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AI Disruption & Windfall Taxes

MONEY MATTERS 09

FILM FLOPPED, BUT THE HEROINE IS SUPER HIT

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THE VOID'S MYSTERY:

HUNTING THE SUN GODDESS PARTICLE

Astronomers are scouring the deep cosmos for the source of the "Amaterasu" particle, a terrifyingly powerful cosmic ray that seemingly arrived from a barren patch of empty space. Boasting energy levels that defy conventional physics, this "Sun Goddess" particle has left experts questioning whether it originated from an invisible celestial engine or a phenomenon entirely unknown to science.

FOCUS-POINT 10

SHORT TAKES

TAKES



Ravindra, Santner Rout Sri Lanka

A stunning rearguard from Mitchell Santner and Cole McConchie knocked Sri Lanka out of the 2026 T20 World Cup in spite of an electric start for the hosts as New Zealand sealed a crushing 61-run win.

STADIUM 11



Ready for war and peace

Abbas Araghchi warned that any conflict between Iran and the United States could rapidly escalate into a devastating regional war involving multiple Middle Eastern nations.

BEYOND BORDERS 08



From Infancy to Old Age...

Loneliness is far more than the absence of people; it is the absence of meaningful connection—an emotional state that can persist even amid crowds.

OPINION 06

THE DAILY MANTRA

LIFE<FLEETING @ TIME



• You're not killing time; time is killing you. You are nothing but a number of days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you has gone."
— Hasan al-Basri (R.A.)
Time is not something separate from us; our life is our time. Each passing day is not merely lost time — it is a part of our own existence slipping away.

Collected by

Venna Srinivasa Reddy



The Thiru kalyanotsavam of Yadagiri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy was held with grandeur on Wednesday night during the annual Brahmotsavams. The deity was taken in a Gajavahana procession, and head priests conducted the sacred wedding ceremony on the Kalyana Vedika.

Telangana's Manufacturing Blueprint

HYDERABAD, FEB.25

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has emphasised that constructive plans should be envisaged to invite investments from the noted global companies and promote Telangana as a manufacturing hub. Adobe CEO and Telangana Rising-2047 Vision Board Member Shantanu Narayen paid a courtesy call on Revanth Reddy at the latter's residence on Wednesday.

During the meeting, Shantanu Narayen and the Chief Minister discussed the steps to be taken by the state government on global trends and the opportunities in investments.

Adobe CEO and the Chief Minister shared their views on global manufacturing, green energy, impact of AI on jobs, skilling & reskilling. Revanth Reddy stressed that the state government should prepare new plans and go aggressive in attracting huge global investments.

The Chief Minister also enquired Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Board Member about the impact of AI revolution on the economy and the effective use of AI in the coming days. Revanth Reddy sought more cooperation from the board member to take Telangana forward on the path of development and bolster the state economy.



Congress Clears Rs. 46,962 Crore Kaleshwaram Loans in Two Years

HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

The Congress government in Telangana has repaid ₹46,962 crore of loans raised for the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project over the past two years, marking a sharp acceleration in debt clearance compared to the previous BRS regime.

Official figures indicate that between 2020 and 2023, the BRS government repaid ₹25,803 crore over four years. In contrast, the present administration cleared nearly ₹47,000 crore in just two years. In total, ₹72,766.16 crore of loans taken for the project have been repaid so far. Despite modest revenue growth, the state government



prioritized servicing high-cost debt, aiming to ease the long-term interest burden. Sources in the Finance Department said clearing principal amounts would significantly reduce recurring monthly and quarterly interest payments. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has repeatedly criti-

cized the borrowing pattern under the previous BRS government led by K. Chandrashekar Rao. He has maintained that Telangana, which began with a surplus at the time of state formation, was left heavily indebted after a decade of governance.

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KTR Slams 'Criminal Silence' on Kummera



HYDERABAD, FEB.25

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) strongly condemned the brutal incident that occurred in Kummera, stating that the entire Telangana society has bowed its head in grief and anguish over the inhuman tragedy. KTR asserted that anyone who stands by the killers of the innocent child is unquestionably guilty. He said it is absolutely wrong for anyone whether Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the local MLA, or the local MP to support those responsible for taking the life of the child.

Demanding strict action, KTR Rama Rao stated that irrespective of who the perpetrators are or which party they belong to, they must be sent to jail.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Singareni invited to partner in lithium mining in Brazil

HYDERABAD, FEB.25

A high-level delegation from Brazil's leading company Companhia Brasileira de Litio (CBL) met Dr. Budhaprakash Jyoti, Chairman and Managing Director of Singareni Collieries Company Limited, and invited Singareni to join as a partner in their lithium mining operations in Brazil.

CBL Board director Daniel Leme and CEO Vinicius Alvarenga presented details about their company and ongoing lithium mining projects in Brazil. They explained that, as lithium is a critical mineral of global importance, a partnership with Singareni—given

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Modi's Jerusalem Doctrine: Defending Peace, Denouncing Terror



JERUSALEM, FEB 25

In a historic address to the Knesset, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday described the Gaza Peace Initiative as a path towards "just and durable peace" in the region even as he delivered a powerful message of solidarity with Israel, asserting that "terrorism anywhere threatens peace everywhere".

Modi said like Israel, India has a "consistent and uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism with no double standards" and called for sustained and coordinated global efforts to counter the menace. The prime minister's address to the Knesset, Israel's house of representatives, came hours after he landed in the country to a rousing welcome with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu

along with his wife Sara receiving him at the Ben Gurion airport. "I also carry with me the deepest condolences of the people of India for every life lost and for every family whose world was shattered in the barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 (2023)," Modi said. "We feel your pain. We share your grief. India stands with Israel, firmly, with full conviction, in this moment, and beyond. No cause can justify the murder of civilians. Nothing can justify terrorism," he said. Marking the first-ever speech by an Indian prime minister to the Knesset, Modi showed India's strong resolve to combat terrorism with full force. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and several other senior leaders were among the parliamentarians who attended the event.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

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SHORT NEWS

Ganesh Sena (BGUS) delegation met Telangana DGP



HYDERABAD: A special search operation should be conducted across Telangana state, Bangladeshi and Rohingya Muslim infiltrators should be arrested and deported. Those identified under Balapur police station limits should be handed over to central agencies immediately. A thorough investigation should be conducted into the series of attacks on Hindu temples and the Hindu community; their conspiracies should be busted and those responsible should be severely punished. Two separate petitions were submitted demanding that the illegal cases filed against Hindus in various incidents across the state be withdrawn. Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samiti President G. Raghava Reddy, VHP National Spokesperson and BGUS General Secretary Dr. Ravinuthala Shashidhar, BGUS advisors Karodimal, Ramaraju and BGUS Secretary Ale Baskar were part of the delegation that met DGP.

Tenure of K Sreenivas Reddy extended as chairman of Telangana media academy

HYDERABAD: The state government has issued orders extending the tenure of K. Sreenivas Reddy as Chairman of the Telangana Media Academy for a further period of two years. As per the GO issued on Wednesday, the Government, after careful examination, approved the extension with effect from February 25, 2026. The remuneration, allowances, facilities, and supporting staff sanctioned earlier through previous Government Orders will continue during the extended tenure. The expenditure towards remuneration, supporting staff salaries, and vehicle hiring will be met from the funds of the Information & Public Relations Department. All other terms and conditions of his appointment will remain unchanged. The Special Commissioner, Information & Public Relations Department, Hyderabad, has been directed to take necessary further action.

PUBLIC TRUST GROWING FOR BJP: T-BJP CHIEF NRR

HYDERABAD

N. Ramchander Rao, Telangana State President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Wednesday asserted that a large number of people, especially the youth from various political parties, joining the BJP reflects the growing public trust in the party.

Lawyers, leaders from Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), and the Indian Youth Congress joined the BJP in the presence of Ramchander Rao and senior leaders. The new members were welcomed with party scarves at a programme held at the party's state office in Hyderabad.

Addressing the gathering, Rao extended a warm welcome to those who joined the party. He said that people are voluntarily coming forward, inspired by the governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, believing that only the BJP can safeguard India's culture, unity, integrity and 'Dharma'.

Strongly criticising the semi-nude protest staged recently by the Youth Congress workers



during the AI Summit 2026 in New Delhi, Rao termed it a "shameful act" that, he said, tarnished the country's global image. He alleged that the Congress party had turned the AI Summit into an "Abuse India, Anti-India programme". He alleged that the protest was orchestrated by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. Even partners of the INDIA alliance had opposed the behaviour. Demanding an apology from Rahul Gandhi, Rao said political differences are natural in a democ-

racy, but actions that harm the nation's dignity on international platforms are unacceptable.

The BJP state president also criticised what he described as "pseudo-secularists and pseudo-intellectuals", alleging that "urban naxals" were instigating students and turning universities into political hubs instead of centres of education. He stated that communism was declining globally, citing developments in countries such as China and the former Soviet Union.

Referring to 'Operation

Kagar', Rao said that several Naxalites were surrendering across the country and that top Maoist leaders had laid down arms in Telangana. He attributed this to the Centre's firm measures against Left-Wing Extremism (LWE). He alleged that Maoist activities over the past 45 years had resulted in violence and loss of innocent lives. The Central government was moving towards making the country Naxal-free by March 31 this year and that operations against LWE were yielding positive results, he noted.

Among those who joined the BJP were former BRS corporator contestants Lankala Ramesh Reddy, Vijeshwar Reddy, and Pradeep Reddy; Youth Congress leaders Shivashankar, Venugopal Reddy, Shivaprasad, and Naresh Kumar; and Advocate Shivakumar along with his team. The programme was organised under the leadership of BJP Rangareddy Urban District President Vanipalli Srinivas Reddy and BJP Kukatpally In-charge Madhavaram Kantha Rao.

Digital boards power surge in "Srivari Dharma Rathams"

TIRUMALA

The free "Srivari Dharma Rathams" (free bus services) operated by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) for the convenience of pilgrims in Tirumala have been receiving an overwhelming response following the installation of Digital Display Boards at major bus stops.

With real-time bus arrival information now available through these digital boards, waiting time for pilgrims has reduced significantly. This technological initiative, introduced for the first time among major spiritual destinations in the country, enables devotees to plan their travel efficiently within Tirumala. TTD Additional EO Sri Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary took a special initiative to install Digital Display Boards at 20 bus stops in Tirumala to provide real-time bus arrival information.

At present, 12 modern electric buses are operating under this service. On an average, nearly 300 trips are conducted daily, with each trip covering approximately 6.5 kilometers. The initiative has also led to a noticeable decline in



private taxi usage, as pilgrims can now track bus timings accurately.

The digital display boards were donated by Hyderabad-based B.S.Technotronics Private Limited, with technical support from Oletra Greentech Limited.

Apart from enhancing commuter convenience, the electric buses are contributing to reduced fuel consumption and pollution control, aligning with TTD's eco-friendly transport goals. Authorities are planning to add 20 more night trips soon to further strengthen the free transport network.

Strict vigil on swachh auto attendance, says Karnan

HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner R.V. Karnan has directed officials to ensure that door-to-door garbage collection is carried out compulsorily every single day without any lapse.

The Commissioner, along with Zonal Commissioner Ravi Kiran, on Wednesday conducted extensive sanitation inspections from Indira Park, Gandhi Nagar to Secunderabad Railway Station. Field inspections were carried out at Surabhi Park, P&T Colony, Gandhi Nagar Division, Kavadiguda, and areas surrounding Secunderabad Railway Station.

The Commissioner personally reviewed the

attendance of Swachh Auto workers and examined the regularity and effectiveness of sanitation operations at the ground level. Karnan instructed Deputy Commissioners, Solid Waste Management DEEs, and AEs to strictly monitor Swachh Auto sanitation workers to ensure mandatory daily door-to-door waste collection.

He emphasised that public places, parks, roads, streets, and major junctions must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition at all times. Making his stance clear, the Commissioner stated that negligence in sanitation monitoring will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He urged officials to remain constantly vigilant and committed to transforming Greater Hyderabad into a model clean city.

Justice row erupts in Nagarkurnool after Infant's death: Sravan slams Govt, Police

HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Sravan Dasoju on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Telangana government over the death of a two-month-old infant following an alleged assault in Kummera village of Nagarkurnool district.

Calling the incident a "collapse of rule of law", the BRS MLC alleged that caste-based aggression and political patronage were undermining the Constitutional protections in the state. He accused the local police of filing counter-cases against the victim's family instead of taking strin-



gent action against the accused. He demanded for the immediate arrests under Section 103(2) of the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for group killing and sought criminal proceedings against the officers under Section 248 of the BNS for allegedly fabricating cases. Besides, the BRS leader called for state protection to the bereaved family, alleging intimidation by local elements.

Stating that "silence amounts to complicity", Sravan urged the Chief Minister, who holds the Home portfolio, to intervene directly and ensure swift justice. The incident has triggered political ripples, with opposition leaders demanding accountability and transparency in the investigation.

College of Defence Management hosts seminar on 'Mitra'



HYDERABAD

Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan Wednesday emphasized that as warfare expands from the physical domain into synthetic and cognitive realms, the Indian Armed Forces must transition from net-centric operations towards Intelligent Warfare.

Addressing the Annual Seminar on 'Multi-Domain Integrated Technologically-Empowered Resilient Armed Forces (MITRA)' at the College of Defence Management here on Tuesday, General Chauhan underscored the need to move beyond Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) to All Realm All Domain Operations (ARA-DO), reflecting the growing complexity of modern conflict.

Highlighting the "Third Revolution in Military Affairs", the CDS described the emergence of Convergence Warfare – integrating contact and non-contact, kinetic and non-kinetic, and traditional and emerging domains across all levels of conflict. He stressed the importance of establishing credible non-nuclear strategic deterrence to ensure the capability to prevail at every level of escalation.

The two-day seminar was conducted in collaboration with the Indian School of

Business as the Knowledge Partner. The theme 'MITRA' reflects the evolving role of military strategy and war-fighting in an increasingly complex geopolitical and technological environment.

The seminar provided a strategic platform to integrate contemporary conflict lessons with India's unique operational requirements. It focused on self-reliance and structural reforms aimed at developing armed forces that are multi-domain in vision, integrated in action, technology-empowered in execution, and resilient in purpose. Senior defence officials, scholars, industry partners, and practitioners participated in discussions aimed at strengthening comprehensive national power and preparing for future contests.

Established in December 1970, the College of Defence Management is a premier tri-service institution dedicated to advancing contemporary management thought and best practices within military leadership. Over the years, its annual seminars have addressed strategic challenges, self-reliance, geopolitical power shifts, and leadership transformation, reinforcing its role in shaping India's military preparedness and resilience for the future.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

Modi's Jerusalem Doctrine: Defending Peace, Denouncing Terror

FROM PAGE 1

"India has also endured the pain of terrorism for a long time. We remember the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and the innocent lives lost, including Israeli citizens. Like you, we have a consistent and uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, with no double standards," he said. "Terrorism aims to destabilise societies, to block development, and to erode trust. Countering terrorism requires sustained and coordinated global action, because terror anywhere threatens peace everywhere." "That is why India supports all efforts that contribute to durable peace and regional stability," he noted. The prime minister also delved into the evolving situation in the Middle East and referred to Israel signing the Abraham Accords with a number of countries a few years back. "It was a moment of new hope for a long-troubled region. Since then, the situation has changed significantly. The path is even more challenging. Yet it is important to sustain that hope," he said. In the current context, Modi explicitly backed the Gaza Peace Initiative, describing the UN Security Council-endorsed plan as the definitive path toward a "just and durable peace" for the entire region. "The Gaza Peace Initiative that was endorsed by the UN Security Council offers a pathway. India has expressed its firm support for the initiative," Modi said.

"We believe that it holds the promise

of a just and durable peace for all the people of the region, including by addressing the Palestine issue," he said. "Let all our efforts be guided by wisdom, courage, and humanity. The road to peace is not always easy. But India joins you and the world for dialogue, peace and stability in this region," he added.

The prime minister said that there is great admiration in India for Israel's "resolve, courage, and achievements". "Long before we related to each other as modern states, we were linked by ties that go back more than two thousand years," he said. Modi said India and Israel are "democracies shaped by history and focused on the future". "Our partnership is grounded in shared experience and shared aspirations."

Our strong partnership not only serves national interests but also contributes to global stability and prosperity," he said. Highlighting robust ties between the two countries, Modi said, "In today's uncertain world, a strong defence partnership between trusted partners like India and Israel is of vital importance." The prime minister also highlighted India's economic growth as well as Israel's technological prowess. "For the last few years, India has been the fastest-growing major economy in the world. Soon, we will be among the top three economies globally," he said.

"At the same time, Israel is a powerhouse of innovation and technological leadership. This creates a natu-

ral foundation for a forward-looking partnership." "We are committed to expanding trade, strengthening investment flows, and promoting joint infrastructure development," he added. Modi said the bilateral investment treaty signed by the two sides last year will provide confidence and predictability to businesses. "In the last few years, India has concluded a number of important trade agreements with other nations. To your West, the European Union, and the UK. To your East, the UAE and Oman," he said.

The prime minister said India-Israel bilateral goods trade has grown manifold in recent years. At the same time, he noted that it does not reflect the "full scope of opportunity". "That is why our teams are working hard to negotiate an ambitious Free Trade Agreement."

It will unlock the vast untapped potential in our trade relationship," he said. "Israel is often called the 'start-up nation'. In recent years, we have also been working to unlock the innovation and creativity of our youth," Modi said.

"I recall that in 2018, Prime Minister Netanyahu and I inaugurated the iCreate Technology Business Incubator in India. Since then, it has supported nearly 900 such start-ups," he said. Modi said India and Israel will also work closely in different formats, such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and the I2U2 framework between India, Israel, the UAE and the US.

"Defence and Security is another

important pillar of our partnership. In November last year, we signed an MoU on Defence Cooperation. In today's uncertain world, a strong defence partnership between trusted partners like India and Israel is of vital importance," he said. Describing both countries as "ancient civilizations", Modi said "it is perhaps no surprise that our civilisational traditions also reveal philosophical parallels".

"In Israel, the principle of 'Tikkun Olam' speaks of healing the world. In India, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam affirms that the world is one family. Both ideas extend responsibility beyond immediate boundaries. They ask societies to act with compassion and moral courage," Modi said. "Judaism emphasises Halakha, guiding everyday conduct through law and practice. Hindu philosophy speaks of Dharma, the moral order that shapes duty and right action. In both traditions, ethical life is lived through action, and faith is expressed through conduct," he added.

Drawing parallels between the festivals of Hanukkah and Diwali, Modi said, "There is an endearing similarity in our festivals as well. You celebrate Hanukkah with the warm glow of candles. Around the same time, we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, with the gentle radiance of lamps." "Soon, India will celebrate the festival of Holi, filled with happiness and colour. And around the same time, Israel will also celebrate Purim with enthusiasm and joy," he added.

Singareni invited to partner in lithium mining in Brazil

FROM PAGE 1

its growing interest in critical minerals—would have a bright and promising future. They also mentioned that they are in discussions with other leading companies in India regarding potential collaboration. During the meeting, they elaborated on the global significance of lithium as a key mineral and its commercial prof-

itability. On behalf of Singareni, Director (projects & planning) K. Venkateswarlu and director (personnel & finance) Gowtham Potru shared details about the company's profile and capabilities. Singareni officials stated that they would examine the opportunities, feasibility, and profitability of lithium mining prospects in Brazil before taking a final decision. (NSS)

Congress Clears Rs. 46,962 Crore Kaleshwaram Loans in Two Years

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao has alleged that the Congress government itself resorted to significant fresh borrowings through open market operations facilitated by the Reserve Bank of India, claiming that nearly ₹1.5 lakh crore was raised in two years.

Government officials counter that much of the recent borrowing was directed toward repaying earlier high-interest institutional loans. The previous administration had reportedly borrowed around ₹84,000 crore from major financial institutions, including Union Bank of India (formerly Andhra Bank), Punjab National Bank, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Power Finance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation.

In January alone, the state paid ₹417.34 crore as interest on outstanding loans. Of this, ₹77.69 crore was paid to Punjab National Bank, ₹51.24 crore to Union Bank of India, ₹15 crore to Bank of Baroda, and ₹273.41 crore to Power Finance Corporation.

Although the Kaleshwaram project was executed on priority during the previous regime, three of its barrages suffered damage, affecting irrigation services since 2023. Even as the project remains partially non-functional, the state continues to shoulder the financial burden of repayment.

Year-wise loan repayments (₹ in crore) show a steady rise: ₹1,487.98 crore in 2020; ₹3,364.65 crore in 2021; ₹9,077.01 crore in 2022; ₹11,873.70 crore in 2023; ₹13,388.71 crore in 2024; and ₹33,574.11 crore in 2025.

With debt servicing emerging as a fiscal priority, attention is now turning to the upcoming State Budget and the allocation earmarked for further repayment of legacy loans.

Adluri launches ‘Swachh Dharmapuri, Swachh Godavari’ initiative

HYDERABAD

In a significant step towards preserving the sanctity of the temple town of Dharmapuri and the purity of the River Godavari, Minister for Welfare Adluri Laxman Kumar formally launched the ‘Swachh Dharmapuri, Swachh Godavari’ initiative, calling for a collective civic awakening transcending political affiliations.

The programme, inaugurated along the banks of the Godavari under the aegis of the newly elected Dharmapuri Municipal Council, seeks to combine environmental stewardship with spiritual responsibility.

Addressing officials, community leaders and residents, the Minister observed that Dharmapuri, being a revered pilgrimage centre attracting thousands of devotees daily, required sustained and systematic measures to ensure both urban cleanliness and river conservation.

He appealed to pilgrims and residents alike to refrain from polluting the river by discarding old clothes, ritual offerings and other materials into its wa-



ters, urging them instead to use designated disposal facilities. “Preserving the sanctity of the Godavari is not merely an administrative duty but a shared moral obligation,” he said, underscoring the need for behavioural change alongside infrastructure development. Emphasising community participation, the Minister invited voluntary organisations and non-governmental bodies to conduct regular cleanliness drives and awareness campaigns. He also called upon natives of Dharmapuri to contribute meaningfully to the initiative, describing service to one’s birthplace as both

a privilege and a responsibility.

With the 2027 Godavari Pushkarams scheduled for June that year, the Minister stated that preparatory groundwork was being initiated well in advance. As part of the planning process, representatives of a government-appointed consultancy are slated to visit Dharmapuri on the 27th of this month to undertake field assessments and prepare detailed project estimates.

He invited suggestions from townspeople, elected representatives across party lines, members of the Brahmin community and agharam elders, assuring that

a comprehensive development blueprint would be formulated after due consultation. The proposed plan is expected to address civic infrastructure, riverfront development, pilgrim amenities and environmental safeguards in an integrated manner.

The Minister further announced that pending drainage works in Dharmapuri would be expedited and completed at the earliest. Steps have also been initiated to resolve the long-standing issue of the dumping yard through a sustainable and permanent solution.

Reiterating the government’s commitment, Lakshman Kumar said the overarching objective was to transform Dharmapuri into a model temple town, one that harmonises spiritual heritage with modern civic standards while preserving the ecological integrity of the Godavari.

Senior officials present at the event described the initiative as a timely and forward-looking intervention, aligning administrative foresight with public participation ahead of a major religious congregation.

Comrade Nallakannu's demise a great loss to CPI: K Narayana

HYDERABAD

Senior Communist Party of India (CPI) leader and freedom fighter R. Nallakannu passed away on Tuesday at the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital in Chennai. He was 101. Reacting to his demise, CPI National leader K. Narayana described his death as an irreparable loss to the entire party and the state of Tamil Nadu.

“Born in 1925, Nallakannu addressed the British Army during the freedom struggle. Inspired by Marx and Lenin, he later joined the Communist Party and fought tirelessly against class and caste discrimination. Comrade Nallakannu breathed his last today”, Narayana said, adding that the people of Tamil Nadu revered him as a Gandhian figure and were unable to come to terms with his passing.

CPI MLC Nellikanti Satyam also condoled the veteran leader’s death, calling it a huge loss for the oppressed sections of society.

He noted that Nallakannu led a simple and principled life and said the present generation of communists should draw inspiration from his ideals. He conveyed condolences to the CPI Tamil Nadu committee and the bereaved family members.

Young YouTuber found dead in Hyd

HYDERABAD

A 21-year-old woman, identified as Komali, was found dead at her residence in Chitrapuri Colony, Manikonda, here on Wednesday. She was a content creator on YouTube. The locals said that Komali committed suicide by hanging herself in her room.

Inspector Venkanna said that a case has been registered on the incident and an investigation is underway. Preliminary inquiry suggests the incident may be linked to personal issues, he added.

According to the police, Komali and a man named Akhil, both originally from Visakhapatnam, were known to each other. Komali had reportedly moved to Hyderabad for higher studies, while Akhil had come to the city for employment. Akhil had already rejected her love because he was in a relationship with another girl. Following this, Komali attempted suicide six months ago. At that



time, her mother came to know that she was in love with Akhil. When Komali’s mother asked Akhil to marry her, he refused. Komali called Akhil to talk before committing suicide.

When she mentioned her love again, Akhil refused again. She committed suicide because Akhil did not accept her love. Komali had also written the same thing in her diary. If it is known that Akhil was involved in Komali’s suicide, a case would definitely be registered against him.

Investigators said they are examining all aspects, including phone records and a personal diary recovered from the scene. Authorities clarified that appropriate legal action will be taken if any evidence of abetment or wrongdoing emerges. The body was sent for post-mortem examination, and further investigation is in progress. Police have appealed to the public and media to avoid speculation while the inquiry continues.

GEETHANJALI COLLEGE OF PHARMACY RECEIVES UGC AUTONOMOUS STATUS

HYDERABAD: Geethanjali College of Pharmacy, located in Cheriya village of Keesara Mandal, has been granted Autonomous status by the University Grants Commission (UGC) starting from the academic year 2026–27. On this occasion, College Chairman Shri G.R. Ravinder Reddy and Principal Dr. Balaji expressed their happiness. They stated that from the upcoming academic year, the college will provide high-quality education to students in line with modern technological advancements.

CHANGE OF NAME & DOB

I. ELANGBAM SHARATCHANDRA, NO. 130045659 OF ASSAM REGT.165 INF BN(TA), S/O ELANGBAM BROJO, RESIDENT OF HIYANGLAM MAKHA LEIKAI, THOUBAL DISTRICT, MANIPUR -795103, HAVE CHANGE MY SON'S NAME AND DOB FROM ELANGBAM SACHIN, DOB: 14/03/2015 TO ELANGBAM SACHIN DOB:05/10/2016 VIDE AFFIDAVIT DATED 06/02/2026 BEFORE THE OATH COMMISSIONER, KAKCHING, MANIPUR.

Vivek calls for joint Central-State action to boost overseas jobs

HYDERABAD

Minister for Labour, Employment and Mines Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy has emphasised the necessity of enhanced collaboration between the Central and State governments in areas such as skill training, course selection, passport services, and immigration protocols to foster improved overseas employment prospects for the youth.

During a meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs at the Secretariat on Wednesday, the Minister articulated that comprehensive foreign language training, in conjunction with specialised skills, is vital for improving global employability. He underscored the importance of

establishing a robust ecosystem of mentors and career advisors to adequately prepare candidates for international job placements.

The Minister further stated that expanding language training facilities alongside professional courses would markedly boost overseas job opportunities.

The delegation included prominent figures such as Secretary (CPV & OIA) Sripriya Ranganathan, Joint Secretary (OE) and Protector General of Emigrants Surinder Bhagat, and Regional Passport Officer for Hyderabad, Ajith John Joshua.

In the course of the meeting, officials evaluated programs being executed by both the Central and State governments aimed at facilitating overseas placements. Sripriya high-



lighted that coordinated efforts are in progress to provide structured training for students aspiring to seek employment abroad.

She commended the initiatives undertaken by the Telangana government to promote overseas placements and reaffirmed that cultur-

al orientation for youth traveling internationally is a priority for the Government of India.

Emphasising the significance of institutional partnerships, she noted that connecting corporate training institutions with international employers would lead to more favorable outcomes and foster confidence among foreign partners. Furthermore, she stressed the imperative to mitigate illegal immigration at the grassroots level and sought the cooperation of the State government in enhancing awareness and monitoring mechanisms. She indicated that certifications issued by State government entities can be validated by central agencies through coordinated processes.

LETF Special Secretary Dana

Kishore provided an overview of the initiatives implemented by Telangana Overseas Manpower Company (TOMCOM), stating that Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) are being upgraded to Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) to cultivate industry-ready professionals.

He also mentioned that several certifications issued within the State have already received recognition from central bodies such as the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT).

The meeting also involved an in-depth discussion on issues related to passport issuance and the urgent need to enhance awareness regarding safe and legal immigration procedures during the passport application process.(NSS)

GITAM Faculty Wins Best Paper Award at International Conference

HYDERABAD

Dr. P. Sridhar, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting & Finance, GITAM School of Business, Hyderabad, has won First Place – Best Paper Award in the Finance Track at the International Conference on Business Innovation and Transformation (ICBIT 2026), held at CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru.

His paper, “Sustainable Transformation and Financial Markets: The Role of IBC in Green Technology Firms,” was praised by the review panel for its originality, research depth, and clarity of presentation. The conference committee also commended his contribution for its strong academic rigor and relevance to the conference theme.

GITAM leadership, including Prof. D. S. Rao, DVVSR Varma, and Dr. Divya Kirti Gupta, congratulated Dr. Sridhar on this achievement and encouraged him to continue his excellent



academic work.

150 years of Vande Mataram Celebrated at GITAM
GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, celebrated the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram with a solemn and inspiring programme, including a mass singing of the complete song. The event paid tribute to the iconic composition that stirred India’s freedom movement and continues to symbolize national pride, unity, and devotion to the Motherland.

The celebrations were part of the nationwide observances approved by the Union Cabinet under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking 150 years of the national song with a year-long commemoration from November 2025 to November 2026. Faculty members and students enthusiastically participated, reaffirming their respect for India’s rich cultural heritage and patriotic legacy.

BGUS delegation meets Telangana DGP, submits petitions

HYDERABAD

A delegation of the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samiti (BGUS) met the Director General of Police (DGP), and submitted two separate petitions raising law and order concerns. The delegation urged DGP B Shivadhar Reddy to conduct a special search operation across Telangana to identify and take action against alleged Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators. They demanded that those identified under Balapur police station limits be handed over to Central agencies.

The representatives also called for a thorough investigation into the recent attacks on Hindu temples and members of the Hindu community, seeking strict action against those found responsible. In addition, they requested the withdrawal of “illegal cases” filed against Hindus in various incidents across the state.

The delegation included BGUS President G. Raghava Reddy, Vishva Hindu Parishad National Spokesperson and BGUS General Secretary Dr. Ravinuthala Shashidhar, advisors Karodimal and Ramaraju, and Secretary Ale Baskar.

Journalists rally in Hyderabad for more accreditation cards

HYDERABAD

Journalist associations staged a protest in Hyderabad demanding an increase in accreditation cards for desk journalists and issuance of cards to all eligible media personnel.

A rally was taken out from Gun Park to the state Media Academy on Nampally Chapel Road under the banner of the Desk Journalists Association. The protesters later staged a dharna in front of the Academy.

Leaders of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) and Telangana Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ-143) extended support to the agitation.

Speaking on the occasion, TWJF founder president and state convener Mamidi Somaiah criticized the state government for failing to issue new accreditation cards for the past



two years. He alleged injustice to journalists who had played a key role in the Telangana statehood movement.

Somaiah said that while the previous government had issued 23,000 accreditation cards, the present government had announced 44,000 but was yet to implement it fully. He termed as ‘outrageous’ the reduction of desk journalist accreditations from five to four per district edition

centre, despite multiple desks functioning in each district with one in-charge and four sub-editors.

He further demanded that accreditation cards for desk journalists in electronic media be increased appropriately to ensure fair representation.

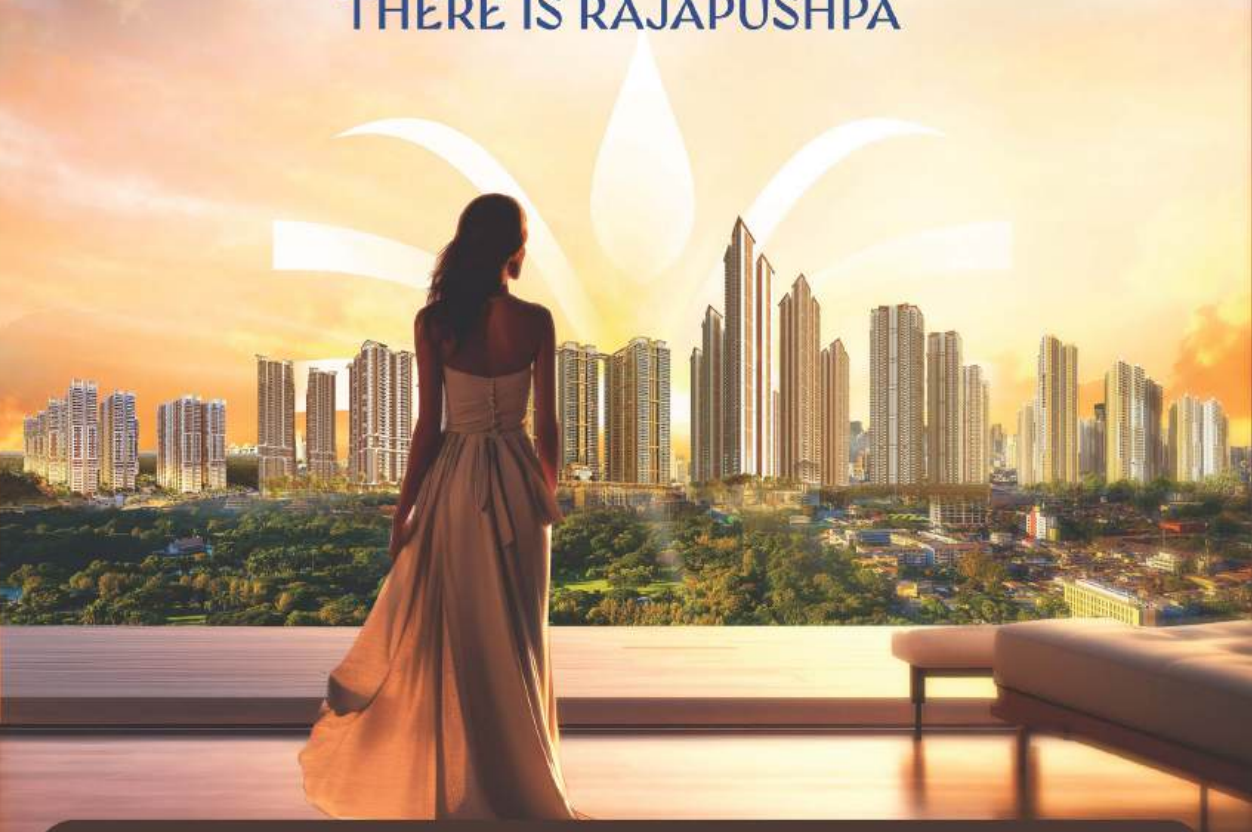
TUWJ leader Yoganand said there should be no discrimination in granting accreditations and warned of a state-wide agitation, including a siege of the

Secretariat, if demands were not met. Among others who participated were TWJF State Co-Convenor Tanniru Srinivas, Hyderabad District Convenor V. Ravikumar, Co-Convenor Brahman, Desk Journalists Association President Uppender, General Secretary Rajaram, and several other media representatives. The protesters later submitted a memorandum to Media Academy Secretary Venkateswara Rao. (NSS)



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SHORT
TAKES

Cattle transporters,
2 gau rakshaks sent
to judicial remand

HYDERABAD: The three cattle transporters beaten by cow vigilantes near Aramghar crossroads on Tuesday, February 24, have been arrested and sent for judicial remand, as have two of their attackers. The driver of the truck, Kaleem, 30, and his two helpers were charged under various sections of the Telangana Prohibition of Cow Slaughter and Animal Preservation Act, 1977. Attapur Sub-Inspector (SD) T Jaya Raj told Siasat.com. Two members of an outfit called Gau Raksha Dal Tiger Force, who were among those who assaulted the transporters, were charged with creating nuisance, unlawful assembly and assault.

After Instagram account
deletion, lookout notice
against Anvesh

HYDERABAD: The Punjagutta police, on Wednesday, February 25, issued a lookout notice against social media influencer and YouTube Anvesh days after his Instagram account Naa Anveshana was deleted. The notice was issued based on a complaint by Telugu actress and comedian Karate Kalyani who alleged Anvesh made objectionable remarks about Hindu deities in a video in the past. After his Instagram account with over one million followers was deleted, Anvesh released a video claiming that he operates two Instagram accounts and two YouTube channels. Police are also likely to approach Instagram and YouTube seeking details.

Man stabbed to death in
Hyderabad's Moosapet

HYDERABAD: A man was murdered at Moosapet in the city on Wednesday, February 25. The police have identified the deceased as Shankar (48) from Karnataka. He had been working in a hotel in Moosapet for the past two years. The accused attacked him and stabbed him to death with knives while he was walking near the bridge in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Upon receiving the information, the Sanathnagar police immediately reached the spot and collected evidence with the help of the clues team. The body was shifted to the hospital for postmortem. The police, who registered a case, have intensified search operations for the accused. They are also examining the CCTV footage of the area.

Revanth, Adobe CEO discuss ‘Telangana Rising 2047’ vision

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday, February 25, emphasised that constructive plans needed to be envisaged to invite investments from noted global companies and promote the state as a manufacturing hub. In a meeting with Adobe Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Telangana Rising 2047 vision board member Shantanu Narayen, who made a courtesy visit to the CM at the latter's residence in Hyderabad, Revanth Reddy stressed that the state govern-



ment needed to prepare new plans and act aggressively to attract huge global investments. Narayen and

Reddy discussed the steps to be taken by the state government on global trends and the opportunities in investments. They shared their views on global manufacturing, green energy and the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on jobs, skilling and reskilling. The Chief Minister also inquired with Narayen about the impact of the AI revolution on the economy and the effective use of AI in the coming days. He sought further cooperation from the board member to take Telangana forward on the path of development and bolster the state economy.

No more rented buildings for
Tahsildar, RDO offices in Telangana



HYDERABAD

Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Wednesday, February 25, said the government has decided to construct permanent buildings for Tahsildar and Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) offices across Telangana to ensure efficient, transparent, and accessible administration for the public. The minister announced that in the first phase, permanent buildings with modern amenities will be constructed for 60 Tahsildar offices and five RDO offices currently functioning from rented premises. In the second phase, 170 Tahsildar and RDO offices currently operating from dilapidated buildings will be reconstructed. He said all new buildings across the state will follow a uniform design to ensure accessibility, efficiency,

and public convenience. He added that the designs will be finalised after consultations with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and the construction will be carried out in a cost-effective manner while ensuring high-quality public service delivery. The minister conducted a review meeting with senior officials of the Revenue Department at the Secretariat, during which details were gathered on the number of Tahsildar and RDO offices operating from rented premises as well as those functioning from structurally weak or unsuitable buildings. He said the decision aligns with the Chief Minister's vision that government offices serving the public should function from dignified and permanent infrastructure rather than temporary or rented premises.

The minister observed that both before and after the formation of Telangana, several revenue offices continued to function without adequate infrastructure and largely from rented buildings, causing inconvenience to the public. He also criticised the previous government for reorganising mandals without proper planning, which resulted in certain mandals falling under multiple district jurisdictions. Due to inadequate infrastructure and staff shortages in several offices, citizens faced significant difficulties in accessing revenue services, he said. The minister said that after assuming office, the present government sanctioned the required posts for newly created mandals and strengthened administrative systems to improve service delivery.

He also criticised the previous administration for constructing some collectorate buildings in remote locations and failing to ensure their effective functioning. Referring to the Stamps and Registration Department, the minister said construction of integrated office complexes with modern facilities has been initiated. He said that within the Outer Ring Road limits, 39 Sub-Registrar offices across Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajigiri, and Sangareddy districts have been grouped into 12 clusters for the construction of integrated facilities. Foundation stones have already been laid at Gachibowli, Medchal-Malkajigiri, and Patancheru. Construction at the Gachibowli facility is in the final stage, and the complex is expected to become operational in the coming months, he added.

'Sheep distribution scheme
should be resumed forthwith'

HYDERABAD

CPI State Secretary and MLA Koonaneni Sambasiva Rao has urged the Telangana Government to immediately resume the stalled sheep distribution scheme and unfreeze the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. He, along with party MLC Nellikanti Satyam, submitted a representation State Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Minister Vakiti Srihari in Hyderabad. Talking to newsmen later, Rao said the government had launched the sheep distribution scheme with a 75 percent subsidy to promote the economic development of the Yadava and Kuruma (Golla) communities in Telangana and to strengthen their traditional occupations. He said that the objective of the scheme was to ensure social and economic upliftment of backward communities in rural areas. Rao pointed out that the Munugodu Assembly constituency in Nalgonda district was selected as a pilot project. Under the scheme, each beneficiary

was to receive a unit consisting of 20 sheep and one ram (21 total) with a 75 percent subsidy. As per the scheme, the beneficiaries deposited Rs.45,000 per unit in banks. However, during the Munugodu by-election, the bank accounts of the beneficiaries were reportedly frozen. The CPI leader expressed concern that these accounts have still not been unfrozen, causing serious hardship to the beneficiaries. Due to the freeze, bank transactions have been halted, and families are unable to access money earned from agricultural activities and cotton sales. He appealed to the State Government to immediately unfreeze the accounts of eligible beneficiaries and expedite the implementation of the sheep distribution scheme without further delay. He also sought clarity on the steps being taken to ensure smooth execution of the scheme. Several community leaders, including Ailaiah Yadav, Jagan Yadav, Suresh Yadav, Ayodhya Yadav, Venkateswarlu Yadav, Manga Venkateswarlu and Shankar, were present. (NSS)

Beware of
fake websites –
TTD cautions
devotees again

TIRUMALA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has once again cautioned the devotees of Srivari to remain alert against the brokers and fake websites that are cheating pilgrims by offering accommodation in Tirumala. The issue came to light following a complaint from a devotee, Sri C.K. Suresh Babu from Kerala, who was allegedly cheated by a person claiming to provide rooms under the name "Karnataka Pravasi Soudha" in Tirumala. Following the complaint, the TTD Vigilance Department conducted a detailed inquiry. The investigation revealed that unauthorized individuals had created fake websites using images of the Tirumala temple and the name of TTD to mislead devotees. These fraudulent websites, which appeared in Google search results, were collecting money through online payment modes. In response, TTD's IT Department has lodged complaints with the police to initiate legal action against those operating the fake websites. Cases have also been registered under the Copyright Act against websites that illegally used TTD logos and temple images. TTD has reiterated that bookings for darshan, accommodation, and seva tickets should be made only through its official website: <https://ttdevasthanams.ap.gov.in>

Harish Rao slams Congress over
delayed Rythu Bharosa disbursement



HYDERABAD

BRS Legislature Party deputy leader T Harish Rao on Wednesday criticised the Congress government for what he termed a betrayal of farmers due to the delayed disbursement of Rythu Bharosa financial assistance. He urged the government to cease its electoral theatrics and fulfill its obligations to the farming community. Harish Rao emphasised that no administration rooted in the hardships of farmers has endured. He publicly admonished Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for renegeing on pre-election commitments following his assumption of office. The BRS leader recalled a

public gathering in Miryalaguda on February 4 of this year, where the Chief Minister had asserted that funds had already been allocated and guaranteed that Rythu Bharosa payments would be deposited into farmers' accounts promptly after the municipal elections. However, he pointed out that over ten days after the lifting of the election code, there has been no financial disbursement, indicating that the matter was not even addressed in the most recent Cabinet meeting. Harish Rao charged the Congress with deceiving farmers by pledging Rs 15,000 per acre prior to the elections, only to fall short on agricultural support for two seasons.

He contended that the government is now wielding Rythu Bharosa as a political instrument rather than honoring its commitments. He questioned the governmental priorities of the Congress party, highlighting the availability of funds for projects such as the Musi beautification initiative, land acquisition for the proposed Fourth City, extensive road construction, and payments exceeding Rs 25,000 crore to contractors, while simultaneously claiming a financial shortfall in supporting farmers. Harish Rao also raised inquiries regarding how Congress leaders manage to transfer substantial sums to their party headquarters in Delhi. Additionally, he criticised the expenditures on infrastructure and facilities associated with the Chief Minister's camp office, alleging excessive spending at a time when farmers are in dire need of assistance. "Given that this government possesses Rs 9 crore to construct a security wall for the multi-crore palace of the Chief Minister and an additional Rs 5 crore for a football ground adjacent to it, yet claims to lack funds for farmer support, it underscores its commitment to governance for the people," he stated.

No compromise on FTL limits:
Commissioner Ranganath
inspects Hyderabad lakes



HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath, on Wednesday, February 25, inspected Gangaram and Eerla ponds and asked officials not to compromise on their FTL limits. The development of these ponds has been undertaken by HYDRAA as part of their efforts to protect the city's water bodies, and they are among the 14 water bodies being targeted

in the second phase. Gangaram pond is spread over 111 acres, while Eerla pond is spread over 32 acres. The Commissioner asked officials to protect the buffer zone of the lakes and make sure that no sewage enters the water bodies. He suggested that parks, children's play areas, and seating arrangements suitable for people of all ages should all be constructed around the lakes and shade-providing trees should also be planted in the area.

CID arrests
ex-Falcon COO in Rs
792 crore fraud case

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Crime Investigation Department (CID) has arrested Vikas Kumar Sakhare, former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Falcon Group, in connection with a massive investment fraud that allegedly cheated thousands of depositors. According to the CID, the company collected Rs 4,215 crore from 7,056 depositors through its Falcon Invoice Discounting App. Of them, 4,065 investors were allegedly defrauded of Rs 792 crore after being promised high returns through short-term investment plans. Sakhare, 40, was apprehended from his residence at Lakshmi Nagar Colony in Hydershakot, Hyderabad. He was produced before a magistrate for judicial remand. Officials said one mobile phone allegedly used in the commission of the offence was seized from him. Investigators said Capital Protection Force Private Ltd.

TGCSB targets mule accounts under ‘Operation Crackdown’

HYDERABAD

Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) on Wednesday, February 25, launched 'Operation Crackdown', to target and dismantle criminal networks and the cybercrime ecosystem in the state over the next few months. The operation was launched in 16 districts, specifically targeting mule bank accounts. A total of 137 teams, comprising 512 officers, are involved in the operation. Data analysis says 4,775 mule accounts were operated in the state last year. As part of the first day of the operation, 1,888 suspected mule accounts opened in 137 bank branches are being checked. These accounts are linked to 9,431 crime links across the country, including 782 in Telangana, TGCSB said in a release. The special teams have visited and inspected 137 bank branches and



collected Know Your Customer (KYC) details of suspicious mule account holders. Initial verification has shown that many of these branches have multiple

mule accounts, in some cases running into hundreds, raising suspicion of colluders of bank staff as well as an organised network of agents, TGCSB said. The in-

vestigation further revealed some noteworthy cases, such as a single account operating from Sultan Bazar that was found to be linked with 496 crime complaints across multiple jurisdictions. In Suryapet district, four banks had 298 mule accounts linked across multiple jurisdictions. It was also observed that certain smaller banks that do not have the technical capacity to operate Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) are using the RTGS of national banks for the transfer of funds. Since there is no proper verification & validation of the persons opening accounts in these banks, this gap is being exploited by cybercriminals. Through 'Operation Crackdown' TGCSB will carry out intense verification, analysis of financial trails, and profiling of account holder details. Strict action will be taken against those found indulging in dubious practices.

HC Halts
Release of ‘The
Kerala Story 2’

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday directed the makers of 'The Kerala Story 2 – Goes Beyond' not to release the film until the pending pleas against it are finally heard and decided.

Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas made the observation while considering three petitions seeking cancellation of the certificate issued by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The petitioners contended that the film portrays Kerala in a distorted manner and could potentially trigger communal tension. As court hours drew to a close, Senior Advocate S Sree Kumar informed the Bench that the film is scheduled to hit theatres on Friday, and that overseas distribution rights have already been sold. In response, the judge indicated that he would hear all sides and that the release could be deferred until the arguments conclude. "Then you can stall it right now. If you are putting the Court into a corner then I will state until we complete the hearing...I will give you enough and more time, you can argue but don't release it till the arguments are over...I will take up the matter tomorrow but I don't want them (petitioners) to come back tomorrow and say that you have already given the rights....without concluding the arguments; I can't. Don't make the entire issue infructuous...let them not give out the right or anything before the Court takes decision.

Polavaram project to be completed before 2027
Godavari Pushkaram: Andhra CM Naidu

AMARAVATI, FEB 25

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Wednesday that the Polavaram project would be completed and dedicated to the nation before the 2027 Godavari Pushkaram.

He also reiterated that Godavari water from Polavaram will be supplied to Nallamala Sagar before that, Nallamala Sagar and the Veligonda projects will be completed by July this year.

The Chief Minister was addressing a public meeting after laying the foundation stone for Veligonda Project feeder canal lining works worth Rs 456 crore at Ghanta-

vanipalle in Dornala mandal of Markapuram district.

This was the Chief Minister's first visit to Markapuram after the government created this district. The Chief Minister said that he kept his promise to create the Markapuram district. With Markapuram becoming a district, people no longer need to travel 150 km to Ongole for administrative work, he said, adding that justice had been done to the long-neglected backward region. Stating that works of the Veligonda project have been accelerated, he said that by June next year, the first phase of the project will be completed and Krishna waters will be brought to this drought-prone



region.

The Chief Minister inspected the Veligonda works and instructed the officials to expedite the works so that the target can be achieved.

He said the Veligonda project aims to provide irrigation to 4.35 lakh acres, benefiting

constituencies including Gid-dalur, Markapuram, Yerragondapalem, and Kanigiri, as well as Udayagiri and Badvel in Kadapa district.

He explained that the Veligonda Project requires Rs 9,081 crore. So far, Rs 5,451 crore has been spent on construction. Another Rs 2,540 crore is needed to complete the works. The feeder canal lining works worth Rs 456 crore have now been initiated, he added.

The Chief Minister said the government is promoting horticulture and aims to transform Rayalaseema into a horticulture hub, along with developing Markapuram and Prakasam districts through

horticulture crops.

He also promised safe drinking water to every household from Nallamala Sagar at a cost of Rs 1,300 crore. He announced Rs 50 crore for constructing a new District Collectorate building in Markapuram.

After the foundation ceremony, the Chief Minister interacted with local farmers and inspected the feeder canal works.

The Chief Minister viewed the Nallamala Sagar feeder canal through an aerial survey and held video conferences with officials at project sites. He directed officials to complete the works as per the targets.

K'taka: 31 daily road
deaths, BJP urges Priyank
Kharge to fix roads

BENGALURU, FEB 25

The Karnataka BJP has called on Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Minister Priyank Kharge to prioritise road construction and maintenance to reduce fatalities, urging him to set aside other concerns. The party asserted that poor road conditions are responsible for the deaths of 31 individuals each day in the state. Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalapathi Narayanaswamy stated that the state government has consistently failed to fulfil its fundamental responsibilities, citing the lack of new road construction and inadequate repairs to existing roads across Karnataka. Citing official statistics, Narayanaswamy emphasised that 31 individuals die daily in road accidents in Karnataka, attributing these fatalities to inadequate road conditions. He questioned the government's effectiveness and called on the minister, who frequently discusses Panchayat Raj, to address these concerns.

"Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge should prioritise this issue over other matters. If he fails to deliver, the Chief Minister should request his resignation," Narayanaswamy demanded. Narayanaswamy alleged that since the Congress government assumed office, certain districts have not seen the construction of even a single kilometre of new road, nor the repair of existing roads. He claimed that thousands of kilometres remain in need of repair, while Minister

Priyank Kharge continues to focus on unrelated issues. According to departmental statistics, the total length of rural roads in Karnataka is 198,657.58 km, yet only 297 km have been newly constructed. Narayanaswamy questioned when the Minister, Priyank Kharge, would address the construction and repair of these roads.

"You have introduced the Shakti scheme despite the poor condition of rural roads. Bus connectivity has been withdrawn from 1,800 villages due to inadequate infrastructure. What is the effectiveness of the Shakti scheme under these circumstances? How can its implementation be justified? How will rural development occur, and where will women board buses if they must travel to towns simply because travel is free?" Narayanaswamy asked.

Narayanaswamy stated that in Minister Kharge's constituency of Chittapur, which contains 564 rural roads, no new roads have been constructed. He questioned the allocation and utilisation of funds, noting that Rs 5,000 crore is managed by the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board, and asked for clarification on its expenditure.

Narayanaswamy questioned Minister Kharge's capability to lead the department, suggesting that if he is unable to fulfil his responsibilities, he should resign and allow others to assume the role. He further asserted that those unable to perform their duties often make irresponsible statements.

Training programe held
at vikarabad near Hyderabad



Congress Leader Rudraraju Calls for Statewide Campaign Against NDA Government

VIJAYAWADA:

Congress Working Committee member Gidugu Rudraraju on Wednesday urged Andhra Pradesh District Congress Committee presidents to intensify their campaign against what he termed as the anti-people policies of the NDA alliance government led by N. Chandrababu Naidu. Addressing party leaders, Rudraraju alleged that the ruling alliance comprising TDP, JSP and BJP

has failed to meaningfully discuss pressing public issues in the Assembly. Instead, debates are being centered on the Tirumala laddu issue and religious matters, diverting attention from governance and welfare concerns. He said the government did not respond promptly to the milk adulteration tragedy in Rajamahendravaram, where five people died and 15 others are undergoing treatment. He also referred to the recent incident in Srikakulam district,

where several people were hospitalized after consuming contaminated drinking water. The Congress leader accused the NDA government of indulging in vendetta politics and claimed that some officials are functioning under pressure. Alleging rampant corruption, sand and liquor mafia activities, and failure to implement the "Super Six" assurances, he said public dissatisfaction is steadily growing across the state.

Andhra: Srikakulam municipal commissioner
suspended over diarrhoea outbreak

AMARAVATI, FEB 25

The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday suspended the Municipal Commissioner of Srikakulam following a diarrhoea outbreak in the town that has left one person dead and dozens hospitalised. Municipal Commissioner Kurma Rao was suspended on charges of negligence in connection with the outbreak, officials said. Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration, Suresh Kumar, issued orders suspending the Municipal Commissioner. Cases of diarrhoea have been reported from various parts of Srikakulam town over the past few days. According to Srikakulam District Collector Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar, 76 suspected cases have been identified so far. Of these, 54 patients are currently undergoing treatment at various hospitals, while one death involving a patient with comorbidities has been reported.

Two patients are on ventila-



tor support, and their condition is being closely monitored by medical teams. Authorities have collected water samples from affected areas and sent them to laboratories in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam for testing. While initial tests conducted at the Srikakulam laboratory did not detect contamination, reports from the Visakhapatnam laboratory are still awaited. The Health Department has set up medical camps in the affected areas, and the state government has announced that it will bear the treatment expenses of patients

admitted to private hospitals.

Meanwhile, leaders of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), including former ministers Dharma Krishna Das, Dharma Prasada Rao, and Dr Seediri Appala Raju, blamed the state government for the outbreak.

After visiting the affected areas, they interacted with families and reviewed the situation on the ground.

The YSRCP leaders alleged that contaminated drinking water was the primary cause of the outbreak.

They also claimed that four

people have died so far and several others are undergoing treatment in government and private hospitals.

The former ministers accused the government of attempting to attribute the deaths to pre-existing health conditions instead of accepting responsibility.

Dharma Prasada Rao said that 61 diarrhoea incidents had been reported in the past 20 months, including cases in government schools and hostels, which he described as indicative of systemic administrative failure.

He demanded immediate relief and ₹25 lakh compensation for each bereaved family.

Dr Seediri Appala Raju alleged that early warnings from local media were ignored and claimed there were attempts to underreport fatalities.

The opposition leaders demanded a high-level inquiry, accountability of officials, and urgent measures to ensure safe drinking water supply.



15-Day
Extension for
Odisha Paddy
Tokens

BHUBANESWAR: (FEB 25)

The Odisha government on Wednesday allowed district collectors to extend the validity of tokens, given to farmers, by 15 days to ensure that no one is denied the opportunity to sell paddy at the state-run mandis during the Kharif Marketing Season. The government's move comes in the wake of a statewide protest over the alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement across Odisha.

The issue was raised in the assembly and outside with parties holding demonstrations, demanding justice for farmers.

Kerala Minister injured in Congress
student wing protest, CM calls it deplorable

The protest was held against the minister over alleged lapses in the state's Health Department following a medical negligence controversy in Alappuzha. The incident occurred as George arrived at the railway station to board a train.

Kerala Health Minister Veena George was allegedly mobbed and injured during a protest by the Kerala Students' Union (KSU) at Kannur railway station on Wednesday, resulting in her getting admitted to a government hospital and drawing sharp condemnation from Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The protest was held against the minister over alleged lapses in the state's Health Department following a medical negligence controversy in Alappuzha. The incident occurred as George arrived at the railway station to board a train. Police sources told India To-



day that opposition activists gathered at the station and surrounded the minister, leading to chaotic scenes.

Visuals showed her caught amid a crowd of protesters while police personnel attempted to escort her through the station. The situation escalated quickly, with officers struggling to move her away from the demonstrators.

State Assembly Speaker AN Shamseer, who was present at the scene, told reporters that "the minister suffered injuries



to her hand and neck".

Following the scuffle, George was shifted to a government hospital in Kannur.

Senior CPI(M) leader P Jayarajan confirmed that she was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. "She has been shifted to the government hospital here. She is being treated in the Intensive Care Unit," he said.

The protest came after nearly a week of agitation by opposition groups, including the KSU, demanding accountability over allegations of medical negli-

gence at a government medical college in Alappuzha. The controversy intensified after reports that surgical forceps were discovered inside a woman's abdomen five years after she had undergone an operation at the institution. The opposition has accused the Health Department of failing to ensure accountability and transparency in the matter, charges the ruling Left government has rejected.

PINARAYI VIJAYAN CON-DEMNS ATTACK

Reacting strongly to the incident, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan described the alleged attack as an example of "deplorable politics" by the Congress's student wing. In a statement, the chief minister said the health minister was attacked and injured at Kannur railway station while she was walking towards the platform. He further criticised the events, stating, "What happened there was not a protest of any kind,

but the rampage of a group of violent individuals". Vijayan asserted that Kerala's public health system is highly regarded nationwide and accused the Congress of politicising isolated incidents. "Such actions cannot be seen as politics, but only as political degeneration," Vijayan added. Warning the opposition, he stated that they should not believe they could "unleash their supporters and disrupt law and order or create unrest in the state". He placed responsibility for the incident squarely on the Congress and the United Democratic Front (UDF), saying, "The responsibility for the incident rests entirely with the leadership of the Congress and the UDF", adding that the attack reflected a pattern of polluting politics by raising completely baseless allegations. Calling the episode "highly condemnable and deserving of strong protest", the chief minister said strict action would be taken.

Haryana CM informs Assembly on
crucial urban infrastructure projects

CHANDIGARH, FEB 25

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday announced in the Assembly a series of major decisions aimed at strengthening urban infrastructure and improving the quality of life for citizens, including approval of the final alignment of the Gurugram-Faridabad-Noida-Greater Noida-Namo Bharat RRTS-cum-Metro corridor. Reaffirming the government's commitment to providing safe, modern, and efficient public transport facilities, the Chief Minister described the project as a significant step towards strengthening Haryana's urban mobility network.

He informed the House that at a meeting held on February 24, the government approved the final alignment of the proposed corridor. The detailed project report (DPR) is currently being finalised, and directions have been issued to the National Capital Re-



gion Transport Corporation (NCRTC), the Government of India agency responsible for executing the project.

He said the project aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the "Namo Bharat" initiative and aims to connect major economic hubs through fast, safe, and modern transport systems. Providing further details, the Chief Minister said the proposed corridor will span approximately 64 km, of which nearly 52 km will fall within Haryana. He said the project is designed not only as a rail corridor but as an integrated regional mobil-

ity network connecting major economic centres such as Gurugram, Faridabad, and Noida within the National Capital Region (NCR). The corridor is expected to provide high-speed connectivity to lakhs of commuters, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

In the Gurugram segment, an integrated RRTS and Metro corridor of about 14.5 km has been approved between IFFCO Chowk and Gwal Pahari. Key stations on this stretch will include Sector 29, Millennium City Centre, Sector 52, Wazirabad, Sector 57, and Sector 58/61. This segment will provide connectivity with the Delhi Metro Yellow Line, the Gurugram Metro Corridor, and the Rapid Metro network, enabling seamless multi-modal integration. Similarly, in the Faridabad region, an integrated corridor of approximately 16 km has been approved between Sainik Colony and Badshahpur.

EDITORIAL

SUPREME COURT
STEPS BACK ON COW
VIGILANTISM

The Supreme Court of India’s recent decision to withdraw from enforcing its own 2018 guidelines against cow vigilantism marks a troubling moment in the country’s judicial journey. What began as a strong stand against mob violence has now turned into a retreat, reflecting a larger pattern of hesitation when faced with majoritarian politics.

In 2018, the Supreme Court, led by then Chief Justice Dipak Mishra, expressed shock at the growing violence carried out by cow protection groups. The Court declared that lynching “must be curbed and crippled” and reminded the state of its sacred duty to protect citizens. The guidelines issued at the time were meant to serve as a framework for prevention, punishment, and compensation. They assumed that the Court would act as a watchdog, ensuring that governments and police forces fulfilled their responsibilities.

On February 23, 2026, Chief Justice Surya Kant described those earlier directions as “unmanageable.” He argued that each case should be judged on its own facts, and that individuals whose rights are violated could seek remedies through the courts. Petitioners had asked the Court to hold states accountable for ignoring its orders, but the Court refused. This effectively ended the hope that the judiciary would play a proactive role in curbing mob violence.

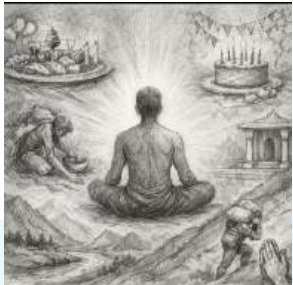
Since 2018, cow vigilantism has not only continued but worsened. In several states, vigilante groups have been given legal recognition and quasi-policing powers, directly contradicting the Court’s earlier directives. Police forces often ignore such violence, and in some cases, they even side with the attackers instead of protecting the victims. States ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have gone further, enabling vigilantism rather than restraining it.

The Court’s retreat raises serious questions about the rule of law in India. Ideally, in a functioning democracy, the police should act in fidelity to the law and prevent mob violence without needing judicial intervention. The fact that citizens had to approach the Supreme Court in 2018 for what should have been routine policing was already a sign of institutional weakness. Now, with the Court refusing to enforce its own directives, the situation has become even more alarming.

This decision signals that the judiciary may no longer see itself as a guardian against mobocracy. By leaving victims to fight individual battles in court, the Supreme Court risks normalizing vigilante violence and weakening public faith in the justice system. The Court’s unwillingness to uphold its own guidelines is more than a legal technicality—it is a blow to the very idea of constitutional protection. In a democracy, the judiciary is expected to stand firm against lawlessness, especially when the state itself fails to act. By retreating from this responsibility, the Court has left citizens vulnerable to mob violence and undermined the principle of equal protection under the law.



THINK



You are born.
But what have you truly grown into?

The silver platter spins with comfort
yet the hands that forged it remain unseen.
Is life a feast,
or a whirlwind draped in celebration?

We cut cakes, light candles, wear garlands
but is that enough?
Is joy to be earned by the calendar?
Is love merely what’s framed on the wall?

Have you paused,
even for a breath,
to feel the weight of Aharnisha struggle
day and night,
someone fights
just to be heard,
just to be fed?

And what of the river?
What of the hill?
Do you remember
the path that nourished your roots?

If you kneel in a temple,
know this
God is not in sculpture or hymn,
but in the soul
that bears no hatred.

That is worship.
That is rebirth.
That is the finest of all human lives.



...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...
7810032847



REWIND

RIGHT MEN IN RIGHT PLACES

Lusty cheers greeted the Supreme Court’s recent decision on the controversial West Bengal poll. This is as it should have been. The Supreme Court’s verdict is of fundamental importance to the future of India’s democracy. It is also in accordance with the wise decision taken by Nehru and the founding fathers of the Constitution to keep the electoral process out of the jurisdiction of the courts. Nehru was clear and said in so many words: “We have thousands of courts all over the country. If they are allowed to intervene there will be no end to writs. We will then have to say good-bye elections.” But in all this recent excitement the Election Commission, which deserves even louder applause, has largely been forgotten. The BJP alone has offered kudos to the Commission for its “correct stand.” As one who has followed political developments

The eight-lakh complaints were submitted by the Congress (I) as mere lists, many not even signed. None of the petitioners before the Calcutta High Court complained that his name was not on the rolls. Worse. Not one affidavit was filed on behalf of eight lakh complainants before the court --- the unrivalled record. Further, the complaint filed by Mr Ajit Panja, a lawyer and former Congress (I) chief in West Bengal, was also unsigned.

in New Delhi over the past three decades, I have not the slightest doubt that there would be no mini-general election today if the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr S.L. Shakhder, had not upheld the Commission’s independence and taken effective steps to assert it.

Congress (I) men today accuse the Election Commission of partisanship. The Commission they feel, has favoured the Left Front Government, headed by Mr Jyoti Basu. But they forget two things. First, Mr Jyoti Basu himself denounced the Commission last year as a “stooge” and an “agent” of the Congress (I). This happened when the Commission postponed some by-elections in West Bengal last year by a month following complaints about defective rolls and decided to hold the poll according to a common programme with other states in June. The Congress (I) then complimented the Commission. Second, Mrs Gandhi acknowledged the Election Commission’s independence in the Lok Sabha on March 1. The Opposition, she said, had hailed the Commission’s decision last June to countermand the Garhwal by-election to the Lok Sabha as “truly democratic.” Yet

the same Opposition had shouted hoarse about the “danger to democracy” when the Commission postponed the repoll in November last. “Does this mean,” she asked, “that democracy is only when the Commission’s decisions go in favour of the Opposition parties.”

The West Bengal affair reflects a trend against which I wrote as follows in my Republic Day piece: “The very basis of democracy is being increasingly undermined. Democracy means rule of the people, by the people and for the people. This is made possible through time-bound elections which are free, fair and without fear. Yet there is an increasing tendency today in the ruling party to avoid inconvenient elections... Garhwal stands out as a bad example...” No stone was left unturned by the Congress (I) to somehow postpone the elections to the West Bengal Assembly beyond June 24 when its five-year term is due to end, and bring the State under President’s rule. To begin with, the bogey of bogus rolls was sought to be raised. Mrs Gandhi herself went to the extent of stating at a public meeting in West Bengal that 30 per cent of the electoral rolls were fudged. Subsequently, as we are all aware, the Congress (I) sought to block the poll on the plea of eight lakh complaints first through the Election Commission and then the Calcutta High Court.

Yet in all this exercise the Congress (I) conveniently slurred over three basic facts. First, the Commission sought to be indicted in the High Court had got the State’s electoral rolls revised in 1979 after a gap of 15 years! (Mr Shakhder took over as Chief Election Commissioner in June 18, 1977.) Second, the rolls were revised again summarily in 1980 and intensively by December 31, 1981. Third, these were summarily revised afresh early this year. Not only that. The eight-lakh complaints were submitted by the Congress (I) as mere lists, many not even signed. None of the petitioners before the Calcutta High Court complained that his name was not on the rolls. Worse. Not one affidavit was filed on behalf of eight lakh complainants before the court --- the unrivalled record. Further, the complaint filed by Mr Ajit Panja, a lawyer and former Congress (I) chief in West Bengal, was also unsigned. Interestingly, Mr Panja loudly protested that 30,000 names had been wrongly deleted from the rolls of his Assembly constituency of Bartola. However, he came forward with an amending list of only 3,000 names!

An equally interesting story hangs by the manner in which the lists of eight-lakh complainants are said to have been drawn up. Some smart Alecs of the Congress (I) appear to have decided to draw up the lists on the basis of a broad blind-shooting formula designed to produce a large list of complainants without much effort. Under the formula, the names of three categories of persons were mainly included in the list. First, all those shown on the rolls to be 70 years of age and more. This was done on the plea that they were now dead and gone. Second, all those who were 21 years old on the ground that they could be presumed to be still minor. Third, all unmarried women in the age-group of 21 and 25. This, it was argued, could be done on the ground that they were now married and no longer in their place of original residence. The Commission’s Secretary, Mr Ganesan, and his team discovered this during spot checking in five districts. At one house, Mr Ganesan asked: “Is this

lady dead?” The lady smiled and said: “I am very much alive.” Then she added after a pause: “Can I offer you tea --- provided you are willing to take it from a ghost!”

Clearly, the Congress (I) was hell-bent on getting the West Bengal poll postponed and President’s rule imposed. The eight-lakh complaints were part of the overall strategy of creating basic doubts about the rolls. Mrs Gandhi’s statement that 30 per cent of the rolls were bogus was not based on any solid information. Asked by newsmen later as to the basis for her allegation, Mrs Gandhi replied: “I was told so.” True Mrs Gandhi did declare publicly that she would not topple the Jyoti Basu Government and impose President’s rule. But then she was aware of two things. First, any toppling of the Jyoti Basu Government would have been counter-productive. Second, leading Congress (I) men in the State, including Mr A.K. Sen, were confident of achieving the same end by somehow getting the poll postponed beyond June 1982. Consequently, in the overall stratagem facts became less important than fiction. But in the exercise, the Congress (I) reckoned without the Supreme Court and the statutory authority vested in the Election Commission to function independently.

In fact, veteran parliamentarians have complimented the Commission for not only asserting its independence but energetically backing this up with meaningful action. The Commission was, for instance, not required to go to the Supreme Court. It could easily have left it to the Congress (I) and the Marxists in West Bengal to fight it out. Instead, it realised its own responsibility in ensuring a free and fair poll and not allowing any party or authority, howsoever powerful, to undermine the basic scheme of things under the Constitution. Its 35-page affidavit before the Supreme Court made matters crystal clear. Even as the Supreme Court was busy hearing the case it went ahead with poll preparations and, to the surprise of expert published the final rolls just a day after the Court’s verdict. It could have easily taken two weeks or more for the purpose. But Commission was anxious to have the election at the earliest and proposed May 9 for the poll. However, this was changed to May 19 when Calcutta asked for a little more time.

Happily, the Election Commission has been exercising its authority under the Constitution to superintend, direct and control the conduct of elections. It gave the U.P. Government ample opportunity to propose fresh dates for the repoll in Garhwal. When Lucknow failed to “play ball”, to quote one authority, the Commission was left with no choice but to virtually direct that the poll be held on May 19 together with the elections elsewhere. Unknown to most people, the West Bengal Government found itself ticked off by the Commission on several occasions when it did not have or tried to treat the Chief Electoral Officer as its own subordinate. (The Chief Electoral Officers are expected to be responsible only to the Commission. But this does not happen in practice leading to another issue and several suggestions. The Commission would be happy to have a CEO cadre of its own.) The present Commission, it may be recalled, was the first to order intensive revision of the rolls in Assam in May-June 1979 for the Lok Sabha by-election from Mangaldoi following complaints. Significantly, over 45,000 foreigners were de-

tected on the rolls in one parliamentary constituency alone!

The Commission has asserted its sturdy independence in several other cases too. Of interest is the recent re-election to the Rajya Sabha of the BJP leader, Mr L.K. Advani, last month. Not many know that he almost missed the boat because of a manoeuvre by some Congress (I) supporters but for a timely eleventh-hour decision by the Election Commission. In August last, Mr Advani changed his residence from Gujarat to Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, manifestly to ensure his re-election. He was registered as a voter in September by the present Electoral Registration Officer. The name was also incorporated in the rolls early this year following summary revision. But on March 9 ten days before the filing of nominations on March 19 --- two persons challenged his registration. The Registration Officer thereupon pasted a notice at the house of Mr Advani’s sister on the evening of March 12 asking him to show cause by March 16 why his name should not be struck off. March 13 and 14 were closed days. Advani, then busy with Parliament in Delhi, soon rushed to Gwalior and on March 15 filed a writ before the Gwalior bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on the plea of mala fide intention. He also moved the Election Commission simultaneously. The High Court and the Commission gave him stay the same day. On March 18, the Chief Election Commissioner heard the case and directed the Registration Officer “not to proceed in the matter.”

What does all this add up to? The Election Commission and, more specifically, the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr Shakhder, has acted over the years in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution. The Commission’s independence is vital for the health of our democracy --- a factor emphasised in recent years by Jaya Prakash Narayan. In fact, JP feared that a one-man Commission was liable to be pressurised easily and he, therefore, expressed himself in favour of a three-man Commission. Theoretically, a three-man Commission does appear to be a better proposition. But some experts doubt if such a Commission could have acted as decisively and promptly as done by the present Commission in the West Bengal and other cases. The question deserves the nation’s attention especially as this high office will fall vacant on June 18 when Mr Shakhder, 63, is due to retire. The rules framed by the Government provide for a Chief Election Commissioner to retire at the age of 65 or at the end of a 5-year tenure, whichever is earlier. In the final analysis, one thing alone is clear, India’s Constitution is basically sound. What we need is right men in right places.



INDER JIT
(Released on
20 April
1982)

From Infancy to Old Age:
How Loneliness Shapes Our Sense of Self

BY VIVEK SHUKLA

Loneliness is far more than the absence of people; it is the absence of meaningful connection—an emotional state that can persist even amid crowds. This was the view of Dr. Shekhar Seshadri, a renowned psychiatrist and former Professor at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS). Delivering a compelling lecture on identity and loneliness across the human life cycle, he offered a comprehensive view of how our sense of self develops from infancy to old age and how isolation subtly influences that journey.

Speaking to a packed audience of clinicians, educators, and students at Pushpanjali Medical Centre in East Delhi, Dr. Seshadri emphasized that identity is not a static trait but a dynamic, lifelong process. “We are not born with a ready-made identity,” he said. “We grow into it, negotiate it, defend it, and sometimes lose sight of it.” The enlightening session was presided over by Dr. Vinay Agrawal, former President of the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

Drawing from his extensive clinical experience at NIMHANS, he traced the roots of identity to early childhood. In infancy and preschool years, a child’s sense of self forms through secure attachment, mirroring, and affirmation from caregivers. Responsive parenting fosters internalized worth and belonging. Disruptions—neglect, trauma, or emotional unavailability—can breed insecurity, later surfacing as social withdrawal or fragile self-esteem.

“The earliest relationships,” he noted, who is also a brother of noted Bollywood star Meenakshi Seshadri.

In middle childhood, identity broadens to encompass competence and social comparison. School acts as a laboratory where children gauge themselves against peers. Success builds confidence; repeated failure or exclusion plants seeds of loneliness. Dr. Seshadri warned that intense academic pressure and performance-driven expectations can subtly convey conditional acceptance. To make his talk interesting, Dr. Seshadri even quoted some famous Urdu couplets.

“When a child believes love must be earned,” he said, “loneliness grows silently.” Adolescence marks a pivotal shift, where identity formation becomes deliberate and intense. Teens experiment with roles, beliefs, and affiliations to answer: “Who am I?” Peers dominate, and belonging feels essential. This very sensitivity to acceptance heightens vulnerability to loneliness. Social media exacerbates the paradox: today’s youth are hyperconnected yet often profoundly alone. “There is a wide gap between curated digital personas and authentic selfhood,” he observed.

Young adulthood intertwines identity with career paths, intimate partnerships, and ideological choices. Modern urban life grants freedom but erodes traditional

communities. Migration for studies or jobs severs family ties, forcing individuals to build identity in relative isolation. “Autonomy without anchoring feels liberating initially,” Dr. Seshadri said, “but it can breed existential loneliness over time.”

Midlife prompts reappraisal. Careers may plateau, children leave home, and aging parents need support. This stage involves quiet reckoning—evaluating achievements, regrets, and unfulfilled dreams. Loneliness here often arises not from absent relationships but from a perceived loss of purpose. He highlighted generativity—contributing to future generations—as a powerful safeguard against isolation. In older adulthood, Dr. Seshadri spoke with urgency. Retirement, loss of loved ones, and health declines shrink social networks. Rapid societal shifts weaken joint family systems, leaving many elders exposed. “Old-age loneliness is not inevitable,” he stressed, “but it is increasingly common.” He advocated community mental health programs and intergenerational initiatives to uphold dignity and identity.

Throughout, Dr. Seshadri framed loneliness as a public health issue. Chronic isolation links to depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, and cardiovascular risks. Stigma often silences sufferers. “We medicalize distress but rarely inquire about belonging,” he said, urging clinicians to routinely assess patients’ relational lives.

He distinguished solitude from lone-

liness: chosen, meaningful solitude can heal; imposed, prolonged loneliness—with its sense of invisibility—harms. The goal is not erasing aloneness but fostering genuine connection. He called on institutions to act: schools should teach emotional literacy alongside academics; workplaces must address the toll of hypercompetitive environments; urban planning should promote shared spaces and community engagement. “Identity flourishes in ecosystems of connection,” he declared.

In closing, Dr. Seshadri revisited the life-cycle lens: identity emerges from the interplay of inner narrative and social recognition. Feeling seen, heard, and valued strengthens it; exclusion or misunderstanding erodes it. Solutions extend beyond therapy to families, classrooms, and neighborhoods. “Our identities are co-authored,” he concluded. “We become ourselves in relationship with others. To address loneliness is to safeguard identity itself.” The lecture prompted deep reflection on how modern life simultaneously expands and fragments the self. By embedding loneliness within human development, Dr. Seshadri provided clinical wisdom and a broader call to action: connection is not optional—it is a psychological necessity.

It may be recalled that Pushpanjali Medical Education and Research Centre organises such lectures on a regular basis.



Temporary
stoppage of
MEMU trains at
Devanagonth
HUBBALLI, FEB 25

It has been decided to provide a temporary stoppage for Train No. 06527/06528 SMVT Bengaluru-Bangarapet-SMVT Bengaluru MEMU at Devanagonthi station on an experimental basis for a period of three months from 27.02.2026 to 31.05.2026. Accordingly, Train No. 06528 SMVT Bengaluru-Bangarapet MEMU will arrive/depart Devanagonthi at 04:40/04:41 hrs, while Train No. 06527 Bangarapet-SMVT Bengaluru MEMU will arrive/depart at 21:24/21:25 hrs. This experimental stoppage has been introduced for the convenience of local passengers, and the public is requested to make use of this facility.

Police, Villagers
Face Off in
Odisha

ROURKELA (ODISHA): (Feb 25) A scuffle broke out between a group of people and police personnel during a protest against a mining expansion work in Odisha's Sundargarh district on Wednesday, an officer said. The residents of areas near Lanjiberna have been opposing the expansion of dolomite and limestone mines owned by a private company, he said.

NCERT pulls chapter on 'judicial corruption' after CJI rebuke

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Wednesday strongly objected to a chapter on judicial corruption in the NCERT's Class 8 social science curriculum, prompting the syllabus-setting body to withdraw the contentious textbook from its website. A three-judge bench comprising the CJI and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi took suo motu cognizance of the "objectionable" statements about the judiciary in the new textbook after senior advocate Kapil Sibal, alongside Abhishek Singhvi, mentioned the matter for urgent consideration. The NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) social science textbook for Class 8 says corruption, a massive backlog of cases, and the lack of an adequate number of judges are among the challenges faced by the judicial system. After stern words by the Supreme Court that it will not allow "anyone on earth" to tarnish the judiciary's integrity, the NCERT pulled the textbook from its website, with sources saying the government was livid with the controversial references in the curriculum. The council, responsible for school education curriculum, is also considering the removal of the controversial portions from the books already printed, sources said. Several schools in the national capital, however, said they had no directive



yet about whether or not to teach the portions in question. The NCERT is said to have called an internal meeting to review the recommendations of the subject experts involved in the chapter and the officials who approved it. NCERT Chairman Dinesh Prasad Saklani did not respond to calls and messages on the issue. Another top official at the council refused to comment, saying the matter was sub judice. The government sources said while the NCERT is an autonomous body, the officials responsible for adding chapters should have applied their minds. If the issue of corruption was to be included in the textbook, it should have been about all three organs (the executive, the legislature and the judiciary), they said. "We are very disturbed as members of this institution to find that children of Class 8 are being taught about corruption in the judiciary. It is part of the NCERT book. We have great stake in the institution; it (the chapter) is entirely scandalous. We have

the copies of the book," Sibal said in court. "I can assure you all that I am fully aware of this," the CJI said, adding that he received various calls and messages and many high court judges were "perturbed". When Sibal said he hoped the bench would take suo motu cognizance, the CJI said, "Wait for a day. This is definitely concerning the entire institution. The bar and the bench are perturbed. Every stakeholder in the system is really perturbed. I am receiving a lot of calls and messages. There are judges of the high courts who are perturbed." The CJI told Sibal he had already passed an order taking suo motu cognizance of the issue. "I will not allow anyone on earth to taint the integrity of the institution and defame the institution. At any cost, I will not permit it. However high it may be, the law will take its course. I know how to deal with it," a visibly irked CJI said. Singhvi raised the issue of the NCERT adopting a selective approach

and said it presumed that "there was no corruption elsewhere. There was not a word about corruption in bureaucracy, politics, public life and other institutions". "It seems to be a very calculated and deep-rooted measure to... we don't want to say anything more... I am aware and I have done my duty," the CJI said and thanked the lawyers for raising the issue. Justice Bagchi referred to the basic structure doctrine and said "constitutional integrity to the basic structure is missing in the contents of the textbook". The book pegs the approximate number of pending cases in the Supreme Court at 81,000, in high courts at 62.40 lakh, and in district and subordinate courts at 4.70 crore. It highlights the judiciary's internal accountability mechanisms and refers to the established procedure for receiving complaints through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System. According to the book, over 1,600 complaints were received through this mechanism between 2017 and 2021. The textbook also quotes former Chief Justice of India BR Gavai, who in July 2025 said that instances of corruption and misconduct within the judiciary had a negative impact on public confidence. "However, the path to rebuilding this trust lies in the swift, decisive and transparent action taken to address and resolve these issues... Trans-

parency and accountability are democratic virtues," he is quoted as saying in the book. The government sources said that data on corruption in the judiciary was available in parliamentary records and the national judicial data grid, but the Union Law Ministry was not consulted for cross-verification of the fact. The sources also said former CJI Gavai's quote on corruption in the judiciary was taken out of context, and he is learnt to be unhappy over it. "If students are to be taught about corruption, the chapter should have ideally encouraged them to file a graft complaint, but not single out one institution. "An in-house mechanism already exists in the Supreme Court and the 25 high courts to deal with complaints of corruption against judges. As per the drafters of the constitution, the judiciary is an independent institution which is capable of dealing with such cases," a government functionary said. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal told the Lok Sabha earlier this month that 8,639 complaints were received against sitting judges between 2016 and 2025. The highest number of complaints (1,170) was received in 2024 by the office of the CJI against sitting judges. Former law minister Ashwani Kumar hailed CJI Surya Kant for taking suo motu cognizance of the chapter and said the prompt action would help bury the propaganda against the judiciary.

Tambaram to Handle
Nellai, Pothigai Express

Temporary revision in
departure timings of Cholan Express from
Chennai Egmore

CHENNAI, FEB 25:

In view of line block on Road No.10 & 11 at Chennai Egmore and to facilitate hassle free train operations during the peak hours, the following are the changes in the pattern of train services: **Change in Origination of Train Service:** Train No. 12661 Chennai Egmore – Sengottai Pothigai Express will originate from Tambaram with effect from 02nd March to 16th March, 2026. The departure time from Tambaram is 20.05 hrs **Short Termination of Train Service:**

Train No. 12632 Tirunelveli – Chennai Egmore Nellai Express will short terminate at Tambaram with effect from 01st March to 15th March, 2026. The arrival time at Tambaram is 06.25 hrs **Rescheduling of Train Service:** Train No. 22675 Chennai Egmore – Tiruchchirappalli Cholan Express scheduled to leave Chennai Egmore at 08.00 hrs on and from 28th February to 15th March, 2026 will be rescheduled to leave Chennai Egmore at 10.15 hrs (Late by 2 hours 15 mins).

Caught on camera:
Bihar woman shot by
lover at her wedding

Chaos broke out at a wedding in Bihar's Buxar district when a woman was shot by her boyfriend, triggering panic among attendees. The accused is on the run and was upset with her girlfriend's marriage to another man. The woman, Aarti, and the groom, at a wedding in Bihar's Buxar district before she was shot by her lover. A wedding celebration in Bihar's Buxar district turned into a scene of horror when a woman was shot by her boyfriend. The accused, who is on the run, was upset over his girlfriend Aarti's marriage to another man. The victim has been identified as Kumari Aarti (18), while the groom is Avinash (23). The accused boyfriend has been identified as Dinbandhu (22). He is currently on the run. The incident took place on Tuesday at her sister-in-law's house in Chausa, where the wedding was being held. A video shows Aarti, and the groom with the garlands they had exchanged during the wedding. Suddenly, a gunshot is heard when Aarti is shot by her lover as the guests are taken aback by what transpired. According to eyewitnesses, the lover, who was not fully visible in the video, shot Aarti in her stomach before fleeing the spot. The sudden gunfire triggered



panic and confusion among guests, who scrambled to safety. Lover Deenbandhu was caught in 2021 in a liquor trafficking case. A family member said she initially mistook the shooting as firecrackers. "We thought it was part of the celebration. I had gone home. Suddenly, we saw sparks near the stage. We thought people were bursting firecrackers. But when we reached there, Aarti had been shot and the groom was carrying her to take her to the hospital," a relative said. Another family member said they heard a gunshot before seeing Aarti collapse. "He shot her and ran away. Her husband picked her up and rushed her to the hospital," he added. Aarti was first taken to a local hospital and later referred to Varanasi for further treatment. Police have launched an investigation into the incident and are searching for the accused. Family members have demanded swift action and justice for Aarti.

More Than 100 Trips of Holi

MALIGAON, 25 FEBRUARY, 2026:

In order to facilitate smooth and comfortable travel during the forthcoming Holi festival and to effectively manage the expected surge in passenger traffic, Indian Railways will operate a total of 14 pairs of Holi Special trains over the North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) for 128 trips. These special services will augment the existing regular train operations and provide much-needed additional capacity during the festive rush. Eleven pairs of trains are already running from this February 2026 as Holi Special trains. In addition three more special trains will run between Tata Nagar-Katihar-Tata Nagar, Agartala-Guwahati-Agartal & Kishanganj-Lalkuan-Kishanganj. The details of these trains are as follows: Special Train No. 08181 (Tata Nagar- Katihar) will run every Monday from 2nd March to 30th March 2026, departing from Tata Nagar at 13:00 hrs reaching Katihar at 07:30 hrs the next day. In the return direction, Special Train No. 08182 (Katihar-Tata Nagar) will run every Tuesday from 3rd March to 31st March 2026, departing Katihar at 10:30 hrs

Special Trains To Be Run Over NFR



and arriving at Tata Nagar at 04:30 hrs next day. Both the trains will run for 05 trips each. Similarly, Special Train No. 05628 (Agartala-Guwahati) will run every Thursday from 5th March to 26th March 2026, departing from Agartala at 19:00 hrs reaching Guwahati at 09:00 hrs next day. In the return direction, Special Train No. 05627 (Guwahati-Agartala) will run every Friday from 6th March to 27th March 2026, departing Guwahati at 13:15 hrs and arriving at Agartala at 04:25 hrs the next day. Both the trains will run for 04 trips each. Further, Train No. 05741 (Kishanganj-Lalkuan) will run every Thursday from 5th March to 26th March 2026, departing Kishanganj at 08:30 hrs reaching Lalkuan at 15:40 hrs next day. In the return direction, Train No. 05742 (Lalkuan-Kishanganj) will run

every Friday from 6th March to 27th March 2026, departing Lalkuan at 20:40 hrs and arriving at Kishanganj at 02:00 hrs on Sunday. Both services will operate 04 trips each. Besides operating special trains, NFR has undertaken added comprehensive measures at major stations over the zone to manage increased passenger footfall during the festive season. Additional arrangements have been made to ensure availability of safe drinking water, strengthened security deployment, systematic crowd management at platforms and circulating areas and enhanced passenger assistance through help desks and additional on-ground staff. These initiatives are aimed at ensuring safe, orderly and comfortable travel for passengers during the festive rush. The detailed schedule, stoppages and timings of these special trains are available on the IRCTC website and at railway enquiry counters. Passengers are advised to verify train details prior to commencement of journey and to book tickets only through authorised channels. NFR remains committed towards providing efficient, reliable and passenger-friendly services across its network.

Relief for Jharkhand CM as SC Halts
Proceedings in Summons Case

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

In a relief to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the trial in a case related to wilful disobedience of summons issued by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the money laundering case registered against him. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate on the plea of Soren seeking quashing of the case. In his plea before the top court, Soren also challenged the repetitive summons issued to him by the ED in the money laundering cases related to stone-chip illegal mining scam. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Arunabh Choudhary, and advocate Pragya Baghel, appearing for Soren, said the ED has been issuing summons after summons to him. Additional Solicitor General Anil Kaushik, appearing for the ED, said Soren was issued seven summons, but he did not appear before the agency. He added that the trial against him was almost complete and only one witness remained to be examined. CJI Kant told

Kaushik, "We were reading in the newspaper, you (ED) have filed some bulk complaints. You should concentrate and spend your energy on those complaints. You will have some constructive outcomes." Justice Bagchi added, "You should focus on effective prosecution. These are in terrorism (in fear) prosecution. Purpose has been served." Soren has challenged the recent Jharkhand High Court's decision refusing to quash the case against him. On January 15, the high court refused to quash the cognisance taken against Soren by a special MP-MLA court in a complaint case filed by the ED, dealing a setback to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader. The ED had filed a complaint case against Soren for not appearing before it despite summonses issued by it in connection with his alleged involvement in an alleged illegal stone-chip mining scam. The special MP-MLA court judge at Ranchi had earlier taken cognisance of the complaint and issued summons to Soren to appear before the court. The ED alleged in the impugned complaint that during the investigation in a money laundering case registered

against Soren, he was issued six summons and one letter under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, requiring his personal appearance. It was alleged that Soren failed to appear on the specified dates on one pretext or another and thereby intentionally disobeyed the summons, constituting an offence under Section 174 of the IPC. The ED claimed that the investigation could not progress in the absence of Soren's presence and cooperation, and that he was required to be examined for a proper investigation into the alleged scam. On the basis of the said complaint, the chief judicial magistrate, Ranchi, took cognisance of the offence on March 4, 2024, and the matter was later transferred to the Special Court (MP/MLA), Ranchi. Soren approached the high court for quashing of the entire criminal proceedings initiated against him in the complaint case, including the order dated March 4, 2024, whereby cognisance was taken by the CJM, Ranchi. The JMM leader contended that the order of the CJM taking cognisance and issuing summons against him is in utter and gross abuse of the process of law.



Registration
Begins for
Admission to
Class 6
for the Academic
Session 2026–27 at
BLW Inter College in
VARANASI, FEB 25

Registration has commenced for admission to Class 6 for the academic session 2026–27 at BLW Inter College, in Banaras locomotive works. The registration form, details regarding the entrance examination, and other related information are available on the school's website: www.dl-wintercollege.co.in/news.

Visa, technical issues keep 200 passengers
waiting inside IndiGo plane for hours

A routine IndiGo flight from Chennai to Singapore faced a four-hour delay due to technical and regulatory issues, leaving passengers stranded on the aircraft.

What was meant to be a routine morning departure turned into a four-hour ordeal on the runway, as more than 200 passengers remained confined inside an aircraft at Chennai Airport after an IndiGo flight to Singapore was hit by cascading delays. IndiGo flight 6E 1025, scheduled to depart at 7:20 am on Tuesday from Chennai to Singapore, eventually took off at 11:39 am, a delay of four hours and 19 minutes. Videos that surfaced online show visibly agitated passengers questioning the prolonged wait while seated inside the aircraft on the tar-



mac. **TECHNICAL SNAG AND ACT TROUBLE** Sources familiar with the sequence of events said the trouble began with the aircraft's air conditioning system, which was underperforming in Chennai's rising morning temperatures. Engineers were called in to rectify the issue before departure. The aircraft returned to bay while checks were carried out. Although the air conditioning

problem was addressed, the delay triggered another complication. **CREW DUTY LIMITS TRIGGER FRESH DELAY** As per sources, the cockpit crew informed the airline that if they proceeded with the Chennai-Singapore sector, Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms would come into effect. Under aviation safety rules, crew members cannot exceed prescribed duty hours. IndiGo was then required

to arrange a fresh set of crew members for the international sector. Identifying replacement crew took additional time. The delay extended further when visa formalities had to be completed for the newly assigned crew, since the flight was bound for Singapore. **WHY PASSENGERS WERE NOT DEBOARDED** Sources told India Today that because 6E 1025 was an international sector flight, debarking passengers after immigration clearance would have created procedural complications. Reprocessing passengers through immigration would have added further complexity and delay. As a result, passengers were asked to remain inside the aircraft while the issues were resolved. **INDIGO'S STATEMENT** In an official statement, an IndiGo spokesperson said,

"IndiGo flight 6E 1025 operating from Chennai to Singapore on 24 February 2026 had returned to bay due to a minor technical snag. While necessary checks and maintenance were being carried out on the aircraft, the cockpit crew exceeded their flight duty time limitations, necessitating the change of crew and further delaying the flight. We regret the inconvenience caused to our customers and did our best to minimise it by offering refreshments and sharing timely update. At IndiGo, the safety of our customers and crew is our top priority." The episode has once again brought attention to how technical snags, regulatory norms and international travel protocols can combine to leave passengers stranded for hours, even before the wheels leave the ground.



Ready for war and peace

Iran Foreign Minister ahead of nuclear talks with US

In an exclusive interview with India Today TV, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that any confrontation could quickly spill beyond Iran and the United States, turning into a "devastating" regional war that would pull in multiple Middle Eastern countries.

A head of a fresh round of nuclear negotiations with the United States in Geneva, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran is prepared for both war and peace, as tensions rise in the region amid US military build-up.

In an exclusive interview with India Today TV, Abbas Araghchi warned that any confrontation could quickly spill beyond Iran and the United States, turning into a "devastating" regional war that would pull in multiple Middle Eastern countries.

tating" regional war that would pull in multiple Middle Eastern countries. The third round of Iran-US negotiations is scheduled for Thursday in Geneva, mediated by Oman. Previous talks established "general guiding principles" for a potential agreement, though major disputes remain over uranium enrichment and missile limits. The Iranian Minister said Tehran believes a settlement remains within reach. "Based on the understanding from previous times, we will build an agreement, a deal. A fair, balanced, equitable deal is achievable," he said. He also signalled lingering mistrust from earlier confrontations. "We are not fully convinced that they have real determination to do that," he said. "They did it last time. Negotiated with us and then attacked us." He added that Iran remains open to compromise



if Washington shows genuine intent. "We have concerns but if there is a real determination on their side to come to a conclusion, then we can achieve an agreement."

IRAN REFUSES TO ABANDON ENRICHMENT

A sticking point in talks is Iran's nuclear enrichment programme. The United States has demanded Tehran abandon uranium enrichment entirely, while Iran insists on retaining

limited enrichment for civilian energy. Araghchi reiterated that position. "Negotiation and diplomacy is the only option," he said. "We are ready to address concerns but we are not ready to give up our right for peaceful use of nuclear tech." He also rejected claims about Iran expanding its missile capabilities. "We are not developing long range missiles. We have limited range to below 2000kms intentionally," he

said. "We don't want it to be a global threat. We only have (them) to defend ourselves. Our missiles build deterrence." The Iranian Minister cautioned that escalating tensions and the US military buildup around Iran raise the risk of conflict. "The US has built a huge military presence around us. If the idea is to threaten us so we capitulate, that is not going to happen," he said. He warned that any confrontation would spread quickly. "Since the American bases are scattered in the region, unfortunately the whole region would be engaged and involved. It would be a terrible scenario." Araghchi said Iran's forces have strengthened since the last conflict. "We have learnt lots of lessons from the last war and so we are more prepared," he said. "There will be no victory for anybody. It would be a devastating war."

IRAN DISPUTES PROTEST DEATH TOLL
The Foreign Minister also pushed back US President Donald Trump claims on death toll during brutal crackdown on anti-government protests. He accused Washington of misinformation on Iran. "President Trump has always complained about fake news. Now he himself is a victim of fake news," Araghchi said. He disputed US casualty figures cited in Washington. "Another fake news — number of deaths in Iran. He mentioned 32,000 but we have published the list of names and they are 3,117 victims which is very unfortunate." The Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRNA), however, have reported significantly higher tolls from the January unrest. It reported that more than 7,000 people were killed in the crackdown.



Bill Gates Apologises Over Ties with Epstein, Says He Did 'Nothing Illicit'

He called his meetings with Epstein a "huge mistake" and apologised to those affected, stressing he never interacted with Epstein's victims.

American tech entrepreneur Bill Gates has apologised to staff at the Gates Foundation over his connections with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein but insisted that he did "nothing illicit," according to a media report. The Microsoft co-founder also acknowledged having two affairs with Russian women and admitted to mistakes that had cast a shadow over the philanthropic group, while maintaining that he did not participate in Epstein's crimes. The Wall Street Journal reported exclusively on Tuesday. Gates was among many celebrities, politicians, leaders, and tech entrepreneurs linked to Epstein, as revealed in tens of thousands of documents—including emails, interview transcripts, photos, and call logs—released online last month by the US Justice Department, collectively referred to as the Epstein files, with some names redacted. During a town hall on Tuesday, Gates confirmed that he had two affairs with Russian women that Epstein later discovered, but stressed they "didn't involve Epstein's victims." "I did nothing illicit. I saw nothing illicit," Gates said, according to a recording reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. Gates said that images in the recently released Epstein files showing him with women whose faces are redacted were taken at Epstein's request with the help of his assistants after their meetings. "To be clear, I never spent any time with victims, the women around him," Gates added. "It was a

huge mistake to spend time with Epstein" and to involve Gates Foundation executives in meetings with the sex offender, Gates said. "I apologise to other people who are drawn into this because of the mistake that I made," The Wall Street Journal quoted him as saying.

Gates said he first met Epstein in 2011, three years after Epstein had pleaded guilty in 2008 to soliciting a minor for prostitution. He admitted he didn't "properly check" Epstein's background, even though he knew about some "18-month thing" that had restricted Epstein's travel, and said he continued meeting Epstein after his then-wife Melinda French Gates expressed concerns in 2013.

"To give her credit, she was always kind of skeptical about the Epstein thing," Gates said. The Wall Street Journal added that Gates told staff he continued meeting Epstein through 2014, flew on a private jet with him, and spent time together in Germany, France, New York, and Washington. "I never stayed overnight," Gates said, and did not visit Epstein's island.

He acknowledged that his association with Epstein and newly disclosed emails from the Justice Department files had cast a cloud over the Gates Foundation and its reputation. "It definitely is the opposite of the values of the Foundation and the goals of the Foundation," he said. "And our work is very reputational sensitive. I mean, people can choose to work with us or not work with us."

A Gates Foundation spokesperson said that Gates holds town halls twice a year and "spoke candidly, addressing several questions in detail, and took responsibility for his actions."

Suicide Blast Hits Pakistan Checkpost, 4 Dead

Ansar ul-Islam, an infamous Bareilvi Sunni Islamist militant group, founded by Pir Saif-ur Rehman, claimed responsibility for the blast. The attacker was identified as Abu Darda.



A series of terrorist attacks in Pakistan took the lives of nine security personnel in provinces like Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On February 24, a suicide terror attack targeting the Dajjal check post in the Punjab province killed four security personnel. In a separate incident, a group of unidentified militants attacked a police vehicle, killing five policemen and setting the vehicle on fire in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kohat region on the same day.

A CCTV camera recorded the moments before the explosion in the Dajjal checkpost attack. It showed several security personnel roaming in the area when the blast suddenly took place. The authorities soon identified a person

named Abu Darda as the suicide bomber. It has come to light that Darda was a member of the Ansar ul-Islam, an infamous Bareilvi Sunni Islamist militant group, founded by Pir Saif-ur Rehman, an Afghan Sufi preacher, in 2004. The organisation has claimed responsibility for the attack. This is the first time the group has taken responsibility for any terror attack in Pakistan.

In the Kohat attack, two civilians, along with five police officers, died, as per the statement of Mohsin Naqvi, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Interior. However, no group has

claimed responsibility for the attack yet. The consecutive terror attacks came amid the country's rising tensions with Afghanistan. A day before, the security forces of both countries engaged in fresh clashes in the border region, with both nations holding each other responsible for initiating the violence.

Following the terror attacks, Pakistan has raised its finger at Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan has denied responsibility for these attacks. They said that the attacks resulted from Pakistan's internal problem of militancy.

Trump Reveals Sharif's Warning on India-Pak Conflict

In a bombshell revelation, US President Donald Trump claimed that Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif told him that 35 million people would have died in India's Operation Sindoor had he not intervened.



US President Donald Trump on Wednesday repeated his claim that he had stopped eight wars, including a "nuclear war" between India and Pakistan -- offering little new. However, in a first, he also claimed that Shehbaz Sharif told him 35 million people would have been killed during Operation Sindoor had he not stepped in. "In my first 10 months, I ended eight wars... Pakistan and India would have had a nuclear war. 35 million people, said the Prime Minister of Pakistan, would have died if it were not for my involvement," he said.

Trump made these claims while highlighting his achievements during his first State of the Union address of his second term, saying he had ended eight wars in his first 10 months in the Oval Office.

The conflicts he has claimed to have resolved include those between Israel and Hamas, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, India and Pakistan, Serbia and Kosovo, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Cambodia and Thailand. Earlier, India repeatedly denied Trump's claims of playing peacemaker between the two countries during the four-day war. When asked about Trump's role in stopping the conflict, External

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar quipped that the US "was in the United States." Rejecting any third-party intervention, India has consistently maintained that Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) reached out to his Indian counterpart on the military hotline, requesting New Delhi to halt the offensive, which led to a "ceasefire understanding," as Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri put it.

Following the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 tourists, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 last year, targeting Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Trump's rare admission on Wednesday has left Pakistan red-faced. After all, it was Islamabad that had nominated the US President for the Nobel Peace Prize last year for his "diplomatic intervention," which it claimed helped stop the war.

Nepal Imposes Pre-Election Liquor Ban

BY SHIRISH B PRADHAN

KATHMANDU: (Feb 25) The Nepal government on Wednesday announced that the sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks would be prohibited seven days ahead of the March 5 general election.

The Nepal-India border will also be sealed 72 hours before the voting begins, the Election Commission (EC) said.

Issuing a notice, the EC said the sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks will be completely prohibited across the country seven days before the election. The restriction will be enforced till the last election results are not published.

Zelenskyy Vows Independence on War Mark

Marking the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, Zelenskyy said Ukraine has defended its independence, insisting that Putin has 'not achieved his goals' and 'has not won this war'.

Four years after Russian tanks rolled across Ukraine's borders, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered a blunt message to Moscow: Ukraine is still standing.

"We have defended our independence, we have not lost our statehood," the Ukrainian President said on social media, marking the grim anniversary of the invasion. Russian President Vladimir Putin, he added, has "not achieved his goals." "He has not broken Ukrainians; he has not won

this war," Zelenskyy said. According to the Associated Press, Zelenskyy's remarks came as more than a dozen senior European dignitaries arrived in Kyiv in a show of solidarity with Ukraine. The war, which has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions, has reshaped Europe's security landscape and stirred fears about Moscow's broader ambitions. Despite Russia's larger and better-equipped military, Ukraine has held its ground. Over the past year, Russian forces captured just 0.79 per cent of Ukrainian territory, according to the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War. Moscow now controls nearly 20 per cent of Ukraine, but advances have slowed. Standing at a makeshift memorial in Kyiv's central square — where



thousands of small flags mark the graves of fallen soldiers — Zelenskyy reflected on the toll of the conflict. "I would like President [Donald] Trump to come and see," he said, referring to his US counterpart. "Only then can one truly understand what this war is really about."

Asked how the prolonged war had changed him personally, Zelenskyy offered a stark response: "I don't have time for friends or friendships." The Ukrainian President also signalled potential diplomatic movement, saying he expected a fresh round of US-brokered talks with Russia within the next 10 days. Meanwhile, Russia's aerial bombardments have repeatedly targeted infrastructure, leaving civilians without electricity and water. A recent report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated that casualties on both sides — killed, wounded or missing — could approach 2 million by spring. As the war grinds into its fifth year, diplomatic efforts remain stalled. The United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday called for an immediate ceasefire and a

comprehensive peace, passing a resolution that reaffirmed Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States abstained from the vote. The Kremlin has shown no sign of backing down. Russian spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Russia's military campaign would continue in pursuit of Moscow's objectives, including Ukraine renouncing its NATO ambitions and ceding territory. Yet European leaders insist the war's consequences extend beyond Ukraine's borders. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called it "a nightmare" not only for Ukrainians but for all of Europe. French President Emmanuel Macron described the invasion as "a triple failure for Russia: military, economic, and strategic."

Balochistan Violence Leaves Two Dead, Five Missing



QUETTA, FEB 25

As violence against civilians intensifies across Balochistan, a leading human rights organisation on Wednesday brought to light the extrajudicial killings of two civilians and the enforced disappearance of five others across the province, allegedly at the hands of Pakistani forces. Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, mentioned that on Tuesday morning, personnel of Pakistan's Frontier Corps (FC), Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), and intelligence agencies, accompanied by a state-backed death squad, raided a house in Khudabadan region in Panjgur district. During the operation, three brothers and their nephew were forcibly disappeared, and hours later, one of them was extrajudicially killed. The victims were identified as Owais Ahmed, Bakhteyar, Irfan and Bilal. Citing reports, Paank stated that Owais Ahmed, the nephew, was severely tortured on Tuesday during the raid and sustained serious injuries. Later in the day, it said, his mutilated body was recovered, bearing visible signs of torture, while the whereabouts of the three brothers remain unknown. The rights body stated that on the same

day, the Pakistani forces and a death squad raided a house in the same region, forcibly disappearing 23-year-old Hassan Khalil, a student at the University of Panjgur. Highlighting the atrocities against Baloch civilians, Paank stated that the mutilated body of 26-year-old Taimoor was found dumped in the Surab district of Balochistan on February 20, after being forcibly disappeared by the FC on February 9. Paank further mentioned that Imdad Baloch, a resident of Turbat city in Kech district of the province, was forcibly disappeared from his home during a late-night raid carried out by the Pakistan Army and CTD on February 24. He worked at a bookshop located in the Shaheed Fida Chowk area in Turbat. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRCB) expressed grave concern over the "ongoing harassment, racial profiling, discrimination, and threats" against Baloch students across Pakistan, including at Punjab University. "Baloch students face identity-based targeting, enforced disappearances, and intensified profiling," the rights body stated. It noted that on February 23, a senior student was harassed in his hostel room, filmed, and threatened by Pakistani intelligence agencies.

Mexico Clears 40-Hour Workweek Reform

The Chamber of Deputies approved the general outline of the bill late on Tuesday with the support of all 469 present in the 500-member Congress; none voted against. Deputies then went on to discuss the law's particular terms, approving them with 411 votes in favour.



Mexico has approved a bill to gradually reduce the workweek from 48 to 40 hours, although the reform, expected to be implemented from next year, increases weekly overtime and maintains only one rest day for every six worked. With more

than 2,226 work hours per person per year, Latin America's second-largest economy has the worst work-life balance in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD). The country, where around 55 per cent of workers are employed in the informal sector, also has the lowest labour productivity and the lowest wages among

the group's 38 member states. The Chamber of Deputies approved the general outline of the bill late on Tuesday with the support of all 469 present in the 500-member Congress; none voted against. Deputies then went on to discuss the law's particular terms, approving them with 411 votes in favour. The opposition had strongly criticised the reform during 10 hours of debate. The ruling party hailed its approval, which follows years of back-and-forth with business owners. "Productivity is not measured by exhaustion. It is built with dignity," said ruling-party representative Pedro Haces, who also serves

as the secretary general of the Autonomous Confederation of Workers and Employees of Mexico.

OPPOSITION SAYS THERE IS NO REAL REDUCTION IN WORKING WEEK

The opposition argued that the bill does not represent a real reduction of the workweek because it increases weekly overtime to 12 hours from nine and does not include a mandatory two days of rest for every five worked.

"The idea of the reform is not bad, but it is incomplete and was done in a rush," said Alex Dominguez, a lawmaker from the opposition PRI party. The reform won general

approval earlier this month in the Senate, where the ruling Morena party holds a strong majority. "After more than 100 years without changes, Mexico will gradually phase out the 48-hour workweek," the Ministry of Labor said on X in the early hours of Wednesday. President Claudia Sheinbaum introduced the proposal in December; it aims to reduce the workweek by two hours per year until 2030, benefiting some 13.4 million workers. If the law is endorsed by more than half of Mexico's state legislatures, as is expected, the first two-hour reduction would be implemented in January 2027.

AI Disruption & Windfall Taxes

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

A growing chorus of global experts is warning that AI could trigger large-scale white-collar job losses, reshaping labour markets faster than previous technological shifts. After a market selloff sparked by the Citrini Research report, calls are emerging for governments to consider taxing AI-driven windfall gains. From Wall Street to the IMF and India's tech leadership, the debate is shifting from productivity gains to employment shock and fiscal response.

'AI is a tsunami for jobs': Experts warn of mass white-collar cuts as calls grow for AI windfall taxIMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said that AI is "like a tsunami hitting the labor market," with "40% of jobs globally, 60% in advanced economies" set to be impacted.

Alap Shah, co-author of the viral Citrini Research report that triggered an "AI scare trade" selloff on Tuesday, has urged governments to consider taxing artificial intelligence to cushion the economic fallout from large-scale job displacement. In a Bloomberg TV interview on Monday, Shah, CIO at Lotus Technology Management, warned that rapid advances in artificial intelligence could significantly disrupt labour markets and consumption-driven economies such as the US. "The smarter AI gets, the more jobs it can replace," Shah said. His remarks come after a weekend research note from Citrini outlined disruptive AI scenarios, sparking a selloff in delivery, payments and software stocks. Similar thoughts were echoed by IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva. Georgieva told Business Today that AI is "like a tsunami hitting the labor market," with "40% of jobs globally, 60% in advanced economies" set to be impacted. She urged policymakers to "manage the risks, especially the risks of displacement of workers" and strengthen safety nets for those affected.

Why an AI tax?

Shah argued that policymakers should consider taxing incremental or windfall gains generated by AI adoption, particularly as productivity gains increasingly replace human labour. Governments "should consider policies such as taxing incremental or windfall gains from AI," Shah said, adding that a related hit to consumer spending would imperil the broader economy.

His core concern is macroeconomic: rising unemployment weakens household consumption, which in turn drags

on growth in advanced economies where demand drives GDP.

The proposal does not advocate taxing AI as a technology. Instead, it frames taxation as a stabilisation tool — recycling extraordinary automation-driven corporate gains back into the economy to offset displaced incomes.

Job displacement scenario

The Citrini report sketches a forward-looking scenario in which rapid advances in machine intelligence dramatically boost productivity while simultaneously displacing large swathes of white-collar labour. Shah outlined a near-term risk case where as much



as 5% of white-collar workers could be cut within 18 months. The concern is not just job losses, but a reinforcing negative loop: firms trim headcount to protect margins, redeploy savings into AI systems, enable further automation, and in the process weaken aggregate consumer demand. That erosion in spending power could feed back into corporate revenues, particularly in sectors built on intermediation such as finance, insurance and software.

Market impact and sectoral divide

The so-called "AI scare trade" followed Citrini's warning of structural disruption, with delivery platforms, payments companies and select software names singled out as vulnerable — triggering a broad selloff. Technology stocks have already been volatile amid growing concerns that AI could rewire business models across industries. Shah said a pronounced sectoral split. Likely beneficiaries include chipmakers, data centers and foundation model labs — the infrastructure backbone of the AI buildout. In contrast, insurers, banks, consumer discretionary platforms and other intermediation-heavy businesses face elevated

risk as automation compresses fee pools and weakens demand.

"We generally have a set of shorts out against businesses that we think are going to be disrupted by AI," Shah said. "On the other side of that, we own a lot of semiconductors that we think are going to benefit."

AI is like a tsunami

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva delivered a stark warning about the scale and speed of AI-led transformation.

Speaking to Business Today in New Delhi, she said: "AI is already here and the speed with which it is affecting the way we work, we live, we interact

with each other is so high, highest in the history of technological transformation."

Her assessment of labour-market impact was blunt: "AI is like a tsunami hitting the labor market."

The IMF estimates that "40% of jobs globally, 60% in advanced economies, [are] to be impacted by AI in the next years, either enhanced, made more productive, or replaced."

Georgieva noted that while overall employment effects may be positive in some regions, gains are skewed: "The total impact on employment, surprisingly, in areas we study, is positive. But it is positive because of the increase of low-paying jobs."

She warned of middle-income job compression: "The jobs in the middle that are neither enhanced nor created as low-service. Jobs they get in relative terms squeezed."

She also flagged risks for young workers: "We also see automation eliminating entry-level jobs. So recent graduates, they worry, where is the job for me?"

To cushion disruption, she urged stronger education systems and social protection frameworks so displaced workers "have something to lean on for

themselves and their families."

Where does India stand

Vineet Nayar, founder Chairman and CEO of Sampark Foundation and former CEO of HCL Technologies, cautioned against assuming AI will automatically create jobs, particularly in India's IT sector.

Speaking at AI India Summit, Nayar said: "From an employment point of view I think it is very important for us to understand that Indian companies, including Indian IT companies, are going to be profit-driven and therefore if you believe that they are going to create employment you must be dreaming."

He argued that job creation will depend on large-scale entrepreneurship: "Therefore, the question is how do we create employment in this environment? That employment comes from mass scale startups... So, how do we create new sets of people who are trying to solve new sets of problems, not new sets of technology and if we do that we will get it right."

Nayar also raised concerns around AI capability and data ownership: "Unfortunately, in India, we never develop products, so therefore we do not have SLMs and LLMs which are world-class."

He warned that allowing global models to operate freely on Indian data poses strategic risks: "On one side, we have global LLM products which are coming to India and trading on our Indian data. Should we allow that or should we not allow that?"

Without incentives to build domestic AI capacity, he cautioned, India risks losing a "competitive advantage on something which is very critical for the next decade".

What governments must decide now

The debate now extends beyond markets to fiscal policy design. If AI accelerates economic output while shrinking payrolls, governments face a structural question: how should tax systems adapt? Shah's proposal to tax AI windfalls introduces one possible framework — using fiscal tools to stabilise labour-market disruption before it translates into a consumption shock. As productivity gains intensify and labour-market stress signals mount, AI taxation may move from theoretical debate to active policy consideration.

India–GCC Begin FTA Talks With Signing Of Joint Statement



NEW DELHI, FEB 25

Negotiations for an India–Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) free trade agreement (FTA) were formally launched through the signing of a Joint Statement in New Delhi on Thursday by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and GCC Secretary General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

Goyal said the Joint Statement, along with the Terms of Reference (ToR) signed earlier this month, marks a significant milestone in India-GCC relations.

He noted that the proposed agreement would deepen longstanding trade and cultural ties and provide

a stable framework for cooperation amid global uncertainty.

Albudaiwi said the FTA would strengthen trade and investment flows by bringing greater predictability and certainty for businesses.

Strong Trade Linkages

The GCC is India's largest trading partner bloc. Bilateral trade reached USD 178.56 billion in FY 2024–25, including exports of USD 56.87 billion and imports of USD 121.68 billion, accounting for 15.42 per cent of India's total trade. Trade has grown at an average annual rate of 15.3 per cent over the past five years.

India's key exports to the GCC include engineering

goods, rice, textiles, machinery, and gems and jewellery, while imports mainly comprise crude oil, LNG, petrochemicals and gold.

The GCC, with a combined GDP of about USD 2.3 trillion and a population of 61.5 million, is also a major investor in India, with cumulative FDI exceeding USD 31.14 billion as of September 2025.

Nearly 10 million Indians live and work in GCC countries, forming a strong people-to-people link that underpins economic ties.

The proposed FTA is expected to expand and diversify trade, enhance economic integration and further strengthen the partnership between India and the GCC.

NMDC R&D Centre Signs MoU with IIT Hyd

HYDERABAD, FEB 25

The R&D Centre of NMDC Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) to advance research and innovation in India's mineral and metals sector.

The MoU was signed by Sanjeev Sahi, Executive Director (R&D), NMDC, and the Dean (Sponsored Research & Consultancy), IITH, in the presence of Prof. B. S. Murty, Director, IITH. The partnership will focus on iron ore beneficiation, green steelmaking, alternative ironmaking using indigenous raw materials, and extraction of critical and rare earth minerals.



The collaboration will also promote research in Artificial Intelligence, IoT, Mining 4.0 and autonomous systems to support digital transformation in mining.

Amitava Mukherjee, Chairman and Managing Director, NMDC, said the

partnership reinforces the company's commitment to innovation and industry-academia collaboration in line with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The MoU comes as NMDC's R&D Centre marks 50 years of contribution to India's mineral development.

‘Mission: Save Lives on Roads’ Calls for Stricter Helmet Enforcement, Safer Infrastructure

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 25

A strong call for stricter enforcement of helmet laws, crackdown on fake manufacturers and adoption of safer road design practices marked the "Mission: Save Lives On Roads, India — An Integrated Road Safety Meet" held in the national capital.

The conference was hosted by Steelbird Hi-Tech India Pvt. Ltd. in collaboration with TRAX and CSIR-Central Road Research Institute at The Leela Palace, New Delhi. The event brought together policymakers, global experts, scientists, medical professionals and industry leaders to chart coordinated strategies for reducing road crashes and fatalities.

Delivering the keynote address, Jean Todt, UN Special Envoy for Road Safety,



urged full nationwide implementation of the two-helmet-per-motorcycle policy and called for an immediate crackdown on fake helmet manufacturers. He emphasised that strict enforcement and adherence to genuine safety standards are crucial to saving lives.

Rajeev Kapur, Managing Director of Steelbird Hi-Tech India, appealed to two-wheel-

er manufacturers to mandatorily provide two certified helmets with every motorcycle at minimal cost. He also proposed the introduction of AI-powered helmet sensors and GPS-based speed limiters to curb over-speeding, while urging authorities to shut down fake helmet units operating in the Delhi-NCR region.

Rajni Gandhi, Found-

er and General Secretary of TRAX, stressed the need to shift from traditional road safety practices to the Safe System Approach. She highlighted that powered two-wheeler users remain among the most vulnerable road users and that standardized headgear is key to reducing head injuries.

The conference featured four technical sessions focusing on safer junction design, inclusive and sustainable mobility, protection of powered two-wheeler users and best practices under the Safe System Approach. Experts underscored the importance of redesigning forgiving infrastructure, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, balancing speed with safety, and building multi-stakeholder capacity to create error-tolerant roads that save lives.

Highlighting broader structural interventions, Chouhan announced that under the 'Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission', the entire quantity of pigeon pea (arhar), urad and lentil offered by pre-registered farmers will be procured by central nodal agencies by 2030–31.

He stated that the initiative is intended to provide assured market access and

ED attaches Anil Ambani’s Rs 3,716 crore house in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached the Rs 3,716.83 crore worth posh Pali Hill residential property 'Abode' of Anil Ambani in Reliance Communications Ltd's bank fraud case, according to an official statement issued on Wednesday.

Enforcement Directorate (ED), Special Task Force, Headquarters has provisionally attached the Pali Hill residential property under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

Earlier, part of this property was attached to the extent of Rs 473.17 crore, the statement issued by the financial investigative agency said. This takes the cumulative at-



tachment of properties of the Anil Ambani Group to over Rs 15,700 crore, according to the statement. ED had initiated the investigation based on CBI's FIR under sections 120-B, 406 and 420 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and section 13(2) read with section 13(1) (d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1989, against M/s Reliance Communications Ltd (RCOM), Anil Ambani, and others. RCOM and its group companies availed

loans from domestic and foreign lenders, of which a total amount of Rs 40,185 crore is outstanding. The ED investigation has revealed that, among other assets, the Pali Hill property was aggregated into the RiseE Trust — a Private Family Trust of the members of Anil Ambani's family. This was done to make it appear as though Anil Ambani is not involved in the ownership.

The intended effect of this corporate restructuring was to ensure wealth preservation and resource generation by aggregation of the property in the RiseE trust and shield it from the personal liabilities of Anil Ambani in the form of personal guarantees extended by him to lender banks against the loans sanctioned to RCOM.

Haryana authorities nab four people in “IDFC” case

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

Haryana's State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau has arrested four people in the IDFC First Bank fraud case, officials said on Wednesday.

Of the four arrested, two are ex-IDFC First Bank employees and two are private persons who own a partnership firm, they said.

The arrests were made on February 24, 2026 evening as part of the ongoing investigation of the IDFC First Bank fraud case, they said. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Bureau registered an FIR, while the State government constituted a committee to examine the fraud.

Chouhan Pushes 18 Key Agri-Schemes

NEW DELHI, FEB 25

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday held a virtual meeting with agriculture ministers and senior officials from multiple states to review the implementation of key central schemes and procurement operations.

The discussions focused on the progress of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and the Krishi Unnati Scheme, with emphasis on timely utilisation of allocated funds before the close of the financial year on March 31.

During the meeting, the Minister conducted a state-

wise and scheme-wise assessment covering Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

He underscored that full and efficient utilisation of central funds is essential to ensure tangible benefits reach farmers at the grass-roots level, adding that delays or partial expenditure dilute the intended impact of these farmer-oriented programmes. A total of 18 schemes are currently being implemented under RKVY and Krishi Unnati.

Chouhan also reviewed procurement arrangements under the Pradhan Mantri

Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), reiterating the Centre's commitment to providing remunerative price support during the Rabi 2026 marketing season.

Under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) component of PM-AASHA, approval has been granted for the procurement of 7,61,250 metric tonnes of gram in Maharashtra, 4,13,250 metric tonnes in Gujarat, 5,80,000 metric tonnes in Madhya Pradesh and 5,53,000 metric tonnes in Rajasthan.

Similarly, approval has been accorded for procurement of 13,78,750 metric tonnes of mustard in Rajasthan and 1,33,000 metric tonnes in Gujarat. In addition,

6,01,000 metric tonnes of lentil will be procured in Madhya Pradesh during Rabi 2026.

The Minister said these measures are aimed at ensuring farmers receive the notified Minimum Support Price (MSP) and are protected from distress sales amid market volatility.

Highlighting broader structural interventions, Chouhan announced that under the 'Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission', the entire quantity of pigeon pea (arhar), urad and lentil offered by pre-registered farmers will be procured by central nodal agencies by 2030–31.

He stated that the initiative is intended to provide assured market access and

stable prices to farmers, while advancing the country's objective of achieving self-reliance in pulses production and reducing import dependence.

The Minister said assured procurement would incentivise expansion of pulses cultivation, promote crop diversification and contribute to improved soil health and nutritional security.

He emphasised that coordinated implementation of PM-AASHA, RKVY, Krishi Unnati and the Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission is designed to address price risk, productivity enhancement, infrastructure development and market access in an integrated manner.





CRICKET



'No place for discrimination': ECB



LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and all eight franchises competing in The Hundred have jointly announced that player selections for the upcoming season will be made strictly on cricketing merit, availability and team requirements, and no discrimination based on nationality will be made. London, Feb 25 (IANS) The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and all eight franchises competing in The Hundred have jointly announced that player selections for the upcoming season will be made strictly on cricketing merit, availability and team requirements, and no discrimination based on nationality will be made.

CRICKET

Rinku will join squad ahead of Zimbabwe clash



CHENNAI: India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak confirmed that middle-order batter Rinku Singh will be joining the squad on Wednesday evening ahead of must-win Super Eights clash against Zimbabwe here at the M A Chidambaram Stadium on Thursday. Rinku, who has figured in all the matches India have played so far in the ongoing T20 World, left the team hotel and travelled to Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday after his father, who is suffering from liver cancer, was admitted to a hospital and is on ventilator support. He did not attend a practice session on Tuesday. While addressing the press conference, Kotak confirmed that the batter will return to Chennai on Wednesday evening. "Rinku's father wasn't well. So he went back. I think he is coming back this evening," he said.

CRICKET

'Tried to mould my game around Dave,' says Stubbs



NEW DELHI: For Tristan Stubbs, sharing the middle with David Miller is more than just a tactical advantage for South Africa; it is the realisation of a childhood dream, and the power-hitter said that throughout his transformative years, he moulded his game around how Miller plays. Long before Stubbs emerged as one of the Proteas' most exciting finishers, he was a schoolboy in Gqeberha trying to copy the fearless strokeplay of Miller. Now 25, the hard-hitting right-hander finds himself not only performing the same finishing role for the national side but doing so alongside the man he idolised growing up.

RAVINDRA PICKS 4-27 AS NZ WIN BY 61 RUNS, KNOCK SL OUT OF TOURNAMENT

COLOMBO

Batting all-rounder Rachin Ravindra weaved a superb web with his crafty left-arm spin bowling to pick 4-27 as New Zealand crushed Sri Lanka by 61 runs to move closer in entering semi-finals of the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup. The result also meant co-hosts Sri Lanka were eliminated from the tournament in front of their home crowd at the R Premadasa Stadium on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka appeared favourites to win the Super Eights clash when they reduced New Zealand to 84/6, but Mitchell Santner and Cole McConchie staged a remarkable turnaround with a record 84-run stand for the seventh wicket. Their late assault lifted New Zealand to 168/7, with 70 runs coming in the final four overs.

Sri Lanka's chase faltered immediately as Matt Henry dismissed Pathum Nissanka on the first ball. Ravindra then took charge with his slower balls and flight to pick his career-best figures in T20Is, as New Zealand's spinners bowled 17 of the 20 overs to exploit the dry conditions.

Sri Lanka never recovered from the early blows, and saw the asking rate spiralling beyond reach to end up at 107/8, as their campaign ended in front of a disappointed home crowd.

The victory has given New Zealand a significant net run-rate boost, strengthening their position in the race for the semi-finals. Pakistan now face a daunting



task to qualify for the next stage, even if they beat Sri Lanka and New Zealand lose to England.

Matt Henry struck with the very first ball of the chase by knocking over Pathum Nissanka with a seaming delivery that breached his defence and dismissed him for a golden duck. Charith Asalanka briefly resisted before Henry returned to remove him with a miscued hoick to midwicket. With Pavan Rathnayake and

Kusal Mendis struggling against tight lines from Santner and Lockie Ferguson, Sri Lanka crawled to 20/2 in power-play, their second-lowest score in this phase in T20Is. The introduction of Rachin Ravindra deepened Sri Lanka's crisis, as he had Mendis and Rathnayake stumped in quick succession.

Captain Dasun Shanaka followed soon after, edging to backward point off Ravindra, who had Dushan Hemantha

perishing tamely. Kamindu Mendis tried to counterattack with inventive strokes in his 23-ball 21, including reverse sweeps and boundaries off McConchie and Santner.

He added urgency alongside Dunith Wellalage, but Santner dismissed him for 31, by having him caught at cow corner. At 77/7, the chase was all but over. Wellalage briefly entertained with a six and a flurry of strokes in a 23-ball 29, but Glenn

Phillips dismissed him in the final over, as New Zealand completed a resounding victory which strengthens their push to enter the semi-finals.

Brief Scores: New Zealand 168/7 in 20 overs (Mitchell Santner 47, Rachin Ravindra 32; Maheesh Theekshana 3-30, Dushmantha Chameera 3-38) beat Sri Lanka 107/8 in 20 overs (Kamindu Mendis 31, Dunith Wellalage 29; Rachin Ravindra 4-27, Matt Henry 2-3) by 61 runs



Shastri calls India's loss a 'timely shake-up' after South Africa thrashing in Super 8s

NEW DELHI

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri believes India's crushing 76-run defeat to South Africa in the Super Eights of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup could serve as a much-needed wake-up call rather than a fatal blow to their semi-final hopes.

India were dismantled at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, where Marco Jansen's stunning 4-22 spearheaded South Africa's ruthless bowling performance. Chasing 188, India collapsed to 111 all out in 18.5 overs, marking their first loss in an ICC event since the 2023 ODI World Cup final at the same venue.

Reacting to the setback on The ICC Review, Shastri struck a measured tone, suggesting the defeat may have come at the right time in the tournament. "You win 12 matches on the trot, there's bound to be an off day. And I'm glad it has come early. It might just be the shakeup India needed," Shastri said.

After being reduced to 51/5 in the chase, India never recovered as South Africa's disciplined attack, led by Jansen (4-22) and Keshav Maharaj (3-24), exposed frailties in the defending champions' batting unit. The heavy margin of defeat also left India with a net run rate of -3.8, meaning they must now win their remaining Super Eight matches against Zimbabwe and the West Indies to stay firmly in semi-final contention.

Shastri indicated that beyond the result, the manner of the defeat could trigger strategic reassessment within the camp. "It might also make them rethink their strategy as to the composition of the side going ahead. They would have learned from that last experience that they're not going to take things for granted because in this Super Eight if you lose one more (match), then you're really putting yourself under serious pressure," he added.

India had entered the clash unbeaten in the tournament, but their batting faltered on a slow black-soil surface after South Africa recovered from 20/3 to post 187/7, thanks to David Miller's 63 and Dewald Brevis' 45.

While Jasprit Bumrah's 3-15 offered a



bright spot with the ball, the chase never gained traction, with Shivam Dube's 42 proving insufficient resistance against a relentless Proteas attack.

For Shastri, however, the bigger picture remains intact, provided India responds swiftly. With the Super Eights format leaving little margin for error, another slip-up could significantly dent their semi-final aspirations, making their upcoming fixtures virtual must-win encounters.

Quality spinners have significantly influenced the T20 World Cup, particularly in matches held in India. Considering the conditions, Shastri prefers including an additional spinner to enhance variation and different attacking angles.

"I think they have to bring him (Axar Patel) back. You need that experience. I would v

say both (Patel and Sundar). Give yourself that extra option. Because on a given day, you're bound to have one bowler who's going to have an off day. Like for example, Varun Chakravarthy on Sunday. He was not at his best and he paid the price for it," he said.

"If Axar Patel is playing, he might be batting at No.8. You have got Hardik Pandya at No.5, you've got Shivam Dube at No.6, you've got Washington Sundar at No.7. Axar can go at No.5 as well. Now, if eight batters can't do the job in T20 cricket, then something's wrong, especially with that kind of firepower. Where you're missing out is you're not giving yourself that extra option of a bowler, which I think is important. Rinku Singh might have to miss out. But if he has to come in, he has to come in place of a specialist batter," Shastri concluded.



Ranji Trophy Final: J&K in command against Karnataka, reach 527/6 at stumps on Day 2

HUBLI

All-rounder Sahil Lotra stood tall with an unbeaten 57 as Jammu and Kashmir reached 527/6 at Stumps on Day 2 in the Ranji Trophy Final against the eight-time champions Karnataka here at the Hubli Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

After losing two big wickets in the second session, the Jammu and Kashmir team started the third session with caution, but Sahil soon changed gears, hitting three fours to Prasidh Krishna and Shreyas Gopal. Sahil made sure the pressure did not fall on the new batter Abid Mushtaq, who was also giving a strike to the all-rounder, and completed his fifty off 73 balls in the 150th over.

Sahil remained unbeaten at 57 with seven fours to his name, while Abid remained not out at 20 off 31 balls before play was first interrupted due to bad lighting, followed by rain, which eventually led to the match being called off. Only 11 overs were bowled in the final session, and J&K scored 49 runs.

Earlier, with the help of captain Paras Dogra's half-century,

J&K reached 473/6 at Tea despite a comeback by Karnataka in the session, with two wickets to their name. J&K had a good start to the post-lunch session with Dogra and Wadhwan continuing the momentum from the first session of the day. Wadhwan completed his fifty in the 122nd over. He reached the milestone in just 84 balls. However, he got out after scoring 70 runs.

Meanwhile, Dogra continued to take his team's score further by rotating the strike well. The 41-year-old completed his fifty off 150 balls. Karnataka finally got the breakthrough in the 143rd over when Shreyas Gopal clean bowled Dogra with a googly.

After being pushed back by J&K on day 1, Karnataka made a strong comeback at the start of day 2 as centurion Shubham Pundir was trapped by Vidyadhar Patil and got caught at mid-wicket. Abdul Samad, who was looking in good touch, also went down in the next over as Prasidh Krishna got his third wicket. But Captain Dogra led the comeback with Wadhwan as the team inches closer to a massive first innings score in the final.

Australia to host Bangladesh for Test series after 23 years in August

SYDNEY

Australia will host Bangladesh for a Test series for the first time since 2003, from August 13- 22, Cricket Australia said on Wednesday. The opening Test will commence on August 13 at Marrara Stadium in Darwin. It will be the first time a Test has been held in Darwin since Australia hosted Sri Lanka in 2004.



Mackay will host a Test for the first time, becoming the 12th venue to do so in Australia.

Bangladesh have not played Australia in long-form cricket since notching their maiden Test win over them in Dhaka in 2017. The series will be part of the World Test Championship 2025 to 27 cycle, in which Australia are leading with seven wins in eight matches.

"We're delighted to bring Test cricket to northern Australia and look forward to a fantastic series against Bangladesh. "It is no secret the international calendar is now crowded and we are fortunate to have world class facilities available in August ensuring we have another window for Test cricket outside summer," Cricket Australia chief executive Todd Greenberg said. "Marrara Stadium and Great Barrier Reef Arena have been outstanding venues for international cricket in recent seasons," he added. After the Bangladesh series, Australia will move to South Africa for a three-match Test series. Pat Cummins' team will then host New Zealand for four match test series.

High-Level Review by DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy on Arrangements for All India Police Football Championship

HYDERABAD

State Director General of Police (DGP) Shri B. Shivadhar Reddy conducted a high-level review on Wednesday regarding the arrangements for the 74th "B.N. Mullik Memorial All India Police Football Championship-2026", which is being hosted by the Telangana Police Department.

The championship will be held in Hyderabad from March 23 to April 5 next month. The DGP reviewed the preparations for the major sporting event and instructed officials to take meticulous measures to ensure that police football players from various states across the country, as well as personnel from Central Armed Police Forces, do not face any inconvenience.

He stated that police football players from across India will participate



in the tournament and informed that special reception teams have been arranged at Secunderabad, Nampally, and Kacheguda railway stations, as

well as at Shamshabad Airport, to welcome the participants.

The DGP directed that each team be assigned a liaison officer proficient

in Hindi and English. These liaison officers will oversee all responsibilities from the teams' arrival until their departure. He further informed that special buses will be arranged for the transportation of players, and liaison officers will also look after their needs at the accommodation venues.

For this mega event, responsibilities such as designing a dedicated website, social media promotions, logo, mascot, T-shirts, and medals have been entrusted to Imageil Advertising Agency.

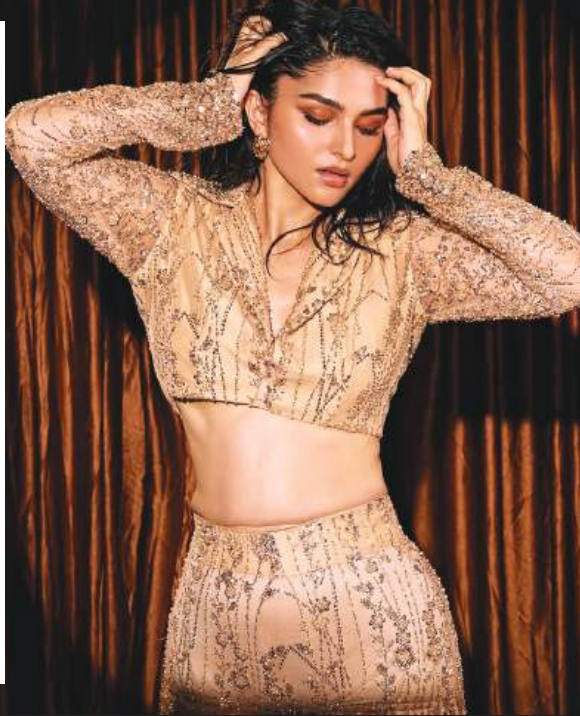
The review meeting was attended by TGPA Director Abhilasha Bisht, Additional DGPs Mahesh M. Bhagwat, Anil Kumar, and Sanjay Kumar Jain; Commissioners of Police Avinash Mohanty and Dr. M. Ramesh; IGS Gajarao Bhupal and Ramesh Naidu; Additional CP Tafseer Iqbal, and other senior officials.



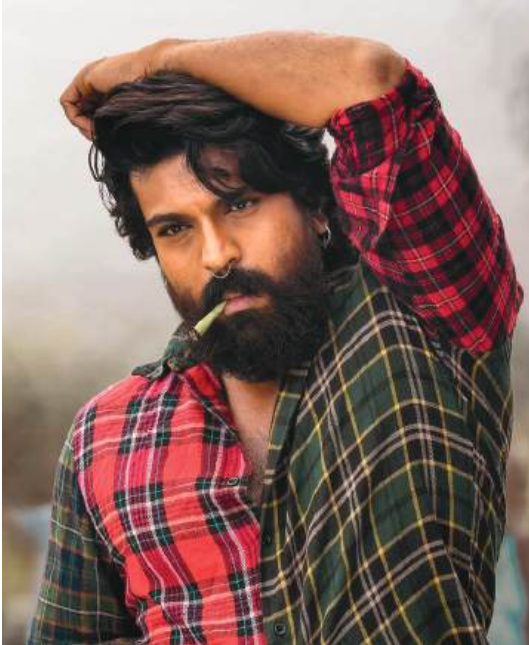
FILM FLOPPED, BUT THE
HEROINE IS SUPER HIT

Despite Funky turning out to be a flop, heroine Kayadu Lohar continues to receive promising opportunities in Telugu cinema.

She made her Telugu debut in 2022 with Al-luri alongside Sree Vishnu, and interestingly her next straight Telugu release after that was Funky. Though the film did not perform well at the box office, it has not affected her prospects in the industry. At present, Kayadu Lohar has signed two new films. The details of these projects are yet to be officially announced, but they are said to offer her good scope for performance. What works in her favour is that she has already made her presence felt not only in Telugu but also in Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil films, which has helped her gain wider recognition. She is now reportedly demanding a remuneration of Rs 1 Cr per film. Even after a setback, commanding such a fee reflects the positive buzz around her and the confidence filmmakers have in her screen appeal and future potential.



Chiranjeevi's Feedback
on Peddi Sparks Curiosity?



If industry sources are to be believed, megastar Chiranjeevi has watched Peddi and shared his feedback with the film's team. Ram Charan is currently busy with the upcoming project, directed by Buchi Babu Sana, which is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on April 30, 2026.

With the film nearing completion, its first glimpse and the debut song Chikiri have already raised expectations. Audiences are now eagerly waiting for the second single. Amid this growing buzz, reports suggest that Chiranjeevi recently watched the film and expressed his overall satisfaction, while also recommending a few changes in certain scenes.

This has sparked curiosity within industry circles about whether director Buchi Babu Sana will retain those portions as they are or rework them with minor reshoots based on the feedback. It is also known that filmmaker Sukumar is closely overseeing the project, mentoring his protégé Buchi Babu Sana through the final stages of Peddi.

The film features Janhvi Kapoor as the female lead, with music composed by A.R. Rahman. Shivarajkumar, Divyenndu Sharma and Jagapathi Babu play key roles in the film.

According to a source, Chiranjeevi has traditionally been involved in listening to Ram Charan's scripts and offering inputs to strengthen the narrative. "Earlier, he would hear the scripts in detail and suggest improvements aimed at making them more impactful. Now, with his own acting commitments keeping him busy, he prefers to watch his son's films after completion and share suggestions, if any. The team takes note of his feedback," the source adds. While there is no official confirmation from the makers, the development has further added to the anticipation surrounding Peddi.



The
Bluff
Review

PRIYANKA CHOPRA'S BLOODY TURN SAVES
THIS PIRATE SAGA FROM SHIPWRECK

Set against the sweeping backdrop of the 19th century, The Bluff sails in waters not entirely unfamiliar to fans of Pirates of the Caribbean, yet it charts a far grittier course. Where the latter thrives on fantasy, myth and supernatural lore, this Frank E. Flowers directorial leans into survival, vengeance and the psychological toll of a violent past.

The film unfolds amid battered coastlines, storm-lashed seas and the constant roar of swirling waves. At its heart is Er-cell, played by Priyanka with her husband, (Ismael Cruz Córdova), Isaac (Vedanten Naidoo), to bury a past soaked in much like memory, does not forget.

Trouble resurfaces when her old nemesis, Captain Connor (Karl Urban), tracks her down after capturing her husband's ship. Years ago, Er-cell stabbed Connor and vanished with his gold, leaving behind humiliation and fury. Now, he returns with vengeance burning brighter than ever. As timelines shift between past and present, the film slowly unveils



Ercell's former identity and the weight she carries. When Connor threatens her family, she is forced to resurrect the very persona she tried to lay to rest.

The narrative attempts to move beyond a straightforward action-adventure template. Beneath the sword fights and sea battles lies a story about a mother determined to protect her child and preserve the fragile peace she has built. The emotional core rests in Ercell's transformation from ruthless pirate to fiercely protective parent. When young Isaac fears the consequences of the violence around them, Ercell reassures him with chilling resolve: those who came seeking "Bloody Mary" will indeed find her.

Chopra's performance anchors the film. She throws herself into the physically demanding role, executing hand-to-hand combat and sword-fighting sequences with intensity. The action choreography is smooth yet brutal, each bruise and cut carrying narrative weight. Unlike her earlier Hollywood outing in Quantico, where the espionage-driven stunts

felt stylized, The Bluff embraces a more visceral tone. The violence here is raw, immediate and often unforgiving.

Karl Urban's Connor serves as a formidable adversary, his portrayal steeped in bitterness and obsession. The climactic confrontation between him and Ercell crackles with tension, delivering one of the film's most gripping sequences. Yet despite the spectacle, the underlying plot remains relatively thin. The treasure-hunt trope and revenge arc offer limited novelty, and the emotional beats occasionally feel rushed, especially as the story barrels toward its conclusion.

The colonial-era settings lend the film a rugged authenticity, reinforcing its harsh world of shifting loyalties and moral ambiguity. A subplot involving Ercell's sister-in-law, Elisabeth Bodden (Safia Oakley-Green), discovering a logbook detailing Ercell's violent past adds a touch of introspection — and even brief humor. When Elisabeth questions whether her brother knew about Ercell's former life, Ercell quips that he certainly did not marry her for her cooking.

What ultimately distinguishes The Bluff is its decision to center a female pirate in a genre traditionally dominated by men. Ercell is neither romanticized nor softened; she is battle-hardened, flawed and unapologetically fierce. While the screenplay may falter in layering its themes more deeply, the film succeeds in delivering adrenaline-fueled thrills and a compelling central performance.

The Bluff demands patience through its slower emotional stretches, but it rewards viewers with high-stakes action and a commanding turn from Priyanka Chopra. It may not recreate the fantastical escapism of Pirates of the Caribbean, yet it occupies a neighboring shoreline — darker, bloodier and more grounded in the cost of survival.

By Aishu Choudhary |
Author & Contemporary Writer

INDORE: In a fast-moving world where success is often measured by speed and visibility, a quieter emotional shift is taking place among today's youth. Behind achievements, deadlines, and digital lives, many young individuals are learning to navigate a deeper journey — understanding their emotions and redefining what true strength means.

Over the past decade, conversations around mental well-being have grown stronger, yet emotional honesty remains a challenge. Young people are encouraged to stay productive and resilient, but very few spaces exist where they can pause and reflect without judgment. Contemporary storytelling has slowly begun to fill this gap, offering readers narratives that mirror real struggles rather than idealized perfection.

Modern readers are increasingly drawn to authenticity. Instead of dramatic, larger-than-life heroes, they seek stories grounded in vulnerability and self-discovery. This shift reflects a cultural change where emotional awareness is becoming a form of quiet courage. Literature today is not just entertainment; it has become a bridge connecting individuals through shared experiences of resilience, identity, and growth.

For many writers, storytelling is evolving into a space of reflection rather than performance. Writing allows emotions to exist without pressure, creating a dialogue between the author and the reader that feels personal and honest. Through contemporary fiction and reflective narratives, authors are exploring themes of healing, personal boundaries, and inner strength — subjects that resonate strongly with a generation searching for meaning beyond external validation.

Another noticeable transformation is the way creativity blends with healing. Music, poetry, and fiction are no longer viewed simply as artistic expressions; they are tools through which individuals process complex feelings. Readers often find comfort in stories that acknowledge silence, confusion, and gradual self-understanding. These narratives remind them that growth does not always appear dramatic — sometimes it happens quietly, in moments of reflection.

However, the modern digital landscape also brings challenges. Social media creates constant comparison, making personal journeys feel inadequate or invisible. Many young people struggle to balance authenticity with the pressure to appear successful. Honest writing, therefore, becomes essential — it allows readers to recognize that healing is not a straight path and that emotional setbacks are part of being human.

As society continues to evolve, the role of writers is expanding beyond storytelling. Contemporary authors are shaping spaces where readers can pause, reflect, and rediscover their emotional voice. By focusing on genuine experiences rather than perfection, literature encourages individuals to embrace vulnerability as a source of strength.

In the end, the emotional journey of today's youth is not defined by weakness but by awareness. Choosing to feel deeply, set boundaries, and grow at one's own pace reflects a new understanding of resilience. Healing is no longer seen as a distant goal — it is an ongoing process lived through everyday moments.

Through reflective writing and honest storytelling, voices that were once silent are slowly being heard again. And perhaps, in that quiet transformation, lies the true power of contemporary expression — a reminder that strength does not always need to be loud to be meaningful.

AISHU CHOUDHARY:
THE QUIET
STRENGTH OF
HEALING IN
MODERN YOUTH

