



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

HYDERABAD • SATURDAY • DECEMBER 27, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION



PRESIDENT CONFERS PM RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR ON 20 CHILDREN

Cricketing sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi (pic), singer Esther Laldhawmi Hanamate, and judoka Yogita Mandavi among 20 awarded on Friday

CHAMPIONS ACROSS SIX FIELDS AWARDED

The award is in recognition of exceptional achievements in the fields of bravery, social service, environment, sports, art & culture and science & technology. President Murmu said it is owing to talented children such as Vaka Lakshmi Pragnika that India is considered a chess powerhouse. Ajay Raj and Mohammed Sidan P, who saved lives of others, were feted too



President Droupadi Murmu confers the award on ten-year-old Shravan Singh, who delivered water and milk to soldiers during Op Sindoor

OF X FACTOR, AND THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

■ Cricketer Vaibhav Suryavanshi was feted for making "a name for himself in a highly competitive sport", the President said
■ Nine-year-old Coimbatore resident Vyoma Priya, awarded posthumously, had lost her life while trying to save a six-year-old during an electrical accident in their gated community park | P7



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AWARDEES AMONG THE 20 ARE SPORTSPERSONS

VISA HASSLE

India presses US to resolve H-1B delay

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA on Friday said it has taken up with the US the issue of delays, cancellations and difficulties in scheduling H-1B visa appointments amid mounting concerns that recent regulatory changes have affected thousands of Indian nationals. "The Government of India has received several representations from Indian nationals who are facing delays or problems with the rescheduling of their visa appointments," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

"While we do understand that visa-related issues pertain

to the sovereign domain of any country, we have flagged these issues and concerns of our nationals to the US side, both in Delhi and in Washington."

The latest disruptions follow a series of policy changes announced by Washington, including a steep fee of \$100,000 for first-time H-1B visa applicants and a move away from the random lottery system towards prioritising applicants with higher skills.

From December 15, the US also expanded social media vetting to all H-1B and H-4 visa applicants, a step that has led to widespread appointment cancellations and rescheduling months later.

Jaiswal said India is actively engaging with US to address the issues faced by Indians.

The changes apply to H-1B visas, which allow US firms to employ foreign professionals in specialised fields such as technology, engineering and medicine, as well as H-4 visas issued to dependents.

Reports say thousands of Indians have been affected with several people who travelled to India specifically to renew their visas being stranded.



A hotel owner in West Bengal's Siliguri pastes a notice banning Bangladeshis | P11

MEA: Relentless attack on B'desh Hindus worrying

Expresses deep concern over unremitting hostilities against minorities in the country



Randhir Jaiswal, MEA spokesman

Unremitting hostilities against the minorities in Bangladesh is a matter of grave concern

— MEA



2,900 cases of violence

The MEA said that over 2,900 incidents of violence against minorities, including cases of killings, arsons, land grab have been reported during the tenure of the interim government

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA on Friday expressed deep concern about the "unremitting hostilities" against Hindus in Bangladesh and condemned attempts to dismiss the continuing violence against religious minorities as media exaggeration or political violence.

New Delhi also reacted cautiously to the return of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tarique Rahman to Dhaka after 17 years of exile, stressing that the development should be viewed in the context of ensuring inclusive polls.

"The unremitting hostilities against the minorities in Bangladesh including Hindus, Christians and Buddhists are a matter of grave concern. We condemn the recent killing of a Hindu youth in Bangladesh and expect that the perpetrators of the crime will be brought to justice," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

The comments came in the wake of a string of incidents targeting religious minorities in Bangladesh amid a rapidly evolving political landscape following the ouster of former PM Sheikh Hasina.

Two Hindu men were lynched in two separate incidents in a span of a week. Jaiswal said India is closely monitoring the developments across the border and underlined that protection of minorities is integral to democratic credibility.

Referring to the lynching of Dipu Chandra Das on December 18, Jaiswal said New Delhi has unequivocally condemned the incident and sought swift accountability. On the killing of another Hindu man, Amrit Mondal, on December 24, Jaiswal appeared to link it to hostilities towards minorities.

When asked about BNP's acting chairman Rahman's return, Jaiswal struck a measured note, saying it should be seen in the context of ensuring inclusive elections. He reiterated India's stand that the upcoming elections must be free, fair, and inclusive but refrained from commenting on Bangladesh's internal political rivalries.

Facelift at Medaram, with roots grounded

B KARTHEEK @ Mulugu

WITH preparations gathering pace ahead of the biennial Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara, Asia's largest tribal congregation, extensive development works are nearing completion at Medaram in Mulugu district. The jatara, which traces its origins to the medieval period, is scheduled to start on January 28 amid dense forests.

The state government has taken up works with an outlay of over ₹250 crore to give the historic Adivasi place of worship a facelift that blends history, tribal faith and modern infrastructure, while respecting Adivasi customs and offering a completely new experience to devotees. Officials said the development works are almost complete, at least in the core area.



The newly constructed stone altars bedecked with flowers even as devotees offer prayers on Friday, much ahead of the biennial jatara | SRI LOGANATHAN VELMURUGAN

Utmost care has been taken in the design of the Sammakka, Saralamma, Govinda Raju and Pagiddida Raju Gaddelu. Symbols of bamboo, the Sonodi bird, the white horse representing

tribal aristocracy, peacock, holy dots symbolising gotras and Adivasi dances have been inscribed on towering pillars carved out of single gigantic stones. The stone installations nar-

FLOATING TO THE TEMPLE

With about a month to go for the Jatara, devotees have already begun thronging the Adivasi place of worship. The long weekend may have helped devotees offer special prayers, with roads leading to Medaram resembling Vanapravesham — a local tradition symbolising a day-long forest dwelling. An elder of a family said they visit the temple every year, but this time they arrived much earlier to the jatara to offer jaggery, locally referred to as gold. "This year it is different as the development works are being taken up. The premises are also widened," said the devotee

rate the legend through symbolic representations, with around 7,000 such symbols engraved across 31 stone installations in and around the sacred platforms. **CONTINUED ON P2**

PIL IN DELHI HC TO CUT GST FOR AIR PURIFIERS

STAY OFF LEGISLATIVE TURF: GOVT ON GST NUDGE

UDAYAN KISHORE @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Friday opposed a PIL seeking reduced air purifier rates, telling the Delhi High Court that judicial intervention would violate the principle of 'separation of powers.'

"This will open up a Pandora's box," the Centre told a vacation bench of justices Vikas Mahajan and Vinod Kumar after the court questioned why the rates couldn't be brought "within reach of the common man".

Additional Solicitor General N Venkataraman, for the Centre, said there was already a legislative process involving parliamentary standing committee reports and GST Council deliberations.

"How can this process be scuttled through a court process?" he asked.

On the court's earlier sug-



Key demands of the PIL

The petitioner submitted that on medical devices, GST was five per cent whereas it was 18 per cent for air purifiers. He sought a direction to authorities to charge five per cent on air purifiers as well considering the capital's pollution crisis



gestion for a virtual GST Council meeting given Delhi's air pollution crisis, the Centre said it was "not possible" as regulations require physical presence of all members.

"This is not a PIL at all. GST is only a ruse...We are scared from the constitutional perspective. It is doctrine of separation of powers," the ASG said, adding the Centre couldn't commit to a Council meeting date. The bench had noted that

EXPRESS READ

3-year-old twins die in AC compressor blast

Hyderabad: A suspected AC compressor blast claimed the lives of a pair of 3-year-old twins in Sundarnagar, Kachiguda on Friday. The deceased were identified as Abdul Rahman and Abdul Rahim. Police said that Abdul Rahman sustained 90% burn injuries in the blast while Abdul Rahim succumbed to asphyxiation | P2

TAPGATE

CASE A-1 PRABHAKAR RAO RELEASED BY SIT AFTER QUESTIONING | P2

Sajjanar vows 'zero-drugs' policy for NY celebrations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

THE Hyderabad city police have moved to enforce a hard-line zero-drugs regime ahead of New Year's Eve, signalling stepped-up surveillance, enforcement and coordinated action across the city.

Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar on Friday ordered immediate deployment of special surveillance teams at pubs, hotels, restaurants and event venues, while directing round-the-clock monitoring of individuals booked in drug-related cases over the past two years.

Chairing a coordination meeting at the Integrated Command and Control Centre in Banjara Hills, Sajjanar instructed senior officers and field staff to maintain constant vigilance throughout the New Year period. He said enforcement would be layered and sustained, involving the Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing (H-NEW), the Task Force, the Special Branch and local police units.

Officials have been told to



Our objective is straightforward: no drug-related cases during New Year celebrations in Hyderabad

VC Sajjanar, Hyderabad CP

update databases of known peddlers and consumers and to track the movement of individuals entering Hyderabad specifically for New Year celebrations. The focus, Sajjanar said, would be on prevention as much as detection.

Police checks will not be limited to public venues. Service apartments, hostels and other private gathering spaces will also come under scrutiny to deter illegal activity during celebrations.

The city police have fixed 1 am as the closing time for New Year events at pubs, hotels and restaurants. Sajjanar warned that violations would invite immediate action. "If any illegal activity is found, licences will be cancelled without delay," he said.

Check-posts and barricades will be reinforced at key locations, including Maitrivanam, Necklace Road, Tank Bund and KBR Park, to regulate crowd movement and maintain order. While enforcement would be firm, Sajjanar said efforts would be made to minimise inconvenience to the public.

Long arm of law yet to reach hoaxers

SIDDHARDHA GATTIMI @ Hyderabad

THE Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has received more than 30 hoax bomb threat emails over the past three months, but the police have been unable to identify the source, despite multiple investigations.

While six arrests were made this year, the location of those behind the flurry of hoax emails still unknown. The police have made limited progress as far as zeroing in on the hoaxers is concerned.

Shamshabad Deputy Commissioner of Police B Rajesh said six hoaxers were traced



and arrested in Gujarat, while acknowledging that several other complaints remain unresolved.

Senior police officials said tracing the origin of the emails has proved difficult, largely due to the use of anonymous, privacy-focused email services.

Parents kill Class XI girl in love with married man

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Karimnagar

A Class XI student was allegedly murdered by her parents in Shivarampalli village of Saidapur mandal in Karimnagar district, following objections to her relationship with a married man from the same village.

The victim, Archana (16), was found dead under suspicious circumstances on November 16. Her father, Reddy Raju, initially lodged a complaint

stating that she had died by suicide. However, following a detailed investigation, police concluded that she had been murdered.

Huzurabad Assistant Commissioner of Police V Madhavi said the police suspected foul play and reopened the case. During the probe, it emerged that Archana was in a relationship with Anil, who is married. Despite repeated warnings and scolding by her



parents, she continued the relationship. Police said the parents viewed the matter as an issue of family honour.

According to investigators, on the night of November 15, after Archana went to sleep, her parents allegedly forced her to consume poison. When she was still alive, her father allegedly strangled her. During interrogation, Reddy Raju confessed to the crime. The case, initially registered as

a suspicious death, was later altered to murder.

The Saidapur police arrested both parents, Reddy Raju and Lavanya, and produced them before a magistrate, who remanded them to judicial custody.

Meanwhile, Archana's sister, Sravanti, lodged a complaint against Anil, alleging that his relationship with the girl led to her death. Based on the complaint, the police registered a POCSO case against Anil on Friday, ACP Madhavi said.

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

CEO among three held for gang-rape in moving car

THREE persons, including the CEO of a private IT company, have been arrested in connection with the alleged gang-rape of the firm's female manager in a moving car after a birthday party in Udaipur.

Police said a local court on Thursday sent the accused to four-day police custody. They identified the accused as GKM IT Pvt Ltd's owner and CEO, Jitesh Sisodia, a senior female executive of the firm and her husband Gaurav Sirohi.

The horrific incident allegedly took place on December 20, while the complaint was lodged on December 23.

As per the FIR, the alleged assault followed a birthday and New Year's party organised by the CEO at a hotel in Udaipur. The victim said she reached the hotel around 9 pm. The CEO, the senior female executive and her husband were also present. The party reportedly continued till 1.30 am.

The victim said when she began feeling unwell late at night, the senior female executive offered to drop her home. Around 1.45 am, they left the hotel in the victim's car. The executive's husband and the CEO were present in the vehicle as well.

Midway during the journey, the accused allegedly purchased an intoxicant and forced the victim to consume it, following which she passed out. When she partially regained consciousness, she saw the CEO sexually assaulting her in the moving car, the victim said in her statement.

She alleged that despite her repeated pleas, the accused dropped her home only around 5 am. The victim told the police that her car's dashcam recorded audio and video of the entire incident. The footage allegedly shows the presence and involvement of all three accused. Police officials are examining the footage.

7 SUMMITS LATER, TEEN EARNS BAL PURASKAR

Award stands as recognition of Vishwanath's years of disciplined training

KHYATI SHAH @ Hyderabad

A 16-year-old from Hyderabad, Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti, has been awarded the Bal Puraskar Award for becoming the youngest Indian and the second youngest person in the world to complete the demanding 7 Summits challenge, which involves scaling the highest peak on each of the seven continents.

The award comes after Vishwanath successfully summited Mount Everest (8,848 metres) on May 26, marking the culmination of a journey shaped by years of physical training, mental resilience and determination.

Everest was the most challenging climb of his mountaineering career and completed his record-setting expedition.

Expressing pride in his achievement, Vishwanath's mother Laxmi told TNIE, "We are so proud to see our child excel at what he loves most. After facing all the physical and mental challenges on his journey to the peaks, he is now being recognised by the world. Karthikey was a lazy kid initially and seeing him grow into this achievement makes us extremely proud."

Vishwanath was guided during his climbs by Bharath and Lt Romil Barthwal, a veteran of the Indian Army and an experienced mountaineer. Praising his young protégé, Barthwal



al said, "Vishwanath's achievement is more than a mountaineering milestone. It reflects his character-humility, strength, and unshakable determination. Guiding him has been a privilege. He shows what young minds can accomplish with discipline, purpose, and the right attitude."

Bharath, who has trained Vishwanath for the past five years, said, "We have been training Karthikey for five years. Watching him grow into India's youngest climber to summit all seven peaks and now receive this award has been incredibly special. His focus and commitment have only grown stronger over time."

The peaks conquered by Vishwanath include Mount Everest in Asia (8,848 m / 29,029 ft), Aconcagua in South America (6,961 m / 22,838 ft), Denali in North America (6,190 m / 20,310 ft), Kilimanjaro in Africa (5,895 m / 19,341 ft), Mount Elbrus in Europe (5,642 m / 18,510 ft), Mount Vinson in Antarctica (4,892 m / 16,050 ft) and Mount Kosciuszko in Australia (2,228 m / 7,310 ft).

3-yr-old twins die in AC compressor blast

CHITHALURI REVANTH @ Hyderabad

WHAT began as an ordinary afternoon turned tragic within minutes. Two three-year-old twins died after a blaze engulfed their house in Sundar-nagar, Kachiguda, on Friday evening, in an incident suspected to have been triggered by an AC compressor blast.

The deceased were identified as Abdul Rehman and Abdul Rahim. Police said Rehman suffered over 90% burn injuries,

while Rahim sustained severe burns and inhaled smoke. He succumbed while undergoing treatment at Osmania Hospital.

Kachiguda SI N Krishna Veni said the twins' parents, Saifuddin Khadri and his wife Firdousi, have four children, including the twins and two others who are below 10 years of age. At the time of the incident, all four children were at home, with the twins asleep inside the house.



Speaking to TNIE, Kachiguda ACP Y Harish Kumar said that around 3.30 pm, the two children who were awake noticed sparks from the AC unit. They immediately came out and alerted their parents. After informing their mother and other elders, the family noticed a massive fire inside the house. They managed to pull the twins out, but both had already sustained critical injuries. Rehman had suffered about 90% burns,

while Rahim had burn injuries along with smoke inhalation. Saifuddin Khadri works as a Muthavali, police said.

An official from the fire department told TNIE that by the time a fire tender from the Gowliguda fire station reached the spot, one child had already died and the flames had been doused with the help of neighbours.

Kachiguda police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.



Journalists to stage dharna against GO 252

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Khammam

JOURNALISTS have called for a strong protest demanding amendments to Government Order (GO) No. 252 related to the issuance of new accreditations.

A dharna has been announced in front of the Khammam Collector's Office on the 27th, urging journalists to participate in large numbers and make the protest a success.

Journalist unions and media representatives alleged that the government is attempting to reduce the number of accreditations, calling it a conspiracy against journalists. They appealed to journalists to unite and fight for the protection of their rights.

While appreciating the government for introducing GO No. 252 after coming to power with a commitment to democratic values and press freedom in Telangana, journalists expressed serious concern over certain provisions in the order.

They warned that nearly 10,000 journalists across the state who currently hold accreditations are at risk of losing them due to the revised norms.

Govt nod needed for union activity at TGSRTC: MD

ENS @ Hyderabad

RESTORATION of union at Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) is not within the management's purview, but union activities would be allowed with government approval, said managing director Y Nagi Reddy.

He was speaking to leaders of the TGSRTC Joint Action Committee (JAC), who highlighted long-pending issues faced by RTC employees. Nagi Reddy assured measures to ease workload, rationalise kilometres on low-occupancy routes, and seek board approval to raise the age limit for compassionate appointments to 44 years.

A delegation led by JAC chairman Eeduru Venkanna, with vice-chairman M Thomas Reddy and co-conveners K Yadaiah and S Suresh, submitted a memorandum outlining 22 demands. The leaders said discussions focused on key concerns, including wage revisions and employee welfare.

Most hoax threats sent to RGIA customer support

FROM PAGE 1

Most of the threat emails were sent to RGIA's customer support email ID, automatically triggering security alerts and emergency response protocols at the airport. However, repeated activation of these procedures has not translated into proportionate progress in identifying those responsible.

In August, police arrested a woman from Chennai in Ahmedabad for allegedly sending two hoax threat emails to RGIA following a dispute with her partner. She was traced after investigators issued a Prisoner Transit Warrant. Police

said she had sent the emails in her boyfriend's name after the relationship ended.

In an earlier case in 2017, a 32-year-old Hyderabad-based travel agent was arrested for sending a hoax plane hijack email that led to heightened security at airports in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai. Police said he had sent the email to Mumbai police after he was unable to afford a trip suggested by his girlfriend.

Despite these isolated arrests, police admit that most recent hoax threats remain unresolved, highlighting continuing gaps in tracking and preventing such emails.

MCK steps up bio-mining at dumping yard

NAVEEN KUMAR TALLAM @ Karimnagar

THE Municipal Corporation of Karimnagar (MCK) has decided to intensify bio-mining operations at the city's dumping yard, following long-standing complaints from residents over smoke, fires and water contamination.

According to MCK officials, plans are in place to process about 1,200 metric tonnes of waste per day. The accumulated garbage will be converted into

fine dust and Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF). Vermi-compost units have also been activated at the SRR Government Degree College premises, with more composting centres proposed.

Garbage has been accumulating at the dumping yard for over three decades, forming a mound of nearly three lakh metric tonnes. Fires at the site have been frequent, releasing smoke that affected nearby residential areas and disrupted traffic on Rajiv Rahadari. MCK Commissioner Praful

Desai told TNIE that a bio-mining unit with a capacity of 400 metric tonnes per day is currently operational, while an additional unit with a capacity of 800 metric tonnes per day is scheduled to begin operations in January 2026. Tenders under the Swachh Bharat Mission have been finalised to accelerate the work.

"We have directed the agency to intensify operations and complete the work at the earliest. We expect the entire garbage heap to be cleared within

Bhadrachalam lodge tariffs surge amid holiday rush

B SATYANARAYANA REDDY @ Khammam

TARIFFS for rooms in private lodges in Bhadrachalam have spiked sharply amid a surge in pilgrims and tourists, causing difficulties for devotees visiting the town to seek darshan of Lord Rama.

With consecutive holidays leading to a heavy influx of visitors, private lodges are allegedly charging between ₹5,000

and ₹6,000 per day per room, while smaller lodges are reportedly demanding ₹3,000 to ₹4,000. During normal periods, room rents range between ₹700 and ₹1,000.

As temple, government and official accommodation facilities are fully occupied, devotees have been forced to depend on private lodges. Many pilgrims, particularly from poor and middle-income

groups, have said the high tariffs have made it difficult to find affordable lodging.

K Naga Raju, a devotee from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, said that he was taken aback by the room charges. He said that after reaching Bhadrachalam during the holidays for darshan, lodge operators quoted rates far higher than expected.

Devotees and local residents

USING THE REFUSE

Light combustible materials such as plastics, cloth and paper will be used as fuel in cement factories and power plants to reduce coal consumption. Fine dust generated from decomposed organic waste will be used for landfilling, road sub-base works and low-lying areas

six months," he said. Officials said full-scale bio-mining and vermi-composting are expected to address the recurring fire and smoke issues.

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHIS
27th December: Advice for a Saturday Moon Change
Puffer fish puff, peacocks fan and people at parties posture and sparkle, because making oneself bigger seems like the impressive, attractive thing to do. And with the lunar move from Pisces to competitive Aries, this tactic can even discourage the opposition. Still, approach with humor; the most attractive thing of all is not taking oneself too seriously.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
There's a time to show your skills, a time to downplay them and wisdom in knowing which way to take things. Downplaying is easy. But are you ready to "show and tell"? Because your moment is coming.

TAURUS (Apr 20 - May 20)
Your heart's ambition has been hard to make progress with inside a chaotic stretch of life. But do keep the flame alive. This is an aim for the long haul. Forget about short-term heroics and just keep coming back.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)
Good relationships, whether with people, places, projects or roles, are going to take effort. But they shouldn't feel like constant work. Give yourself some grace. You're dealing with a complicated situation.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
Instead of pining for distant good fortune, you'll pay closer attention to what's happening around you. The invitations, ideas, people and opportunities crossing your path are just the collaboration you need. It's not "out there"; it's in your realm.

LEO (July 23 - Aug 22)
It comes up today how it might have been nice to have certain opportunities others take for granted. But don't let that diminish the rare, defining experiences that are all yours. You're someone extraordinary despite, or maybe because of, them.

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sept 22)
You can't change the number of hours there are in a day, but you can use them well. And today, with a mix of instinct and planning, you can use them even better than you have been. Efficiency is your middle name.

LIBRA (Sept 23 - Oct 23)
Big moments of intuition are rare. More often intuition comes in microdoses, tiny pangs and pings alerting you to a moment or detail before you consciously understand why it will be important. Today brings three such signals.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 21)
You'll say yes to simplicity when you say no to superfinesses. Your closet becomes functional when you eliminate what you don't wear. Your schedule eases when you decline social clutter. Your emotions stabilize when you stop engaging with takers. Less is more.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
You are with yourself 24/7. Any relationship on earth with that kind of schedule is bound to have its tense moments. Expect fluctuations of self-esteem, and roll with them, knowing that you deserve loads of kindness. You're doing great.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
You have a bit of competition. Your opponent may be worthy, but the game itself is not. You could walk away, come to a deal or give in. Stay flexible and humble, and you just may end up with everything.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 18)
When you smile, you feel happier. Whether you make up reasons or have no reason at all, either way it just works. It's not about faking it until you make it. It's letting go of the petty ideas keeping you from joy.

PISCES (Feb 19 - Mar 20)
You'll pick up undercurrents of a situation -- the real feeling beneath the surface. Because of this, you'll understand someone without them having to say much. You'll also have the right response at the right moment.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-30.

Crossword puzzle clues and solutions.

Jumble puzzle grid and clues.

GHMC EXPANSION

MEGALOPOLIS HYD EYES GREAT FUTURE

12 zones to ensure better administration and improved service delivery to citizens

S BACHAN JEET SINGH @ Hyderabad

HYDERABAD has officially stepped into the league of megalopolis with the expansion of the territorial jurisdiction of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). With the merger of seven municipal corporations and 20 municipalities, the state government has given final approval for the reorganisation of GHMC into 12 zones and 60 circles.

The erstwhile GHMC, which was spread across 650 square kilometres with six zones, 30 circles and 150 wards, has now expanded to 300 wards covering nearly 2,000 square kilometres. The reorganisation has positioned GHMC as India's largest municipal corporation in terms of both area and population, giving Hyderabad renewed national and international recognition as a major metropolitan centre.

GHMC officials said the state government's move to bring multiple urban local bodies under a single municipal authority is being seen as a landmark step to address the challenges of rapid urbanisation through integrated governance and long-term planning. Following the merger of the urban local bodies, the existing administrative structure witnessed a substantial increase in workload.

It has been stated that the population of GHMC now exceeds 1.34 crore, necessitating further decentralisation to ensure uniform administration, improved service delivery and

GHMC REORGANISATION

Total zones: 12

Total circles: 60

Total wards: 300

Area covered: ~2,000 sq km

Population: Over 1.34 crore

NEW ZONES ADDED

Malkajgiri, Uppal, Shamshabad, Rajendranagar, Golconda, Quthbullapur

Zone with most circles: Quthbullapur (7)

Zones with least circles: LB Nagar, Shamshabad, Kukatpally (4 each)

greater convenience to the public. Along with the existing zones — Serilingampally, Kukatpally, Secunderabad, Khairatabad, Charminar and LB Nagar — six new zones have been created: Malkajgiri, Uppal, Shamshabad, Rajendranagar, Golconda and Quthbullapur.

Officials noted that the expanded GHMC framework provides the scale and capacity required to manage growth in a more systematic and sustainable manner. Among the zones, Quthbullapur has the highest number of circles at seven, followed by Rajendranagar and Uppal with six each. LB Nagar, Shamshabad and Kukatpally zones have the least number of circles, with four each.

GHMC to launch AI chatbot to deliver civic services

S BACHAN JEET SINGH @ Hyderabad

IN a step towards digital governance, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is preparing to launch an Artificial Intelligence-based solution - a Chatbot to offer services and information to citizens, guide citizens through a wide range of civic services.

The proposed GHMC chatbot's objective is to reduce citizens' physical visits to municipal offices and enhance transparency.

As part of its new-year citizen-centric initiatives, GHMC is leveraging modern technology to improve service delivery and enhance revenue, while ensuring that services are accessible, transparent and user-

friendly. The AI chatbot will be developed and hosted on the GHMC website under the label "May I Help You."

The proposals have been submitted to the GHMC Standing Committee for inviting tenders for selection of service provider for implementation, operation and maintenance of AI-based solutions - AI Chatbot in GHMC website and automated form filling solution to GHMC for a period of three years.

According to GHMC officials, the corporation aims to make the chatbot available to the public soon as a new year gift. The chatbot would be designed to function as a virtual civic assistant that will address citizens' queries and grievances without the need for physical



visits to municipal offices.

Through a simple text-based interactions, residents will be able to access critical information related to taxes, licences, civic procedures, and public services.

Once launched, citizens can use the chatbot to apply for trade licenses, file property tax self-assessment, download/receive birth and death certificates, guiding applicants which

application to submit for which service, get step-by-step guidance on filling forms.

The chatbot will not only answer questions, but will also listen to voice queries and guide applicants in real time.

As Hyderabad is known for linguistic diversity, GHMC's chatbot will support Telugu, English and Urdu languages. Citizens can ask questions in any of these languages and receive responses in the same language, making the platform inclusive and easy to use for all sections of society.

For several GHMC services, citizens currently rely on agents and middlemen, often paying hefty amounts just to navigate application processes. Officials say the chatbot is aimed at elim-

inating this dependence. The solution will reduce errors while filling applications, prevent avoidable delays, guide citizens directly through official processes, stop exploitation by unauthorised agents.

With services becoming digital and self-guided, GHMC hopes to ensure that citizens need not visit offices repeatedly or depend on intermediaries.

Once the Standing Committee approves the proposal, GHMC will select qualified agencies through tendering for setting up the system and maintaining it for three years. The initiative represents another step toward smart governance, bringing municipal administration closer to residents, they added.

Degree student dies by suicide after online betting losses

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A 21-year-old second-year degree student died by suicide after consuming pesticide at his farm in Debbadaagu village of Kandukuru mandal, allegedly after losing ₹1 lakh on online betting platforms.

The deceased, Vaspuri Vikram, was studying at BJR College in Narayanaguda. His brother, Vaspuri Srikanth, told police that Vikram had taken around ₹1 lakh from home and invested it in an online betting app, "Fun in Exchange", losing the entire amount.

Fearing questioning from his parents, Vikram allegedly consumed herbicide (Paraforce) in the fields around 7.30 pm on Tuesday.

SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE (24x7)

Tele MANAS counsellors at: 14416 (OR) 1800-89-14416

Suspicious husband sets woman ablaze, arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A 26-year-old woman was allegedly set ablaze by her husband in an inebriated condition at Tilak Nagar on Wednesday, suspecting her fidelity, nearly a decade after they eloped and got married. The victim, Chityala Triveni, a helper at a hotel, succumbed to her injuries while undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital around 4.30 am on Wednesday.

Minutes before the incident, the accused, Kastala Venkatesh, allegedly told his son, "Your mother will die today." Venkatesh, a labourer, was arrested by the Nallakunta police nearly 36 hours after the incident and was remanded to judicial custody on Friday.

The couple hailed from Huzur Nagar in Nalgonda district and had migrated to Hyderabad after

marriage. They had two children — an eight-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter. Frequent quarrels had begun a few years ago, with Venkatesh allegedly abusing and assaulting Triveni.

The couple had been living separately for the past eight months, though he had started visiting the house again recently.



Police said that on the night of December 24, Venkatesh poured petrol on Triveni while she was asleep and set her on fire before fleeing. Her daughter woke up on hearing her screams and ran outside. Locals alerted the police, who rushed her to Gandhi Hospital with 95% burns. She later died during treatment.

Based on a complaint by her father, Chityala Appaiah, police registered a case under Section 103(1) of the BNS and are investigating.

Training camp held for mothers of hearing-impaired children

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A one-day training camp for mothers of children with hearing impairment was organised by the Meenakshi Venkataraman Foundation at the ENT department of Gandhi Hospital.

Hospital Superintendent Dr

Vani said that 26 children have so far successfully undergone cochlear implant surgeries at the ENT department of Gandhi Hospital, while another 26 children are currently undergoing pre-implant therapy. She emphasised that hearing

problems can be effectively treated if identified at an early stage.

Dr Bhopender Singh Rathod, Professor and Head of the ENT department, stressed the importance of pre-implant therapy before performing cochlear implant surgery on children.

He added that excellent outcomes are being achieved through post-surgery speech therapy, which is conducted for 25 days every month by the Meenakshi Venkataraman Foundation.

During the camp, digital hearing aids were distributed to children, and mothers shared

their experiences of their children undergoing speech therapy.

Hyderabad becomes India's largest municipal corporation by area and population after major reorganisation

Training Camp Held for Mothers of Hearing-Impaired Children

Karnataka Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. (Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

No.161, MILLERS TANK BED AREA, BANGALORE-560 052

Ph: 080-2226 0932 E-mail: admnkfscs123@yahoo.com

No:KFCSC/MKT/INDIRA KIT/02/2025-26/ Date: 26.12.2025

NOTIFICATION

Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., Bangalore Invites "Request for Proposal for Selection of Transaction Advisor Consultants for Selection of Vendor for Supply and Distribution of Indira Kit Scheme"

The RFP and other information can be obtained from the <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> e-procurement portal.

Sd/- Managing Director

QuoteExpress

IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL IT'S DONE NELSON MANDELA

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एमएस), भुवनेश्वर

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), BHUBANESWAR

(A Statutory body under aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

Sijua, Post-Dumuduma, Bhubaneswar (Odisha) -751019

DEANAC-25015/1/2023-DEAN ACADEMIC/4356 Date:26th December, 2025

ADMISSION TO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FOR JANUARY 2026 SESSION AT AIIMS, BHUBANESWAR

Online Applications (Online Recruitment Portal) are invited from eligible candidates for appointment as fellowship programme at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar.

NUMBER OF VACANCIES: 14

Eligibility criteria (age, qualification, etc.), requisite fee and other details, are available on www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in vide Advertisement No:DEANAC-25015/1/2023-DEAN ACADEMIC/4344, Date: 23rd December, 2025.

Any query please contact Academic Section, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar. (Email-ID: acad_rectt@aiimsbhubaneswar.edu.in)

Candidates are advised to visit our website www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in regularly for latest update.

Sd/- REGISTRAR AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एमएस), भुवनेश्वर

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), BHUBANESWAR

(A Statutory body under aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

Sijua, Post-Dumuduma, Bhubaneswar (Odisha) -751019

DEANAC-25012/1/2023-DEAN ACADEMIC/4357 Dated: 26/12/2025

NOTICE

REOPENING OF SENIOR RESIDENT (NON-ACADEMIC) ADVERTISEMENT

Reference: Advertisement No. DEANAC-25012/1/2023-DEAN ACADEMIC-(Part 2)/4044 dated 07.11.2025, and Addendum/Corrigendum vide Advertisement No. DEANAC-25012/1/2023-DEAN ACADEMIC/4199 dated 27.11.2025.

1. It is hereby informed that, due to administrative reasons, the above-mentioned advertisement is reopened (23.12.2025) for submission of online applications only through the official website aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in (Recruitment -> Recruitment Notice -> Online Recruitment) for a period of 10 (ten) days, i.e. up to 01.01.2026 (11:59 P.M.).

Candidates are advised to visit our website www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in regularly for latest update.

Any query please contact Academic Section, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar. (Email-ID: acad_rectt@aiimsbhubaneswar.edu.in)

Sd/- REGISTRAR AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

ICICI Bank

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanhalli Hosur Main Road Bangalore- 560068

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA).

A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Allwyn Impex Represented By V Jayshanker, Bandaru Srihar No. 3-4-90/2, Rajendranagar, Gandipet Hyderabad-500074/ 024305501941	(As Described In The Loan Document / Property Document Covering All That House Property Bearing No 1-112-1 Consisting Of Ground Floor Of 1300 Sqft On Plot No Mig-1-156/8, Admeasuring 428 Sqyds In Sy No 68 Of Pedd Valtair Village Within The Limits Of Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Area, Visakhapatnam District In The State Of Andhra Pradesh Bounded As Under, Owned By V Jayshanker (Admeasuring An Area Of 428 Sqyds North: Plot No Mig-1-143/8 Of Muvvalavanipalem South: 60 Feet Wide Road East: Plot No Mig 1-157/8 Of Muvvalavanipalem West: 60 Feet Wide Road	October 16, 2025 Rs. 3,70,51,693.13/-	04/08/2025
2.	Manikanta Agencies Represented By Partners Vijaya Adavalli, Parsi Sojan, Parsi Shiva Kumar, Saran Parsi No.1-13-410/1, Mahalakshmi Nagar, Nizamabad Hyderabad Road Nizamabad- 503003/ 653105006441	(As Described In The Loan Document/ Property Document Covering All The Existing Western Portion Of Rcc Roofed House Bearing No 1-7-164, Consisting Of Ground, First And Second Floors, Admeasuring North To South 22-0 Feet And East To West 38 Feets Total Area Of Which 847 Sq. Feet (94.11 Square Yards) Equal To 78.67 Sq Meters Out Of Which Ground Floor Rcc Plinth Area Covered 847 Sft, First Floor Rcc Roof Plinth Area Covered 847 Sft, Second Floor Rcc Roofed Plinth Area 847 Sft As Shown In Blue Colour In The Plan Annexed To Registered Partition Deed Document No.8716/2017 Situated In Ward No.1, Block No.7, Daily Market Area, Kamareddy Town And District. Bounded By, Owned By Parsi Shiva Kumar North: House Of Ravli South: House Of Parsi Kannaiah East: Remaining Portions Of H.No.1-7-164 Allotted To Parsi Ramesh And Parsi Suresh Kumar West: Daily Market Road	October 16, 2025 Rs. 1,10,86,242.49/-	10/08/2025
3.	Tejaswini Equipments Represented By Proprietor Ramanaiah Ala No.6-6-33/14, 1st Floor, Gayathri Apts, Kavagudiga 1000 Secunderabad- 500003/ 112105500169	(As Described In The Loan Document/ Property Document Covering All That Flat No 114 In The First Floor In "Gayathri Apartments" Bearing Mch No 6-6-33/14 With Undivided Share Of Land Admeasuring 39 Sqyds Or 32.50 Sqmtrs Out Of 7353 Sqyds Or 6147 Sqmtrs With Built Up Area Of 800 Sqft (Including Common Area) In Sy Nos 221/2, 222/2 And 224 Situated Adjacent To Praga Tools Ltd, Kavagudiga, Secunderabad, In The State Of Telangana Bounded As Under, Owned By Ramanaiah Ala (Admeasuring An Area Of Undivided Share Of Land Admeasuring 39 Sqyds And Built Up Area Of 800 Sqft North: Flat No 105 And 106 South: Main Road East: 30'-0" Wide Road West: Neighbours	October 16, 2025 Rs. 8,74,715.00/-	28/08/2025

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower(s) and/or guarantor(s) (as applicable) are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: December 26, 2025

Place: Hyderabad

Sincerely Authorised Officer, For ICICI Bank Ltd.

TATA Tele Business Services

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Tata Tele Broadband/Wifi Customers:

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Download our iManage app from Play Store or App Store, or log into My Account on our website www.tatatelebroadband.com

In case the complaint is not received to your satisfaction, you may write at appellate.ap@tatatel.co.in

www.tatatelebusiness.com

Tata Tele Services Ltd. Registered Office Address: Tower 1, Jeevan Bharati, 124, 10th Floor, Connaught Circus, New Delhi - 110 001.

Registered Office Address: D-26, TTC Industrial Area, MIDC Sanpada P.O. Turbhe, Navi Mumbai - 400 703. CIN: L64200MH1995PLC086354

Tel No: 1800 266 1515 email id: 1515@tatatel.co.in

MAN SLITS WIFE'S THROAT FOR ALLEGED INFEDELITY

A man allegedly slit his wife's throat with a knife on Thursday in Athmakur, suspecting her of being involved in an extramarital affair. The victim was identified as M Anusha (35), an attendee at a Social Welfare School in Hanamkonda

EXPRESS READ

Techie dies on spot as two-wheeler rams divider

Hyderabad: A 23-year-old software engineer, identified as Punith Yadav, died in an accident near US Consulate in Financial District late on Thursday. Gachibowli police suspect that the youth, a native of Warangal, lost control of his two-wheeler due to speeding and fell off his vehicle after hitting the divider, resulting in his death. The police, who rushed to the accident spot after receiving an alert at around 1.30 am, found the youth lying in a pool of blood. They shifted the body to hospital for a post-mortem examination. They registered a case and launched an investigation.



PUBLIC NOTICE

GREENSURE TRADING PRIVATE LIMITED (GREENSURE)

NO 5/2, KAY ARR TRUMPH, 102, 1st FLOOR, EAGLES ST, CMP CENTRE AND SCHOOL, BANGALORE, BANGALORE NORTH, KARNATAKA, INDIA - 560025.

NOTICE UNDER SUB-SECTION (2) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

1. The Person above-named, a company incorporated under the companies Act, 2013 (the applicant) has made an application under sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Electricity Act, 2003 for grant of category V license for Interstate Trading in Electricity in geographical region of India before the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi. The Necessary details in respect of the applicant are given hereunder:-

(i) Share Capital

1. Authorized Share Capital INR 2,00,00,000/-

2. Issued Share Capital INR 2,00,00,000/-

3. Subscribed Share Capital INR 2,00,00,000/-

4. Paid Up Share Capital INR 2,00,00,000/-

(ii) Shareholding Pattern (Details of Shareholders)

Name of the Shareholder	Citizenship	Residential status	Type of Shares	No. of Shares	% age
NAGESWARAN MAGESWARAN	Indian	Resident	Equity	90,000	4.50%
SADHASIVAM VIGNESH	Indian	Resident	Equity	90,000	4.50%
GREENSURE POWER PRIVATE LIMITED	Indian	NA	Equity	20,000	1.00%
GREENSURE POWER PRIVATE LIMITED	Indian	NA	Compulsory Convertible Preference Shares	18,00,000	90%

(iii) Financial and Technical Strength – GREENSURE team has extensive experience in power trading, power operations, and regulatory compliance, and meets all requisite financial criteria to operate power trading activities in accordance with CERC norms.

(iv) Management Profile of applicant including details of experiences of the applicant and/or the person on the management of the applicant in generation, transmission, distribution and trading of electricity or similar activity:-

a. Mr. Mageswaran N - Director is an enterprising leader with an MBA in Marketing and a B.Tech in Energy & Environmental Engineering from TNAU, Coimbatore. With 12+ years of experience, he specializes in renewable power, open access power facilitation, solar rooftop solutions, captive power, and regulatory compliance. He has worked across major DISCOMs in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, and manages over 750 MW of renewable energy projects under Open Access in India.

b. Mr. Vignesh Sadhasivam - Director is a young entrepreneur with an MBA in Marketing and a B.Tech in Energy & Environmental Engineering from TNAU, Coimbatore, giving him strong expertise in power marketing and the renewable energy sector. With over 10+ years of experience in Business Development and Finance, he is proficient in renewable power, open access facilitation, solar rooftop solutions, contractual negotiations, captive power, and regulatory and policy frameworks of electricity boards.

(v) Volume of electricity intended to be traded during the first year after grant of license and future plans of the applicant to expand volume of trading - GREENSURE aims to commence inter-state/intra-state trading operations in India by tying up contracts of expected 200 MU per year during its first year and is expected to increase marginally at 10% per annum over the subsequent 5 years.

(vi) Geographical area within which the applicant will undertake trading in electricity - All India and the area as may be permitted under the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 and relevant regulations.

(vii) Net worth as on 31st March of three consecutive years immediately preceding the year of application or for such lesser period as may be applicable and on the date of the special balance sheet accompanying the application-

As per Special Balance sheet dated 15.12.2025	As on 31.03.2025
Net Worth	Rs. 2,00,12,580/-
	NA

(viii) Year-wise current ratio and liquidity ratio of the applicant for three preceding year in which the application is made, or for such lesser period as may be applicable and on the date of the special balance sheet accompanying the application:-

As per Special Balance sheet dated 15.12.2025	As on 31.03.2025
Current Ratio	6254.93:1
Liquidity Ratio	6254.93:1
	NA

(ix) GREENSURE is authorized to undertake trading in electricity under the MoA in the main object are To establish and Carry on the business of trading in electricity and act as a trader in sale and purchase of electricity and electrical energy in any form and in any market including power exchange and derivative market and by any process and in any fuel, derivative and enter into demand side management contracts energy. Conventional contracts including energy performance contract, megawatt contract enter into contract for banking of electricity or any other contract and to operate as an electricity as an energy trading company and to get registered with appropriate agency in accordance with the electricity act, 2003 or any other act regulations/rules framed therein, policy, guidelines laid down by the central government/state government or any nodal agency from time to time or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof and do all act and things necessary or required for doing aforesaid business, including providing advisory and consultancy in issue related energy and trading of Energy.

To generate electrical power by wind power by converting wind energy into a useful form of energy using wind turbines and also by conventional, non-conventional, thermal, solar, hydel, and tidal waves, to develop and accumulate electrical power at the place or places contemplated by the license obtained from government and transmit, trade, distribute and supply of power.

(x) Details of cases, if any, where the applicant or any of his associates, or partner, or promoters, or directors has been declared insolvent and has not been discharged - None.

(xi) Details of cases, if any, in which the Applicant or any of his Associates or partners or Promoters or Directors has been convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude, fraud or any economic offence during the previous three years preceding the year of making the application and the year of making the applicant and the date of release of the above person from imprisonment, if any, consequent to such conviction - None

(xii) Whether the Applicant or any of his Associates, or partners or promoters, or Directors was ever refused license, and if so the detailed particulars of the application, date of making application date of order refusing license and reasons for such refusal - NO

(xiii) Whether the Applicant has been granted a license for transmission of electricity -NO

(xiv) Whether or order cancelling the license of the Applicant, or any of his Associates, or Partners, or promoters, or Directors has been passed by the Commission - NO

(xv) Whether the Applicant or any of his Associates, or partners, or promoters or Directors ever found guilty in any proceedings for contravention non-compliance of any of the provisions of the Act or the rules or the regulations made thereunder or an order made by the Appropriate Commission, during the year of making the application or five years immediately preceding that year? -NO

2. The application made and other documents filed before the Commission are available for inspection by any person with Mr. Vignesh Sadhasivam, No.5/2, Kay Arr Triumph, 102, 1st Floor, Eagles St, CMP Centre And School, Bangalore, Bangalore North, Karnataka, India, 560025. Mobile: +91 7349264332, E-Mail: accounts@greensure.com

3. The application made and other documents filed before the Commission have been posted on www.greensure.com

4. Objection and suggestion, if any, on the Application made before the commission may sent to the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission 6th, 7th & 8th Floors, Tower B, World Trade Centre, Naurji Nagar, New Delhi- 110029; E-mail: secy@cercd.gov.in within 30 days of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant.

5. No objections or suggestions shall be considered by the commission if received after expiry of 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place: Bengaluru

Date: 27.12.2025

Mr. Vignesh Sadhasivam (Director)

DIN: 07660510

KCR DRAWS BRS STRATEGY TO CORNER GOVT IN ASSEMBLY

Former CM holds marathon meeting with party leaders, discusses PRLIS and other issues to be raised in the House to corner govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hyderabad

BRS supremo and former chief minister K Chandrasekhkar Rao seems to be back in the thick of action. Days after addressing a press conference on the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS), where he launched a no-holds-barred tirade against the Congress regime, the BRS chief held a marathon meeting with key party leaders at his Erravalli farmhouse on Friday to discuss the proposed state-wide agitations against the Revanth Reddy's government's indifference in completing the project.

The meeting, according to sources, also discussed the strategy to be adopted by the BRS in the forthcoming Assembly session. The party is likely to announce a series of programmes in a day or two. "An announcement on these agitations and public meetings, which are being planned to exert pressure on the government to complete PRLIS at the earliest, will be made either on Saturday or Sunday. The schedule of proposed public meetings too would be revealed in the next two days," sources said.

Chandrasekhkar Rao is believed to have directed the party MLAs to raise the PRLIS issue in the upcoming Assembly session and corner the state government on other issues as well.

Sources said that the party is planning to raise several issues in the House and these include:



Why PRLIS has been stalled? Though the Centre returned the detailed project report (DPR) months ago, why it has not been resubmitted? Even though 90 per cent of the work has been completed, why is the government unwilling to spend a little more money to complete the project and ensure water supply to Palamuru farmers?

Revanth lowered dignity of CM's office, says KTR

Meanwhile, BRS working president KT Rama Rao found fault with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for "frequently using abusive, uncivilised and irresponsible language and making derogatory remarks against KCR".

Addressing the gathering after welcoming several leaders from Serilingampally Assembly segment into the BRS during an event organised at Telangana Bhavan, he said: "Revanth Reddy's conduct has lowered the dignity of the chief minister's office and exposed his inability to answer serious public questions. He is resorting to foul language as he has no answers to the questions raised by KCR."

"Instead of fighting for Telangana's rights over river waters, Revanth Reddy chose to divert public attention by abusing the leaders of the Opposition," he alleged.

"Revanth Reddy's wife Geethamma should tie him up. Otherwise, he may bite someone because he seems to have gone mad and has been ranting every day," Rama Rao quipped.

Responding to Revanth Reddy's remarks on his education, he said: "When he studied in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh was undivided. I studied in Hyderabad, Guntur, Pune and the United States."

"Why the chief minister is so much troubled by my educational qualifications and where I studied?" he asked, pointing out to "their hypocrisy of objecting to pursuing education in Andhra Pradesh though they maintain close family ties there".

Stating that he takes pride in being known as KCR's son, he said: "Yes, I proudly carry my father's name. He is the leader who achieved Telangana. If you do good work, your children will proudly mention your name. But if you continue with such behaviour, even your grandchild will not mention your name."

Alleging that Revanth Reddy failed to implement his poll promises, Rama Rao declared that "the return of KCR as chief minister wasn't far away" and that Revanth Reddy would be defeated in Kodangal in the next Assembly elections.

Tributes paid to Manmohan on 1st anniversary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

TPCC president B Mahesh Kumar Goud on Friday paid rich tributes to former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh on his first death anniversary.

He said that Manmohan Singh served the nation with integrity, foresight and dedication, and his immense contribution to nation's development are truly unforgettable.

The state Congress chief described the former prime minister as an exceptional leader who steered the country out of economic crisis and placed it firmly on the path of growth.

"Dr Manmohan Singh earned the distinction of positioning India on the global economic stage through landmark economic reforms. Key decisions taken by him such as economic liberalisation, industrial development, and attracting foreign investments transformed the future of the nation," he added.



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka pay floral tributes to a portrait of former PM Manmohan Singh in Hyderabad

Cong neglected Telangana, BJP sanctioned airports, says Kishan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Adilabad

UNION Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy on Friday credited the BJP-led Central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi for sanctioning airports in Adilabad and Warangal.

Speaking at the 'Atmeeya Sammelanam' organised to felicitate newly elected sarpanches in the district headquarters, he said that the Congress regime in undivided Andhra Pradesh had neglected development of airports in the Telangana region.

He claimed that only Hyderabad airport became operational in Telangana, while the Andhra region had five airports.

Kishan Reddy accused the previous BRS government, led by K Chandrashekar Rao, of "centralised corruption" for 10 years, alleging that public money was misused. He contrasted this with the current Congress government, which he de-



Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy inspects the site for the proposed airport in Adilabad on Friday

scribed as engaging in "centralised corruption" in its two years in power.

The Union minister further alleged that the present Congress government was reluctant to purchase cheaper power from NTPC, preferring higher-priced supplies.

He said that 42 railway stations in Telangana, including Adilabad, are undergoing redevelopment and that all railway lines nationwide have been electrified since the BJP came

BC unions condemn attack on BJP leader

ENS @ Nalgonda

THE BC unions staged a massive protest at the Clock Tower Centre here on Friday, condemning the assault on BJP leader Pilli Ramaraju, allegedly by the supporters of saffron party district president Nagam Varshit Reddy.

Raising slogans against Varshit Reddy, they demanded that the BJP leadership suspend him from the party. BC leaders D Laxminarayana and N Madhu Yadav expressed their anger over "the heinous act" of a leader's supporters assaulting his own party colleague.

BC student union leaders demanded that Varshit Reddy immediately tender an unconditional apology to Ramaraju and the BC community.

The protest at the busy Clock Tower Centre resulted in a major traffic disruption in the town, following which Nalgonda Two Town police stepped in and dispersed the protesters.

PHONE-TAPPING CASE

Prabhakar Rao's custody ends, Aara Mastan deposes before SIT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

AFTER questioning him for 14 days, police released former state Special Intelligence Branch (SIB) chief and prime accused in the phone-tapping case T Prabhakar Rao on Friday.

The accused was released from the Jubilee Hills police station, after the Special Investigation Team (SIT) recorded his statements during his 14-day custody. The SIT officials reportedly questioned him on his appointment as SIB chief, Special Operations Team and other details related to alleged phone-tapping during the previous BRS regime.

It may be mentioned here that another accused in the case, former Task Force DCP P Radha Kishan Rao had reportedly referred to TRS (BRS) supremo K Chandrasekhkar Rao in his confession. Based on this, the SIT questioned Prabhakar Rao.

Meanwhile, psephologist Aara Mastan, who is a witness



in the case, also deposed before the SIT on Friday.

Later speaking to the media, Mastan said: "They asked me the same questions they asked me previously. They were probably trying to recheck the statement I had given earlier."

"I came to know that my phone too was tapped after police showed me some evidence. I realised that my two numbers were monitored for years... since 2020," he added.

Meanwhile, sources said that based on the technical evidence and statements given by the accused, the SIT will issue notices to some key persons who served in the previous government.

LOOTING IS YOUR CULTURE, NOT OURS: CHAMALA TO KTR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICES
@ Hyderabad

ACCUSING BRS working president KT Rama Rao of indulging in political theatrics and misleading the people of Telangana with false claims, Congress MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Friday said that the former was issuing provocative statements and openly declaring that he would use abusive language.

"The culture of grabbing lands, looting and amassing wealth applies to your family, not us," he said, while accusing the BRS leadership of deceiving people in the name of neelu, nidhulu and niyamakalu (water, funds and appointments). Specifically targeting former chief minister K Chandrasekhkar Rao, he said: "KCR pushed the state into a debt trap while enriching his family."

The Bhongir MP also claimed that the residents of Hyderabad were welcoming the demon-

BRS LEADERS MUST MIND THEIR LANGUAGE: ADLURI

Karimnagar: Social Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar on Friday alleged that BRS leaders were behaving like egoists and should control their language while criticising Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. He was speaking to media persons at the R&B guest house here on Friday. Hitting out at former minister Koppula Eswar, Kumar said the BRS had ruled for 10 years but failed to develop the Dharmapuri constituency. He said that within two years, the present government had begun implementing its promises. He assured that Dharmapuri would be made a revenue division, a bus depot would be established for the benefit of pilgrims from various states and districts.

litions being carried out by HYDRAA, stating that illegal constructions and encroachments on drains, colonies and parks during the BRS regime had caused severe flooding and property loss during monsoon.

Stating that Rama Rao lacks political maturity, he contrasted the BRS leader's career with that of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

"Revanth Reddy became chief minister on merit, while

KTR entered politics on management quota," he alleged, noting that Revanth Reddy had independently won elections as ZPTC, MLC, MLA (twice) and MP before becoming chief minister.

Asking Rama Rao to bring the BRS chief to the Assembly, he said: "If KCR does not attend the Assembly, KTR should take on the role of Leader of the Opposition, and offer suggestions and guidance to the government."



77 acres prime land belongs to Chevella temple, rules HC

THE Telangana High Court has dismissed a writ petition challenging the grant of an Occupancy Rights Certificate (ORC) in favour of Sri Balaji Venkateswara Swamy temple for agricultural lands measuring 77 acres and 30 guntas at Malkapur village in the Chevella mandal of Rangareddy district. The petition was filed by Seri Narayana Reddy and 21 others, who questioned the order dated September 22, 2006, passed by the Joint Collector-I, Rangareddy district. The JC had confirmed earlier proceedings of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Chevella, dated October 27, 2003, by which the RDO, acting as the Inams Tribunal, granted the ORC to the deity under Section 4 of the AP (Telangana Area) Abolition of Inams Act, 1955.

The petitioners claimed absolute ownership and possession of the lands through their ancestors, relying on Sethwar records of 1951-52, Khasra Pahani of 1954-55 and subsequent revenue entries. They contended that the lands were patta lands and not temple inam lands, alleged that they were denied an opportunity of hearing before the RDO, and questioned the reliance placed on a Munthakhab and endowment records. Opposing the plea, the Endowments department and temple authorities submitted that the lands were endowed properties, entered in the Book of Endowments pursuant to a Munthakhab issued in 1958. After examining the record, Justice NV Shrawan Kumar held that the Munthakhab and endowment entries had attained finality and that the ORC granted to the temple constituted a statutory title.

HC admits civic workers' plea for service regularisation

Justice Surepalli Nanda of the Telangana High Court has allowed a writ petition filed by N Ashok and 38 others, who have been working for decades in contingent and daily wage establishments, seeking regularisation of their services. The petitioners approached the court alleging inaction by the state authorities in not regularising their services despite their continuous engagement for nearly three decades against substantial regular vacancies. They sought regularisation in last grade posts such as attender and watchman, relying on the principles laid down by the Supreme Court in State of Karnataka v. Umadevi (2006) and other subsequent judgments, contending that their appointments were irregular but not illegal and that they had completed more than 10 years of continuous service.

Counsel for the petitioners relied on a series of judgments of the Supreme Court and the Telangana High Court, which recognised the entitlement of similarly placed employees to be considered for regularisation. It was argued that the nature of work performed by the petitioners was perennial and essential, and that the state could not continue them indefinitely on temporary or daily wage basis. On the other hand, counsel for the respondent local bodies submitted that the petitioners had not formally submitted representations seeking regularisation and therefore no writ of mandamus could be issued without first approaching the authorities. The court directed the petitioners to submit their claims for regularisation within one week, enclosing all relevant documents.

By TG Naidu

Centre sanctioned ₹686 cr for TG tourism projects in 10 yrs

KHYATI SHAH @ Hyderabad

THE Union Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned ₹686.39 crore to Telangana over the past 10 years under multiple flagship schemes, reflecting sustained support to strengthen pilgrimage, heritage, eco-tourism, wellness and experiential destinations across the state.

According to data accessed by TNIE, Telangana received ₹146.50 crore under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) scheme for four major religious sites. These include the Jogulamba Devi Temple at Alampur (₹38.9 crore), Ramappa (Rudreshwara) Temple at Mulugu (₹62 crore), Bhadrachalam Temple area development (₹41.38 crore) and basic infrastructure works at Renuka Yellamma Devasthanam (₹4.22 crore). The projects focus on access roads, sanitation, lighting, interpretation centres and pilgrim amenities, while preserving the spiritual character of the sites.

The state also saw substantial funding under the original

FUNDS BREAKUP

₹146.5 CR

FUNDS RECEIVED BY TELANGANA UNDER THE PRASHAD SCHEME

JOGULAMBA DEVI TEMPLE, ALAMPUR ₹38.9 CR

RAMAPPA (RUDRESHWARA) TEMPLE, MULUGU ₹62 CR

BHADRACHALAM TEMPLE AREA DEVELOPMENT ₹41.38 CR

INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS AT RENUKA YELLAMMA DEVASTHANAM ₹4.22 CR

Swadesh Darshan scheme, which promotes integrated thematic tourism circuits. Telangana was sanctioned ₹268.39 crore for three circuits: the Eco-Tourism Circuit in Mahbubnagar district (₹91.62 crore), the Tribal Circuit covering Mulugu-Laknavaram-Bogatha waterfalls (₹79.87 crore), and the Heritage Circuit in Hyderabad, including Qutb Shahi Heritage Park and Paigah Tombs (₹96.90 crore). These projects emphasise last-mile connectivity, visi-

₹268.39 CR

FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE STATE UNDER THE SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME

HERITAGE CIRCUIT IN HYDERABAD, INCLUDING QUTB SHAHI HERITAGE PARK AND PAIGAH TOMBS ₹96.9 CR

ECO-TOURISM CIRCUIT IN MAHBUBNAGAR DISTRICT ₹91.62 CR

TRIBAL CIRCUIT COVERING MULUGU-LAKNAVARAM-BOGATHA WATERFALLS ₹79.87 CR

tor facilities, landscaping, signage and cultural interpretation.

Sustainable tourism

With the Centre's renewed focus on immersive and sustainable travel, Swadesh Darshan 2.0 brought ₹94.83 crore to Telangana for two projects — experiential tourism development at Bhongir Fort (₹56.82 crore) and eco-tourism infrastructure at Ananthagiri forests (₹38.01 crore).

₹94.83 CR

FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE STATE UNDER SWADESH DARSHAN 2.0

ECO-TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AT ANANTHAGIRI FORESTS ₹38.01 CR

EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT BHONGIR FORT ₹56.82 CR

₹34.83 CR

UNDER THE CHALLENGE-BASED DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT OF SWADESH DARSHAN 2.0

Under the Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD) component of Swadesh Darshan 2.0, Telangana emerged as a focus state, securing ₹34.83 crore during 2024-25. This includes ₹24.85 crore for a Digital and Cultural Experience Centre at Buddhavanam in Nalgonda, a site of Buddhist and cultural significance, and ₹9.98 crore for eco-tourism development at Nizamsagar in Kamareddy.

"The Challenge-Based Desti-

nation Development component of Swadesh Darshan 2.0 focuses on destination-centric planning, sustainability and community participation. Projects sanctioned for Telangana during 2024-25 were selected through a structured evaluation process based on tourism potential and readiness,' Jayesh Ranjan, special chief secretary, Tourism and Culture, told TNIE.

Iconic projects under SASCI

The largest strategic investments were made through SASCI, which supports capital-intensive and iconic tourism projects with long-term economic impact.

Telangana received ₹141.84 crore under this scheme for the Ramappa Region Sustainable Tourism Circuit (₹73.74 crore) and the Somasila Wellness and Spiritual Tourism Project in the Nallamala region (₹68.10 crore).

Officials said Telangana's selection reflects the state's growing emphasis on diversified tourism, combining heritage, spirituality, eco-tourism and digital experiences.

JOBS REMAIN BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS ECONOMY CLOSES A MIXED YEAR

IT'S been an unusual year for the Indian economy. If growth surpassed market expectations to settle at 8 percent in the first half of the fiscal, other macro indicators saw a mixed performance. Merchandise exports struggled amid steep US tariffs, while rupee plunged to new lows. The saving grace was that inflation softened and interest rates eased, making credit more affordable to both households and businesses. Even as growth holds up and private demand turns around, the industry remains reluctant to kick-start the much-awaited private investment cycle, thanks to trade uncertainties, a fragmenting global economy reshaped by wars and shifting supply-chain dynamics. Notwithstanding the government's capital expenditure, if private investments and manufacturing activities do not pick up, job creation and wage rise will remain elusive.

The good news amid the prevailing uncertainties is that India's growth forecasts hold promise both for this fiscal and the next. The IMF pegged it above 6.5 percent for each year, citing personal income tax reductions, an accommodative monetary policy, the ongoing GST reforms, and a likely trade deal with the US. But merchandise exports are coursing through a rough patch—not just to the US, but even to ASEAN economies, even though services exports, particularly IT and business-process management, are remaining robust. As if the export shock isn't enough, currency volatility is brewing fresh trouble. The rupee is in a free fall, and the decline isn't just limited against the US dollar but is ending up as a widespread depreciation. For instance, the RBI's index marking changes against 40-odd currencies fell nearly 9.9 percent this year, which means rupee's depreciation is not just a nominal adjustment but an erosion of purchasing power.

Finally, job creation remains one of the toughest challenges for policymakers. Even though India has seen strong economic growth following liberalisation since the 1990s, the employment rate is yet to keep pace with growth. While the unemployment rate fell from 6 percent in 2017-18 to 3.2 percent in 2023-24, according to official data, India needs to create jobs at a much faster clip to accommodate its growing workforce. As the Economic Survey 2024 noted, India must create 7.85 million non-farm jobs annually till 2030; private estimates suggest the need is for about 10 million jobs in the formal sector every year. Undeniably, that will remain the biggest challenge in the new year, too.

PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL COMMUNITIES

ASpate of attacks and disruptions targeting Christmas celebrations and Christian gatherings in some parts of the country has raised serious concerns, coming as it does at a time when the NDA is seeking to engage with the community. Church bodies including the Catholic Bishops Conference of India have spoken out, urging authorities to act decisively to protect believers. They point to more than 1,500 incidents of anti-Christian violence in 2024-25, marking a steep rise over a decade. Many recent cases have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. There is little evidence to suggest these incidents reflect the views of the wider population; they appear to be driven by fringe elements. Rights organisations warn, however, that repeated inaction risks allowing intimidation to harden into a pattern.

The issue has acquired political salience. In Kerala, where assembly polls are due in a few months, the BJP appears uncertain in its approach towards the Christian community, which accounts for about 18 per cent of the population. The Congress, meanwhile, has moved quickly to foreground incidents from BJP-ruled states. Electoral calculations aside, the larger concern is whether governments are responding with the seriousness that threats to public order and religious freedom demand.

At the national level, the BJP leadership has in recent years made visible efforts to reach out to Christian leaders and institutions. Those gestures, however, ring hollow if violence, harassment and disruption of worship are not met with swift and unambiguous action on the ground. Whatever disagreements may exist over religious practice, there can be no justification for preventing a community from observing festivals or creating an atmosphere of fear around places of worship. Law and order is not a matter of interpretation; it is a core responsibility of the state.

Christians constitute a small minority in India despite a presence extending back nearly two millennia. That historical rootedness and their demographic vulnerability place a particular obligation on the State to act without hesitation or bias. Protecting citizens and their right to practise their faith peacefully is not a concession, but a constitutional duty. The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and equal protection of the law. Upholding these guarantees, especially when tested, is essential to preserving the credibility of democratic governance. A clear, firm response is necessary—not to privilege one community, but to reaffirm that intimidation and violence have no place in a constitutional republic.

QUICK TAKE

NOT RISING TO THE OCCASION

A food review is more useful when it advises one to steer clear, because it saves a would-be consumer time, money and probably a pungent belch. But when a celebrated British baker who has opened shop in Mexico City pooh-poohs the proud wheat tradition of the hosts, it's a culture war. After Richard Hart slighted the *tortas* of Mexico, chef Tania Medina retorted, "He wants to be the Christopher Columbus of bread." Maybe Hart didn't stomach the difference between low-starch maize, which has a rich history in the region, and high-fibre wheat. It sounds like a half-baked attempt at attracting heat to make daily bread. Not all that leavens brings in dough.

REGIME-change operations often stray from the script, particularly when orchestrated violence becomes a policy tool. Bangladesh is fast becoming a classic case. Both the US and Pakistan were aggrieved at Sheikh Hasina's cold-shouldering, independent foreign policy stance and her friendship with India. The current bonhomie between these two countries is, inter alia, an expression of the US's gratitude to Pakistan.

One of the most crucial steps of the regime-change operation in Bangladesh was to install Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus as the head of an unelected interim government. In its 17 months in power, his dysfunctional regime has presided over mob violence, economic decline and growing extortion from business houses. There has been a flight of capital, a steep fall in investment, and a fall in GDP growth from a recent peak of 7.5 percent to below 3 percent.

Undeniably, Hasina's own policy miscalculations contributed to her ouster. Apart from corruption, cronyism and manipulating elections, one crucial error was her coddling of selected hardline Islamic groups and a crackdown on others. Madrasas mushroomed, creating a new generation of indoctrinated youngsters. Many of them are fronting violent mobs today.

In this mix, the arrival of Tarique Rahman, the acting chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the eldest son of former PM Khaleda Zia, after 17 years in exile in the UK changes the political matrix before the February 2026 election. It is likely to improve the BNP's chances of winning a majority.

Tarique's return, after acquittal in all cases in which he was convicted, points to a compact with the interim government and Yunus. This compact may have the backing of the regime-change planners, but doubts remain about Tarique's considerable political baggage. Still, India can expect another BNP-Jamaat e Islami (JeI) government emerging from the 2026 elections. Whether it will have a 'reformed' policy agenda with India is the million-taka question.

Tarique will have to navigate pressure from Pakistan and the US. He may find it useful to balance such pressures by improving ties with India. With the Hasina's Awami League banned, it could extend support to the BNP to ensure that the bigger 'devil', the JeI, does not become the bigger partner in a future government.

Meanwhile the JeI, Bangladesh's largest Islamist organisation, is projecting a moderate image and desperately trying to

The return of Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman after 17 years in exile points to BNP's compact with the Yunus regime. Two deaths reveal the alignment of foreign powers

RETURN OF PRODIGAL SON IN BANGLADESH CHANGES PROSPECTS

PINAK RANJAN CHAKRAVARTY

Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and former High Commissioner to Bangladesh



SOURAV ROY

discard its reputation as the Pakistan army's collaborators during the 1971 war. It remains closely aligned with Pakistan and the US and sees the current situation as its best-ever opportunity to grab power. The National Citizen Party formed by student leaders is also in the fray, though without much prospect.

Anti-Indian rhetoric has risen to new levels. Recently, a student leader threatened to isolate India's northeastern states and provide sanctuary to insurgents from India. It reflects a well-planned effort to fan the flames of a hardened nationalist rhetoric. As a direct conflict with India will be self-destructive, surrogates are being used by these new political players.

The death of young anti-Hasina activist Sharif Osman Hadi, who had founded the cultural platform Inqilab Manch—known for spewing hatred against the Awami

League and India—ignited public opinion. This rabble-rouser was shot in Dhaka and died in Singapore. Dhaka was overrun with people mourning his death. His burial site is significant—next to national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in the Dhaka University campus, an unprecedented honour.

Social media was flooded with allegations that the alleged killer had fled to India, though police investigation failed to produce any evidence. Such deliberate provocations have led to another round of testy diplomatic exchanges between Delhi and Dhaka. Mobs burned down and looted two leading Bangladeshi newspapers—*Prothom Alo* and *The Daily Star*. Chhayanaout, a leading cultural organisation, suffered the same fate. Islamists appear to have declared war not only on India, but also on their own country's premier institutions and history.

RESIZING AMERICA'S SENSE OF SELF

KAJAL BASU

Veteran journalist

then by the DoJ releasing the records—only to begin massively redacting them from its website within hours of release, especially for documentation to do with Trump.

In the interstices of this stormy diminution of ratings and the public outcry against the harm done by presidential duplicity to juvenile-focused familism—one of the foundations of American society—other self-critiques began doing the rounds. Trump has always trumpeted his height as 6'3".



The fall in Trump's approval ratings through 2025 reflected America's glissading sense of self. It coincided with his team's back-and-forth on releasing the Epstein files. A battle of real and proclaimed statures played out. Portraits of his team, including Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, resized them in the public eye

When photographs surfaced of him walking beside Prince William, who is confirmed as 6'3", in September, Trump appeared six inches shorter. The war of tallness—or *größte Krieg*, a war of grandeur—broke hearts across social media platforms, with MAGA warriors sharing the quicksand of doubt with left liberals. Potus guaranteed being larger-than-life in two crucial forms—an ethical promise and his own persona—and fell short in both senses.

There was more to come. On Decem-

ber 16, *Vanity Fair* published 'Eye of the Hurricane', a wrap of the year in two parts featuring interviews of Susie Wiles, the Trump White House's chief of staff, at length and in depth.

But the most extraordinary revelations came not from the text, but from the posed photographs by Christopher Anderson. They seem prima facie passable portraits of people in power, posing with their best face forward. But the snarky commentary was in the inconsequential dimensions that Anderson reduced these movers-and-shakers to in their architectural environments.

Anderson posed Vance next to a light switch, installed at a particular height by regulation—and this juxtaposition immediately reduced Vance from his self-proclaimed 6'2" to at most 5'10". Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary whom Trump has occasionally been raffish about, was photographed in close-up, highlighting her spotted lips pierced by filler injections. Right or left, the horror at the careless feet of clay in the mythified high echelons of the White House left the hoi polloi distressed and 'schadenfreuded' in equal measure.

Meanwhile, Trump is mirroring the citizenry—both shrunken and bullfrogged, but still figure-skating on personal and social bewilderment as if none of this resizing was psychologically revealing or long-term. On December 13, following a trip to Japan, Trump spoke positively about "really cute" kei cars, asking, "How would that do in this country?" It sent the bellwether US automobile industry, predicated on design and factory largeness, into a lather. On December 22, he went big, announcing the commissioning of a new series of ginormous 'Trump class' battleships.

Things are changing in America, but, as a March 2020 report by the University of Georgia pointed out, "Americans who do change tend to report a lower sense of well-being." I wonder if this is going to end well.

(Views are personal) (kajalbasu@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Generation gap

Ref: *Tyranny of RWAs* (Dec 26). RWA office bearers, most of them belonging to older generations, fail to align themselves with the changing norms of society and get involved in moral policing. Residents, too, must behave responsibly, maintain decorum and not disturb neighbours. RWAs must learn to sail along with Gen Z. **RV Baskaran, Pune**

Missing half

Ref: *The other half of future* (Dec 26). Predictive systems often replicate biases embedded in historical data. As AI is still in its infancy, humans must ensure that their own shortcomings in matters of gender are not coded into it. It's essential to shape gender-neutral institutions, laws and technologies for an inclusive India that fully harnesses the participation of its 'missing half'. **Anwesha Mishra, Bhadrak**

United subcontinent

Ref: *United by blood, split by politics* (Dec 26). We can't turn a blind eye to the happenings in Bangladesh. But it's nonsensical to think of direct warlike action against a sovereign neighbour to protect Hindus there. All parties keep society polarised to reap political gains. In the subcontinent, one can espouse that all inhabitants are united by blood. **Jitendranath Guru, Padampur**

Highway tragedy

Ref: *Six dead in bus-truck collision* (Dec 25). The tragic road accident has deeply saddened the local community. In recent days, traffic along this route has increased significantly, and concerns are being raised that long-distance driving fatigue, lack of rest and overspeeding may be contributing to the growing risk of such accidents. It's a stark reminder for the authorities to strengthen safety measures and spread awareness. **Darshan Yadav, Sira**

Protect wildlife

Ref: *Poachers kill three blackbucks near Chikmagalur* (Dec 25). The killings are deeply disturbing. Allegations of negligence by forest officials and a hurried investigation demand a transparent, high-level inquiry. Blackbucks are a protected species, and such incidents pose a grave threat to biodiversity. The government must strictly enforce wildlife laws, and hold offenders and errant officials accountable. **Umme Haani, Bengaluru**

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Chairman of the Board: Manoj Kumar Sonthalia Editor: Santwana Bhattacharya

Resident Editor (Telangana): T Kalyan Chakravarthy* Printed and Published by N Gopalan on behalf of Express Publications (Madurai) Private Ltd., at H.No.6-3-1113/1, B.S.Makta Lane, Somajiguda, Near Grand Kakatiya Hotel, Punjagutta, Hyderabad – 500 016 and printed by him at Sakshi Press, Plot No.D-75 & E-52, Industrial Estate (APIE), Balanagar, Medchal-Malkajigiri District, Telangana. Hyderabad: Vol. 49, No. 305 RNI Reg. No. 32179/77. Phone: 040-23413908. * Responsible to decide the matter under the PRP Act. Copyright: Express Publications (Madurai) Private Ltd., All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited.



Coforge to acquire US co Encora for ₹17k cr

Acquisition to scale hitech and healthcare verticals, expand nearshore delivery capacity and increase client base in US

SANAL SUDEVAN @ Chennai

INDIA'S IT services company Coforge, formerly NIIT Technologies, will acquire US-based engineering services company Encora for ₹17,032 crore through a swap of 93.8 million equity shares at ₹1,815.91 each, which is 14.5% premium to Friday's close. Coforge is also planning to pay off Encora's debt by raising a term loan of \$550 million funds through a bridge loan or QIP issue.

The company will acquire 100% of shares of Encora US Holdco, Inc. and Encora Holdings Ltd (Cayman) from Advent International, Warburg Pincus and other minority shareholders, whereas Encora will have 21.25% in the combined firm, Coforge said in regulatory filings. The enterprise value of the transaction is \$2.35 billion. The company said the acquisition is a defining moment for



Acquisition will position the company as capability leader in AI-led engineering services underpinned in data and cloud. Encora, with its Silicon Valley roots, brings strong AI-native DNA

IT services company Coforge

the firm. "This acquisition will position the company as the capability leader in AI-led engineering services underpinned in data and cloud. Encora, with its Silicon Valley roots, brings

strong AI-native DNA and a composable agentic platform (AIVA) that enables it to build intelligent workflows."

As per a company statement, the combined entity is project-

ed to become a \$2.5 billion tech services powerhouse. "In FY27, \$2 billion revenue is expected to accrue from the enterprise core of AI-led engineering, cloud and data services alone. The acquisition will immediately scale Coforge's hitech and healthcare verticals, expand its nearshore delivery capabilities in LATAM, and increase its client footprint in the US West and Midwest," said the company.

Encora is backed by Advent International and Warburg Pincus and offers AI solutions for product, cloud and data engineering, estimating that it would help generate revenue of \$2 billion in next financial year. Encora has a large and widespread nearshore delivery capability with over 3,100 delivery team strength in its LATAM Delivery centers.

The value of the transaction is \$2.35 billion, of which \$1.89

billion will be financed through equity and balance through bridge loan or qualified institutional placement (QIP) of debt securities. The pricing of QIP will be determined by SEBI regulations at the time of transactions. The acquisition is subject to shareholder's approval which will be secured within 30 days, and regulatory approvals which are expected to take another four to six months.

The consolidated turnover of Encora Group in FY25 was \$516 million and \$481 million in FY24. In FY26, it is expected to hit \$600 million with adjusted EBITDA margin of 19%. As per the statement, Coforge's North America unit generated only 25% revenue from US West and Mid-west, whereas post-acquisition the North America business is expected to witness a jump of 50% to \$1.4 billion.



Infosys to offer entry-level salary of up to ₹21 lakh

SANAL SUDEVAN @ Chennai

INFOSYS on Friday confirmed that it is offering compensation of up to ₹21 lakh per annum for specialised roles for freshers graduating in the academic year 2026.

Responding to a TNIE query, Shaji Mathew, Group CHRO, Infosys, said the company continues to lead the industry in its AI-first approach across everything it designs and delivers for clients. He further said achieving this vision requires not only upskilling its existing workforce but also bringing in digitally native talent with deep expertise and high learnability.

"These new hires will be guided and mentored to work on complex problems, advanced technologies, and enterprise grade platforms for our customers," he said. As in the previous years, our early career hiring strategy integrates both campus recruitment to meet forecasted talent needs and off campus hiring to support just in time requirements. While we have always offered multiple roles for early career professionals, we have now expanded opportunities within the specialist programmer track. This includes compensation packages of up to ₹21 lakh per annum," he said.

The company is planning to recruit engineering and computer science students for specialised roles for a salary package of between ₹7 lakh and Rs 21 lakh. According to media reports, a fresher joining as a specialist programmer L3 (trainee) will earn ₹21 lakh a year. Those hired as specialist programmer



These new hires will be guided and mentored to work on complex problems, advanced technologies, and enterprise grade platforms for our customers

Shaji Mathew, Group CHRO, Infosys

L2 will get ₹16 lakh, while L1 trainees will earn ₹11 lakh. Digital specialist engineer (trainees) will be offered a package of ₹7 lakh per year. These roles are open to graduates with BE, B'Tech, ME, M'Tech, MCA and integrated MSc degrees, mostly from computer science, IT, and select circuit branches like ECE and EEE.

Following the Q2 results, Infosys chief financial officer (CFO) Jayesh Sanghrajka said the company has recruited nearly 12,000 freshers in the first half of the financial year 2026, and its target is to hire nearly 20,000 fresh graduates by the end of this fiscal. "We have a net addition of over 8,000 employees. We had set a target at the beginning of the year to hire around 15,000 freshers for FY26," he had said after the results.

LOAN

PNB declares 2 Srei accounts of ₹2.4k cr as fraud

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

STATE-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) has reported a ₹2,434 crore of loan it had extended to crippled infra lender Srei as fraud to the RBI.

The reported fraudulent borrowing is linked to the former promoters of Srei Equipment Finance and Srei Infrastructure Finance, both in the NCLT since 2021.

Other lenders such as Punjab & Sind Bank, Bank of Baroda, and Union Bank of India had also earlier declared their respective loans to Srei companies as fraud.

In an exchange filing on Friday, PNB said of the total fraudulent borrowings, ₹1,240.94 crore are related to Srei Equipment Finance and the remaining ₹1,193.06 crore are related to Srei Infrastructure Finance.

The third-largest public sector lender also said it has 100% provisions for these loans.

According to the bank, the declaring these two accounts as frauds are based on a forensic audit by KPMG, which pointed to irregularities such as loans to connected parties and potential evergreening of loans.

However, Srei founder Hemant Kanoria has challenged the KPMG report as the basis for the fraud classification, noting the matter is sub-judice.

The Srei group has been undergoing insolvency resolution process since 2021, and the National Company Law Tribunal has approved a resolution plan submitted by the National Asset Reconstruction Company in 2023. Like DHFL and Reliance Capital, the Srei group was sent to the NCLT by the Reserve Bank in October 2021 after it had found governance issues and defaults and the regulator superseded the boards of Srei Infrastructure Finance and Srei Equipment Finance. In February 2023, NARCL emerged as the successful bidder for SIFL and SEFL which together owed ₹32,750 crore to lenders.

Tata Steel faces €1.4 bn lawsuit in Netherlands

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

STITCHING Frisse Wind.nu (SFW), a Dutch nonprofit organisation, has sent legal notice to Tata Steel's unit seeking €1.4 billion (about ₹14,800 crore) compensation for alleged environmental harm and health damages caused to people in the Netherlands due to hazardous emissions.

Tata Steel in a regulatory filing to the exchanges said on December 19, 2025, SFW served a writ of summons on two subsidiaries of Tata Steel Limited - Tata Steel Nederland B.V. and Tata Steel IJmuiden B.V. (collectively referred to as TSN).

SFW has not provided supporting evidence: Tata Steel

SFW seeks euro 1.4 billion in compensation on account of increased susceptibility to various health issues and the loss of enjoyment of homes. As per TSN, SFW has provided no supporting evidence for the claim, making it unsubstantiated and speculative.

The proceedings initiated by SFW concern a collective action under the Dutch Act on Collective Settlement of Mass Claims (WAMCA). In this action, SFW states that it is acting on behalf of residents living in the vicinity of TSN. The litigation has been filed in the District Court North Holland (Haarlem). The proceedings pertain to

allegations by SFW, holding TSN liable for alleged damages caused by TSN's operations in Velsen-Noord (including, most importantly, emissions of hazardous and/or harmful substances). Tata Steel's subsidiary TSN said that it is fully prepared to defend against the claim. "In our assessment, SFW faces considerable challenges



Cos raise ₹2 lakh crore in 2025, Dalal Street sees average 1 IPO a day

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

DALAL STREET is closing 2025 just shy of ₹2 lakh crore (₹2 trillion) fundraising through the primary markets, mopping up as much as ₹1.88 lakh crore from 365 initial share sales—104 mainboard issues and the rest SME issues—eclipsing the 2024 record of mopping up ₹1.68 lakh crore.

The year saw average one IPO a day. Investment bankers are expecting the new year to set fresh record. The biggest IPOs lined up for 2026 are of Re-

liance Jio, Phonepe and Flipkart.

While the 104 mainboard issues have raised a record ₹1,76,151 crore and 44% of this have come from just eight issues, 267 SME issues have raised ₹11,800 crore, totalling ₹1,87,951 crore, according to the data from Chittorgarh.com, an IPO-focused online publication.

In comparison, in a decade from 2015, companies have raised over ₹7.5 lakh crore from IPOs, as per historical data from Prime Database. In 2015, 21 IPOs raised ₹13,614 crore,



which rose to ₹26,494 crore in 2016 from 26 issues, 2017 saw 36 issuers collecting ₹67,147 crore, but it declined in 2018 to ₹30,959 crore from 24 issues, and 2019 saw a sharper decline to ₹12,362 crore from 16 issues. Come 2020,

15 issues raised ₹26,613 crore, which rose manifold to ₹1,18,723 crore in 2021 from 63 issuers, but more than halved in 2022 to just about ₹59,302 crore in 2022 from 63 issues, and going down further to ₹54,125 crore in 2023

MSMEs SEEK COLLATERAL-FREE CREDIT

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

WITH THE Budget around the corner, the MSME industry has asked the finance ministry for relief in terms of taxes and better access to credit. In a letter written to finance ministry by the Association of Indian Entrepreneur (AIE), the major demand of the association is the access to statutory collateral-free lending up to ₹10 crore for micro enterprises with interest capped at 6-7%.

The association highlighted that the micro enterprises have been hit by the recent geo-political turmoil and tariff situations and despite several measures being announced by the government, there has been little on-ground visible impact for the micro enterprises.

The AIE requested for an Export Risk Equalisation Fund to compensate micro exporters

impacted by sudden tariff hikes and temporary duty drawback enhancement and interest relief during tariff shocks.

The MSME industries expect the government to ease credit constraints for micro enterprises in next year's Budget. Among their other demands include automatic renewal of working capital limits for GST-compliant units, dedicated micro-lending targets for

SIDBI and public sector banks, built-in interest subvention during stress phases, and interest-free loans to support import-substitution projects.

Budget 2025-26 had unveiled a raft of measures to improve credit flow to MSMEs including a credit guarantee cover for micro and small enterprises that was raised to ₹10 crore from ₹5 crore and a guaranteed cover of ₹20 crore for start-ups, with a reduced fee of 1% for loans in 27 priority sectors.



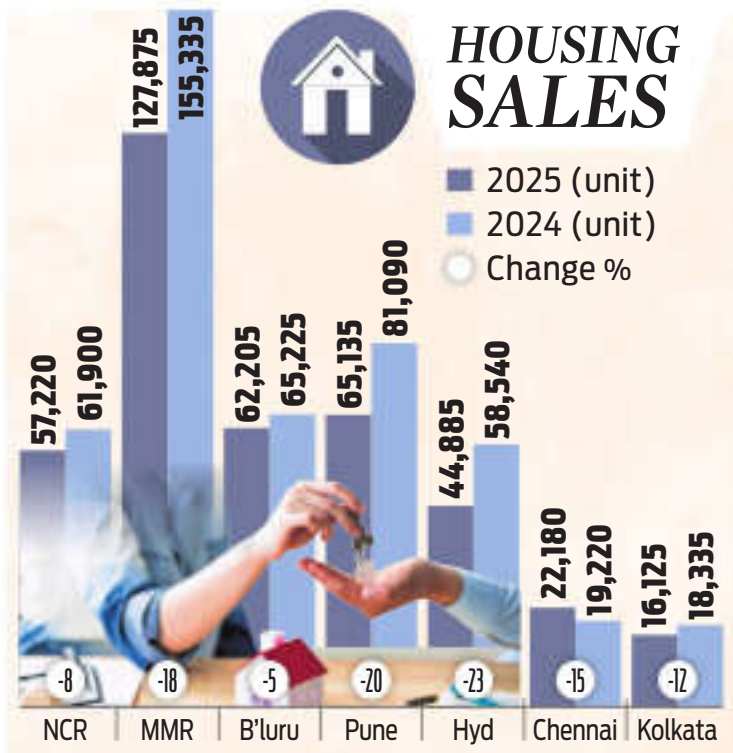
Housing sales crash, inventory soars as prices rise in 2025

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

REALTY sector in 2025 disappointed consumers and most developers with sales struggles playing all but top players. Hit by increasing property prices, layoffs in the IT sector, geopolitical tensions, and other uncertainties, the sector reported a sharp dip in housing sales.

Realty consultant firm ANAROCK Research data indicates that housing sales in India's top 7 cities witnessed a 14% decline in 2025, with nearly 3.95,625 units sold in the year against 4,59,645 units in 2024.

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) witnessed the highest sales of nearly 1,27,875 units, registering an 18% yearly decline. Pune followed with approx. 65,135 units sold, declining by 20% YoY. The two



SALES IN TOP 7 CITIES FALL 14% Realty consultant ANAROCK Research data indicates housing sales in India's top 7 cities witnessed a 14% decline in 2025, with nearly 3.95,625 units sold in the year against 4,59,645 units in 2024. MMR saw the highest sales of nearly 1,27,875 units, an 18% yearly decline

western markets together led residential sales in 2025, comprising a 49% overall share. Besides Chennai (up 15%), sales

declined YoY in all the other six major markets. Hyderabad (down 23%), Pune (down 20%) and MMR (down 18%) regis-

tered sharply decline in sales.

Annually, unsold inventory in the top 7 cities rose 4% by 2025-end, largely because of tapered demand and increased new supply in the year. Approximately 5.77 lakh units are currently on the primary sales market in these cities. Bengaluru recording a significant 23% increase in unsold inventory.

"2025 has been a year of broad-spectrum upheaval including geopolitical turmoil, layoffs in the IT sector, tariff tensions and other uncertainties," said Anuj Puri, Chairman - ANAROCK Group.

"The year's trend was of sale volumes stabilising at near 4 lakh units across the top 7 cities, but growth in overall sales value. Our data shows over 21% of the new supply was launched in the above ₹2.5 crore price bracket.

Interestingly, the average residential price growth rate has tapered down from double digits in previous years to single digits in 2025," added Puri.

Prices in the top 7 cities collectively rose 8% annually, and only NCR saw double-digit growth at 23%, largely due to a higher new supply of pricier homes. The other major cities recorded single-digit price appreciation, ranging between 4-9% in 2025 as against last year's 13-27% in 2024. Out of NCR's total new supply of 61,775 units during the year, over 55% was priced over ₹2.5 crore. Owing to a constant rise in property prices and better demand for luxury apartments, the overall sales value of housing units saw a 6% yearly jump - from ₹5.68 lakh crore in 2024 to over ₹6 lakh crore in 2025.

ASIANOMICS

JAPAN

CABINET APPROVES RECORD \$785 BILLION BUDGET

Japan's cabinet under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Friday approved a record budget of \$785 billion for next fiscal year, seeking to balance expansionary spending plans with concerns over rising debt by keeping new bond issuance in check. Amid higher government bond yields and a weak yen, the Takaichi administration has moved to reassure markets that it will avoid excessive borrowing or unfunded tax cuts. The budget for the fiscal beginning in April, to be submitted to parliament early next year, stands at a record 122.3 trillion yen, up from 115.2 trillion yen in the current year. Despite the rise in spending, new government bond issuance will rise only marginally.

CHINA

REVISES 2024 GDP FIGURES DOWNWARDS

China on Friday said it had revised gross domestic product (GDP) figures for last year downwards, state media reported. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of the world's second-largest economy, GDP was revised to 134.8066 trillion yuan (about \$19.16 trillion), down 101.8 billion yuan from the preliminary figure. But the final verified GDP growth rate for 2024 remained at 5%, unchanged from the preliminary calculation, said the NBS. China's GDP target for this year remains at "around 5%," said a bureau report. "China's annual GDP goes through two stages of accounting: preliminary calculation and final verification. The final verification is conducted based on the annual statistical data, final fiscal accounts, and departmental administrative records," the report said.

THAILAND

LEVERAGES NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY TO BOOST TOURISM

As thousands of fireworks illuminated the sky over the Chao Phraya River, marking the finale of the annual light festival, Thailand has signaled a step forward in its strategy to revitalise the tourism sector through "night economy." The Vajit Chao Phraya 2025 festival transformed Bangkok's main riverbank into an open-air cultural stage, with 15 curated locations ranging from historic sites and temples to bridges and contemporary landmarks adorned with multimedia light installations, laser effects, projection mapping, and drone shows. As per the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the 45-day extravaganza attracted over 1.7 million visits and generated an estimated revenue of 5.5 billion baht (\$177 mn). Beyond the visual spectacle, the event served as a pilot for the government's broader "night economy" policy, designed to extend visitors' spending hours and encourage overnight stays.

2025 will be one to remember for teams that finally broke decade-long hoodoos. A look at a few...

Finish Line 2025

YEAR OF FIRSTS

ROYAL ECSTASY

“*Ee Sala Cup Namde*” (in Kannada: this year the cup will be ours) finally became “*Ee Sala Cup Namdu*,” (this year, the cup is ours) as the Royal Challengers Bengaluru finally got their hands on an IPL trophy 17 years after its inception. For Virat Kohli — who went to his knees and broke down in tears — the elusive title has been captured in what has been a decorated career.

PROTEAS TITLE PRAYERS ANSWERED AT MECCA OF CRICKET

After waiting for years and despite boosting of some of the finest cricketers in the recent years, the South African team failed to lay their hands on an ICC trophy. They had come close but it still remained a dream. South Africa made history at Lord's in England when they rallied to defeat Australia in the World Test Championship final in June this year. At the core of it was skipper Temba Bavuma, whose position as captain since 2022 was constantly debated. Not a bad way to silence critics by securing South Africa their first ICC title.

HISTORIC NIGHT IN MUMBAI

After the heartbreak in 2017 ODI World Cup final and failure to win in 2022, the senior women's team finally broke the jinx and won the title in November this year. With the popularity of women's cricket slowly rising, this win could spark another revolution in the country. Harmanpreet Kaur and Co, despite a brief hiccup in the league stages, beat defending champions Australia in the semifinals before seeing off South Africa in the final in front of a jubilant crowd at DY Patil Stadium.



Elsewhere...

PSG EUROPEAN CHAMPS

After pouring truckloads of money into new recruits, Paris Saint Germain finally broke their European duck, blazing through Inter Milan in June's UEFA Champions League final in Munich. They were ridiculed for their continental failures, for they had the household names in Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe at their disposal once and still failed to win the title.



SPURS DELIGHT

For Tottenham Hotspur, their 17-year-wait of winning a trophy ended, by winning the Europa League title against Manchester United. Considering the fact that Tottenham finished one place above relegation in the 24/25 English Premier League, this European glory was of increased significance.

MINNOWS MAKE IT TO BIG STAGE

Curacao — the smallest ever nation with a population of 156,000 — historically qualified to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Their spot was confirmed after avoiding defeat to Jamaica away from home. Cape Verde — another island nation off the West African coast — also made history as they finished on top of their qualifying group which featured big teams like Cameroon. When teams representing these nations walk out to the pitch for their first game, expect a lot of fanfare, passion and emotion.



Not a very healthy sight

Amidst few highs, sports in India also saw painful lows. A look..

NO FOOTBALL LEAGUE YET

The country is still yet to witness the start of its premier football league — the 2025/26 Indian Super League — and players, coaches, staff and many depending on the league are left high and dry. The agreement between All India Football Federation (AIFF) and its commercial arm Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) in organising the league expired early December and ever since, no new organisers have been found.

INDIA'S DOPING SHAME PERSISTS

The country has yet again topped doping charts, with 260 Adverse Analytical Findings (AAF) being confirmed by World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) recently. To make things more embarrassing, no other country has crossed 100 cases, exposing the large scale of India's doping issue despite several measures and strict guidelines in place.



MODEST RETURNS FOR BADMINTON

Despite good track-record in recent memory, India's premier doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty could not collect another doubles gold this year. In the singles event, it was largely a struggle for big names like PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth. Lakshya Sen salvaged his year by winning the Australian Open in November. Ayush Shetty showed promise after his US Open success in June this year.



TOUGH TIMES CONTINUE FOR TENNIS

Little to nothing has changed after a tumultuous 2024 for Indian tennis on the administrative front. After last year's elections of the sport's national governing body — The All India Tennis Association (AITA) remained unannounced, two factions within the federation reportedly announced their own team managers for the Davis cup matches. On the court, no player is yet to breach the top 100s, as India's best, are still ranked somewhere in the 250s

Captain's innings: Pant comes to the fore for Delhi

CHANDRA PRABHU @ Chennai

WHILE all the focus has been on Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli's performances in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy, another player that may also garner sizeable amount of attention is Rishabh Pant. The wicketkeeper-batter's high-risk, high-reward approach has made heads turn in Test cricket, but he has not had a similar impact in white-ball cricket. That lack of influence has put him in the background for some time now. When the national squad for the upcoming men's T20 World Cup was announced, Pant was clearly not part of the equation and it was far from a surprise to see his name missing. Such has been his predicament in the shorter formats in recent times.

The last time he featured in an ODI match was August last year: He was part of the Champions Trophy that India won at the start of the year but he didn't feature in a single game. Likewise, it was the same story during the recent ODI series against South Africa. His below-par shows in recent outings in the Test format has also not helped his case. And his last T20I match came in the same year in July. He's clearly down the pecking order in the short formats of the game. For that reason, his 79-ball 70 for Delhi on Friday in the ongoing domestic competition is a welcome balm for the 28-year-old. Thanks to his contribution, Delhi registered a seven-run over Gujarat in their Group D meeting at the BCCI Centre of Excellence on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Just a couple of days back, he had been dismissed for 5 against Andhra in the first outing. While Pant might have a lot of catching up to do, this knock could give him the confidence going forward.

Before Pant walked onto the pitch, it was Virat Kohli who orchestrated Delhi's quick start. He rallied to a 29-ball half-centu-



Rishabh Pant (L) in action against Gujarat on Friday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

SELECT BRIEF SCORES

Group A: Tamil Nadu 280 in 49.3 ovs (Mohamed Ali 57, Narayan Jagadeesan 55, Sai Sudharsan 51; Kumar Kartikeya 3/62) lost to Madhya Pradesh 283/8 in 49.2 ovs (Yash Dubey 92, Himanshu Mantri 90; Govinth Ganesh 4/54) by 2 wickets; Kerala 284/7 in 50 overs (Mohammed Azharuddeen 84, Baba Aparajith 71; Abhilash Shetty 3/59) lost to Karnataka 285/2 in 48.2 ovs (Karun Nair 130 not out, Devdutt Padikkal 124) by 8 wickets; Group B: Uttar Pradesh 367/4 in 50 ovs (Aryan Juyal 134, Rinku Singh 106 not out; Taranpreet Singh 2/74) bt Chandigarh 140 all out in 29.3 ovs (Manan Vohra 32; Zeeshan Ansar 4/29) by 227 runs; Group C: Mumbai: 331/7 in 50 ovs (Hardik Tamore 93, Sarfaraz Khan 55, Musheer Khan 55; Devendra Bora 3/74) bt Uttarakhand: 280/9 in 50 ovs (Yuvraj Choudhary 96); Group D: Railways: 266/9 in 50 ovs (Ravi Singh 76, Ansh Yadav 59, Satyanarayana Raju 3/41, Narasimha Raju 3/68) lost to Andhra 271/4 in 44.4 ovs (Ricky Bhui 76, Nitish Kumar Reddy 55 not out; Kam Sharma 3/46).

ry — his 84th in List A format. He scored 77 of Delhi's 108 runs before getting stumped by Urvil Patel off a beautiful delivery from left-arm spinner Vishal Jayswal.

Walking in at 98/3 in the 20th over, Pant took a conservative approach. According to partnership statistics, he was at 5 off 10 balls (4th wicket with Kohli), 26 off 26 balls (5th wicket with Ba-

doni), before taking 62 balls to reach 50. He was stuck to his crease, and avoided any extravagant shots. But that eventually changed, post his fifty. It began when Ravi Bishnoi — who was brought back to the attack — saw his deliveries slammed to long on. From thereon, it seemed like Pant was in his natural habitat — shots-off-the-crease, sweep shots deep towards backwards square leg as he rushed to 20 in his next 16 balls after reaching his fifty. But the pick of the lot would be the shots deep from the crease, where he swivelled his bat to a ball moving outside off and the result being the ball on the covers' boundary. With more innings like this, he could give selectors something to think about ahead of future series.

Rohit goes for duck

Days after he slammed a 94-ball 155 against Sikkim, former India captain Rohit Sharma suffered a golden duck in Mumbai's win against Uttarakhand in Jaipur in a Group C tie. Put to bat first, the lanky medium fast bowler Devendra Bora (3/74) scalped the most memorable victim of his career when he dug one short and Rohit instinctively went for a pull shot. J Nagarkoti, stationed at deep fine leg, juggled before taking it on the second attempt.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

THE beleaguered All India Football Federation (AIFF) had a meeting with all the stakeholders on Friday and submitted a proposal to run the Indian Super League. According to the discussions and document shared in the meeting, the AIFF has said that the league would be “Owned and Operated by the AIFF under the aegis of its new constitution.” The AIFF has also proposed that all revenue share will return to the nation-

Salah spot on as Egypt beat South Africa

AGENCIES @ Agadir (Morocco)

MOHAMED Salah scored a 10-man Egypt beat South Africa 1-0 in Agadir on Friday to become the first qualifiers for the knockout stage of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

Salah converted a penalty on 45 minutes, and South Africa were denied a spot-kick late in the second half when Yasser Ibrahim appeared to handle the ball inside the box. Salah came to Morocco after not starting in five Liverpool matches — his omission leading to an outburst against manager Arne Slot. Egypt were reduced to 10 men in first-half added time when right-back Mohamed Hany was shown a second yellow card for a stamp, followed by a red.

Friday's results: Egypt 1-0 South Africa; Angola 1-1 Zimbabwe.

al governing body after every season. And the period of this arrangement would be for 20 seasons that would be calculated from June 1 to May 31 of next year and after every season, it is to be redistributed/re-tendered. The proposal also speaks of relegation. “Each participating Club would pay the AIFF a ‘standard participation fee’ of Rs 1 Crore a year at the beginning of the season directly to the AIFF,” said the proposal. “This would be independent



Deepti in record books as Ind seal series

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Chennai

INDIA all-rounder Deepti Sharma etched her name into global cricket folklore, becoming the first-ever cricketer across the men's and women's game to register 1000 runs and 150 wickets in T20 Internationals.

The historic milestone came during the third T20I against Sri Lanka in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday, underlining Deepti's status as one of the most complete white-ball cricketers the sport has seen.

With a decisive three-wicket spell, Deepti also rose to joint-highest wicket-taker in women's T20I history, drawing level with Australia's Megan Schutt on 151 wickets.

Sri Lanka's Kavisha Dilhari became her landmark 150th scalp, falling in the 14th over. Deepti, the player of the Tournament at the 2025 ICC Women's World Cup, was re-



Deepti Sharma (C) celebrates with her teammates on Friday | BP DEEPU

cently bought for ₹3.2 crore by UP Warriorz.

On the day, the right-arm off-spinner's figures of 3 for 18 helped the team restrict Sri Lanka to 112/7 in 20 overs. While it was a significant day for Deepti, it was also a memorable outing for pacer Renuka Singh, who was the top wicket-taker for the home side. Bar-

ring Chamari Athapaththu, who was Deepti's first wicket, Renuka dismissed all the other top-order batters, returning with figures of 4/21 in four overs.

The visiting batters, after a slow start, could never find their footing and ended up with a sub-par total of 112/7. In their chase, opener Shafali Verma sparked with an unbeaten fifty (79 runs off 42 balls).

She single-handedly dismantled the opposition bowlers, guiding India home with 40 balls to spare. After facing three dot balls, Shafali danced down the track to clobber a towering 83-metre six over long-off. She continued punishing the Sri Lankan bowlers, smashing 11 boundaries and three sixes. With this victory, India have an unassailable 3-0 lead over Sri Lanka in the five-match T20I series. **Brief scores:** SL 112/7 in 20 ovs (Dulan 27, Perera 25; Renuka 4/21, Deepti 3/18) **lost** to India 115/2 in 13.2 ovs (S Verma 79 n.o).

THE ASHES

Aus lead Eng by 46 runs after crazy day at MCG

AGENCIES @ Melbourne

AN astounding 20 wickets fell on a frantic day one of the fourth Ashes Test on Friday with Australia all out for 152 before storming back to dismiss England for 110 and leave the clash on a knife-edge. England skipper Ben Stokes won a key toss on a green track and his quicks feasted after sending in the hosts under overcast skies in front of 94,199 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It was the biggest cricket crowd ever at the cavernous arena, exceeding the 93,013 who watched the 2015 World Cup final, and they witnessed the home side collapse with Josh Tongue grabbing 5-45. But England fared even worse, slump-



Michael Neser celebrates a wicket on the opening day on Friday | AFP

ing to 16-4 and never recovering, leaving Australia to face one over before stumps, which nightwatchman Scott Boland safely negotiated with Travis Head at the other end.

Australia were 4-0 at the close with Boland on four, 46 ahead, with Head yet to face a ball.

“I feel like anyone could have taken a ‘five-fer’ today,” said Tongue, who became the first

Englishman to take five wickets in an innings in a Test at the MCG since Dean Headley and Darren Gough in 1998.

“When I’m at my best I’m bowling at that fuller length. Stokes has spoken to us quite a bit about it, going a touch fuller but hitting the pitch hard.

“If we get the ball in the same areas tomorrow we can get them three of four wickets down in the first hour.”

Australia bowler Michael Neser, who took 4-45, was not making any predictions for the second innings after a day when the ball dominated the bat.

“We saw how tough it was when we batted. The ball was nipping around and we needed to bowl in the right areas,” Neser said.

Muddappa back for drugg nationals finale

CHENNAI: After a measured first half of the season, ace Bengaluru biker Hemanth Muddappa will be returning this weekend with the title in mind as the final two rounds of the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship 2025 gets underway here on Saturday. The 15-time National champion will chase yet another milestone, taking part in four categories.

EXPRESS READ

Court restores Jaiveer's post as EFI secy general

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday has restored the position of Colonel (retired) Jaiveer Singh as the secretary general of Equestrian Federation of India (EFI), holding his suspension by the federation's Executive Committee illegal and restored his authority Principal District and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna on December 22 restrained EFI from extending Singh's suspension.

Sr nat'ls: Surya, Shruti enter semifinals

VIJAYAWADA: Producing major upsets, local favourite Surya Charishma Tamiri and seasoned campaigner Shruti Mundada ousted the top two seeds — Unnati Hooda and Anupama Upadhyaya — to advance to the women's singles semifinals of the senior national badminton meet on Friday. Surya sealed a 21-12, 21-15 quarterfinal win against Unnati. Shruti beat Anupama 22-20, 21-12.



Anil Jauhri, Former CEO, National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies



Dr. Y Raghuramulu, former Director of Central Coffee Research Institute



Keerthi D Souza is a Sustainability Expert

REWRITTEN INDIA'S COFFEE STORY – FROM SHADE TO STANDARDS

As the Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI) marks its centenary, India introduces new certification standards INDICOFS that will shape the global sustainability landscape for Indian coffee

In celebration of its 100th anniversary, the Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI) has launched the Indian Coffee Sustainability Standards (INDICOFS) through the Coffee Board of India. This initiative is more than just a certification scheme; it represents a significant shift in how agricultural sustainability is defined, measured, and valued in international trade.

For the first time, a major coffee producer from the Global South has created comprehensive sustainability standards that are rooted in its own ecological and social contexts while also incorporating insights from various global frameworks. The new standards present a fresh opportunity for Indian coffee on the world stage — a new identity for everyone's daily cup.

Indian coffee is predominantly produced by smallholder farmers, with over 95 per cent of coffee holdings belonging to small and marginal growers. This coffee-centric farming system plays a vital socio-economic role by providing consistent employment for rural communities and significantly reducing migration from rural to urban areas. As an export-oriented crop, most of India's coffee is sent to international markets, with Europe being a key destination.

Unlike conventional plantations, Indian coffee is cultivated under dense shade in regions such as the Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats, and the north-eastern part of India, which is home to unique biodiversity hotspots. Our coffee farms resemble managed forests; birds nest among the shade trees, elephants traverse traditional corridors and multiple crops grow in harmony. This is more than agriculture; it is agroforestry refined over generations.



CENTRAL COFFEE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The INDICOFS framework is primarily designed to capture the ecological value of Indian coffee systems. Farmers who have practiced sustainability for generations will find that INDICOFS reflects their established practices. INDICOFS enriches the sustainability conversation by ensuring compliance with regulations like the EU Deforestation Regulation and by recognizing essential ecosystem services. The carbon sequestered by shade trees, protected watersheds, and the biodiversity present in these landscapes are all acknowledged within INDICOFS.

The three-tier structure of INDICOFS promotes continuous improvement, with each level building toward world-class sustainability performance.

● **DEMOCRATIZING SUSTAINABILITY:** One of INDICOFS's most significant innovations is making sustainability certification accessible to small and marginal farmers. The current global certi-

cation landscape can be challenging for smallholders due to high costs and requirements that do not always reflect the realities of small-scale farming. By enabling Coffee Board assessments for small farmers at Level 1, INDICOFS expands access to sustainability premiums. This recognizes that sustainable agriculture often occurs at small scales, managed by farmers with extensive ecological knowledge but limited financial resources.

● **INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION:** The development of INDICOFS showcases the enhanced institutional capacity of Indian coffee research. As CCRI enters its second century, the Core Technical Committee brings together diverse expertise—scientists, sustainability professionals, and certification experts—and incorporates feedback from farmers, exporters, and trade associations through consultation. The resulting framework balances rigor with practicality, ambition with achievability.

● **TECHNOLOGY AS AN ENABLER:** INDICOFS harnesses India's digital infrastructure to enable new possibilities not available when international standards were established. Satellite monitoring, blockchain traceability, and mobile connectivity facilitate cost-effective verification and direct engagement with farmers. This integration with evolving digital systems creates an ecosystem where sustainability verification becomes part of everyday business rather than an additional burden. This systematic approach could represent India's contribution to global sustainability practices.

● **MARKET REALITIES:** The ultimate success of INDICOFS hinges on market recognition. The framework is designed to complement existing certification systems while addressing the specific needs of Indian coffee cultivation. As consumers increasingly seek transparency in sustainability claims, a government-backed framework grounded in scientific principles offers additional credibility and assurance.

● **BROADER IMPLICATIONS:** The significance of INDICOFS extends beyond coffee. It demonstrates that sustainability standards can originate from producing countries, enriching the global dialogue on sustainable agriculture. The shade-grown coffee gardens of Coorg offer valuable lessons in sustainable farming for the world. INDICOFS embodies this contribution.

The launch of INDICOFS marks a pivotal moment when India began to define what sustainability means for its unique coffee systems. In the second century of organized coffee development, this shift toward sustainability could transform the future of Indian coffee.

SC STRIKES A FINE BALANCE TO SAVE THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

AFTER six years, the Supreme Court issued its final order on the conservation of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB) or (Ardeotisnigriceps) by revising the priority conservation area while promoting renewable energy in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Supreme Court's order strikes a fine balance between green energy promotion and conservation efforts.

In 2019, environmental expert MK Ranjitsinh filed a public interest litigation (PIL) to protect the birds from the impacts of human activities in their habitats. The PIL requested interim directions to the governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat to ensure predator-proof fencing, controlled grazing and to halt any further permits for installing overhead power lines, wind turbines and solar infrastructure in GIB's potential habitats identified by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

The PIL also sought installation of bird diverters on power lines and proposed to shift power transmission cables underground.

This case is unique as it involves a conflict between the goals of addressing climate change through generation of green energy via solar fields and the need to preserve the GIB. The solar and wind mill installation have encroached upon the habitat of critically endangered species like the GIB and Lesser Florican (LF) in the Desert National Park of Rajasthan. Earlier, the court had pronounced two interim orders on it. Both the GIB and LF have been listed as Critically Endangered in the Red List of Threatened Species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 2011. The latest count says there are only 144 GIBs in India - 140 in Rajasthan and 4 in Kutch (Gujarat). In a 2018 survey, the estimated population was 150, including 25 birds in government captivity.

In its final order, the Supreme Court directed renewable energy companies to relocate some overhead power lines underground within two years in areas prioritised for the conservation of the GIB and LF in the Desert National Park of Rajasthan. The court established a revised conservation area of 14,753 sq km for the GIB and strictly instructed power companies not to violate this zone under any circumstances.

First interim order on GIB

The first interim order on April 19, 2021, restricted the establishment of overhead transmission lines over a vast area of approximately 99,000 sq km. The order also mandated the formation of a three-member committee to assess the feasibility of laying high-voltage underground power lines. Additionally, it directed measures to install bird diverters and underground power lines to ensure uninterrupted flight for the GIB and LF.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Cli-

mate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Power, and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) requested the court in November to reconsider these directives, arguing they would adversely impact India's power sector and its energy transition goals away from fossil fuels. India committed to the Paris Agreement in 2015 to transition to non-fossil fuels and reduce emissions to mitigate climate change.

Moreover, the government also contended in court that the designated area was larger than the actual habitat of the GIB and constituted a significant portion of the country's solar and wind energy potential. It also argued that undergrounding high-voltage power lines was not technically or financially feasible.

Modification of the interim order

On March 21, 2024, the court modified its prior blanket ban on the installation of renewable energy power lines and formed an expert committee to assess the situation and find a balance between the conservation of endangered species and the necessity of combating climate change. The court stated that the decline in GIB and LF populations had various causes, including low fecundity, habitat fragmentation, loss of habitat, predation and loss of prey. It emphasised that converting overhead lines to underground transmission lines might not significantly contribute to species conservation.

Dwindling GIB populations

The GIB, locally known as Godawan, is one of the heaviest flying birds in the world and a flagship species for the arid and semi-arid grasslands of the Indian subcontinent. This majestic bird symbolises the health of fragile grassland ecosystems. Historically found across much of North and West India, the GIB's critically endangered population is now confined to a small region of Rajasthan.

The Rajasthan government initiated 'Project Godawan' on June 5, 2013. Previously, GIBs were heavily hunted for their meat and as trophies by local sportsmen. The birds nest on the ground and primarily feed on pests, termites, rats and snakes, helping maintain ecological balance in the desert. However, the expansion of the Indira Gandhi irrigation canal led to increased agricultural activities in the arid regions of Jaisalmer and Barmer which damaged their habitats. Additionally, use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture disrupted the GIB's food chain and hindered its population growth. The introduction of renewable energy grids aimed at combating global warming further reduced the GIB's available habitats.

High-voltage power lines posed a significant risk to GIBs. As one of the largest birds in the world, they have inadequate frontal vision, making it difficult for them to detect power lines during flight. This often results in collisions with the lines, leading to electrocution. "The main threats to these birds are

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

For on behalf of President of India, the General Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Garden Reach Kolkata-700043 invites e-tender for the following works:
Tender No. : BR-HQ-KGP-25-26-12;
Description of the work : "Kharagpur Division" Conversion of existing bridges into Composite girders/Balasted decks for running of 25T Axle loaded freight trains 100Kmph in (a) Bridge No. 69 DN (Span 4x18.3m) in between station Ghatshila-Dhalbhumgarh Bridge No. 94UP (Span 2x18.3m) in between station Jhargram-Gidhni (b) Bridge No. 217 UP (Span 9x18.3m) in between station Rajghat-Amarda (c) Bridge No. 235UP (Span 9x18.3m) in between station Basta-Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road (d) Bridge No. 235DN (Span 9x18.3m) in between station Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road-Basta (e) Bridge No. 264UP (Span 9x18.3m) in between station Haldipada-Balasora (f) Bridge No. 238 UP (Span 3x12.2m) in between station Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road-Rupsa Junction & Bridge No. 239 UP (Span 2x12.2m+2x18.3m) in between station Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road-Rupsa (g) Bridge 239 DN (Span 2x12.2m+2x18.3m) in between station Rupsa Junction-Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road & Bridge No. 258 UP (Span 4x12.2m) in between station Haldipada-Balasora (h) Bridge No. 217DN (Span 9x18.3m) in between station Amardaroad-Rajghat & Br. No. 234UP (Span 5x12.2m) in between station Basta-Nuagan Mayurbhanj Road (i) Bridge No. 168DN (Span 4x12.2m+2x18.3m) in between station Bakhrabad-Narayanganj & Bridge No. 176 DN (Span 3x12.2m) in between station Belda-Bakhrabad." **Tender Value :** ₹ 125.56,53,525.18; **Earnest Money :** ₹ 64,28,300.00; **Tender Document Cost :** Nil; **Tender Closing Date Time :** 30.01.2026 - 11:30 hrs. **Period of Completion :** 24 (Twenty Four) Months. Interested Tenderer's may visit website www.irops.gov.in for full details/ description of this tender so as to submit their bids online. Physical/manual tender for this work will not be accepted. (PR-998)

For and on behalf of President of India, the Chief Engineer (Con)/IGRC invites e-tender for the following works. Following tender has been uploaded on website www.irops.gov.in. The tender will be closed at 12:00 Hrs on due date : e-Tender Notice No. : 4599-GRCC-CE-C-01-21-2025; **Brief Description of Works:** Composite work for Capacity Augmentation of ELB/BKSC to increase the homing capacity-Up to 300 locos (Ph-1) at ELB/BKSC, Creation of Advance maintenance facilities for Electric locomotives at ELB/BKSC & Creation of Trip Shed at ELB/BKSC-Execution of Earthwork in Formation & Cutting including P. Way Linking Work with Ballasting including Loop Lines & Siding. Construction of Sheds & Service Building Road & Platform, Circulating Area including other related work, including S&T & Electrical work in Bokaro of S. E. Railway; **Closing Date :** 22.01.2026; **Approx. Cost:** ₹ 65.54 Crore, **Bid Security:** ₹ 34,27,100/- & **Completion period:** 18 months; Interested tenderers may visit website www.irops.gov.in for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. NB: "Prospective Bidders may regularly visit www.irops.gov.in to participate in all other tenders." (PR-1007)

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, Zone-1, No. 2152/20, Defence colony, 9th Main, D Block, Sahakarnagara, BNCC Office, Bengaluru-560092

No.: BNCC-Z1/EE/BTP/KPPP/PR/03/2025-26 Date: 26.12.2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bengaluru North City Corporation or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations. (Standard Tender Document KW-1,2,3,4)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
Single Cover Tender	
1	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 05 Kogilu. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 60,000/-, Category: Others.
2	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 06 Jakkuru. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 60,000/-, Category: Others.
3	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 07 Thanisandra. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 60,000/-, Category: Others.
4	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 08 Amruthahalli. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 30,000/-, Category: SC.
5	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 09 Hebbala Kempapura. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 30,000/-, Category: CAT-I.
6	Removal of silt & other maintenance of roads and drains in new ward no. 10 Byatarayanapura. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 30.00, EMD (in Rupees): 30,000/-, Category: CAT-II(A).

Two Cover Tender	
7	Improvements and Refurbishment of Railway Underbridge at Kodigehalli ward no. 8. Approximate value of work (Rs. in Lakhs): 100.00, EMD (in Rupees): 1,00,000/-, Category: ST.

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents can be downloaded from the GOK KPPP website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. (2) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 05.01.2026 at 3:00 p.m. in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, No. 2152/20, Defence Colony, BWSSB Tank Road, Sahakarnagara Office, Bengaluru-560 092. (3) Last Date for uploading the Filled proposals is 09.01.2026 up to 4:00 p.m. (4) Date of Opening of Technical Bid is 12.01.2026 after 4:00 p.m. (5) Date of Opening of Financial Bid after Approval of Technical Bid. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Byatarayanapura Division, Zone-1, BNCC

YOUR GUIDE TO SPICY LIVING

INDULGE

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RAYAGADA (R&B) CIRCLE, RAYAGADA

e-mail ID - sepwd_rgda@yahoo.com, Phone/Fax No - 06856 - 22304

e-Procurement Notice Bid Identification No. C.C.E (R AND B) RGDA- 11/2025-26 (Online) Dt. 20.12.2025

No.2181	Date.20.12.2025
B-883	INVITATION FOR BIDS
1. The Chief Construction Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover mode to be received in online mode only for the construction of works as detailed in the table below:	
2. Nature of work	: Building Work
3. No. of works	: 01 (One) No. of work
4. Estimated Cost. (Approximately)	: Rs.153.56
5. Bid Cost (Online)	: Rs. 10,000/-
6. EMD/ Bid Security Amount (Online)	: One Percentage of the Estimated Cost.
7. Class of Contractor	: B, A & Special Class only as per Financial Eligibility.
8. Availability of Bid Documents in the website.	: 11.00 Hours of Dt.29.12.2025 to 17.00 Hours of Dt. 31.01.2026.
9. Date of opening of Bid	: 11.00 Hrs. of Dt. 15.01.2026.
10. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersorissa.gov.in . Any Addendum only/Corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.	
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Circle, Rayagada	
OIPR-34154/11/0027/2526	

V.O.CHIDAMBARANAR PORT AUTHORITY

CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

TUTICORIN – 628 004

GLOBAL NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No.CIV-OFCPD-PRJ-DEVEL-V1-21(50298)/D.4101 Date:26.12.2025
V.O.Chidambaranar Port invites Application from interested parties (Applicants) in accordance with the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the project "Construction of Breakwater, Rock Bund, Wharf and capital dredging and reclamation for backup yard and allied onshore facilities including maintenance thereof on Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) under Development of Outer Harbour at V.O. Chidambaranar Port".

Name of Work	Construction of Breakwater, Rock Bund, Wharf and capital dredging and reclamation for backup yard and allied onshore facilities including maintenance thereof on Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) under Development of Outer Harbour at V.O. Chidambaranar Port.
Indicative Project Cost	Rs.9,859.45 Crs.
Sale of bid Documents	26.12.2025 to 09.02.2026
Bid document fee	Rs.11,63,416/- (inclusive of GST @ 18%)
Bid Security	Rs 116,34,15,100/- (as per cl. 1.2.4 of RFP)
Last date of receiving queries	07.01.2026
Pre-Application Conference	08.01.2026 at 12:00 noon (Hybrid mode)
Last date and time for submission of Tender through online	09.02.2026 up to 15:00 hours (IST)
Online RFP Bid opening date and time	10.02.2026 at 15:30 hours (IST)
Validity of offer	180 days from the last date fixed for submission of Tender

For downloading of RFP & further details, visit port Website: www.vocport.gov.in & <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Ph. No: 0461-2372306
Email:ce@vocport.gov.in

Sd/-
CHIEF ENGINEER

QuoteExpress

TRY TO BE A RAINBOW IN SOMEONE'S CLOUD

MAYA ANGELOU

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Tender Notice

'e' NIT No.22/MDR/ENC(MDR)/DEC(RV/ETEC)/DE4/AEE/2025-26 Dt.24.12.2025
Online tender is invited under e-procurement platform for one work in Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh for Rs.22.00 Crores under MDR Plan. Tenderers can download the tender schedules and have further details from e-market place i.e., www.approcurement.gov.in from 3:00 PM on 29.12.2025 onwards. The last date of receipt of tenders is upto 3:30 PM on 12.01.2026.
Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), Major District Roads
DIPR No.18539/CL/ADVT/11/2021-22. Dt: 26/12/2025

TUNE IN TO THE expressions PODCAST FOR ALL THINGS LIFE AND LIFESTYLE!

CATCH BENGALURU POLICE COMMISSIONER SEEMANT KUMAR SINGH, IPS

AS HE TALKS ABOUT CONTROLLING CRIME IN THE CITY AND THE HUMAN SIDE OF POLICING

IN A CONVERSATION WITH Neha

Available on: YouTube and Spotify



DAY'S DIARY

Sovereign Indonesia

On this day in 1949, the Dutch formally handed over Indonesia's sovereignty and the Netherlands gave up its claim over the region

SIGNIFICANCE

This act, as part of the Hague Agreement, formally ended four years of armed conflict and diplomatic struggle (1945-1949) between Indonesia and the Dutch



UNITARY STATE

The federal structure of Indonesia was short-lived. By 1950, all constituent states had dissolved, and Indonesia became a unitary state



AGREEMENT REVOKED

The conflict between began once again. On April 21, 1956, six years later, the Indonesian parliament revoked the Hague Agreement

Good story, weak writing and execution

PG 4

SHREYA VERONICA

As the year draws to a close, most of us are eager to know what the coming months have in store. But before we step into the new year, it's worth pausing to look back at a year that truly celebrated good food and finger-licking cuisine — experiences that made us fall in love with dining all over again. Hyderabad witnessed a vibrant culinary calendar, packed with standout cafés, inventive food pop-ups, and immersive dining experiences. From global flavours to regional gems, the city indulged in its finest, savouring every bite.

REWIND PLATES OF THE YEAR

LE MAGNIFIQUE!



HAUTE CUISINE FINDS A MODERN VOICE

Renowned French chef Alexandre Kerboub brought a refined pop-up experience to Prego at The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, blending classic French techniques with contemporary flair and subtle Indian influences. With over two decades of experience, Chef Kerboub is celebrated for his dedication to haute cuisine and his passion for cross-cultural flavours. His Hyderabad pop-up presented a modern interpretation of classic French dishes, offering diners an elegant and thoughtfully curated culinary journey.

SOULFUL FLAVOURS OF TAMIL NADU

From Drumstick Leaf soup to Jeera Samba biryani, Pandya's Virunthu at The Leela Hyderabad celebrated the rich and diverse culinary heritage of Tamil Nadu. Hosted at RAEN – The Chef's Studio, the pop-up moved beyond familiar staples like idli, dosa, and sambhar to spotlight regional specialities. Curated by Chef Vijaya Raghavan, the experience featured authentic dishes from Chettinad, Madurai, and Karaikudi. Each plate was hearty, flavourful, and indulgent enough to leave diners in a blissful food coma.



AUG



THE WHY JUNCTION

Sandesh

(This comedian is here to tell funny stories about Hyderabad)



How was your year?

don't get rejected. Think about it logically. A year has 365 days. To honestly answer 'How was your year?' you would need to remember all 365 days, decide which were good, which were bad, prepare an emotional balance sheet, and then declare whether 2025 was a profit or a loss. Also notice something else. This question matters only for the last one week of the year, mostly at parties. From January to November, nobody is sitting and thinking, 'How is my year shaping up?' But from December 15 onwards, everyone suddenly becomes a life auditor. And once January 1 arrives, nobody cares. You have resolutions, plans, and fresh pressure. That reflection is over. The truth is simple. We don't live in years. We live in memories. Nobody remembers all 365 days. You remember moments. One really good day. One really bad day. And a lot of days where nothing happened.

When people say, 'My year was great', notice what they mention. 'I got promoted.' 'I made good money.' 'I got married.' That's not a year. That's a result. They won't talk about the sixteen-hour workdays, how they hyped their manager like a stand-up act, or how many profiles got rejected before one finally worked out. And somehow, the entire year gets judged only by money, marriage, and promotions. As if health, friends, food, love, and sleep don't count. Online, a lot of people are saying 2025 was bad. That's normal. The human brain remembers negative things more clearly. Sadness lasts longer than happiness. We still cry about losing the World Cup final on November 19, 2023, even though we won tournaments after that. That's just how memory works. Sadness has better storage. So if you feel like your year was bad, it doesn't mean every day was bad. It just means your brain is doing what it does best. Personally, my answer to 'How was your year?' is simple: 'I don't remember.' Not because nothing happened. But because I'm not built to remember 365 things at once. So this year, instead of asking people for a full-year report, ask better questions. What was your best day? What was your worst day? How many hugs did you get? Or don't ask anything at all. Just give one. That already makes the year better. Happy New Year!

(The writer's views are his own)

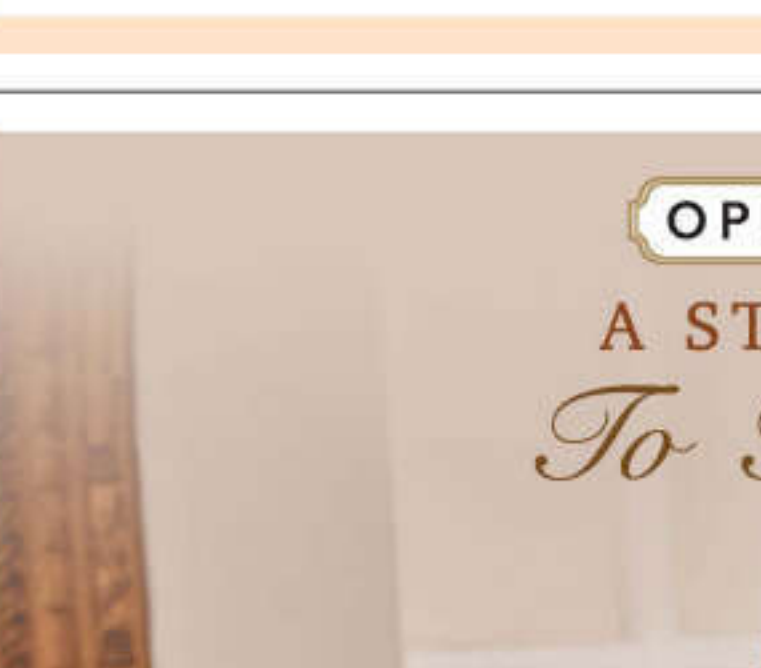
TASTE OF NIKKEI

HYDERABAD GOT A GLIMPSE OF JAPANESE PRECISION AND PERUVIAN VIBRANCY AT CHEF AUGUSTO'S EXCLUSIVE POP-UP AT NIKKEI



JAPANESE PRECISION MEETS PERUVIAN SOUL

Chef Augusto Cabrera of Boya, New Delhi fame, introduced Hyderabad to a dining style that thrives on contrasts while achieving perfect harmony. His three-day Nikkei cuisine pop-up at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre showcased a refined blend of Japanese precision and Peruvian vibrancy — a culinary style that has now earned global recognition. Nikkei cuisine is more than a fusion of flavours; it represents two philosophies. Japanese cuisine focuses on restraint, balance, and refinement, while Peruvian cuisine celebrates boldness, spice, and diversity. Together, they create an experience that is both nuanced and exciting.



RISE OF IMMERSIVE FOOD STYLING

This year was power-packed, with food styling in Hyderabad reaching imaginative heights one could hardly have envisioned earlier. At the heart of this creative movement was multidisciplinary artist and designer Eeshaan Kashyap, who seamlessly blends culinary art, design, and storytelling into immersive experiences. In Hyderabad for West Elm's first-ever party, UNWRAP, Kashyap offered a glimpse into his world, sharing how his imaginative creations bring together design, food, and experiences in unexpected yet delightful ways.

NORWAY'S LANDSCAPES TO HYD'S TABLES

RAEN – The Chef's Studio at The Leela Hyderabad also played host to a Nordic culinary adventure curated by Michelin-starred chef Andrea Selvaggi. Flying in from Norway for a special two-day pop-up, Chef Selvaggi presented an experience unlike any other. Each dish, plated with care and creativity, told a story inspired by Norway's natural landscapes. From playful presentations to refined flavours, the pop-up was a testament to the chef's artistry and his ability to draw inspiration from local ingredients while staying true to Nordic roots.



REDEFINING NIGHTLIFE

Where myth meets modernity, Babylon Brewery & Club 2.0 emerged as one of Hyderabad's most striking new landmarks. Spread across one lakh square feet in Nanakramguda, this experiential destination brought together design, flavour, and rhythm in breathtaking harmony. More than just a club, bar, or restaurant, Babylon was envisioned as a living universe of celebration — where architecture, gastronomy, craft beer, and immersive entertainment converge to redefine the city's nightlife.

OPENS TODAY

A STYLISH END To The Year



HI LIFE EXHIBITION

Fashion | Style | Decor | Luxury

OVER 350+ OF THE FINEST DESIGNERS

27.28.29 DEC | NOVOTEL HYDERABAD CONVENTION CENTRE

10 am - 8 pm | Valet Parking | Entry fee Rs.100

“CELEBRATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE”



20+ Government Institutions Felicitated at Hybiz TV Education Excellence Awards:

Hyderabad, December 23, 2025: In a glittering celebration, Hybiz TV hosted its prestigious Education Excellence Awards 2025 at HICC Novotel, Hyderabad, recognizing the outstanding contributions of educators and institutions across Telangana.

The grand ceremony witnessed the felicitation of over 50 award winners, with more than 20 honors going to government schools and colleges, marking a significant milestone in acknowledging excellence in the public education sector.

Hybiz TV Education Excellence Awards - 2025 program was attended by EX CBI JD V.V. Lakshminarayana, IPS, Dr. Preeti Reddy (Vice Chairperson - Malla Reddy Vishwavidya Peeth), Y. Guruswamy Naidu (Chairman & Managing Director - Celkon Group), Srinivas Murthy (Director - TV5 News), Narendra Ram Nambula (Lifespan), ARV Badrinath (CGM IOCL - TG & AP), M. Rajgopal



(Founder & MD - Hybiz TV), Dr. J. Sandhyarani (Hybiz One Founder & MD), and others participated in the event.

Former CBI JD V.V. Lakshminarayana stated that in India, we always look towards light. He explained that this light doesn't come from the sun, but through knowledge. He expressed his view "that the comprehensive development of the nation depends on the progress of students and teachers". He appreciated that over 20 awards were presented to government schools and colleges, calling it a significant achievement

Dr. Preeti Reddy stated that education plays a very important role in everyone's life. She mentioned that schools are the first step towards this. She appreciated how schools are working hard to enhance students' skills, teach values, and foster ethics. She explained the importance of educational institutions. She clarified that achieving marks and scoring well in exams alone are not crucial, but proper behavior, the way of talking to others, and how to build good relationships are also important.



GOVT JUNIOR COLLEGES OF TELANGANA



GOVT SCHOOLS OF TELANGANA



A GOOD STORY WITH WEAK SCRIPTING AND EXECUTION

The Roshan Meka starrer fails to capture the emotional depth of the real events it's inspired from

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

BHAIRANPALLY village in Telangana is known for its revolt against the Razakars, the private army, during the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad. While the whole of India gained Independence in 1947, Hyderabad State did not. Kasim Razvi founded the Razakars, a private militia, and tortured those who opposed him, and the villagers of Bhairanpally resisted the Razakars and fought back bravely — this is how the village became historically significant, as one of the first to stand up against Razakar atrocities.

Director Pradeep Advaitam chose this historic revolt of Bhairanpally as the backdrop for his film *Champion*, adding a fictional narrative to it. Though the story idea is promising, it should have been narrated in a gripping and more engaging manner. Even though the director has taken cinematic liberties, the film needed strong emotions, as it is based on one of the most important historical movements in Telangana's history.

Champion largely revolves around Michael Williams (Roshan Meka), a football player from Secunderabad who dreams of going to London to play for a Manchester club. However, since his father fought against the British, Michael is denied entry into London. Later, Michael gets an opportunity to go to London, but only if he smuggles weapons without letting the Razakars know about it. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Michael ends up in Bhairanpally village. Kala-vathi (Anaswara Rajan) writes and performs stage plays with villagers,



REVIEW

CHAMPION

CAST: Roshan Meka, Anaswara Rajan, Nandamuri Kalyan Chakravarthy, Kay Kay Menon, VK Naresh, Vennela Kishore

DIRECTOR: Pradeep Advaitam

RATING ★★☆☆☆

spreading awareness and resistance against oppression. Though Michael is still focused on his dream of going to London, he gets involved in the villagers' fight against Razakar atrocities. Whether he contin-



ues to help them and achieves his dream forms the crux of the conflict.

While the story by Pradeep Advaitam, who makes his directorial debut here, looks good on paper, the execution leaves you wanting for more — especially when the film tries to mix historical events with fiction. *Razakar* (2024), which dealt with a similar subject, stayed closer to history, portraying Kasim Razvi's brutality and the revolt against him. On the other hand, *Champion* fails to capture

the emotional depth.

Here, the director takes too much time to unravel the story, indulging in scenes that barely connect to the central narrative. The opening football sequence lacks impact. The scenes with Kovai Sarala do not work. Even after Michael reaches Bhairanpally, the narrative doesn't get to its core point, dragging on till the interval. Michael's secret mission to transport weapons is an interesting idea, but is not handled in an engaging manner. The romantic track between Roshan and Anaswara brings some interest through the stage-play portions, but appears only in bits and pieces. Anaswara's entry arrives disappointingly late, nearly 45 minutes into the film. Additionally, several village characters mysteriously disappear in important scenes and reappear later. VK Naresh, who plays Anaswara's father, is also absent for major parts of the film.

While the first half suffers from heavy lag, despite a good interval scene, the second half completely falters in storytelling. The director takes excessive cinematic liberties, such as the scene where an army officer threatening to kill innocent villagers unless Michael scores a goal within stipulated time — which comes off as highly unbelievable. The film loses its core conflict and focuses on irrelevant elements. Most importantly, the emotional depth is entirely missing. The song 'Gira Gira' is the only highlight, but even that is disappointingly used merely as a background track.

Technically, cinematographer Madhie is the biggest asset of the film, delivering grand and rich visuals despite weak content. Production values are solid, and it's evident that the producers invested heavily. However, the background score fails to elevate key moments. The film also desperately needed tighter editing.

Coming to performances, Roshan Meka performs sincerely. However, the role is demanding and requires more intensity. His physicality is not convincing enough for someone leading a revolt against the Razakars. Anaswara looks pleasant, but her role is minimal, offering little scope to perform. Kay Kay Menon is completely wasted; his portrayal of Kasim Razvi lacks depth and impact. Nandamuri Kalyan Chakravarthy's comeback is underwhelming — his character is poorly written, and emotionally flat. None of the supporting cast stands out.

Overall, *Champion* offers very little beyond a few scattered moments. A powerful real-life incident that deserved emotional storytelling is completely diluted by weak writing and poor execution. With no emotional connection and dull narration, *Champion* ends up being a disappointing watch.



This rom-com is a derivative drag

KARTIK BHARDWAJ

MALALA Yousufzai might have braved the Taliban but I am sure she didn't foresee Kartik Aaryan. At a point in the tongue-twisty-titled rom-com *Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri*, Kartik's Ray describes the width of his dating pool. "Malaika (Arora), Malaika, Uorfi (Javed) or Kamala (Harris), nobody can say no to this momma's boy," he says while showcasing his six-pack abs and chiselled shoulder blades, as if he is auditioning for a whey protein commercial.

If Ray's character brief was just to be annoying, Kartik plays it with perfection. Boy meets girl at the airport. Boy is Ray Mehra (Kartik), a rich, ripped wedding planner from the US whose travel personality is that of a pestering button-pusher. Girl is Rumi (Ananya Panday), whose idea of love hasn't evolved beyond 90s Bollywood. She is an author with a book titled *'Love In Agra'* (She also owns a cafe called 'Love Story'). It's safe to assume she is a hopeless romantic. Ray gets on Rumi's, and the viewer's, nerves from the get-go. The duo is travelling to Croatia, and of course, Ray will get the seat next to Rumi on the flight. They will also have to share the last available cabin on a yacht. You get the gist. Ray's dating strategy seems to be annoying a girl to the maximum limit, so that anything remotely pleas-

REVIEW

TU MERI MAIN TERA
MAIN TERA TU MERI

CAST: Kartik Aaryan, Ananya Panday, Jackie Shroff, Neena Gupta

DIRECTOR: Sameer Vidwans

RATING: ★★☆☆☆

ant he does afterward can be hailed as a he-is-a-good-guy-after-all cutesy gesture. But, as it always happens, two songs down and Rumi and Ray have fallen in love. Rumi, however, calls it quits since she can't move with Ray to the US and, in the process, abandon her ex-Army officer father (Jackie Shroff), who is too attached to his motherland. Ray, who can't wrap his head around no as an answer, thus lands in India to woo her back.

Tu Meri Main Tera... is essentially reheated *DDLJ* for the reel-swiping generation. The writing is so social-media coded for 'youth-connect' that it feels corny and derivative. There are mentions of '*pasandida aurat*', the TV show *Friends*, the long wait for season 5 of *Stranger Things* and an abysmal line which translates to 'In between talks, you are sliding in the DMs of my eyes.' The film is riddled with

references to 90s Bollywood flicks; there is another done-to-death rendition of the 'palat' scene from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), a 2025 take on the medley song from *Mujhse Dosti Karoge!* (2002) and a '*Saat Samundar*' low-fi version, which should be labelled as a blasphemy.

The Sameer Vidwans directorial from the house of Dharma has a warped sense of what clicks with Gen Z. In a scene, Rumi, who professes the need for a '90s love story in a 2025 hookup culture', passionately kisses Ray when he says (lies) that he is actually married. As a protagonist, a hero, Ray is impossible to bear. He is a classic red-flag who can't help but give his opinion on everything, prides himself on being a 'Momma's boy' and confuses narcissism as just a case of 'I am sexy, and I know it'. It would have helped if there was some convincing redemption to his arc, but all he seems to be is an entitled man camouflaging as a new-age progressive.

There is, however, an uptick in the second half when the action shifts to India. Jackie Shroff and Neena Gupta, as Ray's 'not a regular but cool mom' Pinky, are enjoyable. From being a vacation romance, the film devolves into a family melodrama with conflicts that seem forced. *Tu Meri Main Tera...* feels like a glossy, shiny Christmas present which is opened to reveal mere confetti. Or as Rumi perfectly describes Ray: nothing more than laughing gas.

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

On Christmas, several small films hit the big screen, and *Dhandoraa* is one among them. The promotional content looked promising, and the film boasts a strong cast. Murali Kanth makes his directorial debut with this film, choosing a rooted and raw subject for his first outing. In our society — especially in the Telugu speaking states — caste discrimination and honour killings still frequently make headlines. Generally, films based on such subjects are more common in Tamil and Malayalam cinema, while Telugu cinema explores them occasionally. Sekhar Kammula's *Love Story*, Karuna Kumar's *Palasa 1978*, and the recent *Court* are some examples. Now, Murali Kanth joins this list with *Dhandoraa*.

The title *Dhandoraa* immediately reminds us of R Narayanamurthy, known for films with revolutionary and socially relevant themes. The story unfolds in two timelines. In 2004, the plot revolves around an upper-caste girl falling in love with a lower-caste boy. Though the boy is wealthy and well-settled, the elders of the upper caste refuse to accept their relationship. Conflicts arise not just between castes, but even within the upper caste members, leading to tragic consequences that ruin many lives. In the present timeline, Sivaji (Sivaji), an upper-caste landlord, passes away. His son Vishnu (Shree Nandu) is estranged from him since years. The village sarpanch (Navdeep) tries



A thought-provoking film backed by strong writing

to pacify everyone. As more details unravel about Sivaji's life, it also leads to more questions — Why was his body denied burial in the caste cemetery? Why is Vishnu distant from his father? What happened to Sivaji's daughter Sujatha (Manika), who falls in love with a lower-caste man Ravi (Ravi Krishna)? How does the sarpanch handle the escalating conflict? These questions form the rest of the

narrative.

Murali Kanth deserves appreciation for choosing such a sensitive subject for his debut. He presents heavy themes like caste discrimination and honour killing by balancing seriousness with subtle humour, and conveys the gravity of the issue with clarity. Usually, caste discrimination is shown between upper and lower castes, but here the director adds an

interesting twist by portraying how even an upper-caste individual can become a victim, highlighting the emotional and social consequences.

The first half progresses at a steady pace, with Sivaji's death bringing villagers together. In a small village, a death becomes a major event, and the sarpanch immediately takes charge. Despite being the sarpanch, Navdeep's character often finds himself powerless, as he must obey the upper-caste leaders. The second half takes a more serious and emotional turn. The songs and romantic portions in the first half feel like a drag, but once Sivaji's court scene begins, the film becomes gripping. Sivaji's decision to reveal the truth in court is one of the film's best moments. As the film approaches its climax, emotions intensify for every character. Vishnu's journey back to the village to perform his father's last rites, and his eventual realisation, stand out strongly. The climax is exceptionally well executed, driven by impactful dialogues. Performance-wise, the film

shines. Sivaji delivers a terrific performance, and after Mangapathi in *Court*, this is another strong role for him. Navdeep is perfectly cast as the sarpanch, offering a refreshing and mature performance. His dialogue in the climax, addressing Sivaji, is one of the film's highlights. Shree Nandu gets a performance-oriented role unlike anything he has done before, and does full justice to it. Ravi Krishna brings good energy to his role. Mounica, as Vishnu's wife, is very natural. Manika looks good and performs well as Ravi's love interest. Raadhya, though appearing briefly, plays a crucial role, and leaves a strong impression with her performance. The supporting cast contributes effectively, making the village setting feel realistic.

But the biggest strength of *Dhandoraa* lies in its writing. Director Murali Kanth deserves full credit for his strong narration and confident execution, especially as a debutant. The cinematography captures the rural atmosphere authentically, and Mark K Robin's music works well. The title song is particularly impactful and one of the best in recent times.

Finally, *Dhandoraa* is a thought-provoking film driven by strong writing and performances. Kudos to debutant director Murali Kanth for handling such a sensitive subject with conviction, and to producer Ravindra Banerjee Muppaneni for backing it. It's an honest attempt and a well-made Telugu film. After a long time, it feels good to watch a meaningful Telugu film with strong performances.

REVIEW

DHANDORAA

CAST: Sivaji, Navdeep, Shree Nandu, Ravi Krishna, Bindu Madhavi, Mounica, Manika, Raadhya

DIRECTOR: Murali Kanth D

RATING: ★★☆☆☆



Mowgli gets OTT premiere date

MOWGLI, Roshan Kanakala's action-romance directed by Sandeep Raj, which had a theatrical release on December 13, has now set a OTT premiere date. The film will begin streaming on ETV Win on January 1.

Produced under the People Media Factory, banner *Mowgli* starred actor-filmmaker Bandi Saroj Kumar as the main antagonist and marked the debut of Sakshi Mhadolkar. While it received praises for its cinematography and production values, *Mowgli* overall received mixed reviews. The film also struggled at the box office because of the unexpected release date change for *Akhand 2*. Harsha Chhemudu, who played Prabhas Bunt, won accolades for his performance though.

The technical team for *Mowgli* included cinematographer Rama Maruti M, art director Kiran Mamidi, and action choreographer Natraj Madigona. Costumes were by GV Annapurna and Sushmitha Bommididi.