

## Awareness Seminar on Employment-Oriented Skill Courses on January 7

District Collector Koya Sri Harsha



“Peddapalli, January 5 - “P.S.ASHOKAN“KARIMNGAR BUREAU”“District Collector Koya Sri Harsha announced on Monday that an Awareness Seminar on

Employment-Oriented Skill Courses will be conducted on January 7 at the Integrated District Collectorate, aimed at empowering unemployed youth with 100% job-assured skill training. “The Collector stated that, with the objective of providing free skill development training coupled with guaranteed employment, the District Administration—under the aegis of LSC & Reddington—is offering industry-relevant courses certified by Skill India. “As part of this initiative, the following courses will be offered free of cost: “A 38-day Real-Time Forklift Operator Course for candidates who have passed Class 10 or Intermediate. “A 53-day Supply Associate Course for Intermediate pass candidates possessing a valid four-wheeler driving licence. “In addition to comprehensive training, participants will receive free boarding and lodging, industrial exposure visits, a Skill India certification, and a 100% job guarantee, the Collector added. “Unemployed young men and women between 19 and 28 years of age, with an annual family income below ₹3 lakh, are eligible to attend these courses. The awareness programme regarding these opportunities will be held on January 7 at the Integrated District Collectorate. “The District Collector appealed to eligible unemployed youth across the district to make the most of this valuable opportunity and participate in large numbers.

## Officials, Public Representatives Must Work in Coordination for Holistic City Development: M. Srilatha Shobhan Reddy



“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 05“GHMC Deputy Mayor M. Srilatha Shobhan Reddy met GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan at the GHMC Head Office and extended New Year greetings. During the meeting, they held positive discussions on city development, improvement of civic amenities, sanitation, road works, and strengthening the drainage system. The Deputy Mayor stressed the need for coordinated efforts between officials and public representatives to make the city cleaner, safer, and more convenient. Commissioner R.V. Karnan stated that GHMC will move forward in the New Year with the objective of providing better services to citizens.

# Potholes formed on Kamsari Bazar Road it is dangerous

“Secunderabad Cantonment, January 5 (Indian Chronicle):“Kamsari Bazar in Bowenpally ward one under the Cantonment Board, has potholes on the main



road, but the officials do not care. Locals are worried that there will be potholes on the roads in the area if there is constant traffic. Locals are alleging that even though there were potholes at Kamsari Bazar last few months, the officials going there are acting as if they have not seen it.“Locals are angry that the problem has not been solved even under the rule of special authorities, even though there are representatives of the public and they have begged to fill the potholes to no avail. It has become difficult for motorists to go on the road. Locals morning walkers and motorists are asking that the officials of the Cantonment Board should respond immediately and take action, Locals want the Cantonment Board officials to respond and repair the roads

## Health Security for the Poor Is a Top Priority: Former Deputy Speaker T. Padma Rao Goud

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 05:“Secunderabad MLA and former Deputy Speaker Tigulla Padma Rao Goud stated that providing quality healthcare to the poor is a top priority and that education and medical services will be made

easily accessible to the underprivileged.“On Monday, he distributed Chief Minister’s Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques worth approximately ?9 lakh to 20 beneficiaries from the Secunderabad constituency at his MLA camp office in Sitaphalmandi, in the presence of corporators, officials, and party leaders.“Speaking on the occasion, Padma Rao Goud said that his team is at the forefront of extending medical assistance to the poor. He advised residents of the constituency to approach his Sitaphalmandi camp office for redressal of public grievances. He also cautioned beneficiaries not to approach middlemen or pay money to anyone to avail government schemes.“Corporators Kandi Shailaja, Samala Hema, Rasuri Suneetha, and others were present at the programme.



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## Will Strive to Provide Amenities at P&T Colony Muslim Graveyard in OU: Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilatha Reddy

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 05“Members of the Osmania University Muslim Qabristan Committee met GHMC Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilatha Shobhan Reddy at her residence and submitted a representation regarding issues at the Muslim graveyard located in P&T Colony, Osmania University.“Ahead of the holy Shab-e-Meraj on January 16, 2026, the committee requested immediate improvement of basic facilities, including lighting, sanitation, removal of overgrown vegetation, tree pruning, painting works, installation of streetlights and halogen lights, cement benches, renovation of toilets, and overhead water tanks.“Responding positively, the Deputy Mayor assured the committee that she would discuss the matter with concerned officials and take necessary steps to provide the required facilities before the festival.

## Minister Seethakka Extends Invitation to Ministers Sridhar Babu and Lakshman Kumar for Medaram Maha Jatara

“P.S.ASHOKAN“KARIMNAGAR BUREAU.“State Minister Seethakka, along with the priests of the forest deities, formally invited State Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Adluri Lakshman Kumar to attend the world-renowned Medaram Maha Jatara.“The ministers were requested to participate in the grand Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara, scheduled to be held from January 28 to 31, along with their family members. As part of the traditional invitation, Minister Seethakka and the priests presented the sacred Jatara invitation letter and gold prasadam to the ministers.“The invitation was extended during a meeting held at the Assembly premises, where forest deity priests Kaka Venkateshwari, Siddaboyina Jaggarao, and Kaka Sammayya joined Minister Seethakka in personally inviting the dignitaries.“The Medaram Maha Jatara, one of the largest tribal religious congregations in the world, holds immense cultural and spiritual significance, and the invitation underscored the government’s respect for the region’s rich traditions and heritage.

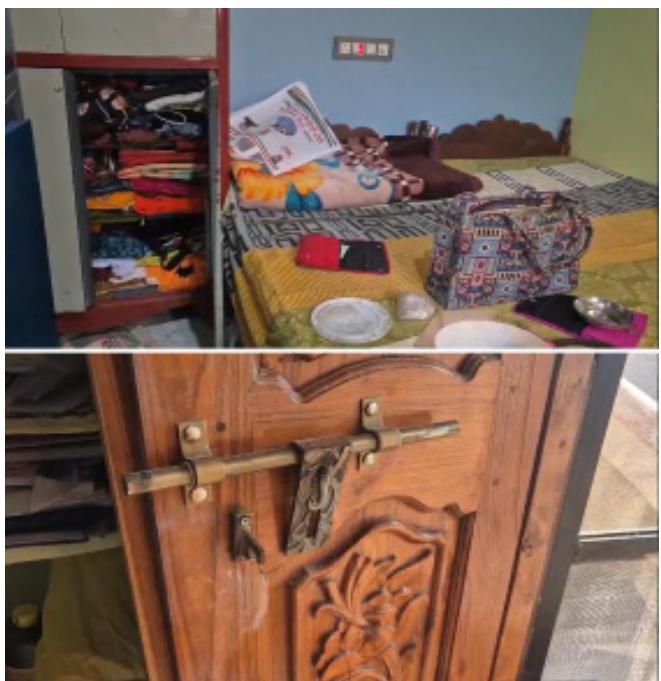




## Bowenpally Traffic Police Saved The Bird Life

Secunderabad Cantonment, January 5 (Indian Chronicle): "What do traffic police usually? Motorists are observed to follow road and traffic rules properly. Also, fines are imposed on those who violate the rules. Traffic is always regulated but traffic discipline is not limited to road safety but the real responsibility is to save every life on the roads and even the speechless birds. Bowenpally traffic police on Monday on the occasion of National Bird Day, on an advertisement hoarding at Boinapally X Roads, the traffic police saw a pigeon in a life-threatening condition stuck in a kite manja string, which shocked the traffic police. Home Guard S. Gopal climbed on the hoarding and freed the bird safely, another home guard afsar provided the necessary assistance from below and brought the bird down safely. After that, the bird's wings were removed from the Chinese Manja and the bird was treated and the bird was saved and released. However, in recognition of the humanitarian services, ACP Shankar Raju traffic inspector G. Janaki Ramulu felicitated the home guards at the ACP office and to encourage such services, the names of the concerned home guards will be submitted to the higher authorities for reward roll."

## Burglars Strike Locked House in Kagaznagar, Gold and Silver Valuables Vanish



Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, January 5 (Indian Chronicle): "A burglary was reported at Sirisilk Colony in Kagaznagar town, where unidentified thieves allegedly broke into a locked house and decamped with gold and silver ornaments. According to the complaint, the victim, Dande Manga (52), wife of late Prasad, belonging to the Padmashali community and working as an ANM, had locked her house on January 3, 2026, and left to visit her daughter residing in Hyderabad. While she was in Hyderabad, her brother-in-law Sridhar telephoned her at around 7:30 a.m. on January 5, 2026, informing her that the doors of her house were found open and that a theft appeared to have taken place."

Following the call, she immediately rushed back to her residence in Kagaznagar. On inspection, she found the household articles and clothes scattered, raising suspicion. Upon checking the valuables she had kept in the house, she discovered that approximately 7½ tolas of gold ornaments and about one kilogram of silver articles were missing. Based on her complaint, it is suspected that unknown burglars gained entry into the house and committed the theft. A case has been registered by the police, and investigation is underway.

## Division Press Club Team Condolences Bereaved Family of Senior Journalist in Manthani



. P.S.ASHOKAN KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. The team of the Manthani Division Press Club paid a condolence visit on Sunday to the family of a senior journalist in Manthani. Senior journalist Thurpati Ramu, associated with the daily newspaper Sahasra Galam, recently lost his father Thurpati Rajayya, who was widely known as Manthani's first photographer. He passed away following a brief illness. Members of the Manthani Division Press Club attended the obsequies and extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, expressing solidarity and sympathy during this moment of profound grief. Those who participated in the condolence visit included Motkuri Srinivas, Kodari Mallesh Yadav, Mahavadi Satish, Ramadugu Srinivas, Rajababu, Ravinder, Shankar, Lakshman, Venu, Santosh Goud, Saduval, Raj Kumar, and several others. The Press Club members remembered the invaluable contribution of the late Thurpati Rajayya to the field of photography and journalism in the region, and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

# Former Minister Harish Rao and Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Unveil 2026 Diary of Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Property Developers

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 5 (Indian Chronicle):“Former Minister and Siddipet MLA Tanneeru Harish Rao, along with Uppal MLA Bandari



Lakshma Reddy, on Monday evening unveiled the 2026 Diary released by Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Property Developers.“The event was organized under the aegis of Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Property Developers and was attended by the company’s

Chairman & Managing Director Kasarla Mahender Reddy, Directors Gurram Shankar Reddy, Devireddy Satti Reddy, and Gurram Raghuma Reddy, along with several other dignitaries.“Speaking on the occasion, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy appreciated Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Property Developers for maintaining quality in the business sector while also upholding social responsibility. He expressed hope that the organization would continue to progress further on

the path of development. He also congratulated the management for designing the 2026 diary in a manner that would be useful to the general public.“The programme was conducted in a cordial and grand atmosphere. Several corporators, former corporators, TRS party leaders, and party workers participated in the event.



# “We Will Build an Army of One Lakh Youth to Achieve Our Goal – Not Just Words, but Action

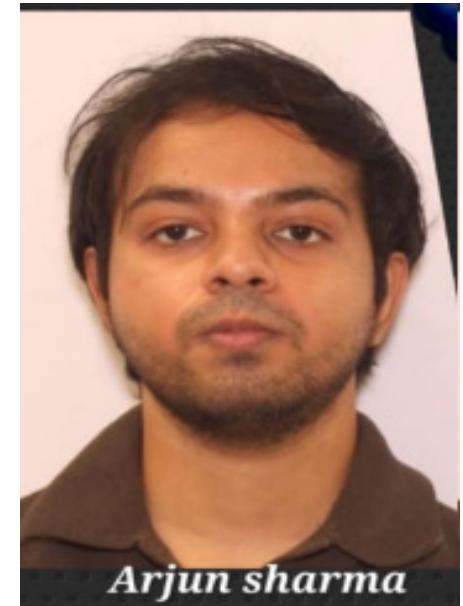
## Congress Worse Than BRS in the Past: Kapilavai Dileep Kumar

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 05:“Telangana State Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) President Kapilavai Dileep Kumar said that his party will form an “army of one lakh youth” to address issues related to unemployment, farmers, and other public concerns. He was speaking to the media on Monday at the party’s state office



in Kavadiguda.“Dileep Kumar announced the launch of a unique programme titled “Lakshyam Kosam Laksha Sainyam” (One Lakh Army for a Goal), under which one lakh youth will be recruited and trained by retired Army officers. The training will focus on physical fitness, mental strength, discipline, and the ability to face challenges in society and life.“He stated that the Rashtriya Lok Dal will take the lead in organizing job melas, skill melas, and loan melas, and over the next two years will provide employment opportunities, skill development, and loan facilities to help youth establish their own industries. He claimed that the party has already conducted job fairs and helped thousands of youth secure jobs in reputed corporate companies.“Criticising the present government, Dileep Kumar said that the Congress government has become even worse than the previous BRS regime. He alleged that earlier one family looted the state, while now at least five Congress leaders are openly indulging in corruption. He said people are dissatisfied with both BRS and Congress, and although there is a political vacuum in the state, the BJP has failed to utilise it. He asserted that the Rashtriya Lok Dal will fill this vacuum by contesting local body elections.“He informed that RLD candidates have won sarpanch posts in several villages in the recent panchayat elections and that the party will contest all MPTC, ZPTC, and municipal seats in the upcoming elections.“Dileep Kumar also announced new appointments, including V.V. Satyanarayana as TRLD Politburo Chairman, Raj Kumar Reddy as Telangana Youth Wing President, and Krishna Vikram as Ranga Reddy District President.“Party Vice President Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, Giri Kunde, Vishal, party spokesperson Beerappa, newly appointed office-bearers, and others were present at the programme.

# Police in Tamil Nadu have arrested the accused Arjuna Sharma for the brutal murder of a young woman from Hyderabad Tarnaka in Columbia City, Maryland, USA



**Arjun sharma**



."Dasha OU: A young woman from Vijayapuri Colony, Lalaguda, went to America to pursue higher education and was brutally murdered there. The last words she said to her parents, who had pinned high hopes on their daughter in the new year, were a call on December 31 and a Happy New Year. The family is in tears over this. According to family members, Nikhitha Godishala (27) from Vijayapuri Colony went to America four years ago to pursue MS. Maryland State Columbia"Maryland in the city"She studied for a master's degree at the university."While reading on one side, on the other side"She used to work. Recently, she was hired by VHENDA."Got a job in the company. Always"Talking to parents in December"To family members in the city on the 31st"Call in the new year"After greetings"Her friend did not find her phone"Arjun Varma says Nikhitha is not showing any signs of improvement."A complaint was lodged at the local police station"Came to India. Doubt"The police arrived in January"When I went to his apartment on the 3rd"Her body was in a state of decomposition."appeared Belongs to Chennai city"Arjun Sharma is currently in his thirties."It will be known. Family background"Anand's family lives in Vijayapuri Colony, Lalaguda. He has two daughters, the eldest daughter is Nikhitha, and the second daughter works in a software company in Bangalore. Her mother works as a staff nurse. Her father is in the marketing field. There are no financial problems. Before they could celebrate that their two daughters were settled in life, this thunderous news shook their family. Murdered by calling to give money: Anand, who knew that the deceased's father was in debt to everyone and was running away, called the daughter and killed her and ran away. We are saddened to learn that she had called and called to give money.

# All-New Kia Seltos Unveiled in Hyderabad at CAR Kia Showrooms

Hyderabad The all-new Kia Seltos, Kia's next-generation premium SUV, was officially unveiled in Hyderabad on January 5, 2026, at CAR Kia Showrooms located in Jubilee Hills, Gachibowli, and the Financial District. The unveiling ceremony at Jubilee Hills drew automobile enthusiasts, customers, and city residents eager to witness the latest evolution of one of India's most popular SUVs.

The vehicle was unveiled by Dr. Neelam Ramana, Senior Orthopaedic Surgeon at Star Hospitals, adding distinction to the launch event.

The all-new Kia Seltos stands out with a bold and modern exterior design, featuring redesigned body elements and Kia's signature "Star Map" LED lighting, giving the SUV a sharp and futuristic road presence. Stylish alloy wheels further enhance its confident stance.

Inside, the new Seltos offers a refined, technology-driven cabin experience. Key highlights include 64-color ambient mood lighting, a dual-pane panoramic sunroof, a command-centric trinity panoramic display, and a premium Bose sound system with eight speakers. The interiors are complemented by a double D-cut dual-tone leatherette-wrapped steering wheel and dual-tone leatherette seats, ensuring comfort and sophistication for both city commutes and long journeys.

Powering the all-new Seltos are three advanced engine options: the Smartstream G1.5 petrol engine producing 84.4 kW and 143.8 Nm, the Smartstream G1.5 T-GDi turbo-petrol engine delivering 117.5 kW and 253 Nm, and the 1.5L CRDi VGT diesel engine generating 85 kW and 250 Nm. These engines are paired with multiple transmission options, drive modes, and paddle shifters, offering an optimal balance of performance, efficiency, and driving pleasure.

Speaking at the launch, B. Santosh Chand, Vice President – Sales, CAR Kia, said, "The all-new Kia Seltos represents our commitment to delivering world-class design, advanced technology, and top-tier safety to Indian customers. With its bold styling, premium features, and versatile powertrain options, we are confident that the new Seltos will further strengthen Kia's presence in the premium SUV segment and resonate strongly with customers in Hyderabad."



## Youth power key for developed India, avers Tripura Governor

Hyderabad: Tripura Governor Nallu Indrasena Reddy emphasised the pivotal role of youth in shaping India's destiny.

Addressing the 44th Telangana State Conference of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Saturday, he highlighted that over the past seven decades, India has advanced in multiple fields, with the intellectual strength of its young generation driving economic growth and positioning the nation toward global leadership.

Reddy underscored that the challenges of the 21st century--ranging from technological shifts to social obstacles--can only be overcome through the active participation of youth. He noted that while many countries struggle with peace, fraternity and unity, India continues to thrive due to its enduring cultural, familial and moral values. These values, he said, form the foundation for sustainable development and collective

progress.

Turning to national security, Reddy cautioned that modern warfare is no longer confined to physical battles. Instead, it manifests in psychological conflicts, biowarfare and the menace of drugs and intoxicants that threaten to weaken society from within.

He stressed that organisations like ABVP, rooted in nationalism and dedicated to the nation's dharma, play



a crucial role in mobilizing student

power to counter such threats and strengthen the country.

He further called for reforms in the education system, urging that it blend India's rich heritage with contemporary advancements. According to him, this integration is essential to transform India into a "Vishwaguru"—a global teacher and guide. The responsibility of this transformation, he asserted, rests squarely on the shoulders of today's students, who must rise to the occasion with determination and vision.

The Governor reminded the gathering that the future of India lies in the hands of its youth. By embracing cultural values, resisting destructive influences, and contributing to national progress, students can ensure that India not only secures its place among the world's leading nations but also inspires others through its example of unity, resilience, and wisdom.

# Why is Delhi's air quality deteriorating? | Explained

With the withdrawal of the southwest monsoon and the onset of winter, the air quality in Delhi has started to nose-dive. This week, the city and its adjoining territories have consistently recorded particulate matter (PM 2.5) levels exceeding 300, or 'very poor' air quality, and forecasts suggest that this could worsen in the coming days. As is now an established pattern, the decline in air quality coincides with the burning of farm stubble, primarily from Punjab.

What is the contribution of stubble burning to air pollution?

Stubble burning refers to a traditional practice of farmers burning the remnants of paddy stalks after harvesting. This method is often the quickest way, as farmers in Punjab and Haryana have a narrow window of October and November to clear their fields and sow wheat for the winter. The environmental impact of stubble burning has been known since the 1990s. Agricultural researchers, while analysing the economics of rice-wheat cropping pointed out that rising labour costs made it expensive for farmers to collect rice stalks strewn across the field that resulted from the use of mechanical devices such as rice shredders and combine harvesters. Though the burning of rice stalk was initially condemned as a waste of valuable manure, concerns were also raised about its harm to farmers' health. However, its link to worsening air quality in Delhi was quantified only over the last decade and a half. Today, the use of sophisticated instruments, modelling studies, and computational methods have enabled the estimation, almost daily, of stubble burning's contribution to air quality in Delhi. A study by the research and advocacy group Climate Trends of winter pollution trends in 2023 found a "strong correlation" between wind direction originating from Punjab and Haryana and the resulting pollution levels in Delhi. In the case of Punjab, during winter, 54% of the time the wind from the State blew towards Delhi, it led to a spike in air pollution; when the wind originated from Haryana, the figure stood at 27%. Every additional fire incident was correlated with an increase in PM2.5 levels of 12.44 units. Studies over the years, most recently in 2023 by a consortium of IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, TERI, and Airshed, Kanpur, found that from mid-October to the end of November 2022, the role of stubble burning to air quality was on average 22% and peaked to as much as 35%. This is fairly consistent with previous studies that have estimated the contribution of stubble burning to range from 20%- 40%. Based on these measurements, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology-Pune (IITM-Pune) maintains an air quality forecast system that models the flow of airborne pollutants through cities. It shows the dynamic nature of stubble burning's impact on Delhi's pollution. For instance, from October 8 to 19 this year, farm fires accounted for less than 1.2% of the PM 2.5 load in Delhi. During this period, the average AQI stayed from 130 - 198 (or the 'moderate' pollution category).

However, on October 21, when stubble burning's relative contribution rose to 3.2%, Delhi's AQI immediately plummeted to 'very poor' (310). On October 23, when the relative contribution of burning reached the seasonal high of 16%, the index deteriorated to 364, still in the 'very poor' region. On October 26, the stubble burning contribution slightly dipped to 14.5%, and the AQI improved to 270 or 'poor' quality.

What is the inference from these observations?

The transitioning period from the withdrawal of the monsoon to the onset of winter causes a sharp drop in windspeed, and cause air pollutants to hover closer to the ground rather than being flushed away to the higher realms of the atmosphere. In this situation, any additional source of pollutants — such as from stubble burning — can dramatically spike the pollutant load in Delhi. Also, nearly 55% of the pollution in Delhi originates outside its territorial borders, as studies have shown. Thus, relatively small spikes can push the index as much as 100 points and change categories anywhere from 'poor' to 'very poor.'

So is stubble burning the sole villain in Delhi's pollution?

Urban Emissions, a research outfit that tracks air pollution trends nationally, reports that from 2016-23, the improving air quality reflected in the index going from a high of 285 in 2017 to a low of 173 in 2021. However, in six of these seven years, the index stayed above 216 and therefore within the AQI categorisation of 'poor' air quality. However, in Punjab, the farm fires reduced by over an order of magnitude from 17,467 in 2018 (as of October 25, that year) to 1,749 (October 25) this year. Fire incidents in Haryana too have halved since 2020. The paddy harvested in Punjab is more than twice that in Haryana and yet, this has only improved the index by 65 points at the most. Significantly, December, January, and February are officially considered the winter months by the India Meteorological Department and by this time, the atmospheric conditions that create a trap for pollutants and prevent them from being flushed out, grow stronger. However, stubble burning almost entirely ceases. Despite that, data compiled by Urban Emissions says, the air quality index has consistently remained in the 'very poor' and 'severe' (400+) category from 2016-23. This suggests that sources other than stubble burning contribute significantly to air pollution.

Which are these factors?

On October 25 this year, stubble burning was responsible for nearly 15% of Delhi's air pollution. On the same day, 'Delhi transport' which includes particulate matter from vehicles and vehicles crossing into Delhi was responsible for about 18% of the PM 2.5 load, according to the IITM's air quality forecast system. The IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, and Teri consortia analysis of the sources of pollution in Delhi found that the real-time source apportionment of PM 2.5 results show secondary inorganic



aerosols (SIA), which travel from beyond Delhi, contribute the highest to Delhi's pollution load. The average of winter pollution source apportionment shows SIA (32%) and biomass burning within and outside Delhi (24%) contribute the most followed by vehicles at 17%. The SIAs form when gaseous precursors like sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) react to form ammonium sulfate

or ammonium nitrate. In winter, the mean contribution of SIA from the sources within Delhi is 16% and the rest 84% from outside Delhi. In the last few years, policymakers have realised that the sources of air pollution can be tackled only via an airshed approach that requires co-ordinated action by multiple States including those beyond Delhi to evolve a joint response to the pollution crisis.

## South Korean scientists first to discover electronic crystallites in solids

Seoul: A group of South Korean scientists have discovered electronic crystallites in a solid material for the first time in the world, which is expected to help make progress in studies on high-temperature superconductivity, the science ministry said on Thursday. A research team, led by Professor Kim Keun-su at Yonsei University in Seoul, posted a paper, titled 'Electronic rotons and Wigner crystallites in a two-dimensional dipole liquid', in *Nature*, a prominent science journal, according to the Ministry of Science and ICT.

This marks the world's first experimental discovery of the structure, theorised by Hungarian American physicist Eugene Wigner in 1934, Yonhap news agency reported. Wigner crystal refers to a solid or crystalline formation of a gas of electrons enabled by strong repulsion between electrons at low electron density. Normally, a crystal formation is understood as an attraction between atoms.

"Until now, scientists have had a dichotomous perception of electrons: those with order and those without order," Kim said. "But our research found a third type of electronic crystallites with short-range crystalline order."

The discovery by Kim's team is expected to provide further clues to under-



stand better high-temperature superconductivity and superfluidity, long-standing problems in modern-day physics. High-temperature superconductors, materials with critical temperature, are considered to have the potential for creating innovations in the energy, transportation, and medical industries as they can be easily cooled with liquid nitrogen. Superfluids are also known to have potential practical uses in health care, the electronics industry, and others. Kim said his team observed an electronic crystallite, with a size of 1 to 2 nanometres, while measuring the energy-momentum relation of electrons doped from alkali metals through angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy and the Advanced Light Source, a specialised particle accelerator at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in the United States.

# Meal costs are rising faster than earnings: Data

On average, the cost of a healthy meal has increased by 52% in October 2024 compared to the same month last year. Meanwhile, average salaries and wages have increased in the range of 9 to 10%. Already, casual labourers spend a larger proportion of their monthly income on food than those in salaried jobs. This gap has widened further in the past year. Households, where women are sole breadwinners, in particular, bear heavier burdens. For this analysis, it has been assumed that an average Indian family will be able to meet their daily dietary needs if they consume food equivalent to two thalis per day, spread across breakfast, lunch and dinner. Non-vegetarian items were not considered due to lack of past data. Vegetable prices were sourced from Mumbai and for other items Maharashtra was chosen as an exemplar, due to the availability of consistent data. Wages data was also taken from the same State.

The following graphs show the weight of commodities required to prepare two thalis daily and their average retail prices in Mumbai (for vegetables) and in Maharashtra (for other items) in Oct. 2023 and Oct. 2024. The % change in prices is also depicted. The retail prices of vegetables were ascertained from the National Horticulture Board's dashboard. Retail prices of items other than vegetables were obtained from the Department of Consumer Affairs' dashboard. The rise in thali prices can be directly linked to the significant increase in the cost of most vegetables. The retail prices of tomato, potato, and garlic have notably surged during this period. Between October 2023 and October 2024, tomato prices shot up by 247%, potato prices by 180%, and garlic by 128%. On an average, the retail price of all vegetables used in the thali collectively increased by 89%, while that of non-vegetable items grew by only 1.5%. In the same period, the prices of tur dal and rice dropped by 2.6% and 0.7%, respectively. Other items, such as salt, sunflower oil, and wheat, underwent only moderate price hikes, ranging between 3% and 18%.

**Share in wage:** Measuring affordability In the charts below, for regular workers, the average salaries earned during a calendar month in Maharashtra were considered. For casual labourers, average earnings per day of those engaged in works other than public works were considered. Values were sourced from the Periodic Labour Force Survey report (October to December quarter -2023). Data for 2024 was arrived at by calculating the compound annual growth rate for the previous five October to December quarters. The analysis assumes that labourers got paid on all days, including rest days, which may not usually be the case. Average wage/salary The following graphs depict the increase in the wages and salaries of daily labourers and regular workers in Maharashtra. The wages are extrapolated to estimate the monthly earnings of a labourer. The data for women and men are depicted. The average daily wage of men in Maharashtra increased from ₹451/day in October- December 2023 to ₹492/day

in October- December 2024. The corresponding figures for women were ₹293 a day and ₹324 a day. These figures were then calculated for 30 days to arrive at their monthly earnings. The average monthly salary of men in Maharashtra increased from ₹24,321 in October- December 2023 to ₹26,509 in October- December 2024. The corresponding figures for women were ₹18,959 and ₹20,928. Cost of meals as a share of wages The graphs depict the retail cost of making two thalis every day for a month at home, as a share of monthly wages and salaries. The figures are in percentage. Data for women and men are depicted separately. The cost when considered as a share of wages earned, increased from 22.6% of a male casual labourer's monthly earnings in 2023 to 31.4% in 2024 - an 8.8 point increase. The corresponding figures for a female casual labourer was 34.7% and 47.6% - a 12.9 point increase. The cost when considered as a share of a male regular worker's monthly salary increased from 12.6% in 2023 to 17.5% in 2024 - a 4.9 point increase. The corresponding figures for a female worker was 16% and 22% - a 6 point increase. The analysis shows that food expenses already exerted a disproportionately higher burden on households in which women were sole breadwinners. In the past year, this burden has increased further. Share of wages and salaries spent by such households on making a healthy meal, increased by 12.9 points and 6 points respectively, higher than those for men.



## Caught in intersections, the Harris multicultural tent

"They have a woman who is Black, although you would say she's Indian, but she is Black... a lot of people didn't know....," said Republican nominee in the U.S. presidential race, Donald Trump, in a recent podcast. He was bringing up his opponent and U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris's race yet again. By raking up this issue periodically, Mr. Trump has been trying to sharpen the fault lines in the multicultural tent that the Democratic Party fashions itself as. Democrats hope Ms. Harris's multiple identity tags — Indian, African-American and woman — could help fuse these voting groups in her favour. But conflicts between these collectives are real, and Mr. Trump is playing on these, ahead of voting day on November 5.

Race and admission policies The debate on affirmative action in the United States is instructive in understanding the tensions between Indians/Asians and African-Americans. In August, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) released demographic data of the incoming class of 2028, the first cohort of students after the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on June 29, 2023 (Students for Fair Admissions vs Harvard) that taking race into consideration in university admission was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause

of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Between the classes of 2027 and 2028 — after race considerations were removed from admissions — the racial composition of students changed dramatically at MIT. In the fresh batch, about 16% of students are African-American, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islander compared to the recent average of their share at 25%. For African-Americans alone, the share dropped from 15% to 5%, between the two batches. The share of white students dipped by one percentage point, from 38 to 37. The Asian-American students were the gainers from all this. The share of this group, which includes Indians, jumped from 40% of the 2027 class to 47% in the batch of 2028.

One of the key arguments that Students for Fair Admissions, the petitioners, brought before the Supreme Court was that race factored admission policies discriminated against Asian students, which in turn undermined both merit and diversity. In the absence of race considerations, more of them would have been admitted, they argued. The defendants were Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, two premier institutions. The Fourteenth Amendment that came into force after the Civil War guaranteed that "all per-

sons, whether coloured or white, shall stand equal before the laws of the States". It was meant at that point to protect the African-American population. U.S. affirmative action and progressive politics were tailored largely around the African-American-white binary, and the Native Americans, but demographic changes that turned the country into a multiracial country have complicated the race debate. Concurring with the majority judgment of the Supreme Court, Justice Clarence Thomas, an African American, wrote: "... university admissions policies ask individuals to identify themselves as belonging to one of only a few reductionist racial groups. With boxes for only 'black,' 'white,' 'Hispanic,' 'Asian,' or the ambiguous 'other,' how is a Middle Eastern person to choose? Someone from the Philippines? Whichever choice he makes (in the event he chooses to report a race at all), the form silos him into an artificial category. Worse, it sends a clear signal that the category matters."

When more universities release demographic data for the latest batch, the impact of the court ruling will become more clear, but MIT's data is likely to be indicative. Meanwhile, the Asian-American campaign against race conscious admission policies is expanding.