

RS. 10 LAKH DONATION TO
TTD SVAT

From Our Staff Reporter

Tirumala, Dec., 8: Tirumal An NRI devotee from the United States, Siva Prasad, donated Rs. 10, 01, 116 to the TTD run Sri Venkateswara Annprasadam Trust on Sunday. The donor handed over the donation Demand Draft the temple officials at the Ranganayakula Mandapam in Tirumala Temple. TTD Board Member Sri Sadasiva Rao also participated in this programme.

HC PUTS BRAKES ON AMRAPALI'S
TELANGANA POSTING

Hyderabad, Dec., 8:

In a setback for IAS officer Amrapali, the Telangana High Court has stayed the CAT order that allotted her to Telangana. The court asked her lawyer to file a counter and adjourned the case for six weeks. The DoPT had originally allotted Amrapali to Andhra Pradesh last October. She contested the decision before the CAT, which ordered a swap with IAS officer Harikiran. The DoPT challenged the ruling, and the High Court observed that such swapping is not permissible since Harikiran belongs to a reserved category, leading to the stay on the CAT order.

Telangana Rising is unstoppable: CM



From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, Dec., 8: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy declared that Telangana Rising is unstoppable and urged everyone, including investors and dignitaries from around the world, to participate in this growth. During his opening remarks at the Telangana Rising Global Summit held at Bharat Future City in Rangareddy district on Monday, Revanth Reddy emphasised that Telangana is the youngest state in India,

brimming with promising opportunities. "Our aim is to achieve a \$1 trillion economy by 2034 and a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. Although we represent approximately 2.9% of India's population, we contribute around 5% to the national GDP. By 2047, I aspire for our contribution to reach 10% of India's GDP," he stated. The Chief Minister noted that Telangana is unique in establishing three distinct zones for services, manufacturing, and agriculture,

which he referred to as the CURE, PURE, and RARE model. The Chief Minister referenced Guangdong province in China, noting that it boasts the largest economy of any province in the country. Over the past two decades, Guangdong has achieved remarkable investment and growth, ranking among the highest in the world. "We aim to emulate this successful model in Telangana," remarked Revanth Reddy. He also

mentioned that the Telangana government is drawing inspiration from countries such as China, Japan, Germany, South Korea, and Singapore, as it prepares to enter the competitive arena. "We have extended invitations for collaboration, investment, and support as we embark on the Telangana Rising initiative. Although the vision may seem ambitious, we believe it is attainable," Revanth Reddy further commented.

Two-day Telangana Rising Global Summit begins with grand ceremony



From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, Dec., 8: The Telangana Rising Global Summit, hosted by the State government, commenced on Monday at Bharat Future City located in the Kandukur mandal of Rangareddy district, showcasing a significant scale. The summit was officially opened by Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Verma. Attendees included Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Telangana Deputy Chief

Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, various ministers, elected representatives, film actor Nagarjuna, as well as national and international dignitaries from different sectors and representatives from multiple organisations. This two-day event is taking place over a 100-acre area at Future City, with 154 delegates arriving from 44 countries. Prior to the summit's commencement, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy visited the venue to review the stalls and provided several recommendations to officials on various matters. During the event,

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy unveiled a digital statue of Telangana Thalli. The state government is hosting the summit with a strong desire to highlight Telangana's achievements on a global stage. Approximately 2,000 guests, both local and international, are expected to attend. The state-of-the-art arrangements have been made at the venue for the visitors. The programme includes discussions on infrastructure, research, innovation and global partnerships. Furthermore, twenty-seven themed sessions will run over

two days with sector leaders outlining challenges and opportunities shaping Telangana's growth plan. On Tuesday, the Chief Minister will release the Vision 2047 document and describe steps that support India's three-trillion-dollar economic goal. DGP B Shivadhar Reddy said nearly 6,000 police personnel are on duty. Senior officers, including ADGPs, IGs and ten IPS officers, are monitoring the venue, helipad zones and parking areas. They said strict measures remain in place to prevent disruptions and ensure a smooth international event.

"Jinnah Opposed 'Vande Mataram', Nehru Agreed With His Sentiments": PM

New Delhi, Dec., 8 (UNI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the Congress on Monday in a Lok Sabha discussion on the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram' by linking India's national song to the Emergency imposed by the opposition party's former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, 50 years ago. He also accused another of his predecessors – Jawaharlal Nehru – of having followed Muhammad Ali Jinnah in opposing 'Vande Mataram' because it could 'irritate Muslims'. "When 'Vande Mataram' celebrated its 100th anniversary, the country was entangled in the Emergency... when it celebrated its 100th anniversary, the Constitution was strangled..." he said. "Now, at 150 years, it is a good opportunity to restore the glory of 'Vande Mataram'... which won us freedom in 1947," the Prime Minister said, praising the song written by Bankim Chandra

Chatterjee in November 1875 and which quickly became a rallying cry for freedom fighters. "We recently celebrated 75 years of our Constitution. The country celebrated the 150th birth anniversaries of Sardar Vallabha Patel and Birs Munda. We are also celebrating the 350th martyrdom day of Guru Teg Bahadur ji. Now we are celebrating 150 years of Vande Mataram..." The BJP has targeted the Congress over 'Vande Mataram' in the build-up to this discussion, accusing the latter of having disrespected it by "pandering to a communal agenda" at its 1937 session and adopting a truncated version as the country's national song. Today, it has become a battleground between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and its arch-rival, the Congress, with the former accusing the latter of having disrespected it by "pandering to a communal

agenda" at its 1937 session and adopting a truncated version as the country's National Song. At the heart of this row are six stanzas in which Chatterjee referenced Hindu goddess Durga, Kamala (or Lakshmi), and Saraswathi, framing them as India's "perfect without peer" feminine guardians. **So what is the 'Vande Mataram' row?** In 1937 the Congress, then led by ex-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, decided to use only the first two stanzas for national gatherings. The argument was that direct references to Hindu goddesses were not well-received by some members of the Muslim community; they were seen as 'exclusionary'. The resolution read: "Taking all things into consideration, therefore, the Committee recommends that whenever 'Vande Mataram' is sung at national gatherings, only the first two stanzas should

be sung". However, the Congress also acknowledged the freedom of any individual to "sing any other song... in addition to, or in place of, the 'Vande Mataram' song". But the BJP has now argued the exclusions illustrate the Congress' 'divisive' plans; Prime Minister Modi said dropping the stanzas "sowed the seeds of the nation's division", referring to the Partition. "In 1937, a portion of 'Vande Mataram' was severed... it was torn apart. The division sowed the seeds of the nation's division. It is important for today's generation to understand why..." he said in November. Last month BJP spokesperson CR Kesavan kickstarted the row by posting on X letters to Nehru had written to Netaji Subhas Bose, in September and October 1937. "Nehru spitefully writes that anybody considering the words in Vande Mataram as



anything to do with a goddess was absurd," Kesavan declared in his X post, although the referred section in the September letter suggests Nehru meant such an interpretation of the lyrics is absurd, and not the person. Referring to these excerpts, Kesavan said, "He (Jawaharlal Nehru) went on to say 'there does seem

some substance in it', i.e., regarding outcry against 'Vande Mataram', and that 'people who are communistically inclined have been affected by it.'" In his letters Nehru suggested the stanzas need not be interpreted as having anything to do with goddesses or divine figures; "... that interpretation is absurd... I think

the whole song and all the words in it are thoroughly harmless and nobody can take exception," the Congress leader wrote. The lyrics, Nehru also wrote, are "out of keeping with modern notions of nationalism". He also wrote, "... we cannot pander to communalists' feelings but to meet real grievances where they exist."

Narsapuram-Chennai 'Vande Bharat' from Dec 15

From Our Staff Reporter
Bhimavaram: Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhubapatiraju Srinivasa Varma announced in Bhimavaram that the Narsapuram-Chennai Vande Bharat train services will commence from December 15. The Railway Department originally scheduled the launch for January 12, but the Minister appealed to start the service earlier, responding to public demand before the festive season. He thanked Prime Minister Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for providing this world-class fast service. He also confirmed that the Railway Department positively responded to his proposal for a halt of the Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam Vande Bharat at Tadepalligudem. The Minister also announced a large-scale ₹1,400 crore project under the Jal Jeevan Mission for supplying purified drinking water to rural homes in West Godavari district. The plan involves purifying Godavari water at a treatment plant near Dowleswaram Barrage and distributing it daily to 3,19,954 households through a 2,663 km pipeline network. Furthermore, technical issues and permits for NH 165, including the Akividu-Digamuru-Bhimavaram bypass, are resolved, and tenders will be called by the end of January to alleviate Bhimavaram's bypass issue.

CM slams YSRCP over temple thefts and political crimes in Amaravati



From Our Staff Reporter
Amaravati, Dec., 8: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has warned that strict action will be taken against those who commit crimes under the guise of politics. Speaking in Amaravati on Monday, CM

Chandrababu questioned what is meant by calling the money laundering case in Parakamani a minor crime. He said that they should understand their mindset. He said that if they had looted Rs. 72 thousand crores and given Rs. 14 crores to God, then they should understand the situation. On this occasion, he recalled that a devotee came to him and said that he wanted to give 121 kg of gold to Sri Venkateswara Swamy. He said that if there is theft in the temple, the EO will be immediately suspended. If money is stolen from the god in the temple, will they support it? He said on this occasion, criticizing the behavior of the YSRCP leaders.

He questioned how they would justify a small theft in the temple of the Kaliyuga god Sri Venkateswara Swamy. Will they support even the poor quality prasadam given to devotees in the past? He expressed his anger. Will they come back to the incident of supplying adulterated ghee to the Lord's prasadam? He lashed out at the YSRCP leaders. He said that there are people in the opposition who support such things. He said that he felt ashamed to do politics with such people. CM Chandrababu explained that a person named Singhaiah was run over by a car and his wife made allegations against them and held a press conference. He reminded that if a pastor who came from Hyderabad while drinking alcohol and died in an accident... they also tried to portray that incident as a murder. CM Chandrababu lashed out at the attitude of the YSRCP top leaders, saying that they were trying to smear the government on every issue. He criticized that Nellore was once a peaceful city.. but now lady dons have been created in that city. They are committing murders.. They expressed concern that they have become ganja dons. He explained that there was never any problem in the state.. there was factionalism in

Rayalaseema and Naxalism in Telangana. Similarly, the coastal districts and both Godavari districts were also peaceful. He clarified that the issue of government support for the family of CPI leader Penchalayya in Nellore will be considered. On this occasion, CM Chandrababu dismissed YS Jagan's comments that he was doing Goebbels propaganda. CM Chandrababu suggested to YS Jagan to examine the GSDP calculations once if necessary. He said that infrastructure will be provided in new districts as well. CM Chandrababu alleged that the YSRCP government has been running and has left with Rs. 10 lakh crores.

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Shivakumar hails Telangana Vision Document, calls it a roadmap for south India

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, Dec., 8: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar lauded the Telangana Vision Document 2047, describing it as an excellent resource not only for Telangana but for the entire South India region. Speaking at the inaugural session of Telangana Rising Global Summit at Bharat Future City in Rangareddy district on Monday, DK Shivakumar said Telangana is thinking globally, and this is the biggest vision for the next generation. He praised that this is possible only with the Congress government and stated that Bengaluru and Hyderabad are key when talking about India's technology. "People say Hyderabad

and Bengaluru are competitors, but we are not competitors-we support each other and compete with the world," DK Shivakumar remarked. He praised this summit organised by Telangana as a matter of pride for South India and the entire country. South India contributes 30 to 35 percent to the national GDP, with Karnataka and Telangana playing key roles, he noted. The Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister stated that Telangana and Karnataka hold key positions in health care, technology, and education. He felt honoured to participate in Telangana Rising 2047 and said that working together is the key to success.

114 Complaints Submitted at Medchal-Malkajgiri Prajavani; Zero Pendency Directed



Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): Additional District Collector Vijayender Reddy conducted the weekly Prajavani program, receiving numerous petitions regarding public grievances from various parts of the district. He was accompanied by Law Officer

Chandravathi at the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector office on Monday. A total of 114 complaints were submitted during the grievance redressal session. Directives for Immediate Action and Online Clearance

Addressing the district heads of various government departments, the Additional Collector instructed them to review the received applications immediately and take swift, subsequent action for their resolution. Vijayender Reddy strongly emphasized the need for department heads to respond instantly to the public's pleas presented during the program. He directed officials to upload details of the actions taken on the requests to the online portal and mandated the prompt clearance of all existing pending applications on the system. The Additional Collector stressed the importance of resolving the grievances quickly, advising officials to conduct continuous monitoring and ensure that no petition is left pending. Furthermore, he issued orders to officials across different departments to ensure the rapid disposal of all CMO Prajavani pending cases. The program was attended by district officials from various departments.

Gogikar Shivakumar Takes Step to Resolve Streetlight and Debris Issues

Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): Gogikar Shivakumar, a community leader from Kapra Division, has taken the initiative to address two pressing public issues facing residents of Sai Nagar and Sai Baba Nagar. He personally submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner, urging the immediate resolution of these major concerns. The main problems highlighted in the appeal are Piles of soil and construction debris accumulated in front of the Sai Nagar cremation ground are severely hindering pedestrian and vehicular movement. Persistent street lighting problems across the Sai Nagar and Sai Baba Nagar areas are forcing residents to navigate in the darkness daily, causing significant inconvenience and safety concerns. Shivakumar emphasized his commitment, stating, "Public problems are my responsibility. I will pay attention to every small issue and work towards its resolution for the overall development of Kapra Division." He concluded with the motto, "For the people – together with the people."



Awareness Program Held on the Dangers of Substance Abuse

-Cultural Troupe Highlights Health and Financial Risks of Narcotics Use



Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): An awareness program highlighting the serious consequences of narcotics consumption was organized today for the public at the Muduchintalapally Municipal headquarters. Following directives from the District Collector, the event was conducted under the leadership of the Civil Supplies Department. Artists from the Telangana Cultural Troupe (Telangana Samskruthika Saradhi) staged performances to educate the community.

Focus on Health and Financial Ruin

The performers detailed the damaging effects of substance

addiction, focusing on Health Deterioration: Illustrating the poor physical condition of individuals enslaved by narcotic substances. Financial Ruin: Explaining how addiction severely impacts the addict's and their family's economic situation. The program sought to raise awareness about illegal intoxicants and clearly articulated the various adverse impacts these substances have on the human body. The awareness drive saw participation from several key individuals, including Sanjeeva Naik, Padmavathi, Veena, Srinivas, Nageshwar Rao, Soni, Srujana Kishore, Naresh, Babu, Jyothi, and Spandana.

District General Election Observers Inspect Control Room

Rajanna Sircilla : DEC - 08 District General Election Observer Ravi Kumar conducted an inspection of the Control Room and Media Center set up at the District Integrated Office Complex on Monday. During the visit, he examined the relevant registers at the Media Center and inquired about the recorded details. He then proceeded to the Control Room, where he inspected the complaints register and gathered information regarding the complaints received and their status. Control room staff and other concerned officials participated in the inspection.



Telangana Thalli Unveiling Ceremony Should Be Conducted Grandly — Collector



Bhupalpally : DEC - 08

District Collector Rahul Sharma instructed officials to ensure that the Telangana Thalli Avatharana Utsavam is organized with grandeur and dignity. On Monday, he inspected the Telangana Thalli idol installed at the IDOC office, accompanied by R&B department officials. He stated that the unveiling ceremony of the Telangana Thalli statue will be held on December 9 at 10 AM on the premises of the IDOC office. Since the election code of conduct is currently in force, he advised the officials to strictly follow all related guidelines while organizing the event. He also directed all departmental officers and staff members to participate in the program. R&B Executive Engineer Ramesh and DE Devender were present at the program.

Global Summit at Bharat Future City Begins; Medchal Collector Details Large-Scale Student Attendance

Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): The Telangana Rising Global Summit, 2025, a preeminent international platform dedicated to showcasing innovation, entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment, began today, according to Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector Manu Chowdary. The two-day summit is being hosted on December 8th and 9th at Bharat Future City in Hyderabad. Collector Chowdary explained that the event serves as a hub for knowledge and progress, convening global leaders and industry experts through thematic sessions, interactive workshops, stalls representing various sectors, and cultural showcases.

Advancing Vision 2047

The Collector announced that subsequent plenary sessions will be conducted from December 10th to 13th, scheduled daily from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM. These meetings are crucial for nurturing the aspirations and entrepreneurial spirit of the state's young population, ultimately driving forward the Telangana Vision 2047. Manu Chowdary underscored the necessity of effective coordination among all departments and agencies to ensure strong participation from students, the general public, corporate organizations, and dignitaries in support of the Vision 2047 goal.

Student Participation from Medchal District



As part of the Summit's plenary events, the Collector confirmed the large-scale attendance of students from Medchal-Malkajgiri District. On December 10th, 966 students are scheduled to attend from the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree College located in Ghatkesar. On December 13th, a total of 400 students will participate, including 200 from Anurag University (Agricultural BSc) in Venkatapur, Ghatkesar, and 200 from Mallareddy University in Dulapally.

Kamma Vari Seva Samithi Kapra Unveils New Year 2026 Calendar



Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): The Kamma Vari Seva Samithi (KVSS) Kapra unveiled its calendar for the year 2026 during a special ceremony held at the Lions Club in TS IIC Colony, A.S. Rao Nagar Division. The event was presided over by the KVSS Kapra President, Challapalli Nageshwara Rao. The New Year calendar was formally released by a panel of distinguished guests, which included, Koganti Ramamohana Rao, a recipient of the President's Award for Best Teacher. Potluri Ramakrishna, President of the Kapra Kamma Sangham. Someswara Rao, Secretary of the Janabhudaya Sangham. Former Corporator Kotha Ramarao. Muppalla Sambashiva Rao (of Vet India). Mandava Premchand. Manne Naga

Malleshwari, a leader of the Tarnaka Kamma Sangham. The ceremony saw the participation of numerous functionaries and members of the community. KVSS Kapra office bearers present included Vice President Patibandla Nageshwara Rao, General Secretary Mallikarjuna Rao, Joint Secretary Venkata Ramana, and Treasurer Haranath Babu. Committee members Hanuman, Narasimha Rao, Maladri, Sukumar, Subbaiah, Paruchuri Pawan, and Sajja Satyanarayana were also present. Leaders from the Tarnaka Kamma Sangham, including Chandramouli, Devineni Vengababu, Vasireddy Siva Prasad, Chanumolu Nagabhushanam, and S.R. Srinu, joined the Kamma brethren for the auspicious launch.

Congress Leaders Vow to Secure 'Indiramma Houses' for All Eligible Poor

-AMC Chairman Bommalapally Narsimulu Yadav Attends Housewarming in Keshavaram



Medchal-Malkajgiri, December 08 (National Express): The objective of the People's Government is to provide housing to every eligible person, affirmed Medchal Market Committee Chairman Bommalapally Narsimulu Yadav and Muduchintalapally Congress Party President Dosakayala Venkatesh. On Monday, they participated in the housewarming ceremony of Gudise Swapna, a beneficiary of the Indiramma Housing Scheme, in Keshavaram village, Muduchintalapally Municipality, and extended their best wishes to the family. Speaking at the event, the leaders reiterated the party's commitment, stating, "Our goal is to construct and provide a dwelling to every eligible person under the rule of the People's Government."

They emphasized that securing Indiramma Houses for all qualified applicants in the Muduchintalapally mandal is their explicit responsibility. The housewarming ceremony was attended by numerous Congress party functionaries and local leaders, including Former Sarpanch Patta Bala Narsimha, Muduchintalapally Municipality Working President Bandi Jagannatham and former Deputy Sarpanch Vanga Venkataramana Reddy, Village Presidents Shekhar (Keshavaram) and Mahesh (Narayanapur), Leaders Gurram Baswa Reddy, Lakshman, Balakrishna Chary, Bommalapally Venkatesh, Mallesh Yadav, and Ramaswamy. Indiramma Committee Member Mohammad Yusuf, among others.

Presiding Officers Play a Crucial Role on Polling Day : District Collector Satya Prasad



Jagityal : DEC - 08

District Collector B. Satya Prasad stated that presiding officers play a vital role on polling day. As part of the Gram Panchayat election arrangements, the District Election Officer and Collector inspected the training program being conducted for presiding officers on Monday at the Government School in Kodimial Mandal headquarters. During the inspection,

he explained several important aspects and provided guidance to the officers. Speaking on this occasion, the Collector said that duties related to Gram Panchayat elections are highly sensitive and crucial. He emphasized that every officer must thoroughly understand each aspect of the polling process and carry out their responsibilities with utmost care.

BJP Received 83% Of Tata Group-Backed Trust Funds During 2024 Lok Sabha Polls

New Delhi: In the 2024 Lok Sabha election year, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the dominant beneficiary of the Tata Group-backed Progressive Electoral Trust (PET), receiving Rs 757 crore, accounting for nearly 83% of the trust's total disbursements. According to disclosures submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI), the trust distributed Rs 914 crore to 10 political parties in 2024-25. The Congress received Rs 77.3 crore, just 8.4% of PET's total political funding. Apart from the BJP and Congress, PET disbursed Rs 10 crore each to Trinamool Congress (TMC), YSR Congress Party, Shiv Sena, Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS), Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Janata Dal (United), and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

Funds Sourced From 15 Tata Group Companies

Progressive Electoral Trust's corpus of Rs 915 crore in 2024-25 originated entirely from 15 companies within the Tata Group. The largest contributors included Tata Sons - Rs 308 crore, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) - Rs 217 crore, and Tata Steel - Rs 173 crore. The remaining contributions came from Tata Motors, Tata Power, Tata Consumer Products, Tata Elxsi, Tata AutoComp, Tata Communications, and other group firms.

Congress Received Over Rs 313 Crore Through Trust Route

In its annual contribution report filed with the ECI, the Congress declared receiving Rs 517.37 crore in donations above Rs 20,000 dur-



ing 2024-25. Out of this, Prudent Electoral Trust contributed Rs 216.33 crore, AB General Electoral Trust gave Rs 15 crore, New Democratic Electoral Trust contributed Rs 5 crore, and Jan Kalyan Electoral Trust donated Rs 9.5 lakh. Overall, the Congress received more than Rs 313 crore through the electoral trust mechanism, forming a significant share of its total contributions for the year. Electoral bonds introduced in 2018 and widely criticised

for opacity were struck down by the Supreme Court in February 2024 for violating transparency principles. With electoral bonds discontinued, political funding has undergone a structural transition.

The 2024-25 donation disclosures highlight electoral trusts becoming the key vehicle for high-value political donations, especially for national parties and several regional parties, reshaping India's post-bond political fi-

nance landscape. Thirty political parties have submitted their political contribution reports to the Election Commission. However, the BJP's 2024-25 contribution report has not yet been uploaded on the Election Commission website. A BJP functionary said the party submitted its report late to the Commission. When asked about the missing upload, an Election Commission official said the matter would be looked into.

Man Who Bid 1.17 Crores For HR88B8888 Number Plate Now Faces Assets Inquiry

Chandigarh: Bidding and then failing to pay Rs 1.17 crore for India's costliest number plate 'HR88B8888' has come with repercussions for bidder Sudhir Kumar as the Haryana government will now investigate his assets. Haryana Transport Minister Anil Vij has ordered his department to thoroughly investigate the assets and income of Sudhir Kumar, Director of transportation service Romulus Solutions Private Limited. Speaking to the

media, Vij said, "We offer VIP number plates via auction. Several people bid for the number '8888'. However, after winning the auction by placing the highest bid, the bidder (Sudhir Kumar) did not pay the amount. Instead, he let his security deposit of Rs 11,000 to be forfeited." Vij has asked to check if Kumar has a net worth of Rs 1.17 crore, the bidding amount for the VIP number plate.

The minister stated that he will write to the Income

Tax Department, requesting them to investigate. It is to prevent bidders from increasing the cost of a number plate without financial capability. "Bidding in auctions is not a hobby, it's a responsibility," Vij said. The number plate will be re-auctioned.

When 'HR88B8888' Became India's Costliest Number Plate

On November 26, the number plate 'HR88B8888' grabbed headlines for being sold for Rs 1.17

Teen Vlogger Dies While Riding KTM At 140 kmph, Decapitated Body Lies On Road

Surat: An 18-year-old vlogger, who went by the name 'PKR Blogger', has died in a horrendous road accident in Gujarat's Surat while riding his KTM Duke motorcycle allegedly at a high speed. The social media influencer, Prince Patel, was decapitated. CCTV footage of the accident shows Prince riding allegedly at a speed of 140 kilometers per hour while descending the Great Liner Bridge, a multi-level flyover. The biker reportedly lost control and fell on the road, while the bike dragged along the divider before stopping a few hundred meters away from Prince. Prince is seen rolling on the ground multiple times after falling off the bike before coming to a stop. The impact was so severe that his head was severed from his body. The initial investigation suggests that Prince was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. Prince's mother reportedly



lives in a shelter and makes a living by selling milk. A case has been registered and the police are investigating.

Who Was Prince Patel?

Prince was popular among teenagers for his biking reels and fast-riding content on social media. His Instagram account reflects his love for the KTM Duke 390, a bike which, according to his social media activity, he purchased in September. The biker would

share stylised pictures and videos of his bike regularly. He had also given his KTM a name - Laila. Four days ago, Prince had shared a video expressing his love for 'Laila' even in heaven. Referring himself as 'Majnu', Prince shared the tale of separation due to death but still loving that one person, here, a vehicle. "Jab tak Majnu zinda tha, use is duniya me Laila se khoobsurat koi laga hi nahi. Lekin ab wo us jahan me hai

jaha pe hoor or pariya bhi rehti hai lekin waha jaa kar bhi use Laila se zaada hasene koi lag hi nahi rahi (When Majnu was alive, he never found anyone more beautiful than Laila. Now Majnu is in a world where there are fairies, but even there, he can't find anyone more beautiful than Laila)," he voiced the video. The video ended with the popular Bollywood song from the movie Laila Majnu, describing his love for the bike.

Woman Who Killed Son Murders 6-Year-Old Girl For Looking 'Prettier' Than Her



Panipat: A woman has been arrested for murdering her 6-year-old niece in Haryana's Panipat, police said on Wednesday. The reason: she did not want anyone to look "more beautiful" than her. The accused, Poonam, drowned her niece in a water tub on Monday when the entire family had gathered for a wedding function in Sonipat. According to the police, Poonam had earlier killed three children, including her son in 2023, whom she had

murdered the same way as her niece -- by drowning.

How The Murder Took Place

The victim, Vidhi, lived in Sonipat and had come to Naultha village in Panipat's Israna area to attend a relative's wedding with her family. She was accompanied by her grandfather Pal Singh, grandmother Omwati, father Sandeep, mother, and 10-month-old younger brother. The incident occurred when the wedding procession arrived

in Naultha, and the family left. Soon after, Vidhi's father received a phone call informing him that she was missing, and the family began searching for her. About an hour later, her grandmother Omwati went to a storeroom on the first floor of their relative's house. The storeroom door was bolted from the outside. When she opened it, she found Vidhi with her head submerged in a water tub and feet on the ground. The child was rushed to the

NC Medical College, where the doctors declared her dead. Vidhi's father later registered a First Information Report (FIR), alleging that she was murdered. Police investigation revealed that the accused, Poonam, was Vidhi's paternal aunt.

Pattern Of Killing Children

According to the police, Poonam had a disturbing pattern of drowning children, driven by jealousy and resentment, because she did not want anyone to look more beautiful than her. She specifically targeted young, pretty girls, police said. In total, Poonam has confessed to killing four children -- three girls and her own son -- all by drowning under similar circumstances. In 2023, Poonam had killed her sister-in-law's daughter. The same year, she drowned her son just to avoid suspicion. In August this year, Poonam murdered another girl in Siwah village because the child looked 'prettier' than her.

Commandos, Snipers, Drones, AI: 5-Layer Security Ring For Putin In India

New Delhi: Highly trained personnel from Russia's Presidential Security Service, top commandos from India's National Security Guard, snipers, drones, jammers, and AI monitoring - a five-layer security ring has been prepped ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India. Putin, who is visiting India to attend the India-Russia Annual Summit at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to land in Delhi tomorrow evening. According to sources, the Russian President will dine with the Prime Minister. He will receive a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan the day after. Later on Friday, he is scheduled to visit Mahatma Gandhi's memorial in Raj Ghat. Putin will then attend the summit at Hyderabad House and an event at Bharat Mandapam. He will also participate in a banquet hosted by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. To ensure top security during the action-packed itinerary, over four dozen top security personnel from Russia reached Delhi beforehand, sources have said. Along with officials of Delhi Police and the NSG, these officials are sanitising every route the Russian President's cavalcade will pass through. Specialised drones will ensure that a control room set up for the President's security has eyes on his cavalcade at all times. Several snipers will cover the route of the President's movement. Jammers, AI monitoring and facial recognition cameras are some of the equipment in the massive tech deployment for Putin's security.

According to sources, a five-layer security ring has



been planned, and each of them will become active as soon as Putin lands. Everyone in the security detail will be in constant touch with the control room. NSG and officers of Delhi Police will be part of the outer layers of security, while the Russian Presidential Security will handle the inner layers. When the Russian President is with Prime Minister Modi, commandos from India's Special Protection Group, which protects the Prime Minister, will join the inner security ring. The ho-

tel in which Putin will stay has also been thoroughly sanitised. Russian security officials are conducting checks at places Putin is scheduled to visit. Also, a list of potential impromptu destinations has been prepared, and these areas are also being scanned.

A big highlight of Putin's security detail is the Aurus Senat, a heavily armoured luxury limousine which the Russian President uses. The Senat is being flown in from Moscow for Putin's India trip. Interestingly, the

Russian President rode with Prime Minister Modi in the Senat during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in China earlier this year. Often called a 'fortress-on-wheels', the Senat is a full-size luxury limousine developed by Russian automaker Aurus Motors. Introduced in 2018, the Senat is Putin's official state car and is part of the "Kortezh" project, a Russian programme to build domestic luxury and armoured vehicles for the government's use.

BJP 7, AAP 3 In Delhi Municipal By-Polls, Congress Scoops 1

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party eased to victory in seven of 12 seats in Municipal Corporation of Delhi by-polls, to add to a dominant win in the February Assembly election. The Aam Aadmi Party - dumped out of power by the BJP 10 months ago after over a decade in power - finished a distant second with three seats. And a struggling Congress did what it could not do earlier this year - win a seat in a Delhi election. The twelfth seat went to the All India Forward Bloc.

But it wasn't all positive

news for the BJP. The ruling party went into this by-poll with nine seats in its pocket, only to lose two - one each to the Congress and AIFB. On the plus side, it did flip one; Chandni Chowk, won by the AAP in the 2022 full election, was picked up by the saffron party's Suman Gupta. The AAP, meanwhile, returned the favour, winning the Naraina ward the BJP won in 2022. The dropped seats, though, will not affect the BJP's control of the House. The party now holds 122 of 250 seats and the AAP 102. The Congress will now

hold nine. Nevertheless, this election was significant for the BJP and AAP. For the former, it was seen as the first big electoral test for Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, a test she passed comfortably. For the latter, it was a similar scenario; it was Saurabh Bhardwaj's first election since taking charge of the party's Delhi unit and, he too, will claim a win after not losing any seats.

The by-polls were for the Greater Kailash, Shalimar Bagh B, Ashok Vihar, Chandni Chowk, Chandni Mahal, Dichaon Kalan, Naraina, Sangam

Vihar A, Dakshin Puri, Mundka, Vinod Nagar, and Dwarka B wards. Eleven fell vacant after their councillors were elected to the Assembly. The biggest of those vacancies was Shalimar Bagh B, a ward previously represented by the BJP's Rekha Gupta, who won the Shalimar Bagh Assembly seat and is now the Chief Minister of Delhi. Anita Jain retained the ward for the BJP. The party also retained the Chandni Chowk, Greater Kailash, and Ashok Vihar wards. Veena Asija won the latter by a narrow margin of 405 votes.

National Express

Voice of the Republic - Mirror of the People

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Is development possible with unlimited promises?

The trends of candidates in the ongoing Panchayat elections in the state are out of sync. We have seen candidates going all out and spending crores for the posts of MLA and MP. But even in the Sarpanch elections, which are limited to just one village, candidates do not hesitate to spend lakhs. It has been proven that the Panchayat elections are held without parties. In the context of the party leaders taking a back seat and fielding candidates, Panchayat elections are also becoming 'prestige' for parties just like the Assembly and Parliament elections. Those who think that breaking the rules to win, violating the election code of conduct, spending crores on the sly, and luring voters with drugs and money on polling day are limited to Parliament and Legislative Assembly elections, must sneer at the current local elections in the state. In the state Assembly elections held two years ago, all the major parties, including the Congress, made empty and unworkable promises. Even the Congress party, which came to power, is still struggling to implement all the promises it has made. In the trend of giving promises when their leaders in politics do not give them, what is wrong if they give them, now even the sarpanch candidates are trying to lure voters by making false promises under the slogan 'The education you taught is Neerajaksha'. If you look at the manifesto prepared by a woman sarpanch candidate from Rangareddy district with 15 promises, you can understand how farcical the election process has become in India, which is known as the largest democratic country in the world. The candidate's list of promises includes a fixed deposit of Rs. 5,000 for the birth of a girl child, books and mats for the marriage of a girl child, and Rs. 5,116 for the marriage of a boy child. Not stopping there, he also promised Rs. 21,000 for the construction of a roof for those who build a house, and Rs. 1,000 for those who need surgery. She promised to provide Rs 15,000 assistance and organize a medical camp in the village once a month. Perhaps she felt that the promises she made were not feasible, so she wrote the promises on a bond paper of Rs 100 to convince the voters. Sarpanches should not carry out development works even if there is funds in the panchayats or if the government grants them. But the governments are putting pressure on the sarpanches to take up the implementation of works like maintenance of green nurseries, establishment of rural parks, garbage dumping yards, and crematoriums, and are completing more works. They are showing their faces when it comes to the issue of sanctioning funds. Sarpanches who have completed the work at their own expense and are running around like crazy for the sanction of bills are still seen as cowards. There are even records of some sarpanches committing suicide. What should we say about the candidates who are making promises to target the target in the current elections despite knowing about such tragic stories behind those who light sarpanches in villages? The manner of auctions taking place in the villages in the name of unanimous votes is also making a mockery of democracy. It is a welcome development when all the villagers come together and unanimously elect a candidate without any competition. The government is also providing cash incentives for this. However, the wrongdoers are also making fun of these unanimous votes. The village cannot develop because of the hawks who lure the competitors and snatch the post of sarpanch, right? There is a danger of corruption. In some villages, they do not hesitate to hold auctions and give positions to those who sing the most. This time, the chances of such unanimous votes gaining momentum in the elections seem high. In the context of elections becoming a farce like a flood on the back of the Panchayat Raj system, which is already languishing due to lack of funds and negligence of the rulers, what is the exaggeration if we do not see even a glimpse of the possibility of the village Swaraj that Gandhiji hoped for?

Secret WhatsApp group of IAS officers sparks unrest in Telangana Secretariat

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad: A clear split appears to be emerging among senior IAS officers holding key positions in different departments in the State. Reflecting the state of affairs in the administration, a few officers have reportedly formed an exclusive WhatsApp group to discuss internal matters. There is an increasing buzz in the Secretariat corridors that these officers are influencing movement of files, granting approvals and other administrative processes, based on discussions in this closed group. While it has always been common for a couple of like-minded officers to hold closed-door interactions on government policies or targets, the notable feature of this WhatsApp group is that only those occupying crucial posts, including in the Chief Minister's Office and in departments headed by senior Ministers, are part of the circle. With mounting financial constraints, and with pressure to clear specific files pushed by politicians and aides of Ministers, especially those related to release of funds, this coterie is said to be using the group to communicate such matters. After arriving at a consensus on a file, decision or release of funds, they allegedly keep other officers and subordinates in the dark.

There are also indications that officers have split on regional and seniority lines. While the members of this core group are predominantly from the North, the remaining officers are from other regions, including the Telugu cadre. This perceived discrimination has not gone down well with senior officers from various departments who have been excluded from important decision-making and policy discussions. It is an open secret that a cold war is brewing between a few Ministers and some IAS officers. Decisions taken by certain senior officers while sidelining files sent by Ministers have become a topic of discussion among staff in different departments.

Is Jagan Comments Supporting Parakamani Thief?



From Our Staff Reporter
Amaravati: Former chief minister YS Jagan has several contradictory and controversial takes on contemporary issues. This was again on display as his spoke lightly about the recently sensational Parakamani case. In his Media conference today, Jagan appeared to have a very dismissive and careless approach towards the Parakamani case. He categorised this Parakamani theft case that happened at the holy Tirumala temple during his time as CM as "Small issue." "That is a petty case where Rs.72,000 worth dollar bills were stolen. The culprit family, then donated Rs.14 crore to the temple as a token of regret. Sachin incidents have happened at many temples, but we did not see an act of remorse like the one that happened in the Parakamani case." Jagan was of the implication that this controversial incident is not that significant and people did not expect him to be so unbothered about such a major lapse in Tirumala operations during his time as the CM. At a time when Jagan is already facing the heat for the gross mismanagement of the Tirumala board during his time as the CM, his latest dismissive comment on the Parakamani case are getting slammed on social media.

WORRIED ABOUT DATA TRACKING?

Here are some open-source alternatives for all Google apps on your phone

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad: If you are an Android user and are worried about Google tracking your data through its apps such as Chrome, Maps and Photos, this article is for you. We have listed alternatives for Google apps that may have you concerned about your privacy and the safety of your data.

Here is a list:
Cromite (Alternative for Chrome):

Cromite can be your option for browsing if you feel that Google Chrome works like a tracking tool which runs background connections you never asked for. Cromite's UI is very similar to Chrome and makes browsing easy for Chrome users without forcing them to change their habits.

LibreTube (Alternative for YouTube):

LibreTube connects you to YouTube through a privacy-friendly backend, letting you watch YouTube videos without using Google's servers. This option is also helpful for users who are tired of ads before and during videos.

Organic Maps (Alternative for Google Maps):

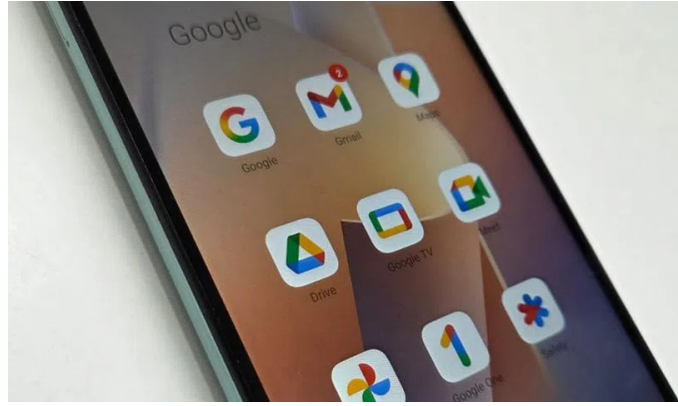
Although Google Maps is a very useful tool, it is slowly turning into a space filled with sponsored location listings. If you do not like seeing such listings on Maps, try Organic Maps, which is based on OpenStreetMap data. It lets you download entire regions for offline use.

Heliboard (Alternative for GBoard):

Heliboard is a good option for those who want an alternative to GBoard, which some users may not realise can be a privacy risk. Since keyboards know everything you type, from your address to your passwords, they can pose silent risks on your phone. Heliboard, an open-source keyboard based on OpenBoard, is safer as it needs no internet permissions. Its clean layout, which feels similar to GBoard, is also easy to adapt to.

Kvaesitso launcher (Alternative to Google launcher):

Google's stock launcher is designed to keep you within the Google ecosystem. The Discover feed is a swipe away, the search bar is linked to Google Search, and many features guide you to Google ser-



vices. Kvaesitso changes this by designing the home screen around your usage instead of Google's needs. It is an open-source launcher that can improve your Android experience if the device feels slow or cluttered.

Thunderbird for Android (Alternative to Gmail):

Gmail works well, but features like labels, smart sorting and promotion tabs often tie you to one platform's way of handling email. Thunderbird for Android is built on the long-running open-source desktop client. It supports multiple providers, including Gmail, Outlook and custom domains, and treats them all equally.

Proton Authenticator (Al-

ternative to Google Authenticator):

Proton Authenticator is part of Proton's privacy-first apps that include mail, storage, productivity tools and a two-factor authentication generator. It is open-source, works on Android, iOS and desktop, and offers end-to-end encrypted sync to keep your codes secure across devices without exposing them on another cloud service in plain text. Google services are not your only choice. If you are even a little curious, replace just one of your default Google apps with an open-source option and you may soon want to change the rest of your home screen too.

India's First Work From Village Policy in Andhra Pradesh

From Our Staff Reporter
Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh has introduced a new policy called the Neighbourhood Workspace (NWS) Policy 2025-2030, and it is the first time any state in India is doing something like this. The idea is simple: instead of people travelling long distances for office work, small work centres will now be set up in every mandal, right near people's homes. Recently the government has issued a G.O issued in this regard in which the guidelines for this policy are there. These centres will have basic office needs like seats, meeting rooms, power supply with high speed broadband internet supply, printers and clean washrooms. Anyone who wants to start such a

workspace can apply, and the government will help them with rent and setup costs. For example, the first workspace in any mandal will get free rent for five years and even the furniture and office setup costs will be supported by the government. This whole idea was first discussed under the state's IT plans and now it has become a full policy with step-by-step rules. The goal is to make it easier for people to work from home instead of crowded cities. It will help students, employees, freelancers and small companies find a clean and safe place to work without spending too much money. CBN and IT Minister Lokesh played a key role in bringing this policy to life. Naidu is known for supporting



technology and development for many years, and Lokesh has been working to make IT jobs reach every town in AP. Their idea is that opportunities should not stay only in big cities and so every district should

grow equally on digital and IT front. With this new policy, Andhra Pradesh is setting an example for the whole country. It shows how simple ideas can make life easier for people and bring work closer to home.

AP Govt In Top Gear With Google, Cognizant & TCS



From Our Staff Reporter
Amaravati: The AP government is moving fast to turn Vizag into a major global centre for artificial intelligence and cloud technology. In October 2025, the state approved a huge AI-based data centre project led by Raiden Infotech, a Google entity, with an investment of about USD 15 billion over the coming years. This project plans to build nearly 1 GW of data-centre capacity across Anakapalli and Vizag districts.

Around 400 acres of land have been set aside, making Vizag the heart of Google's first AI hub in India and one of its biggest campuses outside the US. The Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) has been asked to identify and provide suitable land for this project.

To support the development, the government has allocated close to 480 acres at important locations such as Adavivaram,

Mudasarlova, Tarluva, and Rambilli. These areas will also house supporting facilities like a cable-landing station and power systems. A government order clearly lists the responsibilities of agencies like APIIC, district collectors, and the ITE&C Department.

Their tasks include surveying the land, marking boundaries, and handing it over to the company, all within specific timelines. Under the state's Data Centre Policy 2024-29, incentives worth nearly ₹22,000 crore are being offered to promote jobs and attract investment in cloud, networking, and AI services.

TCS is also getting ready to start its Vizag operations. As mentioned in the report, the company has completed construction on a 21.76-acre campus with two office blocks that can seat nearly 1,500 employees. Officials say TCS may begin operations within the next two weeks.

Telangana Youth Who Stayed Barefoot Till Pawan Won Finally Meets Him



From Our Staff Reporter

Amaravati: Chhatta Satish of Kondagattu village in Jagital district, Telangana, announced that he would not wear footwear again until he meets Pawan Kalyan in person. On Wednesday evening he visited Mangalagiri to meet Pawan Kalyan, now Deputy Chief Minister and President of JanaSena Party, to show his deep respect and admiration. Satish has been an active member of JanaSena youth wing and participated eagerly in many party activities. He is deeply impressed by Pawan Kalyan's vision of politics that tries to unite castes, avoids communal or religious divisions, rejects narrow regionalism and embraces a broader national perspective. On 22 January 2024, the day of Ram Lalla's consecration in Ayodhya, Satish solemnly vowed that he would not wear footwear again until Pawan Kalyan wins and comes to power. He wanted to put on his shoes only after personally meeting him and showing his support. When the NDA secured a decisive victory in the elections and JanaSena achieved a full strike rate, Satish was overjoyed. But since then they had not met. Finally on Wednesday he travelled to Mangalagiri and recalled how he had followed Pawan Kalyan's speeches regularly and remembered the earlier time when Pawan Kalyan visited Kondagattu. Satish said that the admiration was not just personal but inspired by the party's principles.

Consultative Committee Reviews Comprehensive Progress of the PM-DevINE Scheme for the North Eastern Region



New Delhi: The Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) met on 03 December, 2025 under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, at the Parliament House Annexe. The Union MoS for Education and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Sukanta Majumdar, also participated in the meeting. Shri Scindia welcomed Members of the committee from Lok Sabha

and Rajya Sabha and stated that the meetings of the Committee form an integral part of the continuous dialogue on investment and development progress in the North Eastern States. He also thanked Members for their active participation and valuable insights during the meetings of the Consultative Committee. Terming PM-DevINE (Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region) as the most important scheme of the Ministry, Shri Scindia informed that the scheme was conceptualized in the Union

Budget 2022-2023. The scheme has a total outlay of Rs. 6600 crores for the period 2022-2023 to 2025-2026. As of 31st October 2025, 44 projects worth about ₹5,700 crore have been sanctioned. Three out of the sanctioned projects worth about ₹176 crore have been completed and 41 projects worth about ₹5,500 crore are currently under progress. Further, projects worth ₹111 crore have been approved in principle, with more projects worth ₹625 crore in the pipeline. The Ministry is therefore on course to fully uti-

lize the scheme outlay.

Responding to points raised by Members of the Committee, the Union Minister provided specific details of projects under implementation in Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura. On a suggestion for tourism sector projects in Tripura, the Minister informed that tourist circuits with world class facilities will be developed in each of NE state, at selected locations identified in consultation with State Governments. To begin with, Sohra Circuit in Meghalaya and Matabari Circuit in Tripura are being taken up on pilot basis. Foundation stone for the Meghalaya-Sohra Circuit has already been laid, while the Tripura-Matabari Circuit is at advance stage of approval. Besides strengthening of infrastructure, tourist circuit project will have a strong focus on capacity building to ensure availability of good quality skilled manpower to sup-

port the growth in tourism and for a better tourist experience.

Scindia highlighted that PM-DevINE projects are monitored through a rigorous and multi-layered mechanism. Weekly reviews are conducted and each project is tracked against expected versus actual timelines. During these reviews, physical progress is assessed through time-stamped photographs. Officers from MDoNER & North Eastern Council (NEC) also conduct on-ground inspections, supplemented by third-party assessment mechanisms to ensure accountability. The Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to ensuring rapid, transparent, and outcome-oriented development in the North Eastern Region, with PM-DevINE serving as a key catalyst for infrastructure and socio-economic transformation.

INDIA- INDONESIA JOINT SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISE GARUDA SHAKTI COMMENCES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH



New Delhi: The 10th edition of the India– Indonesia Joint Special Forces Exercise GARUDA SHAKTI has commenced at the Special Forces Training School, Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The exercise is being conducted from 03 to 12 December 2025. The Indian contingent is represented by troops from THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT (Special Forces), while the Indonesian contingent comprises personnel from the Indonesian Special Forces. The exercise aims to strengthen mutual understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the Special Forces of the two nations. Its scope includes troop-level tactics, techniques and procedures in a counter-terrorism environment, covering unarmed combat techniques, combat shooting, sniping, airborne operations and planning for drone, counter-UAS and loiter-munition strikes in semi-mountainous terrain. The training also features the exchange of expertise and information on weapons, equipment and operational practices. Designed to emphasise physical fitness, tactical drills and high-intensity combat training, the joint training will culminate in a validation exercise simulating real-world operational scenarios to test the endurance, coordination and combat readiness of both contingents. The exercise marks a significant step in advancing defence cooperation and further strengthening bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

"Snooping Is Not Possible": Centre Doubles Down On Sanchar Saathi App

New Delhi: The Sanchar Saathi cybersecurity app - at the centre of a row after the government mandated its installation on all smartphones sold in the country - cannot be used to 'snoop' on people or access private data, Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia told Parliament. The Government of India-backed app can also be deleted if the user wishes or not activated, Scindia said in attempts to pacify opposition MPs red-flagging potential 'spying' by the centre. "Snooping is neither

possible nor will it happen with the Sanchar Saathi safety app," Scindia said in the Lok Sabha, "And I can delete it like any other app... as every citizen has this right in a democracy. We took this step (ordering the app to be pre-installed) to make it accessible to all." "The success of the app is based on public participation. But now, based on feedback from the public, we are ready to bring a change in the order," the Bharatiya Janata Party leader said. Scindia's comments in the House this af-

ternoon were repeats of an X post Tuesday. "This is a completely voluntary and democratic system - users may choose to activate the app and avail its benefits, or if they do not wish to, they can delete it at any time," his post said. He told reporters outside Parliament the same thing, throwing in a reference to Google's Maps app as an example; "... when you buy a phone, many apps come pre-installed. Google Maps comes too. Now, if you don't want to use it (you can) delete it," he explained.

Google's Maps application can be deleted, but only from an iPhone. However, in mobile devices based on the internet search giant's Android operating system, it can only be disabled. Scindia was responding to a query by the Congress' Deepender Singh Hooda, who, in turn, referred to the Communications Minister's Tuesday clarification - that the app can be deleted. "The Union Minister (had) said it (the app) will be pre-installed. But later he said the user can delete it. However, when a pre-

loaded app is deleted, users may not know if all the features have been disabled. Is not this an attack on privacy? There are concerns over snooping," Hooda was expressing concerns flagged by many on social media - that even if the Sanchar Saathi app remains inactive on their phones, it can be secretly activated. Scindia responded, "We (have) decided to give a choice... If the app is on your phone, it does not mean it will operate automatically. Till the user registers in the app, it

will not operate."

'Ridiculous', fumes opposition

The government has come under fire from the opposition over concerns the Sanchar Sathi app can be used to spy on private citizens, an echo of the 2021 Pegasus spyware scandal. Congress MPs Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Karti Chidambaram were among those to express such concerns. "It is ridiculous. Citizens have the right to privacy. This isn't just about snooping on telephones - overall, they are turning this

country into a dictatorship," Gandhi Vadra said. "This has been done in Russia and North Korea (and) now they want to snoop on our private photos and videos," Chidambaram told NDTV. Other opposition leaders were similarly incensed; Priyanka Chaturvedi from the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena group, called it "another BIG BOSS surveillance moment". The app - specifically the provision it cannot be removed and the number of root permissions it needs to operate - was

also criticised by civil society activists.

What Is Sanchar Saathi?

It is a security and awareness platform developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), and can be accessed as an app - available for both Android and Apple devices - and web portal. The government has said it is to help people manage their digital identities, report suspicious activity, and safeguard their devices, as also offer educational material on telecom safety and cyber risks.

India's Silent Debt Time Bomb: When Households Borrow Faster Than They Save

There is a number in the government's latest disclosures that should unsettle anyone paying attention to India's economic trajectory. Household financial liabilities — the debt Indian families owe to banks, NBFCs and other lenders — have soared 76% in just four years, rising from Rs.77.7 lakh crore in March 2021 to Rs.136.6 lakh crore by March 2025. And here's the uncomfortable truth: the country has entered a phase where borrowing, not saving, is increasingly underwriting the Indian growth story. That fundamental imbalance is a ticking macroeconomic risk, even if it remains politically convenient to ignore.

The Lok Sabha replies tabled on December 1 offer a rare, consolidated snapshot of India's household balance sheet — and the picture is neither benign nor temporary. The rise in debt is not happening in isolation; it's taking place in a context where net household financial savings, the economy's traditional shock absorber, have collapsed from 11.7% of GDP during the pandemic's forced-savings year (2020-21) to just 5.0% in 2022-23 before inching back to 5.2% in 2023-24 and 6.0% in 2024-25. Even after the small recovery, India's house-

hold saving rate is still dramatically lower than its pre-pandemic average of 7–8%. And that should worry policymakers more than they admit. Meanwhile, liabilities have vaulted upward at a far faster clip. RBI data shows that financial liabilities grew at 18.5% in FY23 and 18.4% in FY24 — nearly double the growth rate of financial assets in some years. Asset stocks rose from ₹228.7 lakh crore to ₹352.6 lakh crore between 2021 and 2025, yes — but liabilities raced ahead, narrowing the safety margin that households depend on during downturns. This is the kind of creeping imbalance that doesn't break an economy in one dramatic moment; it corrodes resilience quietly.

And the most striking part? India is not only borrowing more; more Indians are borrowing. In March 2018, the number of "live unique borrowers" in the formal financial system stood at 12.8 crore. By March 2025, that number had exploded to 28.3 crore. The average debt per borrower has climbed from ₹3.41 lakh to nearly ₹4.78 lakh in seven years — a rise of more than 40%. These are not minor, cyclical fluctuations. They are structural indicators of a society where consump-



tion, asset building, and even routine expenses increasingly require credit support. RBI notes that the bulk of new debt has flowed into mortgages and vehicle loans — which, on paper, sounds healthy. But even asset-backed borrowing carries risks when it is underwritten by rising EMIs, stubborn inflation, and uneven income growth, and a labour market still struggling to generate consistent wage increases for the middle class. If incomes do not keep pace, "asset-backed" can quickly turn into "stress-backed." What is more troubling is the long arc of data. Household liabilities remained broadly stable at under 4% of GDP between 2014–15 and 2019–20. Then the pandemic hit, savings spiked temporarily, and after that — debt simply shot up. By

2022–23, household liabilities had reached 5.9% of GDP. In 2023–24 they rose further to 6.2%, the highest in over a decade. Only in FY25 do we see a drop to 4.7% of GDP, and the government presents this as a sign of "early deleveraging." That may be true. Or it may reflect households delaying borrowing due to higher interest rates, not because their financial position has meaningfully improved.

Another shift is happening beneath the surface: households are abandoning traditional bank deposits and flocking to mutual funds. Mutual fund investments have jumped from ₹0.6 lakh crore in 2020-21 to ₹4.7 lakh crore in 2024-25 — a nearly eightfold increase in absolute flows. As a share of gross financial savings, mutual funds have gone from 2.1% to

a staggering 13.1% in just four years. Gross financial savings, by contrast, have barely crept from ₹30.7 lakh crore to ₹35.6 lakh crore over the same period.

This behavioural shift — from guaranteed returns to market-linked volatility — reflects a mix of desperation (to beat inflation), greater financialisation, and clever industry marketing. But it also means that Indian households are now exposed to market cycles in a way they weren't a decade ago. When markets turn, savings buffers will crumble faster.

The government is quick to reassure Parliament that rising liabilities are partly tied to "physical asset creation," citing data from the RBI's Financial Stability Report. That is correct, but incomplete. The issue is not where households borrow, but

how fast they borrow relative to incomes — and the fact that savings are not keeping up. A mortgage-driven rise in liabilities may be justified if wages, job stability, and savings are also rising. But wages have stagnated in several sectors, especially in the informal economy that still accounts for most employment. In the absence of rising incomes, asset-backed borrowing only masks the underlying vulnerability. There's a bigger debt story too, one that undercuts the government's attempts to project fiscal prudence. India's external debt has more than doubled from ₹29.7 lakh crore in 2015 to ₹63.0 lakh crore by March 2025, and ₹63.9 lakh crore by June 2025. Combine sovereign, corporate, and household leverage, and the picture resembles an economy running hotter on credit than the headline GDP figures acknowledge. The danger is not that debt is inherently bad. A developing economy needs credit. The problem is the direction of travel — debt rising faster than incomes, liabilities rising faster than assets, and savings sitting well below historical norms. That is not a stable foundation for long-term growth;

it's a sign of fragility wrapped in optimism. Yet, political messaging continues to celebrate high GDP growth while glossing over the erosion of household balance sheets. For an economy where household consumption accounts for more than half of GDP, weakening financial buffers are not a side story — they are the story. The government, to its credit, has not hidden the data. But it also hasn't framed it honestly. Phrases like "early signs of deleveraging" and "increased asset creation" subtly downplay the scale of the problem. A hard look at the numbers tells a different story: India is becoming a credit-dependent society faster than policymakers expected, and far faster than they are willing to publicly acknowledge. What would a more honest economic strategy look like? Three things. First, rebuild savings. This requires boosting disposable incomes — which in turn requires real wage growth, job-rich sectors (not capital-heavy ones), and social protection that reduces the need for precautionary borrowing. Second, improve credit quality. The rise in borrowers is not dangerous by itself. What's dangerous is rising debt among households

without financial buffers. Regulatory vigilance must keep pace with the scale of credit expansion, especially among NBFCs where risk concentration is higher. Third, restore the link between GDP growth and household welfare. For too long, India has treated high GDP prints as a proxy for rising prosperity. But the numbers in these parliamentary replies show a divergence: growth is increasingly being financed by household leverage, not household income. India's economy may be expanding on paper, but the financial footing of its households — the engine of consumption, savings, and long-term stability — is weakening. No country can sustainably grow on borrowed optimism. If India doesn't confront its household debt problem now, it won't collapse spectacularly tomorrow. But it will chip away, year after year, at the financial security of the very people whose aspirations are supposed to define the India Story. The warning signs are already in the data. The question is whether policymakers want to read them — or wait for the debt cycle to make the consequences impossible to ignore.

Narendra Modi Has To Exercise His Finest Diplomatic Skill In Talks With Putin

When Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives in India's capital on December 4 for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit, he will bring more than proposals for weapons systems and energy contracts. The visit represents a pivotal moment in global realignment, one that could determine whether India maintains its celebrated strategic autonomy or finds itself pushed deeper into geopolitical camps it has long sought to avoid.

The timing is hardly coincidental. Putin's first visit to India since the Ukraine invasion comes as the relationship between New Delhi and Washington has deteriorated to its lowest point in decades, with President Donald Trump imposing punitive tariffs reaching 50 percent on Indian goods—partially as punishment for purchasing Russian oil. Meanwhile, Beijing watches carefully as two of its most important partners navigate their own complex relationship, one that carries implications for China's strategic positioning in Asia.

At the heart of discussions will be a subject that has become the defining issue of India-Russia relations in the post-invasion era: oil. Russian crude now supplies around 35 percent of India's total oil imports, with discounted oil helping India moderate inflation and protect foreign-exchange reserves since 2022. Bilateral trade surged from \$13.1 billion in FY 2021-22 to \$68.7

billion in FY 2024-25, driven almost entirely by energy flows.

For Russia, India's purchases have been an economic lifeline. As European markets shut down and Western sanctions intensified, Asian buyers—particularly India—absorbed Russian crude at deep discounts. Indian refiners benefited by approximately \$12.2 per barrel compared to Brent benchmark prices, generating estimated savings between \$10.5-25 billion during 2023-2024.

Yet this arrangement now faces existential challenges. US sanctions on Russian companies Rosneft, Lukoil, and their subsidiaries took effect on November 21, 2025, forcing Indian refiners to cut December purchases to their lowest in three years. Major buyers including Reliance Industries, HPCL-Mittal Energy, and Mangalore Refinery have already halted or dramatically reduced Russian imports.

The pressure campaign appears partially successful. Five of India's major refiners placed no orders for Russian crude for December deliveries, marking a significant change for the world's third-largest oil importer. Trump has repeatedly claimed that Modi promised to scale back crude purchases, though Indian officials maintain that energy security remains a sovereign decision.

Putin will likely press Modi for assurances on continued energy coopera-

tion and alternative payment mechanisms. Creating alternative payment and insurance mechanisms, including LNG and LPG expansion, upstream investment, dedicated shipping lines, and rupee-rouble settlement systems, is expected to form the centrepiece of negotiations. For Moscow, stabilizing this revenue stream is critical; for Delhi, the question is whether long-term economic benefits justify escalating tensions with Washington.

Beyond energy, the summit will focus on defense cooperation—the bedrock of India-Russia ties for six decades. India seeks to procure five additional S-400 air defense regiments beyond the five already contracted. The S-400 system's reported effectiveness during Operation Sindoor has increased India's interest in additional procurement, with the final units from the original \$5.5 billion 2018 contract expected by 2026-27.

More significantly, discussions will advance around the Sukhoi-57 fifth-generation stealth fighter. Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov stated that both sides were conducting intensive work on the Su-57E platform, with Russia prepared to offer unprecedented localization. The proposal includes technology transfer enabling production at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's Nashik facility—mirroring the successful Su-30MKI program

that produced over 220 aircraft.

The plan envisions an initial purchase of 36 to 40 aircraft forming two frontline squadrons, followed by comprehensive technology transfer for local production, potentially expanding to seven squadrons equivalent to 120-140 jets. This would represent one of the largest international Su-57 procurements outside Russia itself.

The proposal carries both technical and political weight. Russia's willingness to share source code and sensitive technology stems from its need to maintain strategic ties with India amid Western sanctions and a shifting global arms market. For India, the offer demonstrates that Moscow remains willing to transfer cutting-edge technology that Washington has consistently refused to provide.

Yet significant obstacles remain. Payment mechanisms for multi-billion-dollar transactions remain unclear amid sanctions. The threat of CAATSA sanctions looms, though expectations of reduced enforcement under Trump may provide breathing room. And India's own indigenous Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft program, expected around 2035, raises questions about long-term Su-57 utility.

Putin's visit occurs against the backdrop of the most serious India-US crisis in modern history. In February, Modi and Trump



announced "Mission 500"—a plan to expand bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. By August, Trump had imposed a 25 percent reciprocal tariff plus an additional 25 percent penalty for Russian oil purchases, bringing total duties to 50 percent.

India strongly denounced the measures as unfair, unjustified and unreasonable, asserting that its energy policy and supply chains are independent and grounded in its strategic autonomy. The crisis deepened when reports suggested India paused major defense procurements from the US—claims the Defense Ministry denied.

Trump was particularly disturbed that while China increased Russian oil imports for its own use, India

was reselling refined Russian oil products to Europe and elsewhere for a healthy profit. This revelation transformed what Trump viewed as an economic betrayal into a strategic affront.

The diplomatic rupture extended beyond trade. Trump's repeated claims of brokering an India-Pakistan ceasefire in May—publicly rejected by New Delhi—revived sensitivities about external interference and exposed divergent narratives that complicate trust.

Former US Ambassador Kenneth Juster and journalist Fareed Zakaria characterized Trump's actions as reversing decades of bipartisan efforts to strengthen ties with India. Zakaria noted that India was placed in the highest tariff category alongside countries like Syria and Myanmar,

while Pakistan received lower tariffs despite its close ties with China.

The timing of Putin's visit sends an unmistakable message: India possesses alternatives. The outcomes of Putin's visit will be as much about sending a signal to the United States as about assuaging domestic concerns that India will not buckle under pressure from Trump.

Beijing's reaction to the Putin-Modi summit will be measured but significant. As Russia's most important strategic partner and India's primary regional rival, China has complex interests in this triangular relationship. At the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in September, Modi was pictured in friendly discussion with Putin and Xi, with the optics unmistak-

able—China, India, and North Korea backing Russia as a changing global order takes shape. Yet beneath surface-level unity lie deep fault lines. Differences between Russia and China are evident in their engagement in each other's periphery, with Russia's deepening security relationship with North Korea marking a qualitative shift to the detriment of Beijing's influence. Meanwhile, the visit sends a strong message to China that India maintains independent strategic ties beyond its US partnership.

For Beijing, Putin's India visit represents both opportunity and concern. Closer Russia-India defense cooperation could complicate China's military calculus along the Himalayan border, where tensions remain high.

Pankaj Chaudhary inaugurates the 68th Founding Day of DRI



New Delhi: Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary inaugurated the 68th Founding Day celebrations of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), India's apex anti-smuggling intelligence and enforcement agency under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), at its Headquarters at New Delhi. Also present were Shri Vivek Chaturvedi, Chairman, CBIC; M.K. Singh and Shri Yogendra Garg, Members CBIC; Shri Abhai Kumar Srivastav; DG, DRI, besides retired and serving senior officials of CBIC and other Indian Law Enforcement Agencies. In his address on the occasion, MoS Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary, lauded DRI's steadfast commitment to protecting India's economic borders and trade infrastructure since its establishment in 1957. He commended DRI for tackling global challenges, technological changes, and the emergence of organised international crime networks and continuing to perform its duties with steadfastness, dedication, and efficiency on every front. He

underscored that the endeavour of the Government is to ensure that honest taxpayers can do business with dignity and that the use of India's land, waterways, or air becomes impossible, risky, and futile for illegal trade.

CBIC Chairman Shri Vivek Chaturvedi praised DRI for its unwavering professionalism and its central role in safeguarding legitimate trade. He encouraged officers to continue leveraging technology, risk management tools, and global partnerships to strengthen India's border security framework. In his welcome address earlier, Shri Abhai Kumar Srivastav; DG, DRI, reaffirmed DRI's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards and operational excellence. He highlighted the DRI's relentless efforts in busting smuggling syndicates and choking the stream of illicit funds generated from smuggling, which could otherwise be leveraged by anti-national groups and other non-state actors for activities that are inimical to the national interests, impinging upon both public order

and national security. As part of the Founding Day celebrations, DG's Commendation Certificates for Meritorious Service and Excellence were awarded to DRI officers for exceptional contributions to enforcement and intelligence operations. DRI also released the

Smuggling in India Report 2024-25, its annual flagship publication that highlights trends in illicit trade, major enforcement achievements, emerging challenges, and policy recommendations. The ceremony was attended by 30 international delegates from 15 participating countries in the 10th Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting (RCEM), reflecting the growing partnership between India and global enforcement agencies in combating transnational smuggling. Their presence underscored DRI's role as a key contributor to international customs collaboration. DRI reaffirms its mission to protect India's borders, safeguard economic interests, and uphold the highest standards of integrity as it enters its 69th year of service to the nation.

Passport Verification Record Now Available on DigiLocker for Citizens' Ease and Security

New Delhi: The National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), has announced a major enhancement to citizen services through the enablement of the Passport Verification Record (PVR) on the DigiLocker platform. DigiLocker is a secure, cloud-based platform under the Digital India programme that enables issuance, storage, sharing, and verification of digital documents and certificates.

This initiative marks a significant step in advancing the vision of Digital India by simplifying document management for citizens and reducing reliance on physical records. With this integration, Passport Verification Records can now be securely accessed, stored, shared, and digitally verified within the DigiLocker ecosystem.

fied within the DigiLocker ecosystem, promoting paperless, contactless, and citizen-centric service delivery. Upon successful verification, citizens will be able to fetch their respective Passport Verification Records in the "Issued Documents" section of their DigiLocker account. This integration will enhance the convenience and accessibility of official verification documents (OVD) for citizens while ensuring that their records remain secure, trusted, and digitally verifiable within the DigiLocker ecosystem.

The availability of PVR on DigiLocker offers multiple direct benefits to citizens:

Convenience and anytime access: Citizens will be able to seamlessly access and retrieve their Passport Verification Records from the "Issued Documents" section of their DigiLocker

account after successful verification, through both the web portal and mobile application, without the need to carry or store physical copies. Faster processes and reduced paperwork: Digital access to PVR is expected to significantly streamline verification-related processes in areas such as travel, employment, and compliance, thereby reducing manual paperwork and saving time for both citizens and institutions that rely on verified passport records. Secure, tamper-proof, and authentic records: PVRs made available through DigiLocker are issued in digital form directly by the relevant government systems, ensuring authenticity, integrity, and protection against tampering, in line with DigiLocker's secure architecture. Easy digital sharing and verification: Citizens will be able to digitally share their PVR

with authorised requesters through DigiLocker, enabling instant, consent-based access and verification, and reducing the need for attested photocopies or multiple physical submissions. Support for paperless and green governance: By moving passport-related verification records into a fully digital workflow, the initiative furthers the Government's efforts towards paperless governance, resource efficiency, and environmentally responsible administrative practices. The integration of PVR with DigiLocker represents a pivotal milestone in modernising citizen services and strengthening India's digital public infrastructure. It reinforces the 'Citizen-First' approach by combining secure digital records with user-friendly access, thereby enhancing transparency and trust in government processes.

Rahul Gandhi Adds Fuel To Dog Row, Says Pets Allowed Inside Parliament

New Delhi: Adding fuel to the controversy sparked by his party colleague Renuka Chowdhury, who said "those who bite are inside Parliament" after she reached the complex with a dog, Leader of the Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has quipped that pets are allowed inside the legislature. Speaking to reporters in the Parliament complex on Tuesday, Gandhi referred to the controversy and remarked, "Dog is the main topic today, I believe." "What did the poor dog do? Did it come here? Is it not allowed?" he asked.

When a reporter said nothing is mentioned in the rule book, but pets are not allowed, the Congress leader pointed to the Parliament building and quipped, "But they are allowed inside", drawing laughter from the gathering.

Latching on to the remark by Gandhi, who is known for his love for his pet dog 'Pidi', the BJP asked how such language could be used for elected representatives. "The decorum and dignity of Parliament were hurt by the statements made by Rahul Gandhi and

Renuka Chowdhury. Both the 'Rs' need to remember that there is an R - 'responsibility of an MP'." He (Gandhi) did not specify anything, but the implied meaning suggests he was pointing to all the parliamentarians, including the Opposition, as well as sanitation workers, inside the House. The public understands everything," BJP Spokesperson Sambit Patra said. "Rahul Gandhi, we do not expect this from you. I hope that you go home and listen to Renuka's and your own statement and reflect on whether this kind of lan-

guage suits you. With this kind of speech and behaviour, will the country accept or respect you?" he asked.

Another party spokesperson, Pradeep Bhandari accused the Leader of the Opposition of comparing MPs to dogs and said this is how dynasts treat Parliament. Dogs allowed inside". Rahul Gandhi is comparing his own Congressmen, and Opposition leaders to Dog! This is how Parivarvadi treat temple of democracy (sic)," Bhandari wrote on X. On Monday, some MPs had objected to



Renuka Chowdhury bringing a rescued stray dog inside the Parliament complex in her car, after

which the Congress leader had said, "Those sitting inside (Parliament) bite, dogs don't".

Supreme Court's 100-Metre Rule, Mining Ban And What's Next For Aravallis

The Supreme Court has approved a new official definition of the Aravalli Hills, a ruling that could reshape the legal protection of one of the world's oldest mountain systems. According to a report in Business Standard, a bench on November 20 accepted recommendations submitted by a Union Environment Ministry committee that sought to standardise how the 692-km range across north-west India is defined. Under the new criteria, any landform within Aravalli districts must have at least 100 metres of elevation above the local relief - including its slopes and adjoining areas - to be treated as part of the Aravalli Hills. The court also directed the Centre to carry out detailed scientific mapping and develop a "sustainable mining plan", and ordered that no new mining leases be issued until this work is complete. However, the 100-metre threshold has triggered concern. Environmentalists warn the rule may exclude large stretches of low-lying but ecologically linked ridges that had previously fallen within the protective

ambit. Citing The Indian Express, the court was informed that an internal Forest Survey of India (FSI) assessment found only 1,048 of 12,081 mapped hills - just 8.7% - meet the 100-metre benchmark. This could mean nearly 90% of what was commonly understood as Aravalli terrain may lose legal protection.

A legacy of judicial protection

Courts have historically played a key role in safeguarding the Aravallis. Since the 1990s, the Supreme Court has repeatedly intervened to curb unregulated mining across Rajasthan and Haryana. The landmark 1996 judgement in MC Mehta vs Union of India led to the shutdown of hundreds of quarries around Delhi after the court found mining activities were causing "irreversible environmental damage". Subsequent orders tightened monitoring, imposed bans in ecologically sensitive zones, and directed states to rehabilitate mined areas. Over the years, courts have also pulled up state governments for illegal extraction, weak en-

forcement, and failure to protect crucial wildlife corridors. This long-standing judicial oversight is one reason many conservationists fear the new definition could dilute decades of environmental safeguards.

Ecological risks flagged by experts

Scientists and conservation groups warn that reducing the legally recognised footprint of the Aravallis could accelerate ecological decline across the region. Lower ridges and connected hill systems - often the first to be encroached upon - perform essential functions: Habitat loss and fragmentation of wildlife corridors, affecting leopards, hyenas, and bird species. Damage to groundwater recharge zones, affecting peri-urban farming belts. Degradation of scrub forests and native tree cover that support reptiles, pollinators, and grassland birds. Increased desertification risks, with dust and heat worsening air quality in the National Capital Region. Disruption of microclimates, which could push groundwater levels further down. The Congress party

too raised concerns. Congress chief Sonia Gandhi launched a sharp attack against the Centre over the change in the definition of the Aravalli hills range, calling it a "death warrant" for the hills. Party leader and former environment minister Jairam Ramesh tweeted: "This is bizarre and will have very grave environmental and public health consequences. It calls for an immediate review." A report by a central committee, quoted by news agency PTI, underscores the Aravallis' importance in moderating the regional climate, slowing desertification, and recharging aquifers. It urges states to follow strict mapping protocols, adopt stronger safeguards, and use digital tools - including AI and machine learning - to curb illegal mining. Now, the top court's 100-metre rule has intensified a debate around striking a balance between sustainable mining and the survival of an ancient ecological shield that has already endured decades of pressure.

Clashes Break Out At Bhopal Gas Tragedy Rally Over Alleged RSS Effigy

Bhopal: What began as a peaceful rally to mark the 41st anniversary of the Bhopal gas tragedy turned into a heated political confrontation on Wednesday, after RSS and BJP workers clashed with gas victims' organisations over an effigy carried during the march. Gas victims' groups had organised their annual remembrance rally from Bharat Talkies underbridge to JP Nagar Gas Memorial in Bhopal, demanding long-pending justice, stricter action against Union Carbide and Dow Chemical, and proper rehabilitation for survivors. But tensions escalated quickly when the organisations carried an effigy symbolising Union Carbide, Dow, and companies linked to the 1984 disaster. RSS and BJP workers alleged that the effigy portrayed an "RSS worker" and accused the organisers of hurting religious and organisational sentiments. They confronted the march-

ing groups, demanding the effigy be removed and calling the act "provocative" and "anti-national." Gas victims' organisations rejected the allegations, stating the effigy represented the corporations responsible for the tragedy, not any group or organisation. They accused the BJP government of "protecting Dow Chemical" and obstructing efforts to hold the guilty companies accountable. According to them, the intervention over the effigy was politically motivated.

As arguments intensified, police stepped in and seized the effigy to prevent further escalation. Officers at the spot, however, refrained from making any detailed statement on the controversy. RSS-BJP workers later demanded that a case be registered, claiming "anti-national activities" were being carried out under the guise of the rally. They insisted the depiction in the effigy was a deliber-



ate attempt to provoke and "spoil the atmosphere." Gas victims' organisations maintained their stand, reminding that 41 years after the disaster, survivors still await justice. They argued that the state and central governments have failed to take concrete action against Union Carbide, Dow Chemical, and their affiliates despite repeated appeals.

A BJP leader present at the scene alleged that the organisers attempted to

"vitiate the atmosphere by carrying an effigy mimicking an RSS-associated figure," calling the act unacceptable. While rallies and memorial events are held every year on the anniversary of the tragedy, this year's commemoration was overshadowed by the political confrontation. The police have urged all sides to maintain peace as the matter continues to stir reactions across the city.

Centre Rolls Back Order On Mandatory Pre-Installation Of Sanchar Saathi App



New Delhi: The government on Wednesday rolled back an order mandating pre-installation of the Sanchar Saathi cybersecurity app on smartphones sold in the country. The order to manufacturers - including American technology giant Apple, which was reportedly prepping a legal challenge - was withdrawn because the "the number of users who have downloaded the app (over six lakh in 24 hours and 1.4 crore

users overall) has been increasing rapidly". The mandate to pre-install "was meant to accelerate this process". The statement also confirmed what Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said yesterday and repeated in Parliament this morning - the app can be deleted. "The government, with an intent to provide access to cybersecurity to all citizens, mandated pre-installation of Sanchar Saathi app on all smartphones. The app is

secure and meant to help citizens from bad actors in the cyber world. There is no other function other than protecting users... and they can remove the app..." The rollback followed two days of protests over concerns the pre-installation directive violates privacy rights and that the app itself could be used to spy on people, an echo of the Pegasus spyware scandal. Earlier today Scindia told the Lok Sabha, "Snooping is neither possible nor will it happen with the Sanchar Saathi app. And I can delete it like any other app... as every citizen has this right in a democracy. We took this step to make it accessible to all." "The success of the app is based on public participation. But now, based on feedback from the public, we are ready to bring a change in the order," the BJP leader said.

'Ridiculous', fumes opposition

Congress MPs Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Karti

Chidambaram were among those to express concerns. "It is ridiculous. This isn't just about snooping on telephones - overall, they are turning this country into a dictatorship," Gandhi Vadra said, while Chidambaram told NDTV, "This has been done in Russia and North Korea (and) now they want to snoop on our private photos and videos." Other opposition leaders were similarly incensed; Priyanka Chaturvedi from the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, called it "another BIG BOSS surveillance moment".

What Is Sanchar Saathi?

It is a security and awareness platform developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), and can be accessed as an app - available for both Android and Apple devices - and web portal. The government has said it is to help people manage their digital identities, report suspicious activity, and safeguard their devices, as also offer educational material on telecom safety and cyber risks.



In a major step, the Centre is now coming up with a proposed bill that will aim to ban gutkha and pan masala. The proposed bill, called the Health Security to National Security Cess Bill, 2025, will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the coming Winter Session of Parliament next week. With this bill, it brings a completely new system to control how gutkha, pan masala and similar tobacco-based products are made. Instead of taxing companies based on

how much they produce, the new law will put a special cess on the machines that are used for production which could cause supply chain disruptions in this case. This means the tax will depend on the capacity of the machines, not the final output. Even small handmade units, which often work secretly without proper rules, will now have to pay a fixed monthly cess. The main idea behind this move is simple: to collect more money for healthcare and national security as it

has become major concern with how worse the health impact has been due to the tobacco consumption and seen as a healthcare threat to national security. Now with this, the manufacturers must pay the cess every single month, no matter how much they produce. They will get relief only if a machine is shut down for more than 15 days. Every company that can be big or small should and must register with the government, file monthly returns and allow officials to inspect their

units.

Now, no more this unregulated business cannot be compromised and the government saved from tax evasion. This time, it just doesn't stop with regulation but also high penalties are there where anyone found breaking the rules can face up to five years in jail and heavy fines. Companies can appeal against any order, even up to the Supreme Court. The government will also have the power to double the cess if needed. Once the bill gets passed, this could be the biggest reform for the Gutkha industry and stop its overconsumption that could lead to indirect boycott and ban on these products. Recently, even BCCI that has been running all Pan-masala and gutkha ads at the stadium which were contributing large sum of money by ad revenue and later this year, they announced a ban of these ads.

In 2 Breakfasts With DK Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah Says There Was 1 Difference

Bengaluru: The meetings were about trying to resolve a power tussle for Karnataka's chief minister post, but the two breakfasts between Siddaramaiah and his deputy, DK Shivakumar, in the space of four days have also attracted attention for their menus. The two leaders, also, in fact, spoke about the menu when they were asked about it, and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also shared an interesting tidbit about where the chicken was procured from. Sources told news agency PTI that 'nati koli saaru' (country chicken curry), considered one of Siddaramaiah's favourites, was on the menu at the breakfast at Shivakumar's house on Tuesday, along with 'nati koli' fry, idlis, vada and pongal (a rice and lentil dish). Asked about the difference between the breakfast at his house on Saturday and the meal at the deputy chief minister's resi-



dence, Siddaramaiah said, "At his house, it was non-vegetarian, while at my house, it was vegetarian. He is a vegetarian, I am a non-vegetarian. I had not prepared non-veg. I told DK (Shivakumar) to get chicken from the village as you won't get the original in Bengaluru." Shivakumar said he had initially invited the chief minister to his residence, but Siddaramaiah had suggested meeting at his house first. "It was a vegetarian breakfast at the

chief minister's house on Saturday," he said. "Today, I invited him to my house. He enjoyed the breakfast, which had his Mysuru taste," the deputy chief minister added. Siddaramaiah, who was born in a village in Mysuru district, then pointed out that Shivakumar's wife is also from Mysuru. On the menu for Saturday's breakfast at Siddaramaiah's house was idli, upma and kesari baat (a breakfast desert made of semolina), among others.

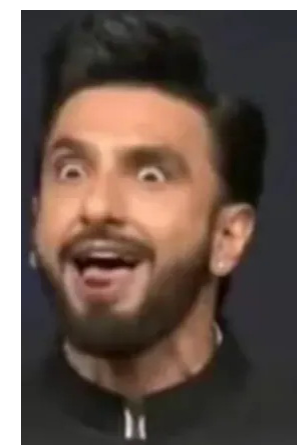
While the outcome of the two breakfast meetings is unclear, sources told NDTV that Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar will fly to Delhi to meet the Congress brass, including party President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, on December 8. This will be preceded by a meeting with senior Congress leader KC Venugopal. Siddaramaiah reiterated that he will abide by what the party high command decides.

Complaint Against Dhurandhar Star Ranveer Singh For Mimicking Kantara Daiva Scene

Mumbai: A complaint has been filed against Bollywood star Ranveer Singh at the High Grounds Police Station in Bengaluru for mimicking the Daiva scene from Rishab Shetty's Kantara Chapter 1. Bengaluru-based advocate Prashanth Metal has filed the complaint against the actor who recreated Rishab Shetty's performance as the Ullalhi Daiva during his stage address at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on November 28. While praising Kantara Chapter 1 and its lead star-director Rishab Shetty, Ranveer Singh allegedly described the Daiva as a demon and a female ghost, which the complainant said hurt his religious sentiments. The complaint has been filed under Sections 299, 302, and 196 of the Bharat Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, stating that through his "illegal and offensive actions", Ranveer Singh has hurt the sentiments of "millions of Hindus, particularly the Tulu-speaking community of Karnataka". In his complaint, the advocate also

said that Ranveer Singh made derogatory remarks about the Ullalhi Daiva during his stage address at the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on November 28.

The development comes a day after Ranveer Singh issued an apology on his Instagram Story. "My intention was to highlight Rishab's incredible performance in the film. Actor to actor, I know how much it takes to perform that particular scene the way he did, for which he has my utmost admiration. 'I have always deeply respected every culture, tradition, and belief in our country. If I've hurt anyone's sentiments, I sincerely apologise,' Ranveer Singh wrote. Ranveer Singh was heavily trolled by a section of social media users after his video mimicking the Daiva scene went viral on the Internet. In the viral video, the actor recalls how he watched Kantara Chapter 1 in cinemas. He said, "I watched Kantara in theaters, and Rishab's performance was outstanding, especially when the female ghost enters



your body; that shot was so amazing." A source told Bangalore Times that Ranveer Singh reportedly stepped off the stage to greet dignitaries, including Rajinikanth and Rishab Shetty at IFFI, when he excitedly began mimicking the Daiva sequence from Kantara Chapter 1. The source said, as quoted by the publication, "Ranveer came down from the stage to greet the guests, including Rajinikanth and Rishab (Shetty). The moment he saw Rishab, he got excited and began mimicking the Daiva, which Rishab asked him to stop-though politely." Rishab Shetty is yet to react to the controversy.

Strengthening of Rural Food Supply-Chain Infrastructure

New Delhi: In order to address gaps in food supply-chain infrastructure and ensure overall development of Food Processing Sector, Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has been incentivizing setting up/ expansion of related infrastructure through its two Central Sector Schemes namely Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) and Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI). MoFPI is also implementing a Centrally sponsored scheme namely PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme. These schemes aim towards creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet which includes storage, transportation, value addition etc., thereby help in providing better returns to farmers, reducing wastage of agricultural produce, reduction in post harvest losses, enhancing productivity and increasing the processing level.

Can Sharwanand Repeat His Sankranti Magic ?

Talented actor Sharwanand is at a critical point of his career. He now needs a big break to end the long flop streak because most of his recent films left no trace at the box office. Though Biker was initially scheduled for release on December 6th, a day after Balakrishna's Akhanda 2, the makers have decided to postpone the film to a new date due to some technical reasons. However, there is no official announcement yet on when the film will hit the screens. Meanwhile, the makers of Nari Nari Naduma Murari are firm on releasing it for Sankranti despite heavy competition. Sankranti 2026 is already jam-packed with a bunch of big-ticket films like The Raja Saab, Mana Shankar Vara Prasad Garu, Bhartha Mahasayulaku Wignyapthi and Anaganaga Oka Raju, Jana Nayagan and Parasakthi. With these many films in race, getting adequate number of screens will be very tough for Sharwanand's film. But, producer Anil Sunkara is looking to release Nari Nari Naduma Murari for Sankranti at any cost. Sharwanand has a promising track record for



Sankranti as his previous offerings like Shatamanam Bhavati and Express Raja emerged as big hits even though there was huge competition from top league actors at that time. So, the team is banking on Sharwanand's

Sankranti sentiment. Nari Nari Naduma Murari is touted to be a feel-good family drama which has all elements to cut across family and youth audiences. Directed by happening director Ram Abbaraju, the film has

Samyuktha Menon and Sakshi Vaidhya as the female leads. Can Sharwanand complete a hat-trick of Sankranti hits with Nari Nari Naduma Murari and make a strong comeback? Only time will tell the answer.

Mahavatar Narsimha Screened In Pakistan

Mahavatar Narsimha is one of the successful animated devotional movies that were released in theatres this year. The film has become a box-office blockbuster. Initially released in Kannada, the film was later dubbed into other languages and received a blockbuster response. But surprisingly, the film reached Karachi, Pakistan. The film was screened for a large audience in Karachi, Pakistan. The Islamic-dominated country has Hindus as a minority. However, this public screening of the film has garnered attention from across the world. The film was screened at the Swami Narayan Mandir in Karachi. The video from the public screening is now going viral on social media. It looks like more such films will make way to Pakistan in the coming days if the reception is constant. No one expected an animation film to gross 300 Cr, but it set big records at the box office. Moreover, the film was also recently nominated for the Oscar nominations. Mahavatar Narsimha is the first installment of a seven-part animated series called Mahavatar Cinematic Universe. Ashwin Kumar is the film's director and Kleem Productions bankrolled the film. Hombale Films distributed it.



Peddi Beauty Looks Stunning in Elegant Attire

Janhvi Kapoor recently spoke quite bluntly about how the media turned her mother Sridevi's death into memes, even bringing up the Dharmendra case while calling it out. Right after all that noise, she quietly signed a new film under Karan Johar, no drama, just work mode. The new pictures she posted today have taken over social media anyway. She's standing in this mustard-yellow outfit with colourful embroidery, looking like she stepped out of a painting someone forgot to finish, neat bun, sharp shoulders, tiny bag dangling casually. The whole look has this soft glamour that isn't trying too hard. There's also something relaxed in the way she's leaning, like she wasn't planning a photoshoot but it happened around her. And in Bollywood, she's already prepping for Peddi with Ram Charan. People are curious because the pairing feels fresh, a bit unexpected even.

Divya Bharathi Turns Up the Heat in Stunning Red



After all the noise around the controversy over the upcoming Sudheer Babu starrer 'G.O.A.T', the on-set insults, the awkward silence from people Divya Bharathi expected to speak up, and the whole thing turning into a minor storm online, Divya Bharathi still showed up last night to promote her film. She looked oddly calm for someone who's been tossed around in headlines all week. In the photos, she's standing there in a deep red gown that sits on her so neatly it almost looks unbothered. One hand on her waist, a small half-smile, and that "okay, let's just get this done" sort of mood that people slip into when they're tired of drama. The gown does most of the work, honestly. The red catches light in a warm, slightly punchy way, making the fabric look a bit richer than usual. It follows her frame cleanly without shouting for attention. She kept things simple, barely any jewellery, hair left loose, and the whole look feels like she didn't want to fuss too much but still wanted to look put-together. And considering what she dealt with, those comments during shoot, the strange silence from others, and a teaser event that felt incomplete, her appearance feels like a quiet shrug.

NBK's Akhanda 2, Gear Up For Big Surprises!



Nandamuri Balakrishna's highly anticipated movie Akhanda 2 has completed all formalities, including clearing the censor board with a U/A certificate. The final print has been delivered to theaters across India and overseas, leaving no room for last-minute hiccups. Clocking in at a runtime of 2 hours and 44 minutes, the film promises a perfectly paced, high-octane commercial entertainer. Theatrical and non-theatrical rights have already generated significant profits for the producers, and with the current buzz, full recovery from box office collections seems almost certain. Director Boyapati Sreenu, known for his signature storytelling style, has taken special care in shaping Balakrishna's role. While this installment continues from the original Akhanda, the narrative promises to be engaging, striking the perfect balance between action, emotion, and spirituality. At its heart, the story is driven by mother emotion, while exploring the values of Sanatana Hindava Dharma. Audiences can expect a blend of surprises, unexpected twists, and striking action sequences designed to leave a lasting impact. As per inside sources major surprise will the lord shiva avatar in the movie. Balakrishna will appear in three distinct looks, with his Akhanda character more powerful and attention-grabbing than ever before. The deadly combo of NBK and Boyapati Srinu is already creating a massive buzz, amplified further by intriguing promos. Reports suggest that censor officials across different languages have appreciated the team for delivering a film that seamlessly blends devotion, drama, and high-voltage action, keeping emotion and spirituality at its core. With expectations soaring, Akhanda 2 is all set to hit theaters on December 5th. Tickets are live and the movie's already trending at No. 1 on BookMyShow. Premiere shows drop tomorrow, indicates the confidence of the makers.