

## Kishan Reddy slams Telangana govt over graft, land scams

**N a l g o n d a / H y d e r a b a d :** Union Minister G Kishan Reddy launched a sharp attack on the Congress government in Telangana during a press conference at the BJP Nalgonda District Office on Sunday, alleging widespread corruption, numerous land scams, and a failure to deliver on key electoral promises.

Marking two years of Congress rule, Kishan Reddy stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was holding "victory celebrations" across the state despite failing to implement a single major promise. He drew a comparison with the previous BRS government, claiming both regimes were steeped in corruption. He alleged: "If corruption was centralised under K Chandrashekhar Rao, it is now decentralised under Congress, with ministers and MLAs opening shops for mass corruption."

The Union Minister accused the government of betraying every section of society Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Backward Classes (BCs), women, farmers, youth, and employees. He listed several unfulfilled promises, including the unemployment allowance, financial assistance to SC/ST families, crop bonuses, gold coins for poor girl marriages, scooters for girl students, and filling two lakh jobs. "Not a single promise has been implemented. People are asking when these guarantees will be fulfilled," he said.

Kishan Reddy highlighted alleged land scams, claiming illegal deals were rampant from Singareni lands to Hi-Tech City. He asserted that ministers were



competing for scams, while real estate in Hyderabad had collapsed. He charged: "This government cannot function a single day without selling lands, beer, and brandy. They have set a target of earning Rs 1 lakh crore through liquor sales," adding that not a single belt shop had been closed despite earlier promises.

He further alleged that the state government owed Rs 42,000 crore in arrears to Singareni through electricity

companies and was failing to pay dues to liquor manufacturers. "The economy is in the same dire state as during the BRS regime. Public anger will rise if this continues," he warned.

On national issues, Kishan Reddy confirmed that the Centre was investigating the cancellation of IndiGo flights and would take strict action. He also called for a nationwide consensus on reservations, noting that the BJP supported the BC reservation bill introduced

in the Assembly. Addressing farmers' concerns, he clarified that there was no limit on cotton procurement. He assured: "If certified by agricultural officers, CCI will buy cotton up to the last quintal until March next year."

Kishan Reddy challenged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to answer the people directly on how many of the promises and guarantees had been implemented. "Playing football cannot divert public attention from the guarantees given."

## Global outreach: Telangana woos Asian Nations

Hyderabad: Telangana Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Sunday hosted ambassadors, high commissioners, and senior diplomats from several Asian, Buddhist, and other nations at the Trident Hotel, Hyderabad. The meeting served to highlight Telangana's ancient Buddhist heritage and the State's vision for global cultural and tourism collaborations.

The Minister explained Telangana's historic role as the cradle of Mahayana Buddhism in South India and briefed the dignitaries on major heritage sites such as Nagarjunakonda, Phanigiri, Dhulikatta, Nelakondapalli, and Kotilingala. He also showcased the development of the Buddhavanam Bud-



dhist Heritage Theme Park at Nagarjunasagar, which is being designed as a world-class spiritual and cultural destination.

The Minister formally invited the delegates to participate in the "Telangana Rising – 2047 Global Summit" scheduled for December 8–9 at Bharat Future City, Hyderabad. The summit aims to present Telangana's long-term development roadmap, investment opportunities, and cultural identity.

The dignitaries appreciated Telangana's efforts to revive Buddhist heritage and expressed keen interest in cultural, tourism, and investment collaborations.

## Cementing strategic ties between India-Russia

What makes the India-Russia bilateral relationship more fascinating is that both countries have remained friendly and cordial despite the growing pressure on them due to the rapidly changing global geopolitical scenario. Though not on the same page on several international issues — the Ukraine war being the latest point of disagreement — their ties have withstood the test of time, weathered many a storm, and remained robust in an otherwise uncertain and unforgiving world. The terms of engagement may have changed over the years, but the India-Russia ties have remained strong and formidable. The recently concluded visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin, marked by the extraordinary bonhomie of his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a flurry of agreements signed, demonstrated the inherent strength of the relationship. His visit for the 23rd Annual Summit came amid a profound churn in global politics, marked by the continued war in Ukraine and United States President Donald Trump's unpredictable tariff salvos. On display during Putin's visit was India's deft diplomatic skills in managing a complex geopolitical terrain of shifting alignments, with the safeguarding of its strategic autonomy as a guiding principle. Significantly, Putin, on his first trip to New Delhi since the Ukraine war began, has promised that Moscow was ready to ensure uninterrupted shipments of fuel to India, which is the world's third largest consumer of crude oil. New Delhi has been buying large volumes from Russia at discounted prices since the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. However, some Indian firms have since started reducing oil imports from Russia to comply with American sanctions.

Bilateral agreements were signed, spanning several sectors, including shipbuilding, civil nuclear energy, health, and critical minerals. The two countries are confident of increasing the bilateral trade from the current USD 69 billion to USD 100 billion by 2030. India exports barely USD 5 billion a year to Russia, while bilateral trade reached about USD 69 billion by March 2025, driven almost entirely by India's imports, particularly discounted crude oil. The joint statement noted that trade barriers must be removed and smoother payment mechanisms ensured to achieve the revised target of USD 100 billion by 2030. It also stated that the joint work on the free trade agreement on goods between India and the Eurasian Economic Union is being intensified. The labour mobility pact opens new avenues for Indian professionals to work across a wide range of sectors in Russia. It comes at a time when Russia is grappling with an acute labour shortage and the West — particularly the US — is restricting immigration. The value of defence cooperation with Russia was demonstrated most recently in the effective use of the S-400 system during Operation Sindo. Russia is also an important partner in the development of nuclear power in India, and during the visit, Putin specifically referred to Russian willingness to collaborate with India on small modular reactors and floating nuclear power plants.

## BRS to celebrate 'Vijay Diwas' tomorrow across Telangana

Hyderabad: The BRS is set to celebrate 'Vijay Diwas' on December 9, the date on which the Central Government announced the commencement of the process for a separate Telangana State. Party leaders have been instructed to organise celebrations in their respective constituencies.

BRS Working President K T Rama Rao has called on the party cadre to celebrate December 9, which marked a key turning point in the Telangana state formation process, as 'Vijay Diwas'. He issued these directives during a teleconference held on Sunday with top party leaders, MLAs, MLCs, and district presidents.

K T Rama Rao recalled that December 9 was the day when party chief K Chandrashekhar Rao announced the start of the Telangana state formation process after the Centre acceded to his fast-unto-death. He suggested that December 9, the day following K Chandrashekhar Rao's 11-day fast, should be celebrated as a festival called 'Vijay Diwas', just as 'Deeksha Diwas' on November 29 was made a success.

K T Rama Rao stated that the 60-year-old Telangana aspiration took shape on December 9 due to K Chandrashekhar Rao's hunger strike. Remembering this significant historical event, he suggested that the day of the declaration of a separate state should be celebrated, honouring the sacrifices made by K Chandrashekhar Rao for Telangana.

Given the ongoing local body elections, K T Rama Rao clarified that these programs should be organised only in constituency centres and not in villages. He outlined the specific programs to be undertaken on December 9: 'Palabhishekam' (a ritual anoint-



ing) should be performed on the statues of Telangana Thalli in the constituency centres; party leaders should place flower garlands on the statue of Dr B R Ambedkar and pay homage; and fruits should be distributed to patients in government hospitals. Pink balloons, symbolising victory, should be released into the air at party offices or main intersections. Following the program, a media conference should be organised to remind the public and future generations of K Chandrashekhar Rao's initiation, the Telangana struggle, and the sacrifices of the students.

A special program is also being organised at NIMS in Hyderabad. He mentioned that fruit distribution programs would be held at NIMS Hospital and Gandhi Hospital by MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav. He suggested that the city leadership should participate in these programs. With two days remaining, K T Rama Rao urged the district presidents to take the initiative and coordinate these programs in all constituency centres to ensure their success.

## 415 elected unopposed; 5 villages get zero valid nominations

Hyderabad: As many as 415 sarpanches have been elected unanimously, while five villages recorded no valid nominations in the second phase of sarpanch elections.

A total of 13,128 candidates, including those elected unopposed, remain in the fray for 3,911 sarpanch posts in Phase-2 polling scheduled for December 14. According to data released by the State Election Commission (SEC), 7,484 candidates withdrew their nominations in this phase.

In ward elections, 8,304 ward members were elected unanimously out of the 38,322 ward seats notified. After withdrawals, 78,158 candidates remain in the contest.

The SEC noted that 107 ward offices received no valid nominations.

The Commission also stated that 7,584 candidates withdrew from the sarpanch contest, while 10,427 candidates withdrew from ward member elections.

In the first phase, 395 sarpanches were elected unanimously, and five villages saw no nominations filed. Similarly, 9,331 ward offices were filled unopposed.

Polling for Phase-1 will be held on December 11 with counting from 2 pm. Polling for Phase-2 is on



December 14, and for Phase-3, the last date for withdrawal is December 9.

# Hyderabad gearing up for Messi mania!



Hyderabad: It's going to be exciting times for football lovers in India as global football icon Lionel Messi is scheduled to play a friendly match with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's team at Uppal Stadium on December 13. And Hyderabad is gearing up for the Messi mania!

On Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said the very mention of a match featuring world-renowned football player Lionel Messi excites football lovers, and thousands of fans from all corners of the country will be arriving at Uppal Stadium on December 13 for an exhibition match as a part of the Telangana Rising celebrations. Speaking to the media after reviewing the arrangements for the match, he said Lionel Messi enjoys massive global popularity and receives special security worldwide. In view of the high-profile friendly match, fool-proof security arrangements are being made in and around the Uppal Stadium.

The Deputy Chief Minister stated that Lionel Messi himself has shown interest in participating in the Telangana Rising festivities. Considering the arrival of thousands of football fans from across the country, he appealed to spectators to reach the stadium ahead of the scheduled time and take their seats early, keeping security and

convenience in mind.

He said all necessary facilities have been arranged for football lovers attending the friendly match.

According to him, the Rachakonda and Hyderabad Police Commissioners are giving special attention to security arrangements for the match. Police and Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) officials briefed the Deputy Chief Minister on the preparations underway at the stadium.

Bhatti Vikramarka also reviewed the routes designated for the arrival and departure of star player Messi, as well as for the Chief Minister, ministers, and other VIPs.

He inquired with officials about the expected number of spectators, the number of entry gates arranged for smooth movement, parking facilities, and transport support being provided for football fans through Hyderabad Metro Rail and RTC services.

Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Additional DGP Vijay Kumar, Rachakonda CP Sudheer Babu, Rohan Reddy, Shiva Sain Reddy, and others accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the inspection.

## Shyamala Gopalan Foundation celebrates anniversary

Palvoncha (Kothagudem): The Shyamala Gopalan Foundation marked its annual celebrations with grandeur and community spirit in Palvoncha on Sunday. The event drew a large gathering of supporters, volunteers, and locals who participated in various cultural and service-oriented activities organized throughout the day. The programme began with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, followed by tributes to Dr Shyamala Gopalan, whose contributions in the fields of women's empowerment, education, and social welfare continue to inspire many. The Foundation's Founder Chairman N Suresh Reddy (NSR) and representatives highlighted her legacy and reiterated their commitment to carrying forward her

vision through impactful community initiatives. He explained the foundation services have been conducted in last seven years. He said the foundation was established on mark of her birthday on 7th of December and conducting special events on this occasion. Speaking on the occasion, foundation members expressed gratitude to the community for their continued support. They emphasised the importance of collective efforts in promoting social welfare and pledged to expand their outreach activities in rural and tribal areas surrounding Palvoncha.

## Promises betrayed, state plundered: BJP issues chargesheet on Cong rule

Hyderabad: The BJP Telangana State unit released a detailed chargesheet marking two years of the Congress government in Telangana, accusing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's administration of large-scale corruption, financial mismanagement, and the betrayal of public trust.

The document, released on Sunday during the party's "Maha Dharna" at Indira Park, outlines alleged failures across social welfare, education, industry, law and order, and fiscal management, branding the Congress regime as "Sinking Telangana" rather than "Rising Telangana."

According to the chargesheet, the Congress government has failed to deliver on its six guarantees and 420 promises made before the elections. BJP leaders claimed that no section of society Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Backward Classes (BCs), women, farmers, youth, or employees has benefited from the promises. The report highlights pending arrears in fee reimbursement, delays in Aarogyasri payments, irregular salaries for government employees, and the denial of pensions to retired staff. It accuses the government of deceiving the people with slogans like "Telangana Rising" while failing to provide basic governance.

The chargesheet also points to the alleged misuse of state wealth, claiming crores of rupees were spent on "victory celebrations" under the banner of democratic governance. BJP leaders argued that the Congress government has instead presided over a rise in corruption, gun culture, and mafia activities. The document cites the spread of drugs, intoxicants, and online gaming mafias as evidence of the administration's failure to safeguard youth and maintain law and order. It further notes that even police officers have been attacked in broad daylight, reflecting a breakdown in governance.

On the economic front, the BJP accused the government of pushing Telangana into a debt trap. The chargesheet references admissions by the Chief Minister himself that the state is drowning in debt and unable to pay even interest on loans. It alleges that salaries and pensions are delayed due to the financial crisis. Simultaneously, industries dependent on real estate cement, steel, brick, and construction have collapsed. The BJP claims that the government's promises of attracting global investments through summits are mere diversions, lacking credibility given the dire fiscal situation.

The report also raises concerns over land policies, alleging that valuable industrial lands around Hyderabad's Outer Ring Road are being handed over to real estate lobbies under the pretext of pollution control. It accuses the government of turning Hyderabad into a "concrete jungle" by selling off public lands meant for schools, hospitals, parks, and playgrounds.

In addition, the chargesheet highlights failures in infrastructure and welfare schemes, pointing to stalled projects, inadequate healthcare facilities, and the neglect of educational institutions. It claims that the Congress government has prioritised commissions and contractor-driven projects over genuine development. The BJP chargesheet asserts that Telangana's wealth is being plundered and mortgaged, leaving future generations at risk. It calls on the people of Telangana to demand accountability from the Congress government and warns that the BJP will not remain silent as the state's resources are allegedly looted.



## Congress govt fulfilled 80 pc of promises, says TPCC prez

Hyderabad: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president B Mahesh Kumar Goud on Sunday said the Congress government has already implemented 80 per cent of its poll assurances and asserted that the remaining promises will be fulfilled over the next three years.

Addressing the media in Nizamabad, Mahesh Kumar Goud strongly countered Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy, stating that the latter "has no right to criticise" the Congress government in Telangana.

"What has Kishan Reddy brought to Hyderabad and Telangana? The people of Jubilee Hills taught the BJP a lesson in the by-poll by not even allowing it to retain its deposit," he remarked.

It may be recalled that Kishan Reddy had alleged that the Congress government was selling government lands to run the state. He claimed the government had "raised the curtain on land 'danda' in the name of the HILT policy" and was attempting to dispose of more than 9,000 acres. He also accused the government of issuing the GO unilaterally and acting arbitrarily.

## CPM calls for unity against BJP's 'fascist' policies

Ongole: CPI (M) state secretary V Srinivasa Rao urged secular and democratic forces to unite against the BJP's fascist policies during a district-level training session for Prakasam district CPI (M) cadre at Sundaraiah Bhavan here on Sunday.

He criticised the BJP government for using Hindutva ideology to divide people and endanger the nation's secular fabric. He accused the ruling party of prioritising corporate interests over constitutional values and ignoring public issues while stoking religious sentiments to undermine democratic principles. He alleged that national wealth is being handed to Modi-affiliated corporates while farmers face increased burdens leading to suicides. He warned that reduced agricultural incentives are weakening the rural economy, while labour rights are being systematically eroded. District leader Punati Anjaneyulu noted the global capitalist crisis and highlighted how socialist nations



## Launch a CBI probe into raw material procurement

Visakhapatnam: Representatives from trade union leaders of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) demanded a CBI probe against RINL CMD (Addl-charge) Ajit Kumar Saxena for deliberately pushing the plant into losses.

They pointed out that ever since Saxena took charge as the CMD (Addl-charge) of VSP, the plant has been incurring losses.

Underlining this, they appealed to the Ministry of Steel to handover the files approved by him for procurement of coke, pallets and other raw materials.

Further, they demanded a probe into the issue with immediate effect as he is retiring in December.

They also urged the Ministry of Labour to launch a probe into Saxena's misrepresentation of the facts to the labour department and appealed to the director of factories to investigate the prevailing unsafe conditions in the plant, resulting in deaths of a number of workers in the last 11 months.

"The CMD of RINL is involved in a number of corrupt practices in raw material procurement for the plant. The Ministry of Steel should place him under suspension immediately," demanded Ch Narasinga Rao, chairman of Visakha Ukkuparirakshana Porata Committee (VUPPC)-CITU, D Adinarayana, chairman of VUPPC-AITUC, Mantri Rajasekhar, chairman of VUPPC-INTUC, Padi Thrinadha Rao, general secretary of Visakha Steel Employees Union.

## Reliance organises quiz for students

Kakinada: Assistant Collector Manisha lauded Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) for its continued support to the education sector in the erstwhile East Godavari district by promoting academic events that

Dhirubhai Ambani. This year marks the fourteenth edition of the programme.

Along with the main competition, a separate stream was held exclusively for government school students. The event took place at Ambedkar Bhavan in Kakinada and was inaugurated by the Assistant Collector. Addressing the participants, she praised the enthusiasm of the students and said such activities play a key role in strengthening memory and overall development. She urged the children to participate in co-curricular activities alongside their academics. She also appreciated Reliance Industries for consistently conducting district-level quizzes and encouraging students



help rural students compete with their urban counterparts. RIL, in collaboration with the District Education Department, organised the district-level Reliance Dhirubhai Ambani Quiz 2025 to commemorate the 93rd birth anniversary of the company's Founder Chairman, L Muralidhar.

A total of 700 students from 170 schools across the Kakinada district participated in the competition. Reliance Site Head L Muralidhar also interacted with the students and explained the significance of such initiatives.

# X-servicemen celebrate Indian Navy Day

Ongole: Prakasam district ex-servicemen celebrated the 54th Indian Navy Day, with MLA Damacharla Janardan Rao as chief guest, at Ambedkar Bhavan here.

The event, organised by the Prakasam District Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association honoured veter-



ans and their contributions. Notable attendees included Colonel PS Reddy (Disaster Management Director), Municipal Commissioner Dr K Venkateswarao, and District Military Welfare Officer Abdul Rahim.

As part of the event held presided over by Alapati Venkateswarlu, the Ministry of Defence honoured Neppalli Nageswara Rao for his service to veterans and society. MLA Janardhana Rao announced land allocation for the construction of an Amar Jawan memorial and a committee hall. Jagarlamudi Nageswar Rao contributed Rs 1 lakh toward the construction of the memorial. State Bank Regional Manager Vellanki Srinivasarao spoke about cybercrime awareness, while speakers emphasised national unity and veterans' sacrifices. Dr Agarwal Eye Hospital conducted eye examinations for attendees.

# Six held, 2 kg ganja seized

Guntur: Nagarampalem police on Sunday ar-



rested six persons involved in ganja smuggling and sale, and seized 2 kg ganja.

According to police, Nagarampalem Circle Inspector Satyanarayana along with his team took six accused into custody at Donka leading to Lalpuram in Guntur city.

During the questioning, they confessed to the crime. The arrested include Gorla Kotesw, Kakarla Srikanth, Bisetty Kiran, Sk Nagul Sharif, A Ashok and Sk Abdul Khayyum.

Police registered the case and took up investi-

# Two constables suspended

Guntur: Guntur district SP Vakul Jindal suspended two police constables for support and cooperation to the PDS rice smuggling activities. He issued orders to this effect on Sunday.

According to sources, police constables attached to Ponnur rural police station, M Nagarjuna and Y Mahesh extended their cooperation to PDS rice smugglers. Police officials conducted a preliminary inquiry. Based on the probe report, the police constables were placed under suspension.

Vakul Jindal warned that if any cops cooperated with PDS rice smugglers, he would take stern action against them. He said he would not tolerate the cops involved in the anti-social activit



# Three held, 37 bikes recovered

Bapatla: The Bapatla district police have arrested three persons involved in a series of two-wheeler thefts, recovering 37 motorcycles worth Rs 21.20 lakh.

Bapatla district SP B Umamaheswar announced the arrests at a press conference on Sunday, revealing that special teams formed under CCS DSP P Jagadeesh Naik and Inspector Premaiah used technical surveillance and CCTV footage to crack seven registered cases.

The SP said they arrested Kagga Sambasiva Rao (32), a lorry driver from Guntur district, who has been stealing bikes for two years to fund his lifestyle. He said that Sambasiva Rao operated across Bapatla, Guntur, Palnadu, Vijayawada, and NTR districts, using duplicate keys to steal parked vehicles outside homes and hospitals. Police linked him to 33 thefts.

SP said that Dasari Gopiraju (32) and his brother, Dasari Durgarao (24), from Chirala, turned to bike theft six months ago due to financial difficulties. They stole



four vehicles in the Chirala and Addanki areas.

SP Umamaheswar said the district police recovered 60 bikes worth Rs 40 lakh in the past week alone. He urged citizens to install safety locks and GPS devices on their vehicles, warning against complacency despite the substantial investment in purchasing motorcycles. He presented cash rewards to the investigating team for efficient work.

# MLA offers to solve paddy moisture problem

Gannavaram (Krishna District): Government Whip and Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkat Rao urged officials to ensure that paddy is procured from farmers without causing any inconvenience under the pretext of rules and regulations. On Sunday, while travelling from Veleru to Remalle in Bapulapadu mandal of Krishna district, the MLA stopped at Veleru village, where farmers had spread their paddy on the roadside for drying. Yarlagadda enquired whether they were facing any difficulties in selling their produce. The farmers explained that due to high moisture content, they were drying the paddy to meet procurement standards. They appealed to the MLA to request the government to relax moisture percentage norms, as strict limits were causing delays in procurement. Responding to their concerns, Yarlagadda assured the farmers that he would take up the issue with higher officials and the concerned Minister to find a solution at the earliest.

He immediately contacted Civil Supplies Department officials over the phone and instructed them to adopt a farmer-friendly approach while checking moisture levels during procurement.

Water Users Association Distributary Committee Chairman Kommareddy Rajesh, Veleru PACS president Avirneni Bhavani Shankar, and



several farmers were present during the inspection.

# Chandrasekhar new TAC member

Vijayawada: Tanubuddi Chandrasekhar of Vijayawada has been appointed as a member of the Telecom Advisory Committee (TAC), following an order issued by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). Chandrasekhar, who earlier served as director of the AP Civil Supplies Corporation, currently heads the NTR district YSRCP commercial wing.

According to him, the appointment was made based on the recommendation of Rajya Sabha member YV Subbareddy.

# Unravelling secrets of the elusive snow leopard

In uncovering the secrets of the snow leopards, we can take a step closer towards understanding a green-eyed silent cat standing in a remote Himalayan area. They are called guardians of the mountains; now we have a number for them. In a first-of-its-kind effort, India has estimated snow leopard numbers from the Eastern and Western Himalayas. The numbers, gleaned from animal signs and camera trap images, are encouraging — we have around 781 individuals found across four states and two Union Territories. Educated guesses made earlier assumed we have upwards of 400 snow leopards in India.

Snow leopards are mysterious apex predators of high mountain ecosystems. They are large cats with masterful camouflage that blends into the sparse high mountain and trans-Himalayan landscape they belong to. Understanding snow leopard numbers, density, and distribution is thus attempting to fathom the status of the inaccessible places they live in and the wildlife they share these places with. The snow leopard estimation is the result of walking 13,450 square kilometres of trails and 1,80,000 camera trap nights. It was found that there are 477 snow leopards in Ladakh, 124 in Uttarakhand, 51 in Himachal Pradesh and nine in Jammu and Kashmir. It is well known that there are many snow leopards in Ladakh — watching them is an eco-tourism attraction. But it's the eastern Himalayas that throw up a surprise. Both Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim have sizeable numbers of snow leopards: 36 and 21, respectively. The particularly rugged terrain of Arunachal Pradesh posed significant challenges for conducting snow leopard studies. Here, the survey was possible only because of the dedication of local community volunteers, forest department staff and WWF-India's field biologists. Almost 700,000 camera trap pictures were taken between June and December 2021. Difficulties posed by the landscape are also a reason why we have had nationwide estimates of other iconic mammals like tigers and elephants, but not for snow leopards until now.

Establishing baselines of snow leopard population density equips us with the knowledge to monitor and respond to shifts in snow leopard numbers. Crucially, it can also help pinpoint areas where snow leopards face the greatest threats, such as regions with elevated poaching rates or habitat degradation. In many ways, snow leopards present completely different challenges when compared to other big cats. They live in areas that are difficult, almost impossible, to access, lined by cliffs, gorges, avalanches and low oxygen conditions. This area is also struck by the climate crisis, with extreme weather events increasing. As mountain areas warm, the tree line has been observed going up the mountain. Yet, an animal's ability to go up the slope is limited. For instance, snow leopards cannot possibly exist above 5,500 metres — these areas effectively don't have much wildlife or prey animals. Another unique aspect is that nearly 70% of snow



leopards are outside protected areas.

What, then, is the future of the snow leopard? It is clear that the future lies in community stewardship. For this, we need to further understand the social drivers of snow leopard conservation. And while we may not know the full impacts of the climate crisis on the area yet, we do know one thing. Communities need help with climate adaptation and livelihood strategies — and we must work to strengthen their resilience and livelihood options. Unlike the protected area approach we have taken for tigers, snow leopard persistence will need a different conservation paradigm — a bottom-up approach for rangeland management and conservation, which may not necessarily involve protected areas. This underscores the importance of forging strong partnerships with local communities and recognising their vital role as land stewards. We can foster mutual understanding through collaborative efforts, pav-

ing the way for innovative coexistence strategies that benefit humans and wildlife. Ecologically, the next step is to see what is driving snow leopard densities. On the face of it, it seems wild prey availability is the primary determinant, but there is also an interplay of factors, like topography and terrain, which need to be understood. This estimation shows us valuable steps forward.

Now that we have a sense of numbers, we need to better understand and tackle threats. Poorly planned infrastructure and the presence of free-ranging dogs are pervasive threats throughout the snow leopard range. Other threats vary across regions. For instance, in the Eastern Himalayas, snaring and unintentional killings pose the primary threat in Arunachal Pradesh, while poaching of wild ungulates is a concern in Sikkim. In the West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal, retaliatory killing is the primary threat — the snow leopards are targeted when they kill livestock. Another aspect is that other wildlife is also responding to warming conditions. In Kargil, for instance, brown bears are emerging mid-hibernation or have shorter hibernation periods. This means that the habitat of the bear and the snow leopard overlap for a longer time. This will create novel interactions, which could also end in conflict. Our imagination has traditionally been captured by tigers in forests, birds in wetlands, and whales in seas. In uncovering some of the secrets of the snow leopards, we can take a step closer towards understanding a green-eyed silent cat standing in a remote Himalayan area. This is our chance to celebrate a mountain species. Neha Sinha and Rishi Sharma are with WWF-India. WWF-India was the partner of state forest departments in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim for snow leopard estimation. The views expressed are personal

views of the authors.

## Self-empowerment tips for women in leadership roles

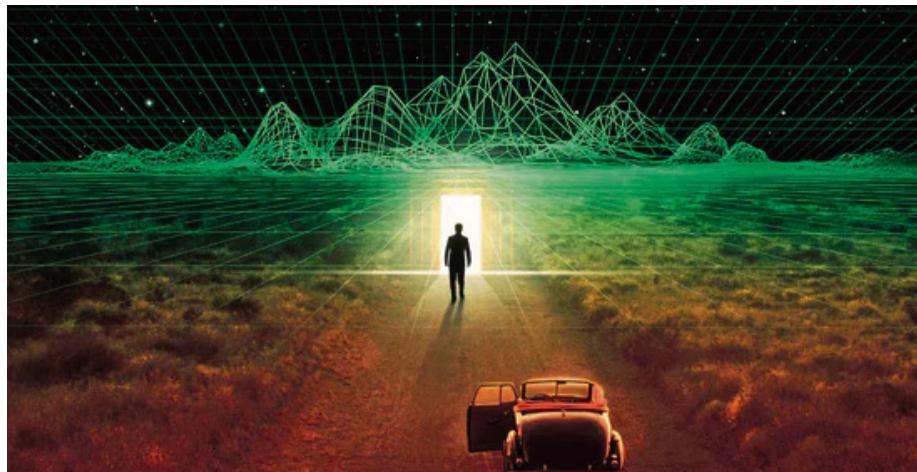
Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence and the most effective way to do it is to include women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored because women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world. Women in leadership roles face a myriad of challenges, from navigating corporate hierarchies to breaking through glass ceilings yet, there is this whole playbook of self-empowerment strategies

that can propel women towards success.

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Shradha Thapa, Regional Head — OTT India at Infobip, shared, "Take building networks, for instance. Rather than sticking to one type, it should include both women and men. Mixing it up will bring a new level of support and insights. Women's networks offer a safe space for sharing experiences and seeking mentorship from female leaders on issues such as career management and salary negotiations. Meanwhile, mixed networks offer opportunities for collaboration and learning from diverse perspectives." She added, "Secondly, we

can never underestimate the power of ongoing training. Women can acquire up-to-date leadership skills and connect with executives across various sectors, gaining valuable insights and making new contacts. Peer mentors, both male and female, offer invaluable advice and guidance, particularly when navigating new sectors or positions." According to Shradha Thapa, visualising goals and stepping out of comfort zones are essential practices for women leaders. She advised, "By clearly defining their aspirations and embracing challenges, women can harness their energy and conviction to achieve success.

# Is tomorrow here already?: Here's what science-fiction predicted for 2026



Nuclear war hasn't materialised, in our world; unbridled industrial pollution has, but it hasn't ended hope (far from it). Extreme virtual reality is in the making; well-funded efforts are striving to prove we live in a simulation. We aren't yet a world where all recreational drugs are legal; we aren't, at least not this year, a world in which our species is barely holding on. But there are deep truths hidden even in the more outlandish films made over half a century ago. There are a few happy endings too. It is the movies, after all. From *Beyond the Time Barrier* (1960) to *Narcopolis* (2015), take a look.

In *Beyond the Time Barrier* (1960), the year 2024 looks bleak. Competitive nuclear-weapons testing has damaged Earth's atmosphere and let in dangerous cosmic rays. The rays have caused disease, rendering everyone sterile except one telepathic woman named Tiriene, granddaughter of the Supreme, leader of the underground city known as the Citadel. Everyone except the Supreme and his second-in-command, the Captain, is also deaf and mute. Into this world crash-lands US Air Force pilot William Allison, who was on a sub-orbital test flight in 1960 when he zoomed through a tear in the space-time continuum. (This was nearly a decade before the Moon landing, and some were still clearly a little hazy on what was possible in sub-orbital flight.)

Allison is first imprisoned, then released as a vital resource, with the mission of repopulating the city. He has other plans. First, of course, he falls in love with Tiriene. Together, they frame a new mission: to help him return to his own time. There is a grand battle, a grand betrayal, a heart-breaking death and an almost-happy homegoing. Can he alter history enough to change 2024? The (very)-low-budget sci-fi effort was directed by Edgar G Ulmer.

Given today's rising incidence of skin cancer and falling fertility rates, his low-fi effort may have had the cause wrong, but was rather on the money on at least some of the effects. As for the deaf and mute detail, he could have substituted it with blind and got that largely right too. The sci-fi black comedy *A Boy and his Dog* (1975) follows

a teenager and his telepathic canine as they scramble to survive in a post-apocalyptic 2024. Wipe thoughts of Pixar and *This is Us* from your mind. These are neither do-or-die heroes nor even etched-in-shades-of-grey anti-heroes; they are violent, amoral miscreants. They don't even like each other very much, but depend on each other to survive in their wasteland of a world, populated by military robots gone rogue. Eighteen-year-old Vic (played by a young Don Johnson) cannot tell right from wrong. He steals; kills; attacks and rapes women. The dog, Blood, is supremely intelligent, but suffering the quirks of imperfect genetic engineering. As the plot unfolds, it turns out that one of Vic's victims, a teenage girl, is from an underground settlement that has achieved some degree of stability. They need someone to help add to the gene pool. Vic's dream of sex with multiple women is short-lived; he is to provide his contribution through the excruciating method of electroejaculation (currently used on cattle and certain other animals, mainly endangered ones). Vic eventually escapes, even begins to feel real love. Then he kills his love interest so he and his now-starving dog can eat her.

The movie was based on a wild ride of a novella, written in 1969 by fantasy author Harlan Ellison. We've avoided the nuclear war that was so feared in this time. There are Vics in our world, but they are not unique to our time. One thing the movie got wrong: There are no bad dogs (at most, misunderstood ones). The *Highlander* film series (there were six movies made between 1986 and 2007) started out strong. Starring Christopher Lambert (as Connor MacLeod) and Sean Connery (as Juan Sánchez-Villalobos Ramírez), the first film told the story of a group of immortals born with an energy called the quickening. It centred on MacLeod, as he discovered he was immortal and prepared to fight another immortal to the death. Then came *Highlander II: The Quickening* (1991). Set in 2024, it veered off into so many new directions, muddying the waters as it went, that it was called one of the worst movies of all time. To begin with, it announced that the immortals were really aliens expelled from another planet for leading a rebellion against their corrupt leader. It then dove into



a plot that was dense and plodding; punctuated by special effects that hinged on explosions, sparks and lightning bolts. "If there is a planet somewhere whose civilization is based on the worst movies of all time, *Highlander 2: The Quickening* deserves a sacred place among their most treasured artifacts," the film critic Roger Ebert wrote, in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Look closely, though, and it does offer prescient lessons in corporate greed. In this 2024, the ozone layer has been destroyed by industrial pollution (the film was released six years after the ozone hole was first noticed over Antarctica). An electromagnetic shield invented by MacLeod, but now owned and run at immense profit by the Shield Corporation, has replaced it. The shield blocks out light and retains humidity, so no one's really happy. Then, MacLeod comes upon new research that indicates the ozone layer has repaired itself (as indeed it has been doing, thanks to policies that targeted chlorofluorocarbons decades ago) and the shield may no longer be necessary. Shield Corporation is determined to keep this news from getting out. *Highlander II* was considered so bad that part three took off from part one, ignoring it completely. But in this cheesy, action-packed, unhinged mess are echoes of where we are today, and how we got here.

*The Thirteenth Floor* (1999) starts out as a relatively straightforward murder mystery. A tech billionaire named Hannon Fuller is murdered. He had been building a virtual-reality simulation called 1937 Los Angeles, populated by characters who believe they are real people. (This film was released in the same year as *The Matrix*, so a fairly good year for this subgenre.) Fuller's protege and heir, Dou-

glas Hall, also chief scientist on the project, finds a message his mentor left for him in the simulation. Jane Fuller, an estranged daughter, is trying to destroy it. Hall deciphers the cryptic message to learn that his own world is unreal too. It is really 1999 Los Angeles, another simulation, one of thousands. Hall is now determined to find the people running these programs. His first step: to reach the world running his simulation, 2024 Los Angeles. Here, he meets the real Jane Fuller. She wants to tell him all about the universe of simulations, but our screens collapse into black, like an old-school TV set switching off. Make of that what you will. *Narcopolis* (2015) is a noir time-travel thriller that starts off in the distant future, 2044, before quickly shooting back to a 2024 London in which all narcotic substances have been legalised. The recreational drugs industry is controlled, as one would expect, by big pharma. The black market is still out there, but quickly shrinking. As companies peddle addictions, addicts are everywhere. A murder at the headquarters of Ambro, the world's biggest drug company, leads a policeman and recovering addict named Frank Grieves to a secret new drug they have been testing. It seems to have played a role in multiple mysterious deaths and disappearances. The drug, it turns out, lets humans travel through time, but they only survive at their destination for a few minutes, then die. The company is racing to fix the formula, but Grieves intends to expose them first. Especially after he discovers that the corpse at Ambro is his grown son Ben, come back from the future, murdered as he was about to blow the whistle. Can Grieves save himself, and his son? As it turns out, whistleblowers, in real and fictional 2024, all too often turn up dead.

## National-level robotics event held in MLRIT

Hyderabad: A national level robotic event showcasing the cutting-edge advancements and innovations in the field of robotics was organized by Robotic Club, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering at MLR Institute of Technology. The event showcased the innovation and creativity driving the robotics industry in our country. Participants dem-

onstrated ingenious solutions to real-world problems,

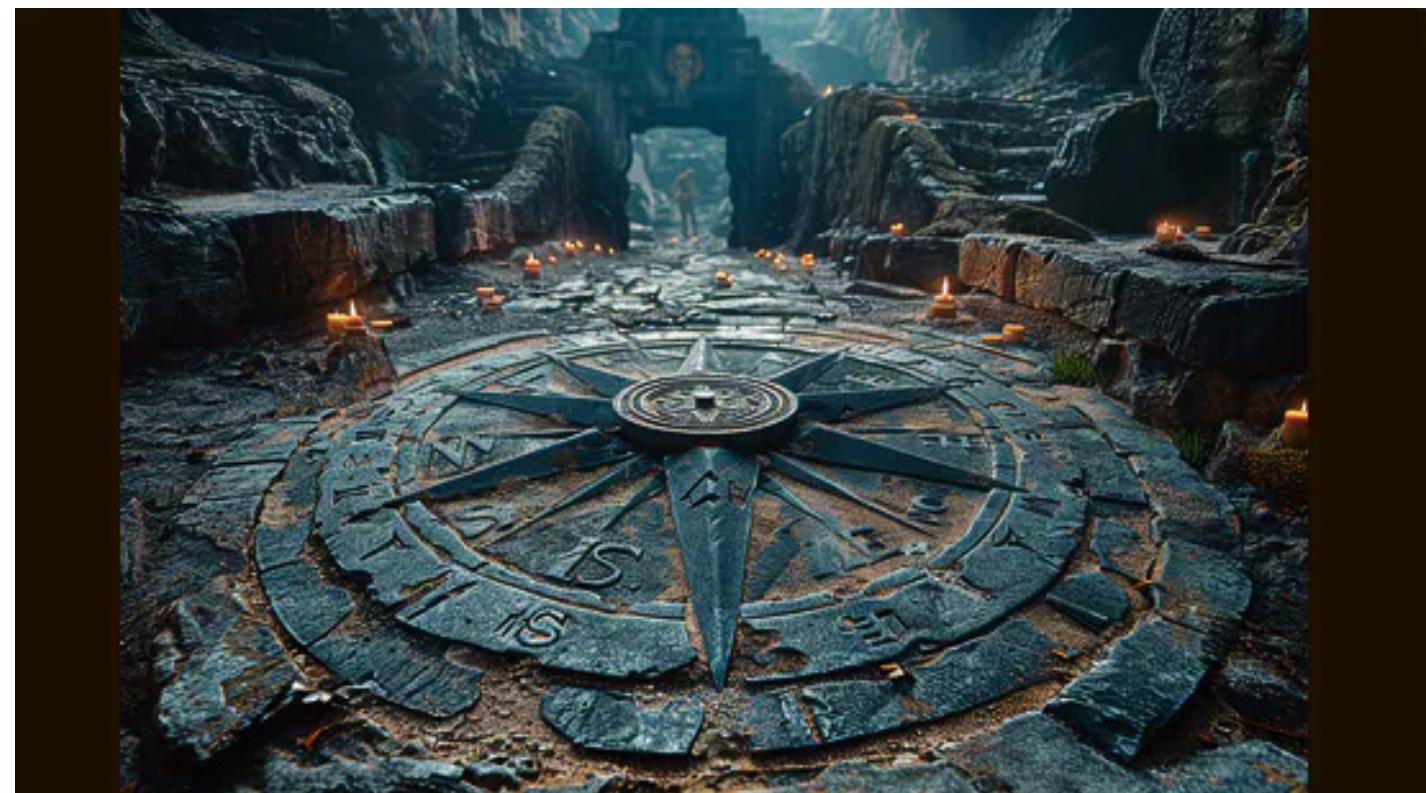
leveraging robotics technology to address challenges in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, disaster response, and environmental conservation. Approximately 100 participants hailing from Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry,

# The man who knew too little: Life Hacks by Charles Assisi

Once upon a time, I felt compelled to opine; wouldn't people think me an idiot if I didn't? Over time, I figured out that attempting to offer an opinion on everything actually makes one look like an idiot. There are times when it is simply best to admit ignorance of a kind. A few days ago, I came upon a thread on X that took these thoughts forward. George Mack, an author and influencer of some consequence, posted some statistics to make the case that there is literally too much content out there. At least 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every day, 500 million tweets are generated.

"The 24 hours allotted to you each day isn't even capable of consuming 0.0000001% of the world's events," he wrote. When looked at from this perspective, deploying what is called "strategic ignorance" becomes a sign of strength. Because it takes courage to acknowledge one's limits and decide to use one's resources more wisely. As Mack put it (paraphrasing Oscar Wilde): "We are all in the ignorance gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." Any attempt then to stay "on top of it all" qualifies as "low-agency ignorance", which is a time sink and an exercise in futility. We cannot know everything there is to know. By choosing strategic ignorance, we move into the zone of "high-agency ignorance", taking tough calls on what we need to know, wish to know, and wish to walk away from.

By way of example, I figure that as a business journalist who earns a living from exploring the intersections of technology and public policy, there are boundaries to the subjects I can delve into, the people I can meet, literature I can read, and therefore, the valid and informed opinions I can hold. What do I think will happen in the general election? The honest answer is: I haven't a clue. You may as well ask my neighbour, the nearest petrol-pump attendant, or my local chaiwallah. Mind you, embracing high-agency ignorance does not give one the licence to remain uninformed. Instead, it means that one prioritises depth over breadth, and then chooses the areas into which to delve deeply. This selective engagement is crucial, for instance, if I am to produce content that matters and adds value in my professional role; as well as if I am to have a well-rounded personal life. And this is true for all of us. I think of it as curating a personal museum of knowledge. A half-decent curator will tell you that one does not attempt to fill the given space, or display every artefact available. In much the same way, a journalist need not clutter their mind with every bit of information. And neither should a businessperson, a stockbroker or a homemaker. Practising strategic ignorance makes it easier to navigate the sea of data and information, because one now has focus and purpose. It guards against the mental fatigue that comes from trying to keep up with every trend and hashtag. The activities one substitutes instead — reading, debating, contemplating — are not just more rewarding intellectually, they are more



likely to lead to genuine knowledge, perspective and growth. The focused approach helps one combat the tyranny of the urgent, which prioritises the newest information over the most important. In journalism, the pressure to react quickly can often pre-empt the need to respond

thoughtfully. When strategic ignorance comes into play, I feel empowered to resist this pressure. Ultimately, the practice of strategic ignorance is about recognising that our cognitive resources (including attention and enthusiasm) are limited, and choosing to invest them wisely. It is about

understanding that in the information age, being selectively knowledgeable is more valuable than being indiscriminately informed. It might even eventually allow one to stand out, in a good way. Heaven knows there are enough indiscriminately informed people around to fill any museum.

## 4 in 10 cancer cases related to obesity: New study

In what shows the growing menace of obesity, a latest study has found the number of cancers related to excess weight multiplying. Being obese can put one at a greater risk of cancer than ever thought. A new research that was done over four decades involving 4.1 million participants, has found out that obesity-related cancers could now be detected in 4 out of 10 people. The study also linked 30 types of cancer to obesity. As against 13 types of the much-dreaded disease linked with obesity earlier, the number has now climbed to 32.

Even as society is prospering as a result of economic growth and new opportunities, diet pattern among a significant number of people worldwide is becoming less healthy thus amplifying the obesity related concerns. Given that massive medical expenses could turn a deep hole in the pockets of people suffering from serious ailments, the problems associated with obesity are threatening to turn into national public health emergency. The way poor diet is taking heavy toll on health, Indian health authorities also recently issued an advisory to cut junk from daily meals and adopt



a healthy lifestyle.

The research conducted by Lund University in Malmo, Sweden, studies the weight and lifestyle of over 4.1 million participants for a period of four decades. Researchers examined 122 types and sub-

types of the disease in a study and pointed 32 forms of cancer with an obesity link. 13 were already identified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 2016 including breast, bowel, womb and kidney cancers.