of miles back to their exact loft, as are salmon fish, which swim across vast oceans and find the exact freshwater stream where they were born. Domesticated cats and dogs are also known to travel considerable distances across unfamiliar places to return to their owners. Yet another example is that of migratory birds, such as swallows and geese, which return to the same nests year after year.

An example of the word 'home' being used in conjunction with other words is 'homework', which is a set of academic tasks assigned to students by their teachers to be completed outside of regular class hours. And 'homemade' refers to anything made at home, on the premises, or through your own personal efforts rather than being mass-produced in a factory or bought from a store.

Homemakers are people who manage a household and care for a family as their main daily occupation instead of working for external income. Their responsibilities include raising children, supporting family members, and acting as primary caregivers. They also take care of cooking meals, cleaning, organizing spaces, and handling day-to-day operations. In addition, they attend to housekeeping chores, such

The architecture of inclusion: How Sukumar Sen built a republic of voters

NOMULA SRINIVAS RAO

“Democracy begins not with the politician. It begins with the voter.”

In 1950, a newly sovereign nation embarked on the most ambitious democratic experiment in human history. India was a vast, deeply diverse landscape recovering from the trauma of Partition, where nearly 85 per cent of the population was illiterate and infrastructure was virtually non-existent. There were no digital databases, no standardised identification cards, no automated networks, and no modern technology.

Into this monumental void stepped Sukumar Sen, an ICS officer appointed as India's first Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Tasked with executing the inaugural general election, Sen did not merely manage a bureaucratic process; he helped build the foundational instinct of Indian democracy. His mission was as radical in its simplicity as it was staggering in its scope: find every citizen, register them,

Technology is a powerful amplifier, but it must serve the original ethos established in 1950. A database should be a bridge to participation, never a barrier. When administrative systems prioritise procedural rigidity over universal access, they risk eroding the trust that Sen worked so tirelessly to forge.

Sukumar Sen

of formal education, could cast a secret ballot with dignity and confidence.

Building vs. maintaining- The founding instinct:

Sukumar Sen and the architects of early India did not inherit a functional democracy; they had to construct one out of hope, determination, and civic faith. Because they built it from the ground up, they understood a fundamental truth that often gets lost in modern administration: the strength of a republic is measured by its capacity to include, not its efficiency at weeding out.

The state seeks out the voter

In recent decades, admin-

their individual names to male officials—offering only their relations as “mother of X” or “wife of Y”—Sen refused to accept the compromise. He insisted that every citizen must be recognized in their own right, and delayed registration drive timelines until millions of women were properly named and cataloged on the rolls.

To overcome widespread illiteracy, Sen's team devised an intuitive visual language. They introduced distinct symbols for political parties—a pair of bullocks, a tree, an elephant—and color-coded ballot boxes so that every individual, regardless

istrative focus has subtly shifted. Where the founding impulse was driven by a relentless urge to expand the circle of participation, modern election machinery is frequently pre-occupied with verification algorithms, identity cross-checks, and purging records. While accurate rolls are essential for integrity, an over-emphasis on deletion risks transforming a welcoming public apparatus into a defensive gatekeeper.

Reclaiming the citizen-centric republic:

When Gyanesh Kumar assumed office as Chief Election Commissioner in 2024, he inherited a sophisticated electoral machinery powered by instant digital verification, advanced satellite communications, and millions of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). Yet, despite these vast technological leaps, the central challenge of democracy remains unchanged: ensuring that no legitimate voice is silenced or left behind.

Technology is a powerful amplifier, but it must serve

the original ethos established in 1950. A database should be a bridge to participation, never a barrier. When administrative systems prioritise procedural rigidity over universal access, they risk eroding the trust that Sen worked so tirelessly to forge.

The founders of India understood that politicians do not create democracy; citizens do. The act of placing a mark on a ballot is the primary assertion of human equality in a complex society. As Indian democracy continues to evolve in a digital age, honoring Sukumar Sen's legacy requires a deliberate return to that original instinct—a commitment to an inclusive republic where the fundamental duty of the state is to seek out every voter and ensure their place in the nation's story.

“The vote is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society.” — John Lewis

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

Printed and Published by K. Hanumanta Rao, on behalf of Hyderabad Media House Pvt. Limited, H.No:1-6-67/A1, Near Balaji Degree College, Varadaraj Nagar, Tirupati, Chittoor District - 517 501. and Printed at Jagati Publications Limited, Survey No: 2/3, Kothapalem Village, Yelamandayam Gramapanchayat, Chennai Highway, Renigunta Mandal, Chittoor District - 517520. **Chief Editor:** P Madhusudhan Reddy. RNI No: APENG/2012/41969

AI drive takes Centre stage at iGOT workshop

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE first regional workshop of iGOT–Mission Karmayogi for the southern states concluded in Vijayawada on Wednesday after two days of discussions on strengthening the capabilities and skills of government employees and improving the quality of public services.

The workshop, organised by the Capacity Building Commission at Dr B R Ambedkar Kala Vedika, focused on capacity building, modern skills, digital learning, technology adoption and sharing of best practices among the participating States.

On the second day, Andhra Pradesh made a presentation on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public administration and citizen services.

Finance special chief secretary Peeyush Kumar explained to representatives of various states the measures taken by the state to use AI for delivering faster and more transparent services. Peeyush Kumar said that while the use of AI was increasing in governance,

• **AP showcases its use of AI in public administration, including analysis of nearly 5,000 commercial tax assessment cases involving transactions worth about Rs 1,600 cr**

• **Officials from six southern states discuss capacity building, digital learning, modern skills and best practices to improve govt services**

human judgement would remain crucial in decision-making. He called upon government officials to move beyond merely implementing rules and focus on finding solutions to public problems.

He said an experiment involving a multi-agent AI network in the commercial taxes department had proved successful. Nearly 5,000 assessment cases involving transactions valued at around Rs.1,600 crore



Finance special chief secretary Peeyush Kumar speaking at the iGOT–Mission Karmayogi for the southern states in Vijayawada on Wednesday

were analysed using AI, he said.

The finance special chief secretary stressed the need to prepare government employees as well as the younger generation for emerging technological challenges. He said officials needed to continuously upgrade their skills in line with changing requirements.

Representatives from six southern states discussed best practices in training and capacity building and exchanged experiences on strengthening training institutions and improving

learning systems for government employees.

The two-day workshop also deliberated on measures to improve the quality of citizen services, enhance employee skills and competencies, expand digital learning and promote the use of modern technologies in government departments.

The regional workshop also prepared a draft incorporating key areas for strengthening employee capabilities. Discussions covered an integrated approach to capacity building,

from training and skill development to improvement in service delivery. The iGOT–Mission Karmayogi platform is being used to promote continuous learning and professional development among government employees.

Andhra Pradesh has completed more than two crore iGOT online courses, placing the State among the leading States in employee capacity building, according to officials.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has appreciated the state's progress in employee skill development and particularly commended the AP HRD department, planning department and AP State Development Planning Society.

The workshop also focused on strengthening co-ordination between training institutions and government departments and expanding digital learning to enhance employee capabilities.

The participating States agreed on the importance of continued exchange of experiences and best practices for building a more capable and responsive public administration.

Hero Indian captain prevents flydubai hijack

Continued from page 1

Together, they regained control of the cockpit and diverted the aircraft to Saudi Arabia, where it landed safely.

Israeli outlets YNet News and Channel 12 confirmed the Captain's nationality as Indian, hailing him as a hero whose actions prevented a mass tragedy. Preliminary reports in Israeli media suggested that the Omani pilot allegedly attempted to crash the aircraft by forcing it into a steep descent from around 30,000 feet. The Indian pilot reportedly lost more than 17,000 feet in under 30 seconds during the incident.

Fluctuating between about -30,000 and +10,000 feet per minute. The aircraft briefly climbed to around 21,650 feet before descending below 14,000 feet and later stabilising at around 15,000 feet for an extended period.

Videos shared on social media purportedly show passengers screaming as the aircraft undergoes a sudden descent. In another clip, passengers appear to cheer after the situation aboard the aircraft seemingly comes under control. The footage has emerged amid reports of a violent confrontation between the pilots. However, the precise sequence of events captured in the videos could not be independently established.

Cabinet hikes MSP for all rabi crops

Continued from page 1

The rabi MSP increases range from Rs 25 per quintal for wheat to Rs 675 for safflower, while the Green Energy Corridor-III scheme will strengthen intra-state transmission networks and add 50 GWh of battery storage capacity. The new Intelligent Traffic Management System in Delhi will cover 42 traffic corridors and use adaptive signals, automated enforcement and real-time traffic data.

Safflower has received the highest absolute increase of Rs 675 per quintal, followed by rapeseed and mustard at Rs 413 per quintal. The MSP for lentil (masur) has been increased by Rs 390 per quintal, barley by Rs 136, gram by Rs 83 and wheat by Rs 25 per quintal. The MSP for wheat has been fixed at Rs 2,610 per quintal for the 2027-28 marketing season, compared with Rs 2,585 per quintal in 2026-27.

The Green Energy Corridor scheme, with a total outlay of Rs 1,86,405 crore, will strengthen intra-state transmission systems and facilitate the evacuation of up to 135 GW of renewable energy across states and Union territories. The scheme, targeted for completion by FY2032-33, includes Rs 1,36,378 crore for intra-state transmission systems and Rs 50,000 crore for deploying 50 GWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

CM Naidu calls for continuous skill training of govt staff

Continued from page 1

He asked employees to make use of virtual courses to continuously upgrade their skills. Skill development should not be viewed as a one-time exercise, he said, pointing out that IAS officers regularly undergo orientation and training to update their knowledge and capabilities.

Naidu directed officials to develop similar opportunities for other government employees and explore partnerships with IITs and IIMs for specialised training programmes.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the drinking water

situation in urban areas and directed officials to ensure that shortages did not occur in either urban or rural areas.

Officials informed him that the drinking water situation in towns and cities had improved considerably following the recent rains. However, minor shortages were still being reported in two municipalities in the Rayalaseema region, where remedial measures were under way. The officials also reported that groundwater levels in Visakhapatnam city had improved following recharge and that the drinking water situation was being addressed.

Modi calls up Trump, discusses trade & energy

Continued from page 1

"We also exchanged views on regional and international issues, including ongoing efforts to advance global peace and security," he added. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch as both sides continue to deepen the strategic partnership.

This comes days after Trump signed into law a sweeping sanctions package targeting Russia and Iran and giving his administration expanded powers to penalise countries that continue buying Russian oil and gas, including India.

Zero vision, 100% frustration in Oppn, poohpoohs BJP

NEW DELHI: The BJP said the outcomes of the INDIA bloc meeting on Wednesday were "zero vision, 100 per cent frustration, and an advance excuse for poll defeats", with the leaders of the Opposition grouping rejecting Rahul Gandhi's leadership.

"The INDI Alliance fell apart even before the meeting took place. The DMK did not attend the meeting. Akhilesh was busy elsewhere. The AAP had already declined,"

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters. The senior BJP leader further pointed out that Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said he will join the meeting virtually. "Why is this happening? It is because the INDI Alliance is simply not willing to accept Rahul Gandhi as its leader. His leadership is not being accepted; that is why they are not even showing up," Chouhan said.

India bloc declares all-out war on SIR

Continued from page 1

At a meeting attended by leaders of as many as 19 political parties that lasted over three-and-a-half hours, it was decided that all Opposition MPs will march to the Election Commission on October 6 and the leaders would meet the President to highlight the issues related to alleged irregularities in voter list revision.

The Opposition grouping discussed the demand for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation and said they will not relent till he is ousted.

The meeting held at the Constitution Club here was attended by top party leaders - Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, besides TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, besides left leaders.

Some Opposition leaders, including Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM chief Hemant Soren, participated in the meeting online, as they could not be physically present.

"With unanimity, everyone vowed to fight together," Kharge said while addressing a joint briefing by the bloc leaders after their meeting. The Congress chief said they have decided on the joint action plan, whereby "save democracy" marches will be taken out in all districts from October 2-8 and demonstrations will be held before the district magistrate's office, where the youth and NGOs would also be invited.

"We will hold five big rallies during October/November and date and place would be decided soon. We will tell people how the government is

snatching the rights of the people to elect their government for running the country," he said. Rahul Gandhi said INDIA bloc leaders are the "collective defenders" of the Indian Constitution and asserted that it is their "personal commitment" to ensure that those who have "destroyed" Indian democracy are punished.

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee asserted that the INDIA bloc is "very much united" and demanded immediate removal of CEC Kumar, alleging serious electoral wrongdoing and manipulation of the electoral process. "But now it has been exposed that Gyanesh Kumar is a 'daaku'. He stole people's votes... therefore, Gyanesh Kumar must resign immediately," she said. "If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign, we people will launch a massive movement from 'mitti to aasmaan' (from the ground to the sky). We will fight, we will win... we will protect democracy and the Constitution," she said.

Kharge said that on November 1 a mega rally would be organised in the national capital to highlight the issue of 'vote chori'. "Now everyone is realising that what Rahul ji was saying is correct and it is attracting attention. First Prime Minister Narendra Modi did 'notebandi' and is now doing 'votebandi', taking away the people's rights," he said.

Asked about reverting to ballots instead of EVMs, Kharge said everyone 100 per cent agreed that all elections henceforth should be held on ballot paper and that the laws framed by this "vote chori government" should be annulled.

According to sources, the rallies will be held in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and one more city.

The Congress chief said Modi-Shah are making the Election Commission work like a "puppet", alleging that "These people are only winning elections by stealing votes.

TG's Chikitha strikes double gold on debut in Asian Games

Continued from page 1

The 21-year-old Chikitha hails from Telangana's Sultantpur village in Peddapalli district. She was initially interested in karate but was persuaded by her father Srinivasa Rao to become an archer. Her first love with archery was when she was a child and a bow presented by her uncle on the occasion of Dasara, which made her aspire for a career in archery. She fondly recollects, "It was a Dasara holiday. My uncle who lives in Hyderabad, bought a recurve Decathlon bow. I tried it just for fun. We used to shoot just for fun at that time," she recalled.

Chikitha said that her father was the driving force behind her archery career, making significant financial sacrifices, including taking loans and selling a rice harvester, to fund her training. She said she was inspired by Saina Nehwal's Olympic success stating, "After Saina Nehwal won an Olympic medal, he decided that I should play another sport (archery, instead of karate)."

Legendary Archer Abhishek Verma trained Chikitha at the SAI Centre in Sonepat, shooting 300 arrows daily. Chikitha said: "I didn't get into archery on my own. It was my father's choice. He wanted me to play sports because he couldn't play any sport. When I was small, he used to take us to playgrounds. Every day we

used to play some games," she recalled, after what can be described as a smashing debut. In school, from 6th grade till 8th grade, I was doing karate. I got my first black belt also," said Chikitha.

Once he realised that Chikitha has potential, her father Srinivasa Rao took a loan to buy her upgraded equipment that could shape her better. She started pursuing archery more seriously in 2018 and was picked in the junior camp in 2021. Rao eventually also sold the family's rice harvester to fund her archery training. He took her to a nearby town to train with a local archer and built makeshift targets at home.

After losing Rs 1.5 lakh in a fraud while trying to buy her first compound bow, he took another Rs 3.5 lakh loan for new equipment. Her performances later earned her a government-funded bow from the district Collector.

On the question of handling pressure, Chikitha said, the golds this morning had also eased the pressure that she had built on herself in the past few months.

"Personally, I have been struggling this past year, facing some difficulties. After becoming World champion last year, it became very difficult for me to perform at the same level. I was struggling with my shooting aim. I worked really hard and I got back to the first team," she said.

Will complete 36 irrigation projects in 3 years: Naidu

Continued from page 1

He said the government planned to complete the Polavaram project by next year and make water available through gravity flow. Water conserved in the Krishna Delta would subsequently be diverted towards Rayalaseema, he said.

Naidu said the previous government had obstructed the Pattiseema project, while his government had completed it and so far transported 490 tmc of water through the project. He said inadequate

inflows into the Krishna, Srisailem reservoir, and Prakasam Barrage, which he attributed to the impact of El Nino, had made the project particularly important this year. He said water brought through Pattiseema was supplied to the delta region, helping prevent a drinking water shortage in Vijayawada.

Naidu said the NDA coalition government had already conferred land rights on 28,000 families in Visakhapatnam and 5,800 families in Mangalagiri. He said the decision to grant ownership rights was

taken after considering the difficulties faced by poor families who had been living on the lands for decades. He congratulated public representatives and officials involved in the distribution of pattas to beneficiaries in NTR and Krishna districts.

The land covered by the pattas in Vijayawada alone extends over 707 acres and is valued at Rs 28,112 crore, with the value of individual plots ranging from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 2 crore, according to the government.

The government had

completed 5.5 lakh houses and was preparing to provide another 5.5 lakh houses during the coming year, he said.

Naidu criticised the previous government over its land policies between 2019 and 2024, alleging that they resulted in property disputes within families. He objected to the printing of political leaders' images on pattadar passbooks and alleged that the Land Titling Act had created difficulties for landowners.

The Chief Minister said about Rs 800 crore

was spent on printing images even on survey stones and argued that the money could instead have been used for welfare programmes.

The coalition government's priorities, he said, were welfare, development, and wealth creation, Naidu said, and claimed that Rs 1.50 lakh crore had already been spent on developmental works.

Naidu also criticised the previous government over its opposition to the Amaravati capital project, alleging that letters had

been written to the World Bank to prevent funding for the project and that various protests had been organised against Amaravati.

He said the previous administration had advocated a three-capital model and described Amaravati in negative terms. He said Amaravati would nevertheless be developed as a major capital city, with 50 per cent green cover, green energy meeting its electricity requirements, and a net-zero city objective.

Job creation coalition govt's only agenda: Lokesh

Continued from page 1

He said the sports certificates being questioned were issued during the previous YSRCP government and added that the government was prepared to abide by any court directions on the issue.

On educational reforms, Lokesh said the system needed to be redesigned for the requirements of the future, rather than those of the past. He said 16,000 teachers had been recruited and trained and that student-level data was being used to prevent dropouts.

Referring to emerging

technologies, Lokesh said quantum computing was not a hypothetical concept but a next-generation technology.

Andhra Pradesh, he said, was planning to establish a 156-qubit quantum computer in Amaravati and build an ecosystem around research, material science, and cryogenic technology.

On attracting investments, Lokesh outlined the government's "3S" approach — speed, service and stability. He said the government was seeking faster project clearances, keeping investors informed about project progress, and providing a

stable policy framework.

Lokesh also said Gen Z was demanding systemic changes irrespective of caste, religion, or region. He said governments needed to listen to young people and work with them to find solutions.

During his Kerala visit, Lokesh also met Kite Garments chairman and managing director Sabu M. Jacob in Kochi and discussed opportunities in textiles, apparel manufacturing, and industrial development. At Jacob's invitation, he visited the Kite factory and reviewed its integrated manufacturing operations.

SIR update: No more parent, grandparent details, says EC

Continued from page 1

The EC, however, has maintained that its decisions on SIR and Form 6 were unanimously approved by all three commissioners. In a clarification issued on September 26, the poll panel said the SIR declaration attached to Form 6 had been upheld by the Supreme Court and that the forms prescribed under the 1960 Rules would be used during periods when SIR is not underway. Earlier, a new voter applying for inclusion in the electoral roll was not required to provide details of their parents or grandparents from previous

SIR rolls. That additional requirement was introduced for Form 6 applications during the SIR exercise. Applicants were required to provide information to establish their linkage with earlier electoral rolls, including details concerning their parents or grandparents. With SIR completed in a state, the additional declaration will no longer be required for new voter applications there.

The EC has said SIR has already been completed in 20 states and Union Territories, including Bihar and West Bengal. Young and first-time voters, as well as people whose names were

left out during SIR or subsequently, can apply for inclusion through continuous updation. The requirement will continue in states and Union Territories where the SIR exercise is still underway. New voters applying for enrolment in these areas will have to submit Form 6 along with the SIR-related declaration, including the details required to establish their linkage with the previous electoral roll.

This creates a distinction between voter enrolment during an ongoing SIR exercise and enrolment during the period of continuous updation after SIR has been completed.

‘REBEL RANIS’

Brings four powerful women to life through dance

Keelaka Dance Company's 'Rebel Ranis' brings together the stories of Kaikeyi, Sita, Karaikkal Ammaiyaar and Draupadi in a vibrant blend of dance, theatre and music. With powerful performances and striking visuals, the production looks beyond familiar legends to explore four women who challenged the boundaries of their time

ANNA RAO GANGAVALLI

Ranghoomi Auditorium recently witnessed a dance theatre production, 'Rebel Ranis', by Keelaka Dance Company. The production was the result of a collaboration between senior Bharatanatyam guru Jyotsna Lata Shourie and her senior student Aneesha Grover from Delhi. The script was by Aneesha and the choreography by Jyotsna Shourie.

The focus was on four characters: Kaikeyi, Sita, Karaikkal Ammaiyaar and Draupadi. These are the heroines who narrate and play out their stories, presenting an intensely emotive slice of life, not legend, as seen from an insider's perspective. Shattering stereotypes, the subtly tailored kaleidoscopic visualisation, brimming with colour, made for an exhilarating experience.

From the start, the audience was gripped and drawn in, and the tightly packed hour-and-fifteen-minute timescale did not allow for any let-up in pace. The

dialogue and dance were seamlessly fleshed out in a bravura fin-de-siècle tone, as the Rebel Ranis briefly spoke and the incandescent energy of the dance took over.

The drama opened with the four heroines perched on high seats, exchanging their stories in a witty dialogue. The thread linking them is the fact that they all stretch the boundaries in a male-dominated society: Kaikeyi, being a warrior queen versed in politics; Sita, the slayer of Ravana in the apocryphal Adbhut Ramayan; Karaikkal Ammaiyaar, who gives up all societal norms in search of Shiva; and an assertive Draupadi, who breaks taboos.

A melange of music styles, from jazz to Carnatic, embellished the soundscape, including the Ravanashatakam, heralding the dramatic entrance of Ravana. The Shiva Panchakshari appropriately set the mood for Karaikkal Ammaiyaar.

Aneesha Grover was Kaikeyi in the first sequence as she described her upbringing. In a violet aharya, she was portrayed as learning



all the skills as a princess that were identical to those of a male counterpart. Her father, Aswapati, wished her to gain experience in warfare and politics. However, these talents proved to be more of a burden than appropriate to the role she was destined to play.

Apart from the occasion when she accompanied Dasaratha to the battlefield,

where she proved her valour by helping him win, thereby obtaining the boons that would prove to be her bane, she was relegated to wifely duties in the antahpura of the royal household. The memory of a matching duet showcasing her martial skills with Dasaratha is all that lingers.

Her sagacity and courage are forgotten, diminished in



the savage arc of the terrible act of sending Rama, Lakshmana and Sita into exile. We hear, in her own words, a trenchant justification.

Nandita Kaalan Mehra as Sita dominated the next scene. She was no fragile queen needing the solace of a protecting male presence. The 'Adbhut Ramayan', from a Shakta perspective, envisages the story of her victory over a thousand-headed Ravana reigning in Pushkar, more terrifying than the Lord of Lanka.

Nandita's orange-and-green dress was elegant. Rama and Ravana, played by male Chhau dancers Sagar Vashisht and Benjamin Jacob, gave a scintillating display of somersaults and cartwheels as they lunged and leaped in the battlefield scene, creating fireworks on stage with their athletic display.

Fit and chiselled, they duelled with vigour, and finally an exhausted Rama is overpowered and rendered unconscious by his antagonist. Nandita's aquiline countenance flashed with

rage as Sita's gentle visage transformed. The cosmic form of the multi-armed Goddess Mahakali, warrior of darkness, emerges.

Laughing hysterically, with bloodshot eyes and an outstretched tongue denoting her ferocity, she charges into the demon and his army ranks, decapitating the Asura's thousand heads in a flash and destroying his armies.

Ravana's myrmidons in black capes sported face masks resembling an amalgam of silvery metal and ruby-stained glass, giving an Art Deco look. They pranced and capered, looking like fiends from Dante's Inferno. Nandita, to sum up, depicted a Sita who would not have needed Lakshmana to ward off Surpanakha but would have been quite capable of doing so herself!

Amrita Sivakumar, in a green-and-yellow dress, gave a finely etched portrait of the great Saiva saint Karaikkal Ammaiyaar. She liberates herself from a mundane housewifely existence by the grace of Shiva.

As she prays to the Lord in despair, requiring a mango to serve to her husband, divine grace makes it appear. She gives up all the norms of human society to smear ashes on herself, denoting complete renunciation, to follow the ascetic path to self-realisation.

She does not care in the least, even shunning clothing, wandering ardently and unclad in search of the Lord.

Harini Iyer was Draupadi in a draped pink saree. She explains that, though being fire-born, she had to undergo the travails of a life full of perils while still being the rock-like support of her five husbands, enduring even the unendurable.

A leering, malevolent Duryodhana, sly Shakuni and a dignified figure of pathos, Yudhishthira, stole the scene. (Sagar Vashisht, Ravi Yadav and Benjamin Jacob.)

As the dice fall with a guillotine-like regularity, all the wealth of the Pandavas evaporates. When Draupadi herself is staked and lost, Duryodhana, intoxicated with victory, decides to hu-

miliate their queen.

He staggers in a louché, unsteady manner, indicating his bare thigh with a repulsive gesture. Leering malice oozed from Dussasana as he evinced satisfaction in physically dragging Draupadi to the palace hall. He is whirled around and collapses with the intervention of Krishna as he dismally fails in trying to disrobe the Pandavas' consort.

A Tamil jazz song, whose lyrics embroidered upon the theme of unleashing righteous wrath and which was sung by Harini Iyer, became the leitmotif of the finale. It received a standing ovation as the production signed off with a grim recital of the statistics of atrocities against women being committed in contemporary India.

It was a warning against the complacency of a society residing in the illusion of having achieved feminine empowerment, which is still a distant goal for many.

Dolly Thakore graced the occasion as a guest and congratulated the artistes on their proficiency.

Farah Khan opens up about raising three kids and being part of the 'sandwich generation'

Farah Khan has opened up about raising her three children while navigating the responsibilities that come with being part of the "sandwich generation" — a phase of life where one often finds themselves caring for both their children and aging parents. Reflecting on the experience, the filmmaker also shared a heartfelt message about recognizing and supporting caregivers, and said she hopes her children learn to acknowledge those who put the needs of their loved ones first. Sharing a couple of her photos with her triplets, Farah wrote, "Me with my three I am part of the sandwich generation. At that age when we either are caregivers to our parents or to our kids... sandwiched in between! One day these three will be sandwiched too, looking after me, n their kids. I am not being dramatic, that's just what it is, n



frankly good luck to them because I am going to be a nightmare." "Today, if u look after someone u love, u do it with nothing. Nobody asking how ur holding up, because everybody is asking about the patient, n quite rightly. We don't think about these people much. We just say she's a good daughter; he's a devoted son. As

if it's a personality trait n not the hardest job either of them will ever do. I don't want that to be what my children inherit. I'd like them to ask the person doing the caring how they are." <She added, "N that starts very small. One question, or even a little hug of acknowledgment.. every strong person sometimes needs to be cared for too. This is something we'll all go through at some point This is for all the caregivers, the pure souls out there putting everyone else first.. hope ur ok n taken care of too This film by @mrmedhq made me think about my kids and all these caregivers. Send it to someone who needs to know theyve been seen."

Farah Khan and her husband, filmmaker Shirish Kunder, are parents to three children, triplets who were born in February 2008 through in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Dia Mirza on parenting her son

'I strive to teach him the values of care, respect, empathy and kindness'

Bollywood actress and environmentalist Dia Mirza has opened up about the values she hopes to instill in her son, Avyaan.

She emphasised the importance of empathy, kindness, respect for boundaries, and understanding consent from an early age. Sharing her thoughts on parenting, Dia said she strives every day to teach her son the importance of treating others with care and respect. "Every single day, I strive to teach my son the value of care, respect, empathy and kindness towards all," she said.

The 'Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein' actress stressed that teaching children about consent goes beyond simply understanding the word "no". She said her son should also learn to recognize subtle signs of discomfort and respect personal boundaries. "That means helping him understand how to respond to rejection, respect boundaries, and recognize and honour even the subtle ways in which a person may convey discomfort," she said.

Dia further explained that consent should be understood as an active and willing choice rather than merely the absence of refusal. "I want him to understand that consent is not merely the absence of a 'no'; it is the presence of a willing and comfortable



'yes,'" she added. The actress also highlighted the importance of teaching children that nobody is obligated to give them attention, affection, or intimacy. She said rejection should not be viewed as an insult or something that needs to be challenged or negotiated. "That no one owes him their attention, affection, or intimacy, and that rejection is neither an insult nor something to be challenged, negotiated, or taken personally," Dia said.

Calling it an important responsibility for parents raising sons, Dia said such conversations can contribute towards creating a safer and more equitable environment for girls. "This

is something every parent raising a son must strive for today. Only then can we build a world that is safer, more equitable, and healthier for our girls," she concluded.

Dia Mirza also shared an image carrying the message: "Don't raise girls to avoid harm. Raise boys who won't cause harm."

Dia Mirza is a mother to two children—her biological son, Avyaan Azaad Rekhi, and her stepdaughter, Samaira Rekhi, whom she shares a close bond with. Avyaan is Dia's son with businessman Vaibhav Rekhi. Samaira is Vaibhav Rekhi's daughter from his previous marriage and is Dia's stepdaughter.

CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4	5		6		7
10	11		12		13						
14											
17		18			19	20					
21					22			23		24	
25				26							
27											
32		33					34				
36										37	

ACROSS

1 Hold sway (4)

4 Frozen drip (6)

8 Average (3)

10 Roman 1052 (4)

13 Cricketing skill? (8)

14 What's-his-name; a nuisance (2-3-2)

15 Centre (6)

17 Rigidly austere (9)

21 "Sea", in French (3)

22 Opening flower (3)

23 Gross Natl. Prod. (3)

26 The final demand (9)

27 Surrogate (6)

28 Nazi police (7)

32 Disgraceful (8)

34 Lip (4)

35 Designer monogram (3)

36 Unit in a sentence (6)

37 Auction condition (2,2)

SUDOKU

8	2						7	6
			6		4			
		1		7		8		
5			4		3			8
	1					6		
9			1	6				2
		8		6		9		
			2		9			
7	9						3	4

Solution to September 30

6	7	9	3	5	1	8	4	2
4	3	2	8	7	6	5	9	1
8	5	1	9	2	4	3	7	6
5	2	4	7	8	9	1	6	3
7	8	3	6	1	5	9	2	4
1	9	6	4	3	2	7	5	8
2	1	8	5	6	7	4	3	9
9	6	7	1	4	3	2	8	5
3	4	5	2	9	8	6	1	7



Anvay Dravid to lead state for Vinoo Mankad trophy

BENGALURU: Promising Anvay Dravid, son of legendary Rahul Dravid, was on Wednesday appointed as captain of the Karnataka team for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy. The one-day format U-19 tournament will be played at Visakhapatnam from October 8-16.

The right-handed wicketkeeper-batter Dravid had recently featured in India U-19's three-match ODI series against Australia in Rajkot, where he played two matches. The 17-year-old was also picked in India U-19's tour of Sri Lanka in July this year. Karnataka are placed in Elite Group E along with Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

Nitte climbs into 1001-1200 rankings for 2027

MANGALURU: Nitte (Deemed to be University), Mangaluru, has moved up in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027, leaving the 1201-1500 band of 2026 for the 1001-1200 band. The rise, the university said, follows steady work on teaching, research, research quality, industry engagement and international outlook, which are the five broad pillars used by THE.

Officials linked the result to a lasting stress on academic excellence, research that has impact, innovation, international contact and social responsibility. The new band, they added, shows the combined labour of the campus community in building a stronger, more globally connected academic and research setting.

University leaders thanked faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners in academia, industry and the community for their continued effort. Nitte said it will keep developing talent, advancing knowledge, supporting innovation and meeting social needs through sound teaching and research that matters. The 2027 improvement is described as a marker on the university's global path and as fresh energy to deepen academic, research, industry and international work and to aim for still higher recognition in coming years.

LPG cylinder explodes on vacant site

BENGALURU: A LPG cylinder exploded inside a makeshift shed at a vacant site here on Wednesday and there were no casualties or injuries, police said. According to police, the cylinder exploded at the site belonging to a person named Murthy, located at 6th Cross, Kaggadasapura, within the limits of Byappanahalli Police Station.

The shed was damaged due to the blast. Upon reaching the spot and inspecting the area, it was found that there were no casualties or injuries, a senior police officer said. Responding to a query whether it was an illegal gas refilling unit, the officer said, "We are verifying the incident." Fire and Emergency Services personnel, along with officers and staff of the Byappanahalli Police Station, reached the spot and conducted an inspection, he added.

New campus at Kings School

Bengaluru: The King's School Canterbury has launched its Bengaluru campus, partnering with Vidyashilp Education Group. Founded in 597 AD, the school will welcome its first pupils in 2027-28, combining its historic educational legacy with Bengaluru's dynamic environment.

Contractors warn of releasing commission documents if dues remain unpaid

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

THE Karnataka State Contractors' Association has warned the state government that it would release documents relating to alleged commission practices if its pending bills are not cleared by November. Association president R. Manjunath said contractors had been waiting for payments for several years and accused the government of failing to honour assurances on clearing their dues.

The association has claimed that nearly Rs 38,000 crore remains pending across various government departments and has sought immediate release of the amount. Reports have put the number of affected contractors at around 1.5 lakh, with dues dating back to 2021-22.

Manjunath alleged that commission demands had increased under the present government and said the association would disclose documents if the pending amount was not released

Reports have put the number of affected contractors at around 1.5 lakh, with dues dating back to 2021-22

within the deadline. These are allegations made by the contractors' association and have not been independently established.

He also alleged that legislators were increasingly intervening in contract works. According to him, contractors who secure tenders are sometimes required to ap-

proach local MLAs before commencing work, which he claimed was discouraging genuine contractors from taking up projects. "Once a tender is awarded, contractors have to first approach the MLA. Only after getting approval can the work begin," Manjunath was quoted as saying.

The association has also alleged that funds meant for clearing contractors' bills were being diverted towards other government commitments, including guarantee schemes.

This allegation has been raised by the contractors' body and was not independently verified in the available reports.

The contractors recalled that Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar had met their representatives on June 30 and, according to the association, assured them that arrangements would be made to clear the dues within two months. The association said that deadline had passed without the promised payments being released.



LoP accuses govt of 'mishandling' drought, farmers' distress

BENGALURU

LEADER of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka on Wednesday accused the Congress government of "failing" to adequately address drought-related distress, the drinking-water situation and the state's finances, and said the BJP would take the issues to the "people's court".

The BJP leader also questioned Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's proposal for an all-party delegation to the Centre, saying the government had not consulted the opposition while preparing its memorandum seeking central assistance.

"The Congress government in Karnataka, this joint government of Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar, has pushed the people of Karnataka into three major crises," Ashoka told reporters here.

According to him, more than 3,000 farmers have died by suicide since the Congress government came to power and the opposition has demanded Rs 25,000 per acre in drought compensation. The government had instead announced Rs 2,500



per farmer.

The state has announced the assistance for around 50 lakh drought-hit farmers at an estimated cost of Rs 1,250 crore.

Ashoka said the government should also prevent distress migration, ensure drinking water and provide adequate power to farmers.

He alleged that more than 200 taluks had crossed the drought threshold and

claimed a 36 per cent rainfall deficit across Karnataka and 46 per cent in south interior Karnataka.

He said the BJP would decide whether to join the proposed delegation after discussions with NDA partners, including Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and H D Kumaraswamy. "If you work for the good of the state, we will stand with you for the good of the state," he said.

Ashoka also charged the government with "mishandling" farmer debt-related distress and demanded directions to banks and microfinance companies to halt loan recovery for two years.

Referring to alleged farmer suicides in Maddur and K M Doddi, he described them as "government-sponsored killings" but provided no independent evidence for the allegation.

On the state's finances, Ashoka alleged that Karnataka had been pushed into a severe debt burden and demanded that the government release detailed financial figures.

He claimed the state's outstanding debt was Rs 8,34,677 crore and alleged that more than half of it had been incurred during Siddaramaiah's tenure.

He also referred to a reported death note by a KRIDL engineer, alleging harassment over delayed payments, and cited the Karnataka Contractors' Association's demand for release of Rs 38,000 crore in pending bills. These claims were presented by Ashoka as evidence of financial distress.

Cong launches Bharat Jodo 2.0 padayatra from Shikaripura

HANS NEWS SERVICE SHIVAMOGGA

THE Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) on Wednesday launched its 'Bharat Jodo 2.0' padyatra from Shikaripura in Shivamogga district, targeting 84 Assembly constituencies where the Congress was defeated in the 2023 Karnataka elections.

The padyatra is being led by KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad and is planned as an 84-day programme covering 29 districts. Congress leaders said the initiative is aimed at strengthening the party organisation and increasing direct interaction with people in constituencies where the party lost in the previous Assembly election.

The programme was launched from Kittadahalli in Shikaripura taluk. The march proceeded through Mattikote, Hosanagar Cross and Nelavagilu before heading towards Shikaripura town. According to Minister Madhu Bangarappa, around 10 km will be covered during the first day's padyatra.

A public meeting has been planned in Shikaripura after the march. Ministers Madhu



Bangarappa and K.S. Basavanna, along with other Congress leaders, workers and local party functionaries, participated in the programme. The selection of Shikaripura for the launch has drawn attention because the constituency is represented by BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra. It was earlier represented by his father and former chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

The Congress has linked the programme to the completion of four years since Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra entered Karnataka in 2022. The new programme, however, has a different state-level focus, with the party planning activities across constituencies where it faced defeat in the 2023 Assembly polls.

Congress leaders said the padyatra would provide an opportunity to interact with residents, understand local issues and strengthen the party's presence at the grassroots level. The next phase of the programme is expected to begin from October 4 or 5 in other constituencies. The party has planned the campaign across 84 Assembly segments over 84 days.

The launch from Shikaripura has also brought the Congress programme into focus because of the constituency's political association with the BJP's state leadership. The Congress leadership has maintained that the padyatra is part of its organisational programme covering the constituencies identified for the 84-day campaign.



A woman crosses a busy road amidst traffic during rainfall in Bengaluru on Wednesday

MRPL explosion prompts call for scientific damage assessment

HANS NEWS SERVICE MANGALURU

WEDNESDAY'S blast at the MRPL facility near Jokatte has left surrounding residents badly alarmed. People in far-off areas such as Katipalla and Bala also heard the loud noise, and accounts of damage to neighbouring homes and buildings have added to the worry. The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) has raised concern on the matter. "The occurrence next to a densely lived-in zone



Smoke erupts after a loud explosion-like sound was reported from the MRPL premises near Jokatte in Mangaluru on Wednesday

is a grave issue. District authorities and industrial safety officers should check without delay

whether all norms needed for public safety are being duly followed at MRPL," a statement

from SDPI said.

"A free and high-level investigation should cover the precise reason for the explosion, any fault or carelessness in the safety setup, and the fitness of the emergency-handling system. Findings should be disclosed to citizens," said Jamal Jokatte, the SDPI Dakshina Kannada District General Secretary.

He further said, "A comprehensive survey of damage to houses, buildings and other assets should start at once, followed by a scientific valuation.

Probe ordered into fake GPS photos under Employment Guarantee Scheme

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

RURAL Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar B Khandre has ordered an inquiry following reports of fraud involving fake GPS photographs being used to record attendance of workers under the rural employment guarantee scheme.

In a written direction to the department's Secretary, Khandre said media reports had alleged that in Koppal district, mates were recording videos at work sites even when workers had not gone to the location and, while the video was being played, taking GPS photographs using another mobile phone to falsely record attendance. He has directed an officer of the rank of Joint Director to conduct an inquiry into the allegations and submit a report within four days.

Media reports had also alleged that fake GPS photographs were being used to fraudulently claim Rs 20,000 to Rs 30,000 every day and that attendance was being

marked for workers who had not actually carried out any work.

Taking the reports seriously, Khandre directed officials to submit a factual report along with recommendations on action to be taken against those responsible if the allegations are found to be true. He also instructed officials to consult experts and take necessary measures to prevent misuse of technology and the fraudulent marking of attendance.

The government has made it mandatory under the rural employment guarantee scheme for workers engaged at work sites to take GPS photographs while carrying out work and upload them on the NMMS app.

The measure was introduced to prevent the use of machinery for works and the illegal marking of attendance of workers who had not actually worked at the site. However, reports that some individuals have found ways to bypass the technology have prompted the government to initiate action.

5 decades on canvas: Ganesha Somayaji brings 'Reflection' to Bengaluru

M RAGHURAM MANGALURU

MORE than five decades of artistic practice, spanning watercolour, oil and acrylic, will come together in veteran artist and art educator Ganesha Somayaji B's solo exhibition Reflection, opening at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat here on October 1.

The week-long exhibition, which will continue until October 7, will present a selection from Somayaji's extensive body of work, including landscapes, portraits and paintings inspired by historical sites, forts, riverbanks, beaches and other natural and cultural settings. His works had been extensive in the realm of folk performing arts, folk traditions. His collections adorn the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi, various art galleries across the country and in some private collections in different countries.

Born in Bantwal in Dakshina Kannada in 1949, Somayaji trained under artist

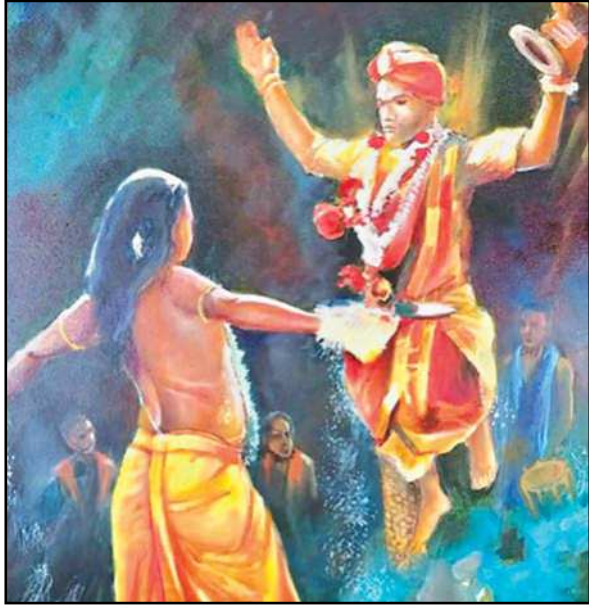


Ganesha Somayaji B

B.G. Mohammed of B.G.M. Fine Arts in Mangaluru. He later secured the first rank and a gold medal in the G.D. Art examination in 1973.

Over a career spanning more than 50 years, Somayaji has produced more than 1,000 works and held 25 solo exhibitions, besides participating in over 120 group exhibitions across India. His practice has included on-the-spot landscape painting, portraiture and documentation of places and heritage through different media.

His works have been ex-



hibited at venues including Mumbai's Jehangir Art Gallery, where he participated in exhibitions in 2019 and 2023. He was also part of the Central Lalit Kala Akademi's national camp, Varanasi Through Creative Eyes in 2016 and has participated in the Appa Art Festival in

Pune and seven editions of the Kudla Kala Mela.

Some of his works are part of collections including that of the President of India and the Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy.

He has been associated with the Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy as a member

VETERAN artist Ganesha Somayaji B. will bring more than five decades of painting to Bengaluru with his solo exhibition 'Reflection'. The showcase, opening October 1, will feature landscapes, portraits and works documenting Karnataka's natural, cultural and architectural heritage.

and has coordinated initiatives including Chithra Siri, Varna Jagruthi and Varna Virasat. He is also honorary president of Karavali Chitrakala Chavadi.

The exhibition will be inaugurated on October 1 at 5 pm by veteran artist Krishna Setty, Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts, Moscow. Artist and Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy president Pa. Sa. Kumar will preside. Reflection will be open to visitors from 11 am to 7 pm daily at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Kumara Kripa Road, Bengaluru.



This is my first Asian Games and I won mixed and team medals. I could not have asked for more. I did not have much time between the women's team gold and the mixed final. I was in a rush and we just got time to sit there and prepare ourselves

-Chikitha Taniparthi, Telangana archer

Sports Nation

Asian Games 2026

Golden hat-trick in compound archery

Indian mixed, women's and men's teams claim top finish; cherry on top was the mixed combination of Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav, also securing an Olympic quota place for the country

NAGOYA: India's compound archers displayed admirable poise under pressure to complete a golden sweep in the Asian Games team competitions, successfully defending their crowns in men's, women's and mixed events here on Wednesday with performances that ranged from domineering to gritty.

Cherry on top was the mixed combination of Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav also securing an Olympic quota place for the country following their top finish.

India thus became the first country to qualify for the 2028 Olympics in the compound mixed team event, which will mark the disci-



The Indian women's compound team celebrate with their gold medals



pline's debut in the Los Angeles Games.

The women's trio of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Chikitha and Prithika Pradeep kicked off the gold rush that culminated with the men's combination of Kushal Dalal, Sahil Jadhav and Ganesh Mani Ratnam Thirumuru rally-

ing to outwit the Chinese trio of Jiahao Liao, Jinyi Liu and Jingyu Shi in the finals 238-237. For Chikitha and Sahil, the day brought two gold medals as they had earlier showed nerves of steel to prevail over Korea's Jungyoon Park and Choi Eun Gyu in a thrilling mixed team final, winning 158-157 after a shoot-off.

The Indian duo had entered the gold-medal match after beating Thailand 156-155 in the semifinals.

This was after the Indian women's compound team produced a sensational performance to outclass the Chinese trio of Wunier, Yue Wang and Fangyao Wei 238-234 and retain its gold with a world record-equaling score. Jyothi, Chikitha and Prithika dominated the women's summit clash to secure the top spot on the podium. Of these, Jyothi was a part of the gold-winning women's team in Hangzhou as well.

The Indians equalled the world record held by South Korea in achieving the feat. Korea had secured the record total during the Incheon Asian Games in 2014.

Neeru-Kynan pair wins trap mixed team gold

NAGOYA: The Indian pair of Neeru Dhandu and Kynan Chenai clinched the Asian Games trap mixed team gold on Wednesday, smashing the continental record in the process and ensuring that the last leg of country's shooting campaign here makes up for the early disappointments to an extent.

The Indian team shot a score of 34 in the final after qualifying in the fourth position. Qatar's Mohammed Al-Rumaihi and Ray Bassil took the silver with a score of 32.



The medal marks a remarkable end to the Asian Games campaign of the 26-year-old Neeru, who became India's first woman shooter to claim an individual trap medal at the showpiece with her gold that came on the back of an Asian record-shattering score on Tuesday.

LOVLINA TO FIGHT FOR GOLD

NISHIO: Lovlina Borgohain scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman boxer to reach back-to-back Asian Games finals, while debutants Priya Ghanghas and Kapil Pokhariya settled for bronze medals here on Wednesday. Last edition's silver-medallist Lovlina edged reigning 70kg world champion Natalya Bogdanova of Kazakhstan 3-2 in a closely fought 75kg semifinal to assure herself of at least a silver.

However, 20-year-old Priya, making her Asian Games debut, went down 1-4 to former world champion Yang Chengyu of China in a bruising 60kg semifinal.

Another Indian debutant, Kapil suffered a similar 1-4 defeat against reigning world champion Turabek Khabibullaev of Uzbekistan in the 90kg semifinal to settle for bronze.

India will thus have three boxers -- Lovlina, Parveen Hooda (65kg) and Ankush Panghal (80kg) fighting for gold in Friday.



Sunil wins second bronze

NAGOYA: Sunil Kumar became the first Indian Greco-Roman wrestler to win two Asian Games medals after clinching a bronze in the men's 87kg event but Nisha Dahiya endured a medal-less campaign on the opening day of the wrestling competition here Wednesday. Sunil assured his podium place with a technical superiority win (9-0) over Philippines' Roberts Callum Johnston, who



was no match to the strength and technical skill of the Indian. Locking his rival's right arm, Sunil effected two take downs to quickly open up a 4-0 lead. A defensive

Johnston was put on ground in 'Par Terre' position from where Sunil made more scoring moves to finish the bout in the first period itself. Sunil had won a bronze in Hangzhou 2023 Games, ending a 13-year wait for India for medal in the Greco Roman style.

Indian women in hockey final

NAGOYA: The in-form Indian women's hockey team placed itself on the verge of ending a 44-year wait for an Asian Games gold, beating South Korea 2-0 to enter the final of the continental showpiece here on Wednesday. Ishika Chaudhary (44th minute) and skipper Salima Tete (48th) were the goal scorers for India. India are now just a victory away from securing its only second Asian Games women's hockey gold medal.

The previous triumph came way back in the 1982 New Delhi games. India will take on defending champions China in the final on Friday. China beat Japan 4-2 in a shoot-out after both sides failed to break the deadlock in the entire 60 minutes of the first semifinal. South Korea will face Japan in the bronze medal match.



Squash: India assured of medals

NAGOYA: The Indian men's and women's teams eased into the Asian Games semifinals with convincing wins over Kuwait and Singapore respectively, assuring themselves of a medal here on Wednesday. The Indian men, top seed and defending champions, collected a 2-0 win over Kuwait in the quarterfinals. Among the two singles, Veer Chotrani had to dig deep against Bader Almoghrebi before prevailing 12-10, 8-11, 11-0, 11-5 in a 34-minute contest. Abhay Singh, India's highest ranked players and silver medallist in the singles competition, sealed the tie 11-3, 11-4, 11-8 win over Ammar Altamimi. In the women's singles, the Anahat Singh-led team tamed Singapore 2-0 in its quarterfinal.

India renew hockey rivalry against Pak

KAKAMIGAHARA: Defending champions India will renew the fiercest rivalry in men's international hockey when they take on Pakistan in a mouth-watering semifinal of the Asian Games here on Thursday, with eyes firmly set on securing a direct ticket to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.



Campbell, Hope, Jangoo tons power WI to record 405/7

TAPAN MOHANTA
GUWAHATI

CENTURIES from John Campbell, Shai Hope and Amir Jangoo powered the West Indies to their first 400-plus total in the 50-over format, a mammoth 405 for seven against India in the second ODI here on Wednesday.

After being sent into bat, Campbell set the tone with a 65-ball hundred as the West Indies' batters ruthlessly exposed India's inexperienced pace attack. A self-confessed admirer of Chris Gayle, Campbell channelled the inner Universe Boss perfectly, playing the Indian attack with brute power and freedom in his 101 off 68 balls (9x4, 5x6).

Hope and Jangoo then kept the West Indies in complete control through the middle and late overs, maintaining a scoring rate around eight an over. Hope was the anchor and accelerator in one, building his innings carefully before stepping on the gas to make full use of the reprieve he got when he was dropped on 27 by Virat Kohli, with the ball bursting through his hands at short midwicket.

The skipper brought up a superb 104 off 94 balls, with eight fours and three sixes, keeping the tempo high rather than allowing India to claw their way back. Jangoo complemented Hope perfectly, mixing calculated stroke-play with aggression and reached his second ODI century off just 69 balls, finishing on 114 with 13 fours and three sixes as the Windies brought up three centuries in an ODI for the first time. The total surpassed their previous best of 389 against England in 2019.

In the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, who is on the Asian Games duty, and Mohammed Siraj, who is still sitting out, India continue to expose youngsters ahead of the 2027 World Cup in South Africa. But the pace attack threw more questions than answers. With proven campaigners such as Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami still being overlooked, India's search for options beyond the established names hardly looked convincing. Auqib Nabi, who became the third cricketer from the Valley to represent India, endured a forgettable outing, conceding 84 runs in his 8.5 overs.

Operating at military-medium pace, Nabi struggled to contain the West Indies on a flat surface. Gurnoor Brar, used as the second-change bowler, was the best among the three returning 2/96, while Prasadish Krishna finished with 1/45 in five overs.

There was further concern for India as batting all-rounder Naman Dhir, who also bowls off-spin, twisted his ankle and had to leave the field in the 36th over after bowling 6.1 overs. The only bright spots were the two spinners as Kuldeep Yadav claimed 2/65 to get into the 200-wicket club in ODIs, while Ravindra Jadeja who finished with 2/75.

Family preserves man's body in freezer for 4 yrs, spends Rs 50 lakh

MUMBAI

THE family of an 80-year-old Mumbai man who died four years ago has preserved his body due to 'deep emotional attachment', spending over Rs 50 lakh in the process, police said on Wednesday.

Ruling out any foul play, the

Ruling out any foul play, the police said the man passed away in 2022 after suffering from cancer, kidney failure and other age-related ailments

police said the man passed away in 2022 after suffering from

cancer, kidney failure and other age-related ailments.

The family initially kept the body in a freezer in their home in Mumbai's Malad area, said an official from Kurar police station.

According to the police, the man's wife and two children, one of whom is a lawyer, decided against performing the last rites due to 'deep emotional

attachment'.

When their residential building underwent redevelopment, the family moved the body to a local dispensary, which closed down about a month ago, they said.

"The family has spent more than Rs 50 lakh to keep the body preserved and was explor-

ing options to send it to a facility in the United States offering long-term cryopreservation services," a police official said.

Cryopreservation broadly refers to storing cells, tissues or organs at extremely low temperatures.

Police uncovered the unusual case after receiving a tip-off.



One chapter has ended: Pahalgam victim's daughter on Moosa death

MUMBAI: Asavari Jagdale, daughter of Pahalgam terror attack victim Santosh Jagdale, on Wednesday expressed gratitude to the Indian Army and security agencies following the killing of Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Hashim Moosa in an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam.

Speaking to ANI, Jagdale said she considered the day one of the happiest for her, recalling the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

"Today, I will consider it the happiest day for me. On April 22, 2025, the way our people were killed in the Baisaran Valley, 26 lives were lost. They were killed after asking about their religion. The way they brutally killed our people, today I came to know that the mastermind behind it has been eliminated in an encounter. I would say this should be the happiest day for the country," she said. Expressing her gratitude



towards the security forces, she said, "I want to thank the Army and all the intelligence forces working on this. I request you to continue this operation and eliminate all the terrorists in this country until the last terrorist is eliminated." Jagdale recalled that she had performed her father's shradh (death anniversary ritual) the previous day and had spoken to

his photograph about the ongoing operations against terrorism. "Yesterday was my father's shradh, and I was talking to him. I told him that whatever operations are happening against terrorism are because of the sacrifice of all of you. The 26 people who were killed, the sacrifice of those 26 people is the reason these operations are taking place," she said.

Maha govt orders banks not to visit farmers for loan recovery

PUNE: Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekar Bawankule directed banks not to visit farmers' homes for loan recovery due to the prevailing drought situation and asked officials to explore whether the RBI could issue a circular suspending such recovery proceedings.

During a meeting of the Bawankule-headed drought relief cabinet sub-committee on Tuesday, directives were also issued for implementing a 10 per cent water cut in urban areas and to maintain the conserved water as a buffer until June next year, according to an official release.

At present, water is being supplied through 560 tankers in the state, it stated, as the panel members suggested proper planning to preserve drinking water supplies for 10 months, before the next monsoon.

The Maharashtra government has declared drought in 265 of its 358 talukas, or 74 per cent of the state, amid rainfall deficit, and announced relief measures,



including crop loan restructuring, land revenue concessions, and power bill subsidies.

It has activated 'Trigger-1' under its manual for drought management 2016 (updated in 2020) and Drought Management Code to declare drought conditions and initiate relief.

Trigger-1 is the first stage in the state's drought framework, activated by a rainfall deficit of more than 25 per cent combined with a prolonged dry spell of 21 days.

According to Principal Secretary Vinita Ved Singh, scarcity conditions have been reported in 265 talukas of the state based on information received from divisional commissioners. Drought conditions have become evident under the 'Trigger-1' criteria, while 43 talukas have qualified under 'Trigger-2'.

'Jail Bharo Andolan' on Oct 2 from Shivaji Park

MUMBAI: Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke on Wednesday announced that a "Jail Bharo Andolan" will begin from Mumbai's Shivaji Park on Gandhi Jayanti, alleging that the Election Commission's functioning was not in the interest of the country.

After reaching Mumbai, Dipke said that the protest movement would start from Shivaji Park on October 2 and appealed to all political parties to participate in the agitation.

He alleged that the "dictatorship" of the Election Commission was a matter of concern and claimed that collective efforts were needed to bring change in the country.

Supporting the remarks made by NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar regarding alleged misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) in elections, Deepak said that everyone should come together to address concerns related to the electoral process.

Eiffel Tower chief to quit after exclusion of female staff

PARIS: The head of the company that operates the Eiffel Tower is to leave his post at the end of the year after female employees were excluded from a visit by a Hindu religious group at the Paris landmark.

Patrick Branco Ruivo, director general of the Société d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel (SETE), will step down following an investigation by an independent firm into operational failures surrounding the group's visit on September 5.

The investigation found that the failures had led to female members of staff being kept away from the delegation, which SETE described in a statement as an "unacceptable situation". Ruivo has headed the company since the end of 2018.

The 330-metre (1,083-foot) tower, one of Paris's most recognisable landmarks and a major tourist attraction that draws around seven million visitors each year, was closed on



September 7 after staff went on strike. A union official described the management instructions surrounding the visit as "unacceptable".

Tensions had risen among employees after management instructed female workers not to come into contact with members of the delegation from Bochasawanasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha.

Known as BAPS, the organisation is a global religious and civic group within the Swaminarayan tradition of Hinduism. Its members had been in Paris for celebrations marking the inauguration of a traditional Hindu stone temple.

BAPS did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the announcement.



“Ayush is not merely a cultural inheritance but a dynamic and high-growth engine of India's economy. The Ayush sector is poised to play an increasingly important role in healthcare, wellness, employment and global economic engagement, while contributing to our vision of a healthy and self-reliant India.”

-Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State (IC) for Ayush

BIZ BRIEFS

Diageo unveils updated product

Diageo India has revamped McDowell's No.1 with an upgraded blend combining imported Scotch, Indian malts and grain spirits, alongside redesigned packaging and a refreshed visual identity. Ruchira Jaitly, CMO, Diageo India, said: “Today's whisky drinker is redefining value. It's no longer just about affordability, but also about quality, craftsmanship and experience. Socializing is at the heart of how India drinks, and consumers want a whisky they can proudly share with their circle, one that reflects who they are.”

OPPO launches K14 Plus in India

OPPO India has launched the K14 Plus, powered by MediaTek Dimensity 7360 MAX, with a 1.5K 144Hz AMOLED display, 8,000mAh battery, 45W charging, 50MP OIS camera with 4K video and 5,000mm² vapour chamber cooling. It offers up to 8GB RAM, 256GB storage, IP69K/IP69/IP68/IP66 protection and ColorOS 16. Available in Solar Orange and Star White, it goes on sale October 8 via Flipkart and OPPO's e-store, starting effectively at Rs 25,999 with bank discount.

ICICI Prudential's death claims rise

ICICI Prudential Life said its average individual death claim stood at Rs15 lakh in FY2026, up from about Rs10 lakh in FY2021. The insurer said the average payout has remained around Rs14-15 lakh over the past four years. Sarang Gokhale, Chief - Underwriting and Retail Claims, ICICI Prudential, said: “Life insurance is built on a simple promise to provide financial security to families when they need it the most.”

Amazon sale from October 7

Amazon India has announced Navaratri-focused offers ahead of its Great Indian Festival beginning October 8, with discounts of up to 70 per cent across fashion and beauty brands. Prime members can get up to 10 per cent additional benefits. The platform is also offering AI-powered shopping tools, including Rufus, Lens AI, price tracking and review highlights, while Amazon Now provides rapid delivery of festive essentials across more than 65 cities.

Bontrue Furniture gets recognition

Hyderabad-based Bontrue Furniture won the “Excellence in Customer Trust & Care – Furniture Retail” award at the Times Business Awards 2026. Former India women's cricket captain Mithali Raj presented the award to director Rakesh Patel at Novotel HICC on September 26. Rakesh Patel, Director, Bontrue Furniture, said: “This award belongs to our customers. More than 18,000 families have trusted us with their homes, and over 6,500 of them took the time to tell others about it.”

Venu Srinivasan takes Tata Trusts row to Maha Charity Commissioner

Questions Noel Tata's perpetual trusteeship, Neville Tata's appointment

MUMBAI

THE widening boardroom dispute at Tata Sons has spilled into Tata Trusts, with trustee and Tata Sons nominee director Venu Srinivasan seeking a regulatory inquiry into the governance of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT), one of the charitable entities that collectively control about 66 per cent of Tata Sons.

In a letter to Maharashtra's Charity Commissioner, Srinivasan has questioned the appointment and continued status of Noel N. Tata as a perpetual trustee, the appointment of Noel Tata's son Neville Tata, and what he described as attempts to constrain his independent role as a nominee director on the Tata Sons board.

At the centre of the dispute is a September 16 SDTT circular resolution that Srinivasan said sought to prevent him from participating in or voting on the proposed listing of Tata Sons. He described it as an attempt to “prevent me from exercising my independent judgement and vote”.

The following day, at a Tata Sons board meeting,



Venu Srinivasan

Srinivasan supported the reappointment of Chairman N Chandrasekaran for a third five-year term and backed moving ahead with the listing process. Noel Tata opposed both positions. The board passed the resolutions, with the Chandrasekaran vote requiring a casting vote. Tata Trusts later disputed the validity of the board decisions, maintaining that its nominees were required to agree on such matters.

Srinivasan has also questioned the Trusts' involvement in Tata Sons' commercial affairs. Referring to a September 17 Tata Trusts statement that all available options, and not listing alone, should be explored, he

Noel Tata flags concerns over Tata Sons listing plan

MUMBAI

TATA Trusts Chairman Noel Tata has urged the Tata Sons board to review a restructuring proposal aimed at avoiding a stock market listing of the holding company.

Noel Tata said he remained hopeful that the Reserve Bank of India would reconsider its decision to classify Tata Sons as an upper-layer non-banking financial company (NBFC).

According to him, listing Tata Sons would fundamentally change the way the Tata group



Noel Tata

has operated for decades and could create a conflict between investor expectations for profits and the philanthropic objectives of Tata Trusts.

Tata Trusts, which owns 66 per cent of Tata Sons,

has proposed merging Tata Electronics Systems Solutions and Tata Consulting Engineers with Tata Sons. The restructuring would give Tata Sons its own operations and revenue and could allow it to avoid classification as an NBFC or core investment company. Tata Sons was placed on the RBI's upper-layer NBFC list in September 2022 and was given three years to list. The company subsequently cleared its debt and applied in 2024 to surrender its core investment company status and remain private.

alleged that the Trusts and their operating team had assumed a direct role in commercial and strategic matters concerning Tata Sons.

He argued that such involvement could conflict with the charitable objectives of SDTT and poten-

tially expose it to tax consequences. He alleged that the Trust was being exposed to “potentially immense fiscal consequences” and described the conduct as mismanagement of its affairs and property.

Srinivasan has sought

an immediate inquiry into SDTT's administration and governance, including Noel Tata's perpetual trusteeship, Neville Tata's appointment, his own exclusion from decision-making and the Trusts' involvement in Tata Sons' commercial affairs.

Fiscal deficit hits 41.9% of FY27 target by August

NEW DELHI: THE central government's fiscal deficit stood at Rs 7.1 lakh crore or 41.9 per cent of full year target at the end of August, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on Wednesday. The deficit was at 38.1 per cent of Budget Estimates (BE) of 2025-26 during the corresponding period last year. In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit, or the gap between the government's expenditure and revenue, was Rs 7,10,249 crore during April-August period of the 2026-27. According to the CGA, the Centre's net tax revenue up to August 2026 was about Rs 8.38 lakh crore, or 29.2 per cent of the corresponding BE of 2026-27 of total receipts. In the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year, the net tax revenue was at 28.6 per cent of that year's BE. The data on monthly accounts showed that the total expenditure during the first five months was at about Rs 20.78 lakh crore, or 38.9 per cent of BE. In the year-ago period, it was at 37.1 per cent of BE. The Centre has set a fiscal deficit target of 4.3 per cent of the GDP or Rs 16.96 lakh crore in the current fiscal.

Bank credit to industry up 18.2% : RBI data

MUMBAI: Bank credit to industry grew 18.2 per cent in August, up from 7 per cent in the same period last year, according to Reserve Bank data released on Wednesday.

The RBI has released data on sectoral deployment of bank credit for August 2026, collected from 41 select scheduled commercial banks, which together account for about 95 per cent of the total non-food credit by all SCBs.

On a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, non-food bank credit grew 18.8 per cent as on the fortnight ended August 31, 2026, compared to 10.2 per cent during the corresponding fortnight of the previous year (September 5, 2025).

“While credit to ‘large’ and ‘medium’ industries grew at an accelerated pace, ‘micro and small’ industries sustained steady expansion,” the RBI said.

Lighter cars get relief under new CAFE norms

Centre drops separate small-car concession, adopts flatter weight-based formula

NEW DELHI

THE government has notified the third phase of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE-III) norms for passenger vehicles, giving lighter cars relatively softer efficiency targets while requiring greater improvements from heavier vehicles.

The norms, notified by the Ministry of Power, will come into effect from April 1, 2027 and remain applicable until March 31, 2032. They will cover new passenger vehicles manufactured or imported for sale in India.

The revised framework replaces the proposed special concession for small cars with a flatter weight-based target curve, providing lighter vehicles greater relief compared with the September 2025 draft.



The reference weight has been raised from 1,082 kg under the existing norms to 1,229 kg, an increase of around 13.6 per cent.

The September 2025 draft had proposed a 3 gram per km deduction in declared CO2 emissions for petrol cars weighing up to 909 kg, with engine capacity up to

1,200 cc and length up to four metres. The final norms have dropped this separate concession.

The new framework targets more than 16 per cent improvement in fuel efficiency over the five-year period. The fuel-consumption benchmark will tighten from 3.996 litres per 100 km in 2027-28 to 3.3273 litres per 100 km in 2031-32, an improvement of around 16.7 per cent.

The norms provide multiple compliance routes, including incentives for electric vehicles, hybrids, flex-fuel vehicles, alternative fuels and fuel-saving technologies.

Battery electric vehicles, range-extended EVs, plug-in hybrids, strong hybrids and flex-fuel vehicles will receive

volume derogation factors, or “super credits”, in fleet-average calculations.

The framework also introduces a Carbon Neutrality Factor to recognise renewable and low-carbon fuels such as ethanol-blended petrol, biofuels and CBG. Recognised fuel-conservation technologies have been expanded from four to 12.

Manufacturers can meet obligations through specified two-year or three-year compliance blocks. Those exceeding targets can carry forward credits, trade them with other manufacturers or sell them through the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's buyout mechanism.

Manufacturers selling fewer than 1,000 units annually will remain exempt from fleet-average obligations.

Two Timex World Stores opened in Hyderabad

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

WATCHMAKER Timex Group India Ltd., has announced the launch of its first Timex World stores in Hyderabad. Located in Hab-siguda and Himayat Nagar, the new stores will offer customers access to an extensive portfolio of globally renowned and homegrown watch brands under one roof.

Deepak Chhabra, MD, Timex Group India, said: “As consumer preferences evolve, we continue to see strong value in in-person retail, particularly for categories like watches where customers want to discover collections and experience products firsthand. With the launch of our first Timex World stores in Hyderabad, we are creating a dedicated destination that brings together choice, convenience and a seamless brand experience. Hyderabad is an important market for us, with a growing base of discerning consumers and strong demand for global and premium brands.” Designed as a one-stop destination for watch enthusiasts, the new Timex World stores showcase a diverse collection spanning everyday essentials, fashion-forward styles, and premium timepieces. Consumers can explore collections from Timex, Helix, GUESS, Gc, Aston Martin and Daniel Wellington, catering to a wide range of styles and price points.

Apple Pay joins India's digital payments race

NEW DELHI

US technology major Apple has entered the Indian digital payments market with the launch of Apple Pay in collaboration with Axis Bank.

The service is available on iPhone, iPad and Apple Watch, with support for Mac coming soon, Apple said on Wednesday.

“India is home to a dynamic and digitally savvy population that continues to embrace a cashless future while expecting the highest standards of security and privacy, and we're so excited



to bring Apple Pay to users in India today,” said Jennifer Bailey, Apple's vice president of Apple Pay and Apple Wallet.

Customers with Axis Bank-issued Visa and Mastercard credit cards can add their cards to Apple Pay and make payments at stores, in

apps and on the web without entering PINs or OTPs at checkout.

Apple said the service will be accepted by millions of merchants across India, including Apple Store locations, Blinkit, Chaayos, Comet, Croma, Interflora, Igigo, Le15 Patisserie, Reliance brands, Tata 1mg and Zomato.

The company has also worked with payment service providers including Cashfree, JusPay, MsSwipe, Paytm, PayU, Pine Labs, Razorpay and Worldline to enable Apple Pay across their merchant networks.

Apple said card numbers are not stored on the device or its servers and are not shared with merchants. Instead, a unique Device Account Number is assigned, encrypted and securely stored in the device's Secure Element. Transaction details are also not retained by Apple. If an iPhone is lost or stolen, users can use the Find My app to locate, lock or suspend payments from the device. Apple Pay is currently available in more than 90 countries and regions and works with more than 11,000 bank and network partners globally.



D. Sridhar Babu, IT Minister of Telangana with officials of DoorDash in Hyderabad on Wednesday

DoorDash picks Hyderabad for first India hub

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

US-based DoorDash, one of the world's leading local commerce platforms on Wednesday opened its talent hub here, its first India office. The company is starting with 500 professionals and plans to scale its headcount to more than 3,000 within next two years, a company release said.

Telangana Industries and Commerce Minister D Sridhar Babu inaugurated the facility alongside Ravi Inukonda, Chief Financial Officer at DoorDash, Jenna Kohnke, Senior Director, Workforce Strategy and Talent Acquisition Operations at DoorDash and Sai Krishna, IT Advisor to Telangana government.

The Hyderabad hub will initially house Customer Experience and Integrity (CXI) and General and Administrative teams, it said. Its CXI

operation will be DoorDash's third internal CXI service centre globally. The hub will support DoorDash's global operations and help deliver reliable experiences for consumers, merchants, and Dashers across DoorDash's geographies, it said. Team members in Hyderabad will support a global platform that serves over 56 million monthly active consumers across geographies with a combined population reaching over one billion people, it further said. Sridhar Babu said DoorDash choosing Hyderabad to build capabilities to drive its rapid growth is a strong validation of how the city has evolved as a global talent hub. “As one of the world's leading local commerce platforms, with operations across 40 plus countries, DoorDash is a strong addition to Hyderabad's growing hyperlocal digital commerce ecosystem.”



OTT crisis in Tollywood

SHRINKING STREAMING DEALS THREATEN BIG-BUDGET FILMS

SUHAS SISTU

For years, online video platforms have taken up a crucial role in the economics of Tollywood, with post-theatrical streaming deals serving as an important source of recovery for producers. But the way in which the streaming market is evolving is now compelling the Telugu film industry to reevaluate its reliance on digital revenues.

It especially has ramifications for medium-budget films, which previously relied

on lucrative OTT deals to offset the costs of production. The notion that streaming agreements could cushion weak box-office performances has also led to the criticism that filmmakers were taking fewer risks with theatrical prospects.

That assumption seems to be proving out. Streaming platforms are becoming more reluctant to spend large amounts of money on acquiring films, and OTT budgets reportedly are being trimmed and deals increasingly tied to a film's theatrical

performance and commercial viability.

For example, Yash's Toxic OTT valuation has reportedly dropped significantly from an initial pre-release offer of Rs150 Cr down to around Rs30 Cr following its underwhelming theatrical run.

The ramifications go beyond mid-range productions. Even big-budget Telugu films are being threatened as producers expect substantially higher digital valuations than what streaming platforms are willing to offer. Such a disparity could leave films

that are mounted on ambitious budgets in financial distress. Speaking on it, '1948 Akhanda Bharat' director Eswar said, "The OTT market is definitely going through a correction. Earlier, filmmakers could factor in a strong digital deal while planning their budgets, but that safety net is becoming smaller. For young directors like us, this is actually a reminder to focus on the script and make films within realistic budgets. A film should first work for the audience in theatres, and OTT should be seen as an

additional revenue stream rather than the foundation of the entire business model."

If the trend persists, theatrical revenue could again become the default priority for producers looking to recoup their investments. It would also compel filmmakers to be more disciplined with their budgets and give more thought to content and theatrical appeal.

For Telugu cinema, the shifting OTT landscape could thus be a major turning point in how films are planned, financed and marketed.



'Ranabaali: The History We Forgot' episode highlights untold stories of British India

The second episode of the Ranabaali – Never Forget the Truth documentary series, The History We Forgot, is out on the YouTube platform. Starring Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, the episode uncovers lesser-known facts about India's history under the British rule.

In the episode, the lead actors discuss the exploitation of India's agriculture produce and take a close look at the railway network laid down during the colonial period. While Vijay Deverakonda talks about the narrative around the introduction of railways in the country, the documentary reveals the other side of the coin. The



actress plays an essential role in the documentary film. Rashmika Mandanna shares her research for the role in Ranabaali and

states that sifting through the annals of history and getting into the events that occurred long ago made her more empathetic to the

struggles of people from long ago.

Ranabaali's four-episode documentary aims to uncover forgotten tales

of the bygone era that are intrinsically linked to the movie's universe. Apart from The History We Forgot, the third episode titled The Men We Forgot will be out on October 2. The release date of the finale, The Last Load, will be announced soon.

The film is directed by Rahul Sankrityan. It stars Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna who share their insights about the country's history via a prism of pertinent questions. The film is produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar under the banner of Mythri Movie Makers, presented by T-Series and will be released worldwide on October 16, on the day of Vijayadashami.

'Tatvam' director Arjun Kola promises a thrilling murder mystery

Director Arjun Kola is confident that the suspense and mystery in Tatvam will keep the audience on tenterhooks. The murder mystery stars Dinesh Tej and Dashwika K. jointly produced by Vamsi Seemakurthi and Swetha Pashupate under their Trayathi Ishani Creations and S.K. Productions.

In the run-up to the October 2 release, Arjun Kola unveiled that their initial plan was to make a rural drama centered on a village panchayat. They later added murder, mystery, and courtroom thriller elements as they worked on a story based on a case in a village context.

The director explained the meaning of the title Tatvam,



saying that it stood for the conflict between truth and lies. He observed that the protagonist unravels the truth in the narrative, which exposes a person's true na-

ture, besides delving into the minds of the characters.

Arjun further revealed that they encountered several obstacles during the production. The cast and crew involved in a car crash while promoting the film caused another postponement. However, the team resumed promotional campaigns and set October 2 for the release.

The director also praised Chetan Bharadwaj's background score, which plays a critical role in the second half of the film as the mystery deepens.

Arjun, who gave up a career in software to pursue movies, announced plans to make Dwarapudi Days, a melodrama set in the Godavari region.

Priyanka Jawalkar grabs attention in sheer pink saree

Priyanka Jawalkar stunned in sheer pink saree. The actress is garnering love for flaunting a pretty traditional look on her social media. Even though she has been seen in cameo roles in many of the web shows that she has been a part of, this picture has definitely got a lot of attention and likes! For the pictures, Priyanka went with a sheer hot-pink saree and paired it with a sleeveless ikat-style blouse that had pretty straps. She was seen posing elegantly in front of a window, where the camera captured the soft lighting on the actress. For styling, the actress kept her looks minimal but still stood out in the pictures. She accessorized with colourful glass bangles in teal, mustard and pink. A touch of makeup, including a minimal black bindi, subtle eye shadow and nude lip balm, completed the beauty's look, while soft and loose wavy hair gave her a pretty finishing touch. The pretty traditional attire along with minimal styling has surely helped Priyanka Jawalkar get a lot of appreciation for her latest photo-shoot.



Satya, Yogi Babu team up for comedy entertainer 'Golden Bhagyam'

Golden Bhagyam stars Telugu comedian Satya and Tamil comedy star Yogi Babu, in a unique comedy entertainer directed by Rangabali fame Pawan Basamsetti. Recently, the makers unveiled the title reveal glimpse, showcasing the film's special Telugu-Tamil concept. Produced by Nagarjuna Reddy and Pawan Basamsetti under Dream Movie Makers and Nayavayu Chitralu, it is the maiden production venture of both the banners. The film is described as 'Telumil' which combines the Telugu and Tamil language and stars the popu-

lar stars from both the industries.

The glimpse starts with a funny conversation between a Telugu man who enjoyed biryani and a Tamil man having idli with sambar, who claim that their respective cuisine is the best. Later, they argue which one is the best cuisine and eventually the funny introduction of Satya and Yogi Babu in white dress starts. Interestingly, in the video, Satya speaks Tamil while Yogi Babu speaks Telugu. It is said that the film has a love, crime and action track with a comedic take on it. Jayashree and Athiraj play the female leads



while Vennela Kishore, Sudharshan, Kishore Tirumala, Rohini, Tanikella Bharani and Sunil Reddy play pivotal roles. Bablu Aju has been roped in for cinematography while the music has been composed by Pawan CH.

'Impure' producer Varahi backs her film with her mother's wedding savings

Impure marks Varahi Mallipamula's debut as a producer, actor and writer, with the film being born from an unusual source of funding - her mother's wedding savings.

Set for a limited Pan-India theatrical release on October 2, the independent film delves into gender, social expectations and the struggles of women. Born in Kakinada and raised in Pennsylvania, Varahi currently splits her time between New York and holds a double major in Engineering and Journalism from Penn State. Despite working in the technology sector in New York, Los Angeles and London,

she continued to pursue filmmaking, penning the first draft of Impure six years ago.

The film follows a woman whose wedding is cancelled after her in-laws discover that she is not a virgin. Varahi said she spent years pitching the women-centric story before deciding to produce it herself. She also starred Telugu actor Yasha Muthuluri in the lead role.

Impure features music by Grammy-nominated artists Raja Kumari and Karan Pandav, with cinematographer Gnana-sekhar VS capturing Telugu locations in an artistic visual approach. Nishanthi Evani makes her directorial debut with the film. The movie premiered at TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles before an



East Coast premiere at Cinema Village in New York.

'Chakkora - Lunar Love Bird' clears censor with U/A certificate

Chakkora - Lunar Love Bird, the upcoming romantic musical entertainer, has cleared its censor formalities and bagged a U/A certificate. Written and directed by Manga Srinivas, the film is produced by Dr. Chintada Hemarao under High Joy Commercials and made under the VIP - Vintage Iconic Pictures banner.

The censor board members reportedly appreciated the team for coming up with a youthful family entertainer without any cuts. The film has a crisp runtime of 2 hours, 17 minutes and 58 seconds while its screenplay was appreciated for keeping the narrative engaging. Starring Sravan and

Malaika T Vasupal in the lead roles, Chakkora - Lunar Love Bird has Anushka Luhar, Yamini, LB Sriram, Suman, Brahmaji, Indraj, Mani Chandana, Nellore Sudarshan, Prabhavathi, Madhavi Prasad, Janardhan and others in pivotal roles.

The film is slated to have a worldwide theatrical release on October 9 through Sri Lakshmi Pictures. In the meanwhile, the movie's audio rights have been acquired by T-Series Music.

After the previous promotional material, the censor clearance adds to the anticipation over the film that promises to blend romance, music and family-oriented entertainment.



'Anakapalli' interval and climax will surprise audience: Lagadapati Sridhar

The upcoming Telugu film Anakapalli is all set for the worldwide theatrical release on October 2, as the makers assure to present an entertainment-filled drama of love, family, action, and suspense. In this regard, the team of the film interacted with the media and shared glimpses of the film.

Lagadapati Sridhar appreciated the team's hard work and assured that the film has a good commercial value. He revealed



that the film was initially planned to release this August,

but it underwent several improvements after the screening

and the audience's response. He further added that the interval and climax of the film will surely amaze the viewers.

The film, which will hit the screens in October, is produced by Kandregula Naidu and Thrinadha Rao Nakkina, Bhavya Sri Movie Makers, and Nakkina Narratives. It stars Vikram Sahidev, Sandhya Vasishta, and Tarak Ponnappa in leading roles. Directed by Khagesh Tammineni, Thrinadha Rao Nakkina

has written the script.

Thrinadha Rao Nakkina described the film as a love drama with an intriguing family mystery and emotions. He further praised Vikram's hard work and assured that the film will make the actor famous. He also shared that the film has got good pre-shows bookings.

Producer Kandregula Naidu and Sandhya Vasishta also shared that they expect the film to be a hit among the audience.