

## HILTP leak to BRS rattles Telangana govt, hunt on for opposition 'moles'

HYDERABAD: A major storm has erupted within the state government after highly sensitive information on an industrial land decision was allegedly leaked to opposition leaders even before the official GO was issued. The explosive leak has triggered uproar within the administration and raised grave questions about the presence of "covert operatives" embedded deep inside the government machinery.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and the Chief Secretary are understood to be trying to identify those responsible for leaking the information related to the government's 'Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation Policy' (HILTP) to the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS).

Officials were left red-faced when BRS working president KT Rama Rao disclosed the details of the policy at a press conference on Friday — even before the Government Order was officially released, which happened a day later.

The ruling establishment was caught off-guard when Rama Rao raised the issue at his press meet to criticise the government. Key functionaries are now scrambling to identify the pro-BRS employees within the system.

The spotlight is currently on staff

working in ministers' offices as well as the chambers of senior officials. Intelligence agencies, too, are on the job, keeping a close watch on "deep moles" believed to be embedded within the government machinery.

Highly placed sources said the CMO has taken a serious view of the breach and is keen to identify the black sheep. The government is reportedly examining whether the leak originated from ruling party leaders themselves or from the administrative apparatus.

Sources in the government said senior officials are particularly worried because detailed information — even at the discussion stage — appears to have reached the opposition.

A senior minister expressed shock that BRS "spies" seemed to be active within the government, enabling the party's working president to level allegations with clockwork precision.

Officials recall that this is not an isolated incident, noting that similar leaks have occurred in the past. They now fear covert operatives may be active at various levels of the administration. Several senior officials are trying to determine whether their own staff or subordinates may be playing a double game. The CMO is also examining which officials had been particularly loyal to the



BRS during its 10-year rule — especially to KT Rama Rao — and whether they continue to wield influence behind the scenes.

According to sources, a few employees and mid-level officers are now under the scanner. The Chief Secretary's office has sought detailed information from senior officials about the staff working under them.

A senior officer recalled that the TGIIC land issue had also been leaked to the BRS earlier, which a former minister used to target the ruling Congress.

A senior leader said some individu-

als within the ruling party might be attempting to undermine the CM and the minister concerned for political gain.

They have not ruled out the possibility of such leaders passing sensitive information to the BRS to land the government in trouble. Senior officials added that once the black sheep are identified, they will be removed without delay.

An opposition leader remarked that his party's "men are everywhere in the government — and vice versa," adding that such a phenomenon is nothing new and, in his words, "quite common."

## Telangana Min Jupally plays social reformer, encourages widow to perform housing unit bhumi puja

HYDERABAD: In a strong message against discriminatory social customs, Tourism, Culture and Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Sunday encouraged a widow to perform bhumi puja for an Indiramma housing unit at Machinenipalli in Kollapur mandal, despite objections from some local residents.

The house was sanctioned under the Indiramma Housing Scheme in the name of Ramudu, son of Lakshmi Devamma, who lost her husband a few years ago.

As Ramudu's wife is pregnant and unable to participate in the ceremony, the minister asked Lakshmi Devamma to perform the Bhumi Puja.

Firmly rejecting the objection raised by the locals, the minister said such beliefs have no place in a modern, progressive society.

He termed the exclusion of widows from auspicious ceremonies a deep-rooted

social evil, adding that women already dealing with emotional trauma should not be subjected to further isolation or stigma.

"Viewing widows as inauspicious is inhuman and discriminatory. These outdated customs are stains on our culture and must be eradicated without delay," he said.

The minister stressed that discriminatory rituals and superstitions continue to hinder the psychological and economic progress of women, despite the presence of several laws meant to safeguard their rights.

Earlier in the day, the minister said that women's education is vital not only for the progress of families but also for the advancement of society. He was speaking at an event where Indiramma saris were distributed.

Addressing the large gathering of women, Krishna Rao elaborated on the government's development and welfare



initiatives. He cautioned that social ailments, lack of awareness about physical and mental health, poor dietary habits, and the burden of high medical expenses in

corporate hospitals were pushing families into distress. Despite the availability of quality facilities in government schools, many continued to prefer corporate education, he observed.



## Congress under fire as HILTP sparks land sale controversy

Hyderabad: From the forest lands of Kancha Gachibowli to the auction of TGIIC plots and now the controversy over the Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation Policy (HILTP), the Congress is repeatedly contradicting its own earlier position on the sale of government lands.

While in the opposition, the Congress had vehemently objected to auctioning public lands, with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, then TPCC president, arguing that government lands were 'the State's wealth' and must be preserved for future needs.

In sharp contrast, after coming to power, the Revanth Reddy government has been auctioning lands extensively to generate revenue and mobilise funds for welfare and development programmes.

The Telangana Housing Board, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority, Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) and other agencies have been auctioning lands under their jurisdiction.

Under the HILTP, the government is examining the conversion of lands within the Outer Ring Road (ORR). A total of 9,292 acres have been identified under the policy, of which 4,740 acres comprise plotted areas.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu said the State expected to generate Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 5,000 crore through the collection of conversion fees. The proposal is to collect a conversion charge of 30 percent to 50 percent on the Sub Registrar Value of the lands, rather than market value. The opposition BRS has questioned why industries were being permitted to convert the lands at such low rates.

## Former Sarpanches to protest pending bills, demand BC quota in panchayat polls

Hyderabad: As the Congress government gears up to organise the Praja Palana celebrations in a fortnight, former Sarpanches have drawn up plans to stage protests at Gram Panchayat Offices from December 1 to 9 over the delay in clearing their pending bills.

They are also demanding that the government conduct panchayat elections with 42 percent reservations for Backward Classes, as promised in the Congress manifesto.

The State government has to clear

pending bills totalling Rs 531 crore. Despite repeated appeals and protests, the government has failed to address the issue for 23 months, Telangana Sarpanches Joint Action Committee president S. Yadaiah said.

He added that many former Sarpanches were facing financial distress, and a few had even resorted to suicide unable to bear the pressure.

Moneylenders were exerting pressure on them to repay loans, leaving several former Sarpanches humiliated, he said.

Meanwhile, BC organisations

staged a protest near the Mahatma Jyothiba Phule statue in Amberpet, demanding that the government scrap G.O.Ms. 46. They insisted that the Gram Panchayat elections be conducted with 42 percent reservation for the community.

Under the banner of the BC Organisations Joint Action Committee, leaders led by Jajula Srinivas Goud burnt copies of the GO. He warned that both the Congress and BJP were deceiving the BC community, and would be taught a fitting lesson in the elections for failing to ensure 42 percent reservations.

## Egg prices soar in Karimnagar amid festive demand and shortages

Karimnagar: The price of eggs in Karimnagar has shot up sharply, with

States and the stockpiling of eggs in cold storages ahead of Christmas and

and Rs 160, is now priced between Rs 190 and Rs 210.



each egg becoming costlier by Rs 1 to Rs 1.5 in recent days.

A majority of Hindus do not consume non-vegetarian food, including eggs, during the holy month of Karthika Masam, and prices usually decline during this period. However, despite Karthika Masam, egg rates have continued to rise.

The large-scale death of chickens in the recent past is cited as a key reason for the surge. Exports to other

New Year celebrations are also said to be contributing factors.

Except in exceptional situations, eggs are usually sold at Rs 5.30 to Rs 6. Prices tend to rise slightly when layer birds die in large numbers due to disease or heat during the summer. Normally, there is no major fluctuation.

At present, wholesale traders are selling eggs at Rs 6.30 each, while retailers are selling at Rs 7. A tray of 30 eggs, which earlier cost between Rs 150

A wholesale trader said eggs were earlier exported mainly to Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. However, traders from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have also begun sourcing eggs from Telangana since the State is recognised as a poultry hub.

They are reportedly offering an additional 50 paise per egg compared to local traders, prompting poultry owners to sell their stock to out-of-state buyers and creating shortages within Telangana.

Some traders are also believed to be creating artificial shortages by storing eggs in cold storages ahead of Christmas and New Year. Since eggs are an essential ingredient in cake preparation, the December demand surge is being used to make higher margins.

Speaking to Telangana Today, wholesale trader Srinivas said he used to sell 100 trays of eggs a day earlier, but the number has dropped to 50. Though he is ready to sell 100 trays, poultry owners are not supplying stock.

Karimnagar is a major poultry centre, with around 75 lakh eggs produced daily across nearly 350 farms in the erstwhile district.

## Farmers booked by cops for demanding procurement of cotton in Narayanpet

Narayanpet: In sharp contrast to the Congress government's claims of being a farmer-friendly regime, cases have been booked against cotton farmers for staging a protest and demanding procurement of their stocks.

Cases have also been registered against former BRS MLA C Rammohan Reddy and a few other leaders for extending support to the farmers, with the Maganuru police initiating action, accord-

ing to reports.

On November 17, nearly 50 farmers staged a protest at the Vadvat Basaweswara Ginning Mill gate on the national highway for four hours. The farmers had carried their stocks in trucks to the ginning mill on the night of November 16 and parked all the vehicles in a queue on the road.

The next morning, the mill man-

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agement announced that the stocks would not be procured from them. Irked over the decision, the farmers, along with BRS leaders, launched a protest demanding procurement of their stocks.

The police have registered cases against the farmers and BRS leaders for staging the protest and disrupting traffic movement on the highway, reports said.



## Driver charred to death as moving car bursts into flames on ORR at Shamirpet

Hyderabad: In a tragic incident, a moving car caught fire on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) at Shamirpet and its driver who got trapped inside, was charred to death on Monday.

As per information available, an EcoSport car, travelling on the ORR, suddenly caught fire while in motion. Within moments, the flames engulfed the entire vehicle, giving the driver no chance to escape.

By the time other motorists noticed the blaze and alerted authorities, the car had completely reduced to ashes. The driver was found charred to death, with only skeletal remains left in the driver's seat.

On receiving information, the Shamirpet Police reached the spot and began investigation.

The cause of the fire was to be determined. The identity of the victim is yet to be confirmed.

Police authorities are also examining if technical failure, overheating or other possibilities could be the reason behind the sudden ignition.

The incident caused brief traffic disruption and widespread panic among motorists using the ORR.

## WhatsApp groups of Ministers' PROs and journalists hacked

Hyderabad: A few WhatsApp groups operated by public relations officers of Ministers, apart from a few mobile phones of journalists were allegedly hacked by cyber crooks in the city on Sunday.

In the guise of SBI Aadhaar updates, the hackers shared APK files with a journalist and later, through the same contact, to a few WhatsApp groups, including Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's group, thereby

hacking the groups.

In the message, the hackers threatened that SBI accounts of the users would be permanently 'locked' and wanted the account holders to update their Aadhaar details. The display pictures of the WhatsApp groups were also changed.

Cyber experts have appealed to users not to click or open APK files as they could allow fraudsters to hack their mobile phones.

## Congress government has betrayed BC community again, says Talasani

Hyderabad: The BRS will decide its future course of action over the Congress Government's unmet promise of the 42 percent reservation for the Backward Classes, with BC leaders of the party to discuss the issue at a crucial meeting scheduled to be held at Telangana Bhavan on Monday.

Announcing this at a media conference on Sunday, former Minister and Sanathnagar MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav said the Congress government was deceiving the Backward Classes yet again.

He reminded that the Congress party, in its Kamareddy Declaration, had promised 42 percent reservation for BCs. However, the caste census was not conducted properly and the report of the Dedicated

Commission was not made public even to this day, he said, strongly criti-

cizing the Congress for creating a ruckus at Jantar Mantar in Delhi in the name of a dharna without any of the top leaders of the party attending the protest.

Srinivas Yadav also lashed out at

## Restrictions in cotton procurement lifted due to fight by BRS: Jogu Ramanna

Adilabad: Former minister Jogu Ramanna said both the Centre and the State government withdrew the fingerprint marking requirement for farmers during cotton procurement following the sustained agitation by the BRS on behalf of farmers.

He, along with BRS activists, celebrated the development by performing

Ksheerabhisekam to flexi-posters of the party's working president KT Rama Rao and former finance minister T Harish Rao here on Sunday.

Ramanna said the protests spearheaded by the BRS and Rama Rao's recent tour of the district compelled the governments to roll back the fingerprint system and enhance cotton procurement



from 7 quintals to 12 quintals per acre.

Calling it a victory for farmers and their unity, he asserted that the party would continue its agitation until the Android-based Kisan Kapas application is scrapped.

The former Adilabad MLA alleged that both the Congress and BJP were displaying 'fake love' towards farmers. He remarked that neither party had the moral standing to seek votes in the upcoming local body elections.

Ramanna criticised local MLA Payal Shankar for focusing on the Jubilee Hills bye-election while ignoring the problems faced by cotton and soybean farmers.



ment of a dedicated ministry for the most backward classes (MBC) was one of the election promises made by the Congress, but it has turned out to be mere lip service.

Besides this, financial assistance to traditional artisans and handicraft workers was assured by the government, but that too remains unmet.

"Even after nearly two years, not a single promise has been fulfilled," he said, demanding that the local body elections be conducted only after implementing the promised 42 percent reservation for BCs.

Accusing the Congress of cheating more than 50% of the State's population, the BC community, with false promises, Srinivas Yadav warned that BC leaders and intellectuals would launch agitations across all districts in coordination to paralyse the government.

the government for failing to implement several promises made to the BCs, including allocation of Rs 20,000 crore per year under the BC Sub-Plan. Establish-



## Speeding car crashes into shops in Macha Bolarum; driver injured

Hyderabad: A rashly driven car went out of control and crashed into shops injuring the driver and creating panic in the locality in Macha Bolarum on Monday early hours.

The incident took place near the Select Theatre, when the speeding car went out of control and rammed into nearby shops and commercial units.

The impact was so severe that the

front portion of the car was completely mangled. The driver suffered serious injuries in the crash.

On receiving information, the Alwal Police reached the spot immediately and shifted the injured person to a nearby private hospital for treatment.

Police suspect that the driver may have been under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident. Case is under investigation

## Sathya Sai a great humanist



Nellore: District administration has organised Sathya Sai Baba birth centenary celebrations in a grand scale at the Collectorate here on Sunday. Floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Sathya Sai Baba.

Joint Collector Venkateswarlu launched the programme by lighting the lamp and said that Sathya Sai Baba is not only spiritual leader but also a great humanist, who provided water to Rayalaseema district and promoted quality education and medicine to poor.

Puttaparthi a remote village in Ananthapur district has secured world recognition only because of the services rendered by Sathya Sai. DRO Vijaya Kumar, I&PR Deputy Director P Venugopala Reddy, Collectorate AOT Vijayakumar and others were present.

## Committee members to monitor 'Margasiramasotsavalu'

Visakhapatnam: In the month of 'Margasira', Sri Kanaka Mahalakshmi Devasthanam organises month-long 'Margasiramasotsavalu.' To ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenienceduring the festival, Commissioner of Endowments K Ramachandra Mohan constituted a festival committee for 'Margasiramasotsavalu' celebrated Sri Kanaka Mahalakshmi Devasthanam, Burujupeta in Visakhapatnam. The formation of the committee aims to monitor and conduct the festival in a hassle-free manner. The newly-nominated committee members comprise Kandula Nagaraju, Vakamulla Akkalanaidu, Dhanalakota Madhuri, Chintapalli Vimalakumari, Nallaballi Venkata Lakshmi, Kedari Lakshmi, Indana Bhadra Rao, Medapati Sridhar, Yendra Vijaya Lakshmi, Bhoomireddy Krishna Rao, Koppala Ram Kumar, M.Lakshmi Nageswara Rao, K Srinivas Sarma, Archaka of the temple

## MITS to host Int'l workshop from Dec 8

Madanapalle: MITS Deemed to be University will host a three-day international workshop titled 'Advances in Wireless Connectivity: Technologies, Systems and Network Evolution' from December 8 to 10. Organised by Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, the event is supported by IEEE Communication Society Student Chapter, which has sanctioned USD 5,000 (Rs 4,48,120) for the programme, announced Vice-Chancellor



Dr C Yuvaraj.

The workshop, exclusively for IEEE student members, aims to provide insights into emerging technologies, system evolution, and future of wireless communication. Experts from academia and industry will discuss modern connectivity solutions and key research directions.

The event will be convened by Dr Rajasekharan and Dr C Kumar, with Dr Aravinda Raj, Dr G. Nagaswetha, and G Subbarao serving as coordinators. University Founder & Chancellor Dr N Vijaya Bhaskar Choudary, Pro Chancellor N Dwarkanath, Vice-Chancellor Dr C Yuvaraj, and Registrar Dr D Pradeep Kumar appreciated IEEE Communication Society Student Chapter for its support.



## CPS employees urged to make 3rd phase of 'Chaitanya Yatra' a success

Tirupati: AP CPS Employees Association (APSCPSEA) associate president Chirla Kiran has called upon CPS employees across State to ensure grand success of third phase of 'Chaitanya Yatra' being held to demand abolition of Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS). Speaking to the media in Tirupati on Sunday, he said political parties have long used the State's 3.5 lakh CPS employees as a ladder to power, only to neglect them after assuming office. The yatra, he said, was launched to unite CPS employees and draw the government's attention to their plight.

Kiran explained that the yatra is being conducted across all 26 districts in three phases.

The first phase covered Chittoor to Nandyal, and the second phase stretched from Nellore to West Godavari, during which delegations met district collectors to convey their concerns. The third phase will be held from December 6 to 10, covering Konaseema to Srikakulam.

He stated that since the implementation of CPS, problems have only multiplied while no government or official has offered meaningful solutions. Against this backdrop, Kiran urged CPS employees from all corners of the state to participate in large numbers and strengthen the movement. APCPSEA leaders Vankeepuram Pavan, V Muralimohan Reddy, B Chalapathi, G Rekha and others participated.





## Elaborate arrangements for tomorrow's Panchami Theertham

Tirupati: TTD has made elaborate arrangements for the convenience of devotees visiting Panchami Theertham to be held on Tuesday (November 25), last day of Karthika Brahmotsavam of Sri Padmavati Ammavaru in Tiruchanoor.

Engineering works such as queue lines, barricades, entry and exit gates to Padmapushkarini, signboards, etc. have been completed.

TTD Security and Surveillance department has made strict security arrangements and 600 security personnel, 200 Scouts and Guides, 200 NCC students, 900 Srivari Sevaks and 1,600 police personnel have been deployed. Around 150 Annaprasadam counters have been set up, 50 at Thollappa Gardens, 15 at SV High School, 45 at Sri Ayappa Swamy (Navajeevan Hospital) Temple, 25 at Pudi Area and 15 at Emergency Annaprasadam counters at Gate 4. Drinking water, snacks, Annaprasadam and buttermilk will be

distributed to devotees in queue lines.

284 permanent, temporary and mobile toilets have been set up. Additional sanitation staff have been appointed as required. Medical and paramedical staff, first aid stations at 3 locations, 5 ambulances, and necessary medicines have been made available. Doctors from SWIMS and Ruia Hospitals and Ayurvedic doctors will provide services. Similarly, fire and national disaster management personnel have been made available. Parking has been arranged at Shilparamam, Thanapalli Cross, Market Yard, Ramanaidu Kalyana Mandapam, Pudi Junction, Tiruchanur Dalit Wada. Parking has been arranged for dignitaries opposite the Tiruchanur Panchayat Office. 25 LED screens have been installed in TTD temples across the country, including Tiruchanur and Tirupati for viewing the Brahmotsavams. Priests will perform Chakrasnanam at Padmapushkarini at 12.10pm.

## MSME launches credit outreach campaign

Visakhapatnam: As part of its continued efforts to support and empower the MSME sector, the Central Bank of India, regional office in Visakhapatnam organised an MSME credit outreach campaign in Visakhapatnam.

Chanchal Kumar, DFO, MSME, who attended as chief guest, highlighted the importance of accessible credit for the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises. During the programme, customers were briefed about the bank's attractive MSME loan schemes, digital services and various initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and business expansion. As a key highlight of the event, sanction letters were distributed to newly onboarded MSME borrowers.

A total of Rs 56 crore (including both in-principle approvals and sanctions) was extended to MSME borrowers during the campaign, reflecting the bank's proactive approach in fostering financial inclusion and business development.

The outreach programme witnessed enthusiastic participation and several customers shared positive feedback regarding the bank's services, prompt processing and customer-friendly approach.

## Temples to be transformed as spiritual centres



Nellore: Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy stated that all temples in the State will be transformed as spiritual centers by streamlining endowments department, as per directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan and Minister N Lokesh.

Along with Venkatagiri MLA Kurukonda Ramakrishna, he laid foundation for the reconstruction of Audilakshmi Ammavari temple at Penchalakona village of Rapur mandal on Sunday. Minister Anam said Rs 118 crore were allocated for development of

temples under Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Nellore district. Also, funds were sanctioned for reconstruction of temple in Yachavaram village of Balayapalle mandal of erstwhile Nellore district.

MLA K Ramakrishna said that temples in the erstwhile Nellore district have been securing past glory after the coalition government emerged to power. He appealed Minister Anam to take steps for getting permission from forest department for construction of double road in Penchalakona village.

## Tragedy turns wedding venue into mourning site in Telangana

Hyderabad: A wedding venue in Telangana turned into a mourning site after the bride's father died just hours before the marriage ceremony was set to begin.

Andala Anantappa, a 46-year-old

freshly painted, a festive tent was erected outside which was supposed to be wedding venue, and the entire household was bustling with pre-wedding activity for the wedding scheduled for Sunday.

On Friday evening, Anantappa was returning to Sangenkurdu village after completing some work at the Yalala mandal centre.

On the outskirts of his village, he lost control of his motorcycle and fell. He sustained critical head injuries.

He was rushed to a hospital in Tandur and was later transferred to Gandhi Hospital for advanced care, but he succumbed to his injuries in the early hours of Saturday.

Wedding venue to site for mourning in Telangana

The shocking death completely transformed the wedding venue. The tent that had been set up for festive celebrations instead became the site for mourning.



farmer, was the father preparing to celebrate his daughter's marriage. He had been making all the necessary arrangements for his daughter Avanti's wedding to Bharath, a young man from their village.

The family home in Telangana was



# Versuni India Advances Local Area Development With Education Empowerment Initiatives

Versuni India, a leading home appliance company and home to legacy brands Philips Domestic Appliances and Preethi, has announced a new initiative to empower education in the country, through wide assistance for education infrastructure in local govt schools around its areas of operations starting with Chennai. The brand kick started the project in two government primary schools in Chennai's Veluchai and Thaiyur villages that accommodate roughly 50 students. This initiative reflects Versuni India's broader vision to support and empower underprivileged students by improving their learning environments. The objective is to foster holistic development and create a better, brighter future for all students.

Dedicated to empowering consumers and communities nationwide, Versuni India has implemented a phased approach to create a more cohesive and impactful program. In the first phase, Versuni India has enhanced two primary schools by constructing playgrounds, renovating buildings, and providing essential furniture such as tables, chairs, and bulletin boards. Additionally, the brand has improved local area development by installing a 1000L capacity RO water system for clean drinking water, planting trees, and securing the premises with fencing around a nearby pond. These efforts aim to foster a conducive learning environment crucial for students' academic and personal growth. Furthermore, Versuni India is committed to monitoring and improving the schools' sanitation to ensure clean and safe conditions for students' well-being.

"Education serves as the foundation for community growth and development.



At Versuni India, we are committed to shaping a future where every child can overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

Our mission is to empower individuals and communities, ensuring that future generations have access to quality educa-

tion. Our initiative exemplifies our dedication to this cause and goes beyond simply improving infrastructure; it is about fostering an environment where students can thrive academically and personally. By providing essential resources and support, we aim to create a sustainable impact that will

benefit the community for years. This endeavour aligns with our vision of economic, emotional, and social self-reliance. We are eager to witness the positive changes this initiative will bring" said, Gulbahar Taurani, Managing Director, and Chief Executive Officer, of ISC at Versuni India.

## PolicyBazaar Partners applauds Union Budget 2024 for promoting economic growth, innovation and social inclusion



PolicyBazaar Partners, a brand under Policybazaar Insurance Brokers, expresses strong support for the Indian government's Union Budget 2024, recognizing its visionary approach designed to foster economic growth, innovation, and social inclusion across various segments

of society. The budget's provisions are set to have a significant positive impact on the insurance sector and beyond. Dhruv Sarin, Co-founder, PBPartners said, "We applaud the Indian government's Union Budget 2024 for its forward-thinking approach across all segments of society. The reduction of TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) rates

from 5% to 2% for individual agents selling insurance policies is a particularly commendable initiative, as it will directly increase their disposable income. Dhruv further added, "Empowerment of India's young workforce was also one of the central focus areas. With five targeted schemes aiming to benefit 41 million youth over five years and supported by a central outlay of ₹2 lakh crore, this move will result in more employment opportunities and significantly

uplift India's youth. The women-specific skilling programs and initiatives to boost workforce participation are also laudable steps towards inclusive growth. These initiatives will lay a solid foundation for sustained economic growth by financially strengthening India's lower middle segment and youth." PBPartners believes that the Union Budget 2024 is a transformative step towards building a more inclusive and prosperous India.

## Police arrests Two burglars; 23 tolas of gold and cash recovered

Hyderabad: Two burglars who moved around in a car to commit offences and broke into houses in the city were arrested by the Hayathnagar police on Tuesday. The police recovered 23 tolas of gold, Rs. 2 lakh cash, a phone and seized a Toyota Glanza car from them. The arrested persons are Shaik Azeez (38) and Pathiwada Lovaraju (30), both natives of East Godavari. According to the police, the duo

travelled to the city from East Godavari in Andhra Pradesh in their car and moved into the colonies in the night.

After identifying houses that are locked, Azeez and Lovaraju broke the door locks and entered into the house and took away valuables. On June 27, the duo had committed burglary at a house in Hayathnagar and took away gold ornaments.



# A behind-the-scenes view of Kerala's gender-sensitive textbooks

"Fish curry is made by father himself." This statement in the Class V Social Science textbook for the Kerala board syllabus, brought out in June, was just one of the changes made to break down gender norms as part of curriculum reforms initiated by the present Left Democratic Front government. Similar references to gender parity in the textbooks for Classes I, III, V, VII, and IX were celebrated across India as leading the change in the way children are taught in school.

The first chapter of the Class V textbook has a group of friends travelling to their classmate Peeli's village where they are served rice, tapioca, and fish caught by her father. The father's presence in the kitchen was a break from tradition in Kerala's predominantly patriarchal society — a factor that caused an uproar at the subcommittee meet of the Kerala curriculum steering committee in Thiruvananthapuram in December 2023. One participant at the meeting asked: "If the father is doing everything, what is left for the mother to do?" "A revolution is set to begin in the kitchens in Kerala," was another sarcastic jibe. The sentence in question, though, remained unchanged in the final draft of the textbook and is now being studied in schools across the State. "That was seen as a victory, but it is tough to describe what we went through during that time," recalls Anjana V.R. Chandran, academic coordinator of the Class V Social Science textbook development team. Father makes 'unniyappam'

An image shared by V. Sivankutty, the State's Minister for General Education, on social media on school reopening day, June 3, had created a buzz. The illustration, from a Class III Malayalam-medium textbook, shows a man sitting on the floor, grating coconut, while his wife does the cooking. Positioning the kitchen as a main workspace in the house and depicting the man engaged in a domestic chore was all about sending a message to children. At Government Lower Primary School, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram city, Class III students are studying English. Under discussion is a character named Sasha whose father is pictured in the textbook as not only 'helping' the woman of the family in the kitchen, but also preparing a not-so-easy-to-make sweet called unniyappam, for Sasha to take to school.

As students are quizzed by the teacher about what chores their fathers do around the house, Anjaneyan R.A. shares that his father makes sambar, does the dishes, hangs clothes out to dry, and cleans the house. Other students in the classroom try to make each other heard about fathers who knead the dough for chapattis, steam appam, dress infant siblings, and bathe the dog. Anuroop D., father of Aadya, a classmate of Anjaneyan, says girls and boys are increasingly taught together, without discrimination, and this is reflected in their thinking too. "My daughter expects me to pull my weight in the house, and does not shy away from pointing it out. Things have changed from the time when it was believed a woman belonged in the kitchen." Anuroop feels the school environment has

played a role in this, and the new curriculum will reinforce this. The basis for the new thought in the textbooks is that gender sensitisation will put boys and girls in touch with the other's thoughts and feelings, reducing the possibility of toxic relationships and gender violence. Anuroop also stresses the need for teachers who can spur students to reimagine gender roles. The new textbooks attempt to do just that: to demolish entrenched gender stereotypes and foster an inclusive outlook even among very young children.

In the chapter 'Peeli's Village' over which the brouhaha had erupted, one of Peeli's friends is wheelchair-bound. Another lives in a slum with a single mother, a mill worker. A third is the daughter of a migrant worker couple from Assam, and one has entrepreneur parents. Beena S. Nair, who teaches Social Science to Class V students at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Malayinkeezhu, on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram city, says the response of the students to the lesson and activities such as role play taken up in class has been very positive. Beena attributes this to the fact that they can relate to the characters portrayed in it. Her school has two secondary students who hail from Manipur and Assam. Now that schools in the State are inclusive with differently abled students mainstreamed, "Attitudes are changing. The foremost reaction to the differently abled is not sympathy. Instead, students suggest to teachers how better they can provide academic support to them," says Beena. Inclusivity is also reflected in how the migrant workers' daughter, who feels people keep a distance from her family, gets a warm welcome in the village while her friend, who has been told by his mother to skip food at Peeli's house, goes on to relish it, points out Chandran. A message through drawings

Niketan M., a Class XII Science student at Government Higher Secondary School, Medical College campus, Kozhikode, who drew the illustrations for 'Peeli's Village' is happy that he got an opportunity to become a part of a process intended to bring about a transformation. "Gender sensitivity and inclusivity are yet to be fully realised. There are still boys who think only they can do certain things. My illustrations will send a message that will help students steer clear of such notions as they grow up," he says.

"Seeing a picture of a man cooking or washing clothes will have a greater impact on a student's mind than being just spoken about in class," believes Niketan, whose own perspectives on gender equality and diversity evolved through his passion for cinema, be it those that address gender equality directly such as *The Great Indian Kitchen* or the more recent *Laapata Ladies*. This inclusive approach is evident in the chapter 'Strive Forward' in the new Class IX work-integrated education activity book that features the country's first transman pilot Adam Harry; national hand-wrestling champion Amal Iqbal who has cerebral palsy; and entrepreneur, cancer survivor, and single mother Shalin. "It is good to see Adam Harry written about in



the textbook as one does not read about transmen or intersex people as much as about transwomen," says transgender poet and activist Vijayaraja Mallika, a member of the curriculum steering committee.

Until now, children were not taught about gender diversity in schools, and words like transperson and intersex person have not been regularly spoken about at home either. "When there are marks attached to it, it gets more importance and value," she says. At a time when the education system is highly competitive, it is the State's responsibility to not only ensure that students attain competency but also study in an inclusive system where they can express their identity fully. The new textbooks are the first step in that direction, Mallika says.

Jayaprakash R.K., director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), which is spearheading the curriculum revision, says that since the last revision of textbooks in 2013, attitudes to gender have evolved into an acceptance of various gender identities. Court verdicts have reflected this. "In a first, the State's curriculum steering committee has a transgender representative in poet Vijayaraja Mallika." The Class IX Social Science volume 2 textbook that is under print, he says, has an entire chapter on gender justice as defined in the Constitution, related court judgments, gender perceptions, gender roles, and discrimination. This portion can be the springboard for teachers to delve further into gender issues in the classroom, says Jayaprakash.

Praveena Kodoth, Professor at the Centre for Development Studies in Thiruvananthapuram, observes that a gender binary is very deeply rooted in textbooks. "In pre-pubescent children, there is very little that differentiates girls and boys in terms of bodily features. They do the same things. So, there is no need to differentiate between genders at that age. You can come up with ways of learning where, irrespective of caste, class, or gender identity, you are capable of similar things. There are differences also as people have different innate abilities," she says. Auditing textbooks for gender bias Work on the gender aspect began with an audit of the textbooks in use for the past decade, says Jayaprakash. As many as 22 textbooks across 13 subjects of Classes I to X were

audited at random. Textbook development teams were found to have little or no women representation. The content adhered to the gender binary of male and female. In language subjects, stories or poems by women were few and far between. A number of instances of gender bias were found in the language used; illustrations reinforced society's gender rules.

The gender audit went beyond textbooks by conducting school visits and looking at oft-overlooked aspects such as school infrastructure, environment, classroom practices, and parent-teacher association (PTA) through the gender lens to detect biases or discrimination, says Chandran a convener of the gender focus group and author of the chapter on gender in the Class IX Social Science textbook. As a host of problems prevalent in schools came to the fore, it became apparent that the vision of the previous Kerala Curriculum Framework (KCF), from 2007, for a gender-sensitive approach in content and practice of curriculum had not been achieved.

Mridul Eapen, former State Planning Board member and chairperson of the gender and education focus group, says a start has been made with the new textbooks, but the school system is a much larger entity: there is infrastructure, school environment, classroom and pedagogical practices, learning material, PTAs and school management committees, interface with home and community, and importantly, teacher education. These too have to be addressed if the school system has to be overhauled to be gender-sensitive. Chandran says public discussions ahead of the preparation of the curriculum framework included classroom and school-level discussions on a host of topics, including gender, in institutions across the State. The gender focus group also studied national and international education policy documents models in gender and education practices. "A careful attempt was made to look at gender beyond the binary, be inclusive of the gender spectrum, and address gender concerns within an intersectional context," says Chandran. Jayaprakash says an orientation was given to textbook writers on preventing gender bias in language, content, and illustrations. "There has been a change from the male-dominated textbook development teams that used to be there earlier."



# When a home is 'enemy property'

Faisal Azim Abbasi, 48, is worried for himself and his joint family of eight. He has been getting notices to sign an 11-month license agreement with the Custodian of Enemy Property for India (CEPI), a department under the Ministry of Home Affairs, formed after the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and the two Indo-China wars in 1962 and 1967. Abbasi has known no other home other than the single-storey, 800-square-foot space in Lucknow's Maulviganj. The house, popularly known as Zareef Manzil or Lal Kothi, has been inhabited by his family for four generations.

"My grandfather took the property on rent from the Raja of Mahmudabad in the late 1930s," says Abbasi. They paid ₹16 and 8 annas (50 paise). In 1957, the erstwhile raja moved to Pakistan and took citizenship there.

Abbasi is among hundreds of residents across India who occupy 'Enemy Properties', declared thus after the Enemy Property Act, 1968, came into being. The Act enabled the state to regulate and appropriate real estate belonging to those who had left India and got citizenship of countries it has gone to war with: Pakistan and China. Now, the Union government has begun to e-auction many of the 12,611 properties across the country, out of which 126 belong to Chinese citizens. Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number, at 6,041, followed by West Bengal at 4,354. Lucknow itself has 361 such properties, with 105 occupied, the highest in U.P. and all in disrepair. Shamli district has 482, Sitapur 378, Muzaffarnagar has 274, and Budaun 250, besides the others. These 'enemy properties' could be "any property that belongs to, is held or managed on behalf of an enemy, an enemy subject, or an enemy firm". The word "enemy" signifies any country that has committed an act of aggression or declared war against the Union of India, and "property" is immovable assets and all negotiable instruments such as shares, debentures, and other commerce. Family dynamics

Abbasi's grandfather, Matloob Alam, signed the original lease and the family was told on September 24, 1966, via a letter from the then Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDO), Lucknow, S.S. Nigam that the building they lived in had become 'enemy property', and was owned by the state. "I, SDO Lucknow hereby direct Shri Matloob Alam, the occupant of the property, to pay monthly rent, dues etc. to Tehsildar Lucknow with immediate effect," the letter had said. Thereafter, the rent was paid to the CEPI. The amount was increased to ₹22.28 in 1972 and further increased to ₹312 in April 2013.

However, Abbasi claims that the rent has not been collected by the CEPI since December 2016. "Where will we go from here? If they sell it to us at a reasonable rate, we will take it," he says. He considers ₹50 lakh a reasonable sum to buy the property. Alternatively, he is ready to pay five times what he is paying on rent if the lease is renewed. Over the years, the Enemy Property Act has seen several amendments, with the most significant and recent being The Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2017. It expanded the meaning of the term "enemy subject", and "enemy firm" to include the legal heir and successor of an 'enemy', whether a citizen of India or a citizen of a country which is

not an enemy; and the succeeding firm of an 'enemy firm', irrespective of the nationality of its members. The Act also made it clear that once a property is declared 'enemy property', it remains so. The amendment nullified a Supreme Court judgment which ruled in favour of Mohammed Amir Mohammad Khan, son of the erstwhile Raja of Mahmudabad.

Though the erstwhile Raja of Mahmudabad took Pakistani citizenship, Amir stayed behind as an Indian citizen, and asserted claims over various properties that were originally in his family's name. After a prolonged legal struggle of over three decades, the Supreme Court ruled in his favour in 2005, declaring him the rightful owner, even though they have been declared 'enemy properties'. Amir was a two-time MLA in the Uttar Pradesh State Assembly in the 1980s from the Congress party and died in October 2023 at the age of 80. The most well-known among these properties is the three-storeyed Butler Palace, built on the banks of the Gomti river in the 1910s. The palace was originally constructed in a mix of Indo-Mughal and Rajasthani styles as the official residence of the commissioner of Avadh, Harcourt Butler, in Lucknow. It has remained empty since the 1960s, and has been branded 'haunted', by the Lucknavis — either by ghosts of the past or addicts of the present. It is now missing its best brass bit and anything of value. Sometime in September-October 2023, the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) began refurbishing it as a tourist attraction after receiving a no-objection certificate from the CEPI. Another prime property is Halwasiya market in Lucknow's Hazratganj, the older part of the city, where real estate prices start at approximately ₹15,000 per square foot, if the buyer is lucky enough to get a place. Sued from many sides like Abbasi, many shopkeepers received notices for a fresh lease and licence agreement for the 'enemy property' they were occupying, but no one has signed one with CEPI until now. The occupants proposed a long-term lease for at least a decade, which was not accepted by CEPI. Ali Khan Mahmudabad, the next in line from the family, is still fighting for various properties in the Supreme Court. He declined to comment on the matter since it is sub judice. Niraj Gupta, who has been his lawyer since 2003, says, "The Supreme Court has maintained the status quo related to our petition challenging the Act and its amendment provisions. The government cannot sell, auction, or create third-party rights on our properties." Ali is an associate professor in a private university and a member of the Samajwadi Party.

Mohammad Haider Rizvi, a Lucknow-based lawyer who is fighting the legal battle of tenants occupying enemy properties, says many of his clients have been living as tenants for 70-80 years. They are all nervous after receiving renewed agreements. "Now, the proposed arrangement is only for 11 months, and it adds that on the expiry of this period or an earlier termination, the licensee shall hand over the property to the licensor, which is CEPI. It is frightening," he says. In 2020, the Union government set up a Group of Ministers led by Home Minister Amit Shah to monitor the disposal of 'enemy properties'. The value of the earlier 9,000 surveyed 'enemy



properties' across the country was estimated to be ₹1 lakh crore. Later, over 3,000 such properties were identified, taking the numbers above 12,000. The guidelines for the disposal of enemy properties stipulate that if the property is valued below ₹1 crore, the custodian must offer the occupant the choice of purchase. If they refuse, the property will be e-auctioned. Those valued at over ₹1 crore but less than ₹100 crore will be disposed of by the CEPI through e-auction or through a rate determined by the Enemy Property Disposal Committee, unless the Central government chooses to retain it.

All auctions take place through the Metal Scrap Trade Corporation Limited, a Central public sector undertaking. In 2023, the Central government earned over ₹3,400 crore from the disposal of movable 'enemy properties', like shares and gold. Halwasiya Market, situated in the older part of Lucknow, Hazratganj.

In U.P., 79 enemy properties identified as agricultural land, each valuing less than ₹1 crore were auctioned across Muzaffarnagar, Sultanpur, and Amroha districts till March 2024. "A person interested in buying these properties can visit the site and talk to the local tehsildar to check documents before going ahead with the e-auction," says Kamlesh Verma, a Home Ministry official who is the supervisor for such properties in Sonbhadra district. Before the process of the disposing of such properties began, the U.P. government, on the directions of the Home Ministry, conducted surveys of the properties to free them of legal hindrances and set their value, so they could be auctioned off. Roughly half of such properties are without any legal hindrance. "Our role was to help in surveying the properties and send notices to encroachers. The rest is done by the CEPI," says Saurav Singh, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Malihabad, Lucknow.

## Housewife becomes victim of trading fraud of Rs 24 lakh

Hyderabad: A 29-year-old housewife from the city became a victim of a trading scam and ended up losing over Rs 24 lakh to fraudsters.

The woman joined a malicious group on WhatsApp with her husband's mobile phone to learn about trading and earning money from the share market. Group members regularly posted messages and information about buying and selling shares. The scammers also provided live trading classes to the victim and her husband, with group members frequently posting about their profits, which increased the victim's and her husband's confidence in them.

According to the police, the fraudsters instructed the victim to go through a simple registration process by sending her a link. She was instructed to send a screenshot after downloading the app, and they would guide her through the registration process.

"After completing the registration, the scammers guided the victim on how to invest in trading. Within a few days, the victim's funds appeared to grow rapidly as the scammers regularly advised her and her husband on buying and selling



The woman joined a malicious group on WhatsApp with her husband's mobile phone to learn about trading and earning money from the share market. Group members regularly posted messages and information about buying and selling shares

shares," police said.

However, when the victim attempted to withdraw money from the trading app, she was unable to do so due to insufficient balance. She contacted the scammers multiple times, explaining that she urgently needed the money.

Realising that she had been a victim of a stock and share market fraud, the victim lodged a complaint against the scammers and requested necessary action to be taken.