



Telangana minister announces housewarming of Indiramma houses soon

Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has announced that three lakh Indiramma houses are currently under construction in various stages across the state. Speaking to the media at the Telangana Secretariat, he revealed that one lakh of these homes are expected to be ready for housewarming soon, with plans to complete the housewarming for all three lakh houses by March next year.

Minister Reddy also outlined plans for the second phase of the Indiramma housing project, which is set to commence in April 2024. He added that a strategy has been developed for constructing Indiramma houses in core urban areas, with plans for ground-plus-four buildings aimed at providing housing for the underprivileged.

In addition, the minister announced that houses will be built in all directions adjacent to the Outer Ring Road (ORR), with a target of constructing 10,000 houses in each location. These homes will be offered to middle-class families under a no-profit, no-loss scheme. Detailed plans for the urban housing initiative will be unveiled at an upcoming global summit.

Rahul Gandhi blames IndiGo flight chaos on government's 'monopoly model'



IndiGo informed the aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), that operations are expected to be fully stabilised only by February 10, 2026. The airline also sought temporary relaxations in flight duty norms on a day when its widespread cancellations affected hundreds of passengers.

Acknowledging that the disruptions over the past few days were primarily due to misjudgment and planning gaps in implementing the second phase of Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms, IndiGo informed the regulator that further cancellations are likely until December 8, after which services are expected to be reduced.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu held a high-level review to assess the situation and

expressed displeasure over the way IndiGo implemented the new FDTL norms, despite having ample time to prepare.

The operator cancelled more than 400 flights, and a large number of flights were delayed at various airports on Friday, according to sources.

Hundreds of passengers faced hardships at the airports as flights were delayed for long periods.

The sources told news agency PTI that over 220 flights, including departures and arrivals, were cancelled at the Delhi airport, while more than 100 were cancelled at the Bangalore airport.

At the Hyderabad airport, over 90 flights were cancelled, the sources said.

Techie couple attends own wedding reception through video call after IndiGo flight disruption

Hyderabad: The ongoing wave of IndiGo flight disruptions has left thousands of passengers stranded across major airports, and among them was a techie couple who were forced to attend their own wedding reception virtually after their flight from Bhubaneswar to Bengaluru got delayed multiple times, before eventually getting cancelled.

Medha Kshirsagar of Hubballi and Sangama Das of Bhubaneswar, both working in an IT firm in Bengaluru, were scheduled to be at their wedding reception organised by the bride's family in Hubballi on Wednesday.

However, their travel plan took an unusual turn after their IndiGo flight from Bhubaneswar, where they got married, to Bengaluru and onwards to the bride's hometown was cancelled due to the ongoing pilot shortage across the coun-

try.

The couple, stranded in Bhubaneswar from December 2 to 3 after repeated flight delays, decided to join their reception through a video call as all the guests invited to the function had already gathered at the venue on the given date.

Dressed in traditional attire for the occasion, the couple marked their presence through the video call for their own wedding reception.

While the bride's parents had to step in to perform the rituals on behalf of the newlyweds, the guests at the venue got a glimpse of the couple thanks to technology. The couple's heartwarming gesture is winning hearts online, with netizens praising them for their effort in not cancelling the event and making sure their presence was felt using technol-

ogy.

Meanwhile, several IndiGo flights remain cancelled across India this week after the airline failed to make sufficient changes to its roster to meet new government norms.

Flight services to several cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai among others continue to be hit.



IITM Hyd showcases India's booming travel landscape

The three-day India International Travel Mart (IITM) has convened leading stakeholders from across India and abroad in the city, with the event featuring over 200 exhibitors from more than 25 states and 10 countries, alongside several international tourism representatives and private travel enterprises.

Valluru Kranti, Managing Director of the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TGTDC), formally inaugurated the travel mart and the associated exhibition. The event will run until 6th December at the HITEX Exhibition Centre and is set to underscore the immense potential and diversity of both the Indian and global travel markets. The organisers noted that IITM has played a vital role in bringing together national and international tourism boards, state governments, hospitality brands, travel operators, technology companies, airline partners, and ancillary service providers. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore new packages, unique destinations, innovative travel technology solutions, and the emerging travel trends shaping the future of the industry.

Sanjay Hakhu, Director of Sphere Travelmedia, described the mart as an essential platform for business, innovation, and collaboration. He stated, "With a focus on connecting businesses and enabling meaningful partnerships, IITM Hyderabad 2025 is offering structured B2B meetings, networking sessions, curated presentations, knowledge interactions, and demonstrations of new-age travel technology. Exhibitors and buyers have access to a streamlined environment that encourages dialogue, trade development, and long-term business associations."

Aligned with the vision of 'Dekho Apna Desh' and India's growing prominence as a year-round destination, the exhibition reinforces the importance of domestic travel in shaping the sector's future. Alongside domestic exhibitors, international tourism boards such as Tourism Malaysia and the Nepal Tourism Board, along with their travel partners, are highlighting opportunities for holidays, cruises, international weddings, cultural explorations, and luxury travel experiences. With outbound travel from India witnessing robust growth, IITM Hyderabad provides a strategic interface for international destinations to connect directly with the travel trade and consumers. The organisers affirmed that IITM Hyderabad 2025 continues this commitment by bringing together the best of the industry under one roof and facilitating meaningful collaborations that drive progress.

Over 13,000 candidates in the fray as Telangana Gram Panchayat polls kick off

Hyderabad: A total of 13,127 candidates remain in the electoral race for the 3,836 Gram Panchayats scheduled for the first phase of elections, which will be held on 11th December.

The State Election Commission (SEC) officially released the final list detailing the total number of candidates in the fray. According to the data, a significant 395 Sarpanchas were elected unanimously. Conversely, there were at least five villages where no nominations were filed. Consequently, the polls on 11th December will proceed for the remaining 3,836 Gram Panchayats.

Regarding the elections for ward offices, the SEC notified polls for 37,440 ward offices, with the total number of candidates in the fray standing at 67,893. Officials reported that 9,331 ward offices saw candidates elected unanimously, while 149 ward offices received no nominations. The election will, therefore, be conducted in 27,960 ward offices.

A notable number of candidates withdrew their candidature: 8,095 individuals withdrew from the Gram Panchayat contests, and 9,626 candidates withdrew their nominations for the ward offices.

Centre moves swiftly on T'gana's Musi Riverfront project, Delhi airport glitch

The Union Government addressed two major issues in Parliament on Thursday--Telangana's ambitious Musi Riverfront Development Project and the recent Air Traffic Control (ATC) software glitch at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport-- both responses underline the Centre's role in supplementing state initiatives and strengthening national infrastructure resilience.

Responding to questions raised by Malkajgiri MP Etala Rajender, the Centre clarified that the Musi Riverfront Development Project, spearheaded by the Telangana Government, is envisioned as a transformative urban initiative aimed at enhancing climate resilience in Hyderabad. The project seeks to tackle pollution, mitigate floods and restore ecological balance while integrating urban development with sustainability.

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu stated that urban planning is primarily the responsibility of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and State Urban Development Authorities under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution. However, the Union Government supplements state efforts through schemes, missions, and advisories. The Musi Riverfront plan is being prepared in alignment with MoHUA's 2021 'River-Centric Urban Planning Guidelines', which emphasise climate change considerations, eco-sensitive zoning, and recreational spaces.

The Telangana Government has prepared a Master Plan and sought the Central assistance under various schemes, while also approaching multilateral agencies for funding. A preliminary project report (PPR) has been submitted to the World Bank for an IBRD loan of USD 500 million, recommended in-principle by MoHUA's Externally Aided Project (EAP) committee, subject to technical appraisal of Rs 1.5 lakh crore, underscoring the scale of funding challenges.

Under AMRUT 2.0, three sewerage projects worth Rs 3,849.10 crore have already been approved for Greater Hyderabad, covering 972 MLD sewage treatment capacity and 4.92 lakh new connections. The Centre reiterated its commitment to supporting states through financial and technical interventions, particularly in view of urban vulnerabilities such as the recent flooding of Hyderabad streets attributed to poor drainage systems.

In another response, the Ministry of Civil Aviation addressed concerns over the ATC software glitch at Delhi Airport earlier in November 2025. Minister of



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State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol confirmed that high latency in processing Air Traffic Service (ATS) messages disrupted operations between November 6 and 8, delaying 397 scheduled passenger departures. The glitch affected the delivery of Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunication Network (AFTN) messages, including flight plans, mandatory clearances, and air defence approvals. While airlines incurred additional expenditure due to delays, the government stated that quantifying exact financial losses was not feasible.

To prevent recurrence, corrective measures have been initiated. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is replacing the existing Automatic Message Switching System (AMSS) with a new Air Traffic Services Message Handling System (AMHS).

AAI has also been directed to conduct a comprehensive audit of Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS) equipment across airports. The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has inspected the system and overseen the replacement of database servers with upgraded versions to improve performance. The ministry emphasised that these steps are part of broader efforts to strengthen system resilience, cybersecurity protocols, and timely backups, ensuring smooth air traffic management at India's busiest airports.

Besides these national concerns, MP Etala Rajender made an urgent appeal regarding road infrastructure in Telangana. He highlighted severe traffic congestion along the Nagarjunasagar Road, particularly the Turkayamjal stretch, urging the sanction of a flyover to ease bottlenecks and improve connectivity.

He also called for the inclusion of the Balanagar-Gandhi Maisamma X Roads stretch, part of the Medak-Nanded Highway linking Telangana with Maharashtra, into the National Highway network, along with an elevated corridor to support uninterrupted long-distance travel.

Furthermore, Rajender pressed for the Rajiv Rahadhari, connecting Hyderabad to Karimnagar and northern Telangana, to be included in the National Highway system. He argued that such inclusion would guarantee higher infrastructure standards, sustained maintenance, and improved logistics across the region.

The MP appealed to the Minister of Road Transport and Highways to consider these proposals for early approval, stressing their importance for public convenience, safety, and regional economic growth.

Supreme Court's timely intervention to curb cybercrime

Cyber criminals spare none. From celebrities, industrialists and politicians to retired professionals and homemakers, every section has become vulnerable to scams being perpetrated by online fraudsters using sophisticated technology tools. India now ranks among the largest victims and perpetrators of cyber frauds worldwide. Among various forms of cybercrime, 'digital arrest' has emerged as the most devious one. It poses a threat not only to the country's financial security and stability but also to public trust in the law enforcement machinery. The Supreme Court's decision to entrust the CBI with a nationwide probe into digital arrest scams comes as a timely intervention. It should, hopefully, help in speeding up efforts to check this dangerous trend. Digital arrest involves fraudsters impersonating as law enforcement officers or judges and intimidating people into paying large sums of money. The modus operandi here is dangerously simple: Fraudsters pretending to be police and customs officials make calls from locations resembling government offices or police stations. They contact their victims, informing them that they are under investigation on grounds such as the seizure of their postal consignments carrying drugs. They are told to cough up money or face legal consequences, including arrest. Driven by panic, the gullible ones end up making the payment. The scammers force victims to stay on the call until they comply. Thousands of people have fallen victim to such scammers though there is nothing called digital arrest in law.

All States have been directed by the apex court to give consent to the CBI to probe offences within their jurisdiction. The SC has acknowledged the reality that cybercrimes know no State boundaries. In fact, fragmented investigations only embolden cross-border criminal networks. The court took suo motu cognisance of the widespread menace after an aged couple from Haryana was defrauded of Rs 1 crore. Forged Supreme Court orders were used to threaten them — a chilling reminder that these crimes can imperil faith in public institutions. Most victims prefer to stay silent because of a sense of shame associated with such experiences. Among common tactics employed are accusing the victim of illicit activity that has been carried out using the individual's Aadhaar number. The cybersecurity agencies must remain ahead of the curve rather than playing catch-up. According to one estimate, people in India are losing nearly Rs 1.5 lakh to cyber criminals every minute. The growing sophistication of technologies makes cyber criminals try out new methods to defraud people. The apex court has granted a free hand to the CBI to file FIRs in cases of digital arrest and freeze bank accounts linked to fraud. The premier investigating agency has also been empowered to probe the alleged complicity of bank officials under the Prevention of Corruption Act. There is a dire need for people to be vigilant — especially the elderly, who are not very tech-savvy.



Medicover Experts Reverse Rare Swallowing Disorder with Advanced Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM) Showcases Additional High-End GI Achievements

Hyderabad, 05 December, 2025: A 61-year-old woman from Secunderabad, who had been experiencing recurrent cough, difficulty swallowing food, nausea, and persistent retrosternal burning, was successfully treated at Medicover Hospitals, Secunderabad. Her symptoms had progressed to the point where even liquids caused discomfort.

A prior CT scan revealed a significantly dilated esophagus. At Medicover, further evaluation through endoscopy and High-Resolution Manometry confirmed Achalasia Cardia, a rare esophageal motility disorder with an incidence of 1 in every 1 lakh individuals. The condition occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter fails to relax, leading to food stagnation, risk of aspiration, weight loss, and severe nutritional compromise.

Delayed diagnosis remains common, as many patients mistake swallowing difficulty or chronic acidity for routine gastric issues. Globally, nearly 30–40% of achalasia cases are identified late, reinforcing the need for public awareness and timely evaluation. Early diagnosis ensures quicker intervention and prevents long-term complications.

Traditionally treated through major surgery, Achalasia Cardia can now be managed through minimally invasive endoscopic technology. The patient underwent Per Oral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM), where

specialized endoscopic knives are used to cut the tight muscle layers, restoring normal swallowing. She resumed liquids the very next day and experienced significant relief.

Speaking about the advance, Dr. Krishna Gopal, Medicover Hospitals, Secunderabad, said, "Endoscopic innovations like POEM have transformed outcomes for patients with complex esophageal disorders. Early recognition of symptoms remains the key to successful treatment."

Over the last three months, the Gastroenterology team at Medicover Hospitals, Secunderabad, has successfully performed multiple complex interventions, further strengthening its reputation in advanced digestive care. This includes ERCP in elderly and critically ill patients, where minimally invasive treatment prevented major surgeries; laser therapy for large CBD stones, enabling complete stone clearance in challenging cases; and small bowel enteroscopy, which has enhanced diagnostic precision for deep intestinal conditions not visible through routine endoscopy.

These achievements highlight Medicover's continued commitment to offering world-class gastrointestinal services and ensuring that even the most complex cases receive cutting-edge care with optimal patient outcomes.

Congress MLAs, in-charges to sweat it out to ensure victory of party picks

Congress MLAs and constituency in-charges—where there are no Congress MLAs—have been tasked with ensuring the victory of party-supported Sarpanch candidates in the upcoming local body elections. Following this directive, the newly appointed District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents have intensified efforts in the ongoing 'Vote Chori' signature campaign.

The DCC presidents formally launched the campaign on December 3 though it was launched before Jubilee Hills by-poll and have each been assigned a target of collecting 25,000 signatures. Although DCC presidents traditionally play a pivotal role in local body elections, the current office-bearers were appointed only recently. Consequently, the responsibility for selecting Sarpanch candidates has been entrusted to MLAs and constituency in-charges, who must also ensure their victory. Congress MLAs have been closely supervising all stages of the local body election process—from candidate selection to election strategies.



Brochure for Harihara Kshetram Brahmotsavams released

Kurnool: Former Rajya Sabha Member TG Venkatesh on Thursday unveiled the annual Brahmotsavam brochure of the sacred Harihara Kshetram, located on the banks of the Tungabhadra River near Sankalbagh.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the temple has been conducting Brahmotsavams for the past 20 years under the supervision of Vedic scholars.

The temple, constructed around 40 years ago for the Brahmin community, has been a centre of divine experiences ever since the commencement of the annual rituals, he added.

Venkatesh explained that extraordinary occurrences take place during the festival, particularly on the opening day's Dwajaroohanam and during the concluding Chakrasnanam, when Garuda birds appear and circle the temple precinct three times, which devotees consider a divine blessing.

He said that rituals



are performed with strict discipline similar to those at the Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, which he believes is the reason such divine manifestations occur.

He appealed to devotees from Kurnool and surrounding regions to visit and participate in the 11-day Brahmotsavams beginning from January 19, and sought public support in preserving and developing the temple.

He also assured full cooperation to modernise the Harihara Kshetram. Brahmin community leaders Durga Prasad and Sridhar were present.

Later, addressing

the 44th Masters Athletic Association Meet and Selection event held at the local Outdoor Stadium as the chief guest, Venkatesh said that sports strengthen healthy relationships among people and play a vital role in promoting unity and discipline.

He expressed pride in his long-standing commitment to sports development and recalled persuading the then chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy to approve the construction of indoor stadiums across every mandal in the undivided Andhra Pradesh.

He criticised the previous government for con-

verting many indoor stadiums into office spaces instead of promoting sports culture.

Venkatesh recounted his contributions in safeguarding public sports grounds and facilities by building compound walls to prevent encroachments, particularly protecting the outdoor stadium land nearly 50 years ago and securing around 80 public park spaces during his tenure as MLA.

He further highlighted efforts in constructing walkers' tracks along KC Canal and the Tungabhadra River, and establishing outdoor and indoor stadiums in APSP Battalion premises, Panchalingala and Rayalaseema University.

Athletes who excelled in the Masters Athletics competitions were felicitated.

District President Pandurangareddy, DSDO Bhupati Rao, Traffic CI Mansuroddin, Ramachandra Reddy, Surendra and others participated.

Kanchi Cafe opens 5th branch in Nallagandla

Hyderabad: South Indian café chain Kanchi Cafe has launched its fifth branch in Nallagandla, Hyderabad. The inauguration was graced by Serilingampalli MLA Arekapudi Gandhi as the chief guest.

Speaking at the event, MLA Gandhi congratulated the management for bringing the traditional flavours of five South Indian states to customers in a modern café setting at affordable prices. Kanchi Cafe is jointly founded by Tea Time and Kanchi Cafe founder Uday Srinivas Tangella, along with partners Prasad Shakamuri, Srikanth Nunna, Parthasaradhi Katta and Phani Babu, who collectively have over 15 years of experience in the F&B industry. The cafe currently operates branches in Hitech City, Manikonda, Kompally and Kurnool. The management announced plans to expand soon to Nagole, Kondapur, Goa and Hanumakonda, citing strong customer support. Kanchi Cafe's menu features dosas, idlis, thatta idlis, filter coffee and a variety of South Indian tiffins and snacks. The team also revealed plans to launch Kanchi Sweets in January, coinciding with the New Year.

Tough action launched on sanitation & animal control: Commissioner

Kurnool: Kurnool Municipal Corporation has initiated strict measures to strengthen city cleanliness, public health protection, road safety, and animal control, announced Municipal Commissioner P Vishwanath on Thursday.

Speaking to The Hans India Commissioner stated that in accordance with Supreme Court guidelines, the

Sports fest SPORTECH – 2K25 begins

Anantapur: The sports festival of Inter Junior Colleges "SPORTECH-2K25" began on Thursday at PVKK Engineering College (Autonomous), Rudrampet, Anantapur.

These sports will be held for three days.

Hundreds of students from Inter Colleges from all over the district made the campus buzz with their cheers and became a special attraction of this event.

The chief guests who lit the sports lamp and started the competitions were JNTU Anantapur Vice Chancellor Prof. H Sudarshana Rao and national level basketball player Dwarkanath Reddy and wished the students.

Sri Balaji Educational Institutions Chairman Dr Kishore Palle said that his college has extensively developed sports



facilities along with education with the aim of excelling at the national and international levels.

He revealed that special coaches in the sports department, maintenance of grounds, and provision of sports equipment are being monitored daily.

JNTU Anantapur

Vice Chancellor Professor Sudarshana Rao said that sports play a key role in enhancing physical fitness as well as mental peace, discipline and competitiveness among students. He said that competitions are being held in more than 15 disciplines like cricket, kabaddi, basketball, long jump and high

jump. Treasurer Palle Sindhura, Special Officer Prof. Srinivasulu Reddy, Management Representative Srikanth Reddy, Principal Dr Ramesh Babu, Dean Dr Santosh Kumar Reddy, PVKK Diploma Principal Dr Vaibhav, Balaji PG College Principal Dr Subba Rao, AO Dr Manohar Reddy,



Corporation is determined to implement firm action to protect public health and enhance the aesthetics of the city.

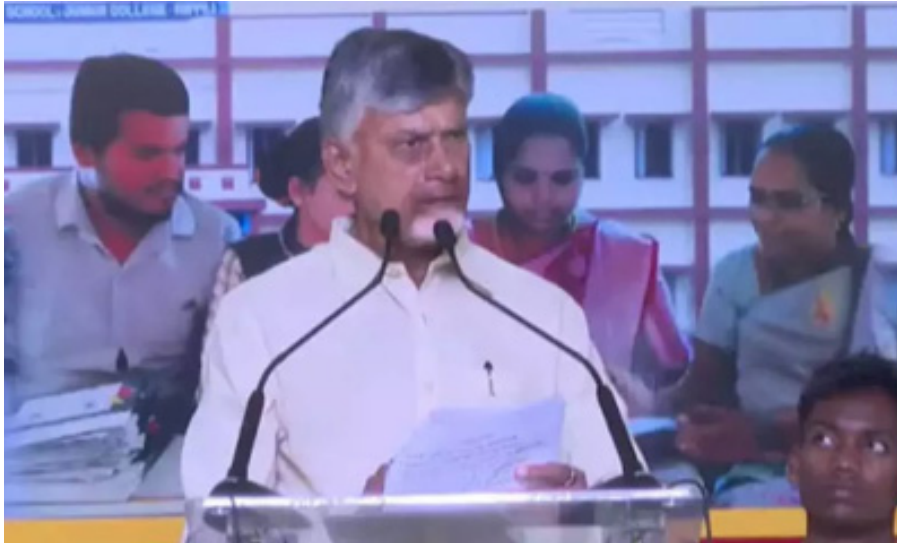
As part of this mission, special sanitation and animal control operations were taken up across various localities.

Commissioner Vishwanath said that stray dogs roaming around Damodaram Sanjivayya Memorial Municipal High School were safely captured and relocated by special teams to ensure the safety of students.

Likewise, cattle causing traffic inconvenience in Seetharam Nagar were traced and shifted to the LIC Park. In Nirmal Nagar, the Corporation identified unhygienic private vacant plots and immediately undertook sanitation work, clearing accumulated garbage and wild vegetation to prevent potential health hazards.

CM Chandrababu Advocates for Innovative Learning Approaches at Mega PTM

In a recent address at the Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) held in Bhamini, Parvathipuram Manyam district, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasised the importance of integrating innovative programmes into the educational system. He urged that children should engage in learning through play and music alongside their studies, fostering a more enjoyable and enriching educational experience.



Highlighting the intelligence of today's youth, Naidu stated, "It would be beneficial if they could read with interest, even for a short time." He recognized a global trend of declining populations, asserting

that in the future, India will be the nation with the highest number of children. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that such programmes will provide a solid foundation for students to excel in all

subjects.

He further encouraged parents and teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their children, suggesting that any shortcomings be addressed

promptly to assist in their overall development. Chandrababu's call for a more playful and engaging approach to education aims to create well-rounded individuals ready to tackle future challenges.

MP raises banana farmers' crisis in Parl

New Delhi: Anantapur MP Ambika Lakshminarayana raised the severe crisis faced by banana farmers in Anantapur district during the Parliament session, urging the Central Government to take immediate corrective measures to protect farmers from further distress.

Addressing the House, the MP said Anantapur, a major banana-producing region and the horticulture hub of Andhra Pradesh, along with Kadapa and Kurnool districts, cultivates bananas on over 40,000 hectares. However, this season, prices have collapsed drastically, leaving farmers unable even to recover harvesting and handling costs.

The overall production expenses, he noted, are significantly higher, worsening the financial burden.

The MP acknowledged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had promptly responded by directing officials to provide transport assistance, offer-



ing some relief to farmers. Yet, core structural issues remain unaddressed.

Although farmers in Rayalaseema produce bananas comparable and often superior in quality to those from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, they are unable to compete in national markets due to high reefer container charges imposed by Indian Railways and full empty-haulage charges on return containers. These costs make refrigerated transport unaffordable, reducing farmers' competitiveness and limiting access to major markets like Delhi and Mumbai.

The MP demanded immediate financial support for farmers affected this season, rationalisation of reefer freight charges, and waiver of empty-haulage fees. He also urged the Centre to introduce dedicated banana cargo trains from Anantapur to major consumption centres, which would expand market access, stabilise prices, and ensure fair returns to farmers.

He concluded by appealing to the Central Government to stand with farmers and take urgent, long-term measures to safeguard the livelihoods of lakhs of farming families.

DDO offices inaugurated

Kurnool: The Andhra Pradesh Government has launched Divisional Development Officer (DDO) offices across the state to enhance administrative efficiency and address public issues at the grassroots level.

District Collector Dr A Siri stated that these offices are aimed at decentralising governance and ensuring quick resolution of problems faced by rural communities.

Deputy Chief Minister Konidela Pawan Kalyan virtually inaugurated 77 DDO offices statewide from Chittoor on Thursday.

In Kurnool district, the new office established at the Zilla Parishad premises was formally opened by Dr Siri along with Panyam MLA Gauru Charitha Reddy and Kodumuru MLA Boggula Dastagiri.

Speaking on the occasion, she said the newly established offices will greatly assist in solving issues such as road development, drinking water supply and street lighting at the divisional level, without the need to approach district headquarters.

The Collector said that the offices set up in Kurnool, Pattikonda and Adoni divisions will enable Divisional Development Officers, MPDOs and



Panchayat Secretaries to coordinate effectively and deliver rapid solutions to public grievances.

Panyam MLA Gauru Charitha Reddy said that the coalition government has restored full authority to the Panchayati Raj system.

She noted that conducting Gram Sabhas in all 13,226 panchayats on a single day and passing development resolutions was an unprecedented achievement.

She added that the State Government is implementing development works in phases based on Gram Sabha resolutions, providing funds for drainage, drinking water and road projects.

Establishing DDO offices at the divisional level will simplify administrative functioning and accelerate rural development, she said.

Kodumuru MLA Boggula Dastagiri remarked that the coalition government is committed to strengthening rural infrastructure under the leadership of the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan.

He said the government is already undertaking works such as CC roads and drinking water projects, which are transforming rural areas.

The establishment of DDO offices marks a significant step towards reinforcing the Panchayati Raj institution and promoting comprehensive rural development.

ZP CEO Nasar Reddy, DPO Bhaskar, DLDVO Ramana Reddy, DWAMA PD Venkata Ramanaiah, DRDA PD Ramana Reddy and other department officials attended the event.

Officials told to expedite Smart City works

Tirupati: District Collector and Tirupati Smart City Corporation Limited chairman Dr S Venkateswar directed the officials to speed up the works taken up under the Smart City project. The Collector on Thursday reviewed the progress of pending works under the Centre-sponsored Smart City project and held 41st board meeting with Smart City officials. Smart City Director SP Subba Rayudu, independent directors Dr Ramachandra Reddy and Ramasri participated in the review meet and explained the decisions and accounts of the previous board.

Katchatheevu | What is the controversy all about?

The story so far: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 31 raised again the controversial matter of Katchatheevu, a few weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha poll in Tamil Nadu. Citing a report in a daily and posting it on "X" (formerly Twitter), he said: "Eye-opening and startling! New facts reveal how Congress callously gave away Katchatheevu...." Subsequently, the State BJP and the AIADMK sharpened their attacks on the DMK and the Congress while the responses were swift too. Even though almost 50 years have lapsed since the signing of the original agreement in 1974, the matter comes back to the fore as political parties use it for attacking their adversaries. On March 16, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK chief M.K. Stalin contended that Katchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka despite strong protests by the DMK. He asked the Prime Minister what steps were taken by the latter to retrieve the islet. About one-and-a-half months ago, Katchatheevu was in limelight as, in late February, fishermen associations in Ramanathapuram district boycotted the annual two-day festival, as a mark of protest against the Sri Lankan Government's continuing arrests of Indian fishermen on charges of poaching.

When did Katchatheevu become a part of Sri Lanka?

During June 26-28, 1974, the then Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi and Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike, signed an agreement to demarcate the boundary between the two countries in the historic waters from Palk Strait to Adam's Bridge. A joint statement issued on June 28, 1974, stated that a boundary had been defined "in conformity with the historical evidence, legal international principles and precedents." It also pointed out that "this boundary falls one mile off the west coast of the uninhabited" Katchatheevu. The pact brought to a close the talks held between the two sides since October 1921. Initially, the negotiations were held between the governments of the then Madras and Ceylon.

How important has been Katchatheevu to the fisherfolk?

Fisherfolk of the two countries have been traditionally using the islet for fishing. Though this feature was acknowledged in the 1974 agreement, the supplemental pact in March 1976 made it clear that fishing vessels and fishermen of the two countries "shall not engage" in fishing in the historic waters, territorial sea and exclusive zone or exclusive economic zone of either of the countries "without the express permission of Sri Lanka or India."

What triggered the negotiations between India and Sri Lanka?

Sri Lanka claimed sovereignty over Katchatheevu on the ground that the Portuguese who had occupied the island during 1505-1658 CE had exercised jurisdiction over the islet. India's contention was that the erstwhile Raja of Ramnad [Ramanathapuram] had possession of it as part of his zamin. According to a news item published by The Hindu on March 6,



1968 which was based on the interview of the erstwhile Raja Ramanatha Sethupathi, Katchatheevu was under the jurisdiction of the zamin "from time immemorial" and it was the "last post" of the Ramnad Estate. He added that the zamin had been collecting taxes till 1947 when it was taken over by the State government following the Zamindari Abolition Act. However, replying to the debate on the matter in Lok Sabha in July 1974, the then External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh asserted that the decision had been taken after "exhaustive research of historical and other records" on the islet.

How was the 1974 agreement received?

The present demand for the Katchatheevu retrieval traces its origin to the opposition that the pact generated in 1974. During the debates in both Houses of Parliament in July 1974, most of the Opposition including the DMK, AIADMK, Jan Sangh, Swatantra and the Socialist Party, staged walk outs in the two Houses. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was the Jan Sangh's leader, had contended that the decision to transfer the islet had been taken "behind the back" of the people and Parliament. He was supported by Madhu Limaye, veteran Socialist leader. The then Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi, even in 1973 when the talk of the islet transfer had been doing rounds, had urged Indira Gandhi that the popular feeling was in favour of retaining Katchatheevu which "belonged to India and not to Tamil Nadu alone," according to a report published by The Hindu on October 17, 1973. Three months later, he wrote a letter reiterating the stand, a copy of which was released a day after the 1974 agreement was signed. M. G. Ramachandran, founder of the

AIADMK, which was a fledgling party then, had criticised Karunanidhi for "his failure to guide the Centre properly" on the issue and sought his resignation.

When did the issue get a fresh lease of life?

After remaining low nearly for over 15 years, the Katchatheevu issue got revived in August 1991 with the then Chief Minister Jayalalitha demanding retrieval during her Independence Day address. She later modified her demand to one of getting back the islet through "a lease in perpetuity." The Tamil Nadu Assembly had witnessed a number of debates on the matter. In the last 15 years, both Jayalalitha and Karunanidhi had approached the Supreme Court on the matter.

What has been the stand of the Union government on the issue?

In August 2013, the Union government told the Supreme Court that the question of retrieval of Kachchatheevu from Sri Lanka did not arise as no territory belonging to India was ceded to Sri Lanka. It contended that the islet was a matter of dispute between British India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and there was no agreed boundary, a matter of which was settled through 1974 and 1976 agreements. In December 2022, the Union government, while referring to the two agreements, pointed out in its reply in the Rajya Sabha that Katchatheevu "lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line." It added that the matter was sub-judice in the Supreme Court.

Free film making courses in seven Indian languages at Ramoji Film City

Hyderabad: Ramoji Academy of Movies (RAM) the digital film academy of Ramoji Group based at Ramoji Film City on Monday announced online filmmaking courses in seven Indian languages i.e. Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, and Bangla, besides English. The filmmaking courses include Story and Screenplay, Direction, Action, Film Production, Film Editing and Digital Filmmaking.

The comprehensive courses provide specialized syllabi in the native languages, and they are free of cost, making it easier for enthusiastic individuals pursuing a ca-

reer in filmmaking to learn. These courses eliminate any limitations related to time and location, thereby expanding the accessibility of high-quality filmmaking programs.

To register for these RAM courses, there is no upper age limit or minimum qualification criteria. The minimum age requirement is 15 years and proficiency in the chosen language of study is mandatory. The student must have a valid phone number and email address to receive the necessary communication. RAM provides a seamless and secure online environment enabled by Safe Exam Browser (SEB).

The Indian Army connects Arunachal Pradesh

Denwa Meyor, 40, and Kunchok Dolma Meyor, 29, are residents of Kibithoo, one of the easternmost villages in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh. Inhabited by people of the Meyor tribe, it is located about 7-8 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the contested line that separates India and China. Their husbands work as porters with the Indian Army, like many men here. Denwa has two children, a 13-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son. Her daughter is in a hostel in Hayuliang, about 135 km away, as Kibithoo's school runs only until Class 8 and English-medium education is limited in the area. Kunchok has a two-and-half-year-old son. He plays in the sun, oblivious of his mother's worry about his education. "We want better education [closer home], and in English," says Denwa. The State-run hostel costs ₹60,000-₹70,000 a year and making the monthly trip to see her daughter is expensive. Over the past year, the village of about 130 residents has witnessed its Primary Health Centre and residences of the schoolteachers being upgraded, and concrete tracks being laid under the Central government's Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP). Nijum Manyu, 32, a contractual government teacher from Tezu, 245 km away, who got his first posting in Kibithoo three years ago, says there are four teachers, and the school is being renovated, with a new badminton court as well. The Army's demarcation

For administrative purposes, the Army classifies Arunachal as Kameng, derived from the name of the river that flows through the State. Tawang district is part of the Kameng area, while the remaining part of the State is considered separate and was earlier referred to as the Rest of Arunachal Pradesh (RALP). Of the 3,488-km-long LAC, 1,346 km falls in the eastern sector, comprising Sikkim and Arunachal. While the Tawang and Kameng areas are under the Army's IV Corps, headquartered at Tezpur, RALP is under the III Corps, which is based at Dimapur. Kameng and Tawang have seen development in the last 10-15 years, with the remaining areas only now catching up with the kind of infrastructure that China possesses. The VVP was approved as a Centrally-sponsored scheme on February 15, 2023, with an outlay of ₹4,800 crore for the financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26 for the development of 2,967 villages in 46 blocks across 19 districts in the border States of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and the Union Territory of Ladakh. The objective of the VVP is comprehensive development of these villages to improve the quality of life of people, thereby reversing outmigration, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The VVP is an effort to counter China's model villages — called Xiaokang (moderately prosperous) and located very close to the LAC opposite Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh — which have raised apprehensions in the security establishment.

In the first phase of the VVP, 662 villages have been identified on priority, of



which 455 are in Arunachal, with 245 earmarked in the III Corps area. Out of these, 23 villages have been identified by the Army in Tezu for priority development, officials on the ground say. Union Home Minister Amit Shah formally launched the VVP in Kibithoo on April 10, 2023. He also inaugurated nine micro hydel projects of the State government and 14 infrastructure projects for the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). "Captured the beautiful landscapes during my visit to Kibithoo, India's rst village. Arunachal Pradesh is blessed with immense natural beauty. I urge all to visit Arunachal Pradesh, especially Kibithoo, to be inspired by its history and stunned by nature's marvels," the Union Minister said in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), after his visit, along with a video of the mountainous landscape. Along with Kibithoo, the adjacent villages of Kaho and Meshai, all in the Anjaw district, have together been allotted ₹9.72 crore for infrastructure development, revenue generation, and human resource development. Work is approximately 85% complete, an official says. Civil-military coordination Just a few metres from where Denwa and Kunchok live, is Kibithu Bakery, staffed with four young women, in the 20 to 27 age group, who draw a monthly salary of ₹7,500. It was established in 2022 by the Army with the help of the Pune-based Aseem Foundation through funds under Operation Sadbhavna, a social welfare scheme spanning the areas of environment, education, and skilling. The bakery sells nankhatai (a type of shortbread), coconut and butter cookies, and cake. With tourists trickling in, the Army has lined up a renovation plan that will see new decor, lighting, and seat-

ing, estimated to cost between ₹30 lakh and ₹35 lakh. Once there is decent mobile connectivity, expected in the next few months, UPI payments will also be made available, improving ease of payments, officials say. Civil-military coordination is a prerequisite for the programme in border areas, says Lt. Col. R.S. Manhas, from a unit of the Punjab Regiment deployed in the area. "Our works through Operation Sadbhavna function as a feeder to the VVP," he says. The Army has allocated ₹15 crore under Operation Sadbhavna for developmental projects and outreach activities in the forward areas in III Corps area for 2022-23. The topography of Arunachal is like a wheel, the flat plateau as the hub with mountains and valleys jutting outwards like spokes. It means for travel between valleys, a visitor must come back to the plains. Work on the 2,400-km trans-Arunachal highway, which goes along the length of the border, is about 92% complete and the rest is expected to be completed this year, another official says. The new, almost 1,800-km-long frontier highway, on which work has commenced, will fill a critical void facilitating inter-valley movement. It will start from Bomdila in Arunachal's west, pass through Nafra, Huri and Monigong villages, and end in Vijaynagar, near the Indo-Myanmar border. The roads cut through eastern Arunachal's thick forests. Another 3,000 km of road infrastructure is also under planning and construction in the State. A number of operational tracks are being built by the Army to ensure last-mile connectivity in the forward areas, and in addition, a large number of projects have been sanctioned under the Prime Minister Gati Shakti project for infrastructure development.

A total of 34 new bridges have been constructed between 2020 and 2023, and three are under construction, all of which are Class 70 or higher, which means they have a capacity to carry 70 tonnes of load or higher. "All seven valleys have been connected with Chinook-specific helipads to ensure aerial connectivity," a source says, meaning they can be used by CH-47F(I) Chinook heavy-lift helicopters of the Air Force, which have emerged as a game changer on the LAC. Since the 2020 standoff with China in eastern Ladakh, the Army has carried out a major reorientation of troops from the western borders to the northern and eastern borders, and a change in the Order of Battle (ORBAT), the structural changes involved in maintaining troops and machines. As a part of this, several battalions that were committed to counter-insurgency roles in the Northeast were moved to the LAC. The Army's artillery guns — M777 Ultra Light Howitzers and 105mm Indian Field Guns — are deployed close to the LAC. The M777s, with a range of over 30 km, weigh just four tonnes and can be airlifted underslung on Chinooks, giving significant manoeuvrability in terms of long-range firepower between the valleys. Over the last few years, a range of new-generation equipment ranging from SIG-716 rifles, Negev light machine guns, Sako TRG-42 sniper rifles, tactical drones, sensors, and other weapons and equipment have been inducted here. A new memorial dedicated to the Battle of Walong of 1962 stands tall. In November 1962, the Indian Army halted the advancing People's Liberation Army soldiers for 27 days, forcing them to commit their reserve division from Tawang sector to Walong. Vastly outnumbered,

With dogs, do size and breed matter?

Over twenty breeds of 'ferocious' dogs have now been banished from Indian shores, and those that are here, will have to be sterilised, to ensure the end of their lines. These include the magnificent Rottweiler, the not-quite-pretty Pit-bull, gigantic mastiffs and other 'bully' breeds, which have been bred as guard dogs or for dog-fighting. These dogs, the accusation goes, have been bred to be violent, and hence are a danger to people at large. And as usual, it's not the dogs that are to blame, but us, for selectively breeding and seeding violent and aggressive traits in these breeds, until, to some extent, it becomes inherent in the breed. Sheepdogs, for instance, will instinctively herd not only sheep, but even groups of people and children and force them into a corner. On top of this is the training given to these breeds: Guard dogs are trained to be aggressive with strangers, to bark, bite and attack. It's relatively easy to train a dog to behave violently: by keeping it tied up all day, by teasing it, denying it food and even beating it. But, what most owners ignore is that aggressive behaviour should only happen on command from the owner. And, more importantly, it should desist the moment the owner calls a halt. The owners of such dogs alas, are usually more interested in being seen swaggering around with these big 'brutal' breeds, it gives them an ego kick, even if they're hardly in control of the raving animals straining at their leashes.

All pet dogs (and even strays, which probably account for more dog bites than all the others), like all people, need to be socialised, with us, human beings and with their own kind. And more than them, it's their owners that need obedience training from the day they bring the pup home. My own Boxer, Chops, was a big sloppy oaf with my friends because he had been taught how to behave around them, but was a terror with other dogs, simply because I had not taught him how to behave when among his own kind, making him believe he was one big dada dog who was boss of the canine world. My Labrador, Wag, was just the opposite: He was unpredictable with people, could not be trusted around children, but was happy to make friends with other dogs (unless they did something unacceptable) simply because I had introduced him to a pair of lovely Labradors, when he was a pup. A little stray pup (of one of his friends), who I named Hands-Up would wait for Wag every evening on the path I walked him on the Ridge, and roll over, squeaking excitedly and squirting away, as Wag trotted up to him and gave him a regal nod, like a Mafia don blessing a novice pickpocket. But Wag would snatch a biscuit – none too gently – from a child with no compunction, just a warning growl maybe. Chops too, once pinched a biscuit from my toddler nephew, but apologetically and very gently, with a lugubrious sigh, suggesting, 'ah, my friend, what to do, such is the way of the world.' Wag was a perplexing case, because he had been brought up (and socialised) in just the same way as our two earlier Boxers (Bambi and Chops), so why he had these most uncharacteristic, unpleasant Labrador traits was hard to fathom: possibly due to excessive inbreeding (or because he hailed from Hapur). The Boxers, which might have appeared more 'ferocious' were totally harmless and never

even growled at anyone, ever.

And, just as undesirable traits can be bred into a dog, they can be bred out of dogs, too. Boxers were originally bred for bull-baiting (as were Bulldogs) and in Germany, could only be given their breed certificates if they (and probably their owners) passed an Army test, for discipline, physical strength and demeanour. So they were tough, no-nonsense soldier dogs if you like. That was until they went to America and the UK, where over generations, these hard-core traits were bred out of them and they became the big, sloppy family clowns they are today. The same holds true of English bulldogs. Don't get me wrong: a badly brought up Boxer can also be a nasty piece of work. Does size and breed really matter so much? Well, obviously, a big dog can cause more damage if it attacks, but even the smaller yappy-snappy ones can be holy terrors and are more likely to have hair-trigger responses being size-challenged. A beagle, a dachshund, or a Yorkie can be as much of a terror as a Mastiff or a Rottweiler. It's the people who breed these violent dogs or train them to be so, that need to be put away, before their dogs. 'Weaponising' a Bull-mastiff or Pit-bull is as good as opening up with an unlicensed AK-47. More important than merely registering your pet dog with the authorities, it should be made mandatory that anyone



who wants to keep a dog, attend and pass – with their dog – a training school, especially mastering primary-level commands: "Sit! Stay! Come! Heel!" The only thing your dog wants is to be able to please you, and regrettably, if that includes attacking children or the elderly, well so be it, that's what

it will do. What you do have to watch out for is the pack instinct. Dogs are pack animals, and when a pack collects, say in a park, they can switch into hunting mode, which turns even the sweetest-tempered dog into a horror from hell. Well, we can hardly blame them – look at what happens when our own mob mentality takes over...

The world's first pig-to-human kidney transplant holds out hope for millions. Is this the future?

Richard Slayman, a 62-year-old man, received the world's first pig-to-human kidney transplant on March 16 in the United States. The kidney was from a genetically modified pig who was carrying 69 genomic edits. From what we read, the patient is doing well as of now. Previously, surgeons transplanted two gene-edited pig hearts and several gene-edited pig kidneys into brain-dead human patients so as to evaluate and hone the procedure. Earlier this year, a gene-edited pig liver was transplanted in China – this raised huge expectations that xenotransplantation may finally have come of age. Organ transplantation, one of the biggest medical breakthroughs of the 20th century – and the subject of research even in the preceding century – has prevented thousands of people from dying of end-stage organ failure. Yet a persistent problem is the huge gap between demand and supply; there are simply not enough organs available for transplantation. As a result, there are several more people on waiting lists, and patients dying whilst waiting for lifesaving organs.

According to estimates from the World Health Organization, two million people globally need organ transplants each year, yet only one in 20 of those individuals get a donor organ. When it comes to India, at least 20 individuals pass away every day while waiting for an organ, and there are over 300,000 patients on the waiting list. In our nation, the waiting list is augmented by one person every 10 minutes.

Radical approaches like

xenotransplantation thus, can close the supply and demand gap for many patients. While implanted devices and cell or stem cell therapies are among the other kidney replacement techniques under investigation, xenotransplantation might be the most accessible, as well as the easiest to implement, and even the most economical option. Furthermore, since animal organs are resistant to some viruses, such as the Epstein-Barr virus and Hepatitis B and C, they could potentially introduce extrinsic genetic material to avoid certain diseases.

Pigs are preferred because they can be raised in a controlled environment, mature very quickly, have large litters and their organs are the same size as human organs. To facilitate successful transplantation, pigs have been genetically engineered to resist the barriers to transplantation: immunity, inflammation and clotting. This included the deletion of pig antigens like Gal 3, which humans can have a hyperacute rejection. What's more, CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing devices have enabled the process of gene editing (removal as much as addition) with accuracy, efficiency, and affordability.

Most pigs harbour a Porcine Retrovirus (PERV) that is infectious to humans. This too has been modified by genetic engineering, but recipients require close follow-ups for transmission of these viruses which could be a major public health hazard in the same way that the transfer of influenza virus, coronavirus, and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) be-

tween species generated strains that led to widespread infections. Despite its potential, xenotransplantation is not without its challenges and ethical considerations. The possibility of infectious disease transmission and cross-species infection rank first among these difficulties. The potential for a xenograft-carrying microbe to mutate and produce a novel infectious pathogen can not be ruled out.

Then there are other ethical concerns with xenotransplantation that need to be addressed. A carefully constructed ethical code concerning the creation and care of animals that will serve as donors needs to be developed. It also needs to be decided when and under what circumstances should children and infants be considered as recipients of xenografts. Moreover, persons who receive xenografts may be required to participate in long-term follow-up programmes. An equitable way to distribute donor animal organs in a society where thousands of people die while waiting for a transplant will need to be formulated. Xenotransplantation has the potential to completely transform organ transplantation, notwithstanding the difficulties and ethical issues it raises. Xenotransplantation may open the door to a future in which organ shortages are eliminated and patients have access to life-saving organs when they need them most. It is therefore vital that ethical scrutiny goes hand in hand with research. Dr (professor) Sandeep Guleria is a senior consultant surgeon specialising in transplantation at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in New Delhi.