

DON'T MISS...

Anti-drug rally to promote awareness

Nizam College on Thursday hosted an Anti-Drug Rally organised by the National Service Scheme (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC) students to create awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. The rally was inaugurated by Nizam College Principal Professor AV Rajasekhar, who emphasized the importance of eradicating social evils and unhealthy habits, particularly among the youth. Addressing the gathering, Professor Rajasekhar called for collective responsibility among faculty, staff and students to ensure that substances...

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R-Day to showcase military prowess

Some of the cutting-edge defence platforms including BrahMos, Pinaka and Akash will be part of the 76th Republic Day celebrations on Kartavya Path with Army's Battle Surveillance System 'Sanjay' and DRDO's surface-to-surface tactical missile 'Pralay' set to be showcased in the ceremonial parade for the first time, officials said on Thursday. India will display its military prowess and vibrant culture heritage on the majestic boulevard here on January 26, and the flypast will feature 40 IAF aircraft and three...

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Industry wants steps to propel growth

With Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman preparing to present the first full Budget of the Modi 3.0 government, industry players from various fields have put forth their demands for raising income tax limits, taking measures for more job creation, and further improving doing business to propel growth. The industry is hopeful that the government will announce a slew of measures to boost consumption by ensuring more money in the hands of people, boosting capital expenditure, giving relief to the housing sector...

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India batting stars disappoint

The high-profile return of India's stars in Ranji Trophy ended up as a damp squib with the likes of Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill falling cheaply on Thursday, unable to click in the face of some hostile bowling on the opening day of their respective matches across different venues. Veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja was the only one who stood out among the battery of Indian stars as he took a five-wicket haul for Saurashtra to dismiss Pant's Delhi for 188 on a Rajkot turner...

-SPORTS

Rising TG shines at Davos

CM Revanth team strikes ground-breaking deals
Nets Rs 1,78,950 crore investments, Rs 49,500 jobs
Secures biggest Rs 60,000 crore investments from Amazon

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Rising delegation, led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, concluded its highly successful trip to Davos with a ground-breaking investment haul of Rs 1,78,950 crore, which is projected to create 49,500 jobs across multiple sectors in Telangana.

The largest individual investments included Rs 60,000 crore from Amazon (AWS), Rs 45,500 crore from Sun Petrochemicals, Rs 15,000 crore each from Tillman Global Holdings and Megha Engineering, among others. These investments reflect a strong vote of confidence in the state's economic environment.

Tech giants played a pivotal role in the job creation surge, with Hyderabad emerging as a major hub. Software majors like HCL (5,000 jobs), Infosys (17,000 jobs), and Wipro (5,000 jobs) committed to expanding their presence in the state, further cementing Telangana's dominance in the IT sector.

Data centres were a key focus,



A highlight of the trip was Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's presentation of his Telangana Rising 2050 vision, which found strong endorsement among global investors, entrepreneurs, and policymakers. "Building on core strengths in software and pharma, Telangana will grow aggressively in Data Centres, Green Energy, Food Processing, Electric Vehicles, and Semiconductors," he stated, emphasizing the state's ambition to be a key player in the post-Covid "China Plus One" strategy.

attracting investments from Amazon, Tillman, Usra, CrtS, and Sify, signaling a significant leap in infrastructure development. Cutting-edge sectors such as solar cell manufacturing, UAVs, aircraft interior design, and rocket manufacturing also saw substantial traction. Defense investments by Jindal further underscored the strategic appeal of Telangana's industrial policies.

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Telangana to expedite inter-state Lendi Project

Focuses on early completion

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has intensified its efforts to expedite the completion of the Lendi Project, an inter-state irrigation initiative that promises significant benefits for both Telangana and Maharashtra. Telangana's Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister, Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, emphasized the importance of the project during a review meeting with a Congress delegation from Maharashtra, led by Nanded MP Ravindra Chavan.

Speaking on the occasion, Uttam Kumar Reddy highlighted that the Lendi Project, initiated in 1984 with an estimated cost of Rs 2,183.88 crore, has the potential to bring 38,573.15 acres in Telangana and 27,710.39 acres in Maharashtra under cultivation. He reiterated the Telangana government's commitment to completing the project, which will benefit farmers in both states by enhancing irrigation facilities.

The minister outlined the current progress of the project, noting that Telangana and Maharashtra have collectively spent Rs 1,040.87 crore so far. About 70% of the earthen dam work and 80% of the spillway construction have been completed, while canal works are ongoing. Plans have also been prepared to supply water through underground pipelines to address local irrigation needs.



However, Reddy acknowledged that the project faced hurdles due to land acquisition issues, leading to its suspension in 2011. Efforts are now underway to resolve these challenges and resume construction. The Telangana government is formulating strategies to complete the earthwork within the riverbed and accelerate the project's progress.

The minister assured that under the agreement between the two states, the project is expected to be completed by the end of next year. He stressed the importance of inter-state cooperation to ensure the project's timely completion for the benefit of farmers in both regions.

The delegation from Maharashtra, including former MLA Hanumanth Rao Patil and Congress leaders Suresh Panditwar, Subhash Bad, Vakidishwar, Dinesh Awaj, and Sandeep Patil, expressed their support for the project and discussed strategies to overcome existing challenges.

'INHUMANE AND UNJUST'

Harish slams pension deduction for property tax

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

Former minister Harish Rao expressed strong resentment over the deduction of old-age pensions to cover pending property taxes in Mancherla district, terming it inhumane and unjust. Harish criticized the practice of halting pensions meant for elderly individuals when their family members fail to pay property taxes.



"It is cruel and unfair to deduct pensions from the elderly for unpaid property taxes by the government and officials are tearing families apart," Harish Rao said, adding that it is unreasonable to expect elderly people to sustain themselves if even their small pension amount is redirected.

He slammed the Congress government for failing to fulfill its promise of providing Rs. 4,000 per month as pension and instead resorting to taking away the current Rs. 2,000 pensions under the guise of property tax dues.

"What's wrong in placing KCR's photo in office"

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA from Patancheru, who joined the Congress party, Gudem Mahipal Reddy, asked what was wrong in placing former chief minister K Chandrababoo Naidu's photo in his office.

He said that KCR is a former chief minister and developed the State. So, what's wrong if his photo is placed in his office? Mahipal Reddy said that he will place the photo he wished in his house. Are we doing burglary?



SC to take up Krishna Water dispute in Feb

SAI SURYA ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has announced that it will take up the petition filed by the Andhra Pradesh government regarding the Krishna water allocation dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in February. A bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice Koteswara Singh made this decision after the AP government raised the matter in the court. The issue stems from the Krishna Tribunal's distribution of water among the three states before the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014. In October 2023, the Centre issued a notification to address the water-sharing dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The TG government, citing the fact that the river flows predominantly through its territory, approached the Tribunal, requesting a 70% share of the river's waters.

Slot system mooted in stamps, registration to tackle graft

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

In an effort to eliminate corruption and streamline operations, the Telangana government is set to introduce a slot booking system in the Stamps and Registration department. The government plans to implement the slot booking system to ensure transparency and efficiency. Under this system, citizens must book slots in advance, reducing the scope for corruption and easing the workload of sub-registrar offices.



Currently, Telangana has 141

sub-registrar offices handling non-agricultural property registrations and mandal revenue offices managing agricultural land registrations. On average, the department processes over 5,000 non-agricultural and 2,500 agricultural registrations daily. Each sub-registrar is expected to handle about 30 documents per day without pressure, but nearly 40 offices regularly exceed this limit. To address this, the government plans to allocate additional staff to high-volume offices.

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KTR hits back at Revanth's 'IT mindset' remark

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) leader K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) strongly responded to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent remark that "IT employees have employee mindset, I politician, I have policy mindset". KTR called it an attempt to belittle his professional background. Through a post on X (formerly Twitter), KTR defended his roots in the IT sector while taking a sharp swipe at Revanth's political journey. "To those who think they can belittle me by calling me just an IT employee, I say: being part of the IT industry takes genuine talent, education, skill, and dedication... Unlike carrying bags of cash to bribe MLAs or paying Delhi bosses for a job!" KTR

remarked, alluding to past controversies surrounding Revanth Reddy. KTR lauded the contributions of IT professionals, stating that their ingenuity and hard work are the backbone of the modern tech world. "To my fellow brothers and sisters in the IT and ITES industry, I salute you. Your tireless efforts and brilliant minds drive innovation and progress globally. Without you, the wheels of advancement would grind to a halt," he wrote. Addressing Revanth's leadership, KTR pointed out that some "accidental politicians" lack the credentials or work ethic to lead effectively. "Let's be honest: some accidental politicians can't hold a candle to the educational credentials or the work ethic of IT professionals," he said.



'Anuja' gets nomination for Oscar

SAI SURYA ■ NEW DELHI

"Anuja", a New Delhi-set short film, on Thursday bagged a nomination in the Live Action Short category at the 97th Academy Awards. "Anuja", directed by Adam J Graves and Suchitra Mattai, is pit-ted against "A Lien", "I'm Not a Robot", "The Last Ranger" and "The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent" at the awards gala. The nominations for the 2025 Oscars, which were twice postponed earlier this month due to wildfires in Los Angeles, were announced by Bowen Yang and Rachel Sennott.

"Anuja" follows a gifted nine-year-old Anuja, who must make a choice between education and factory work alongside her sister - a decision that will shape both their futures. It stars Sajda Pathan and Ananya Shanbhag.

The film has two-time Oscar winning producer Guneet Monga on board as executive producer and Hollywood star-writer Mindy Kaling as producer. Recently, actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas boarded the project as an executive producer.

The 2025 Academy Awards will be held on March 2 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Ram Gopal Varma gets 3 months jail in cheque bounce case; arrest warrant issued

SAI SURYA ■ MUMBAI



A court here has sentenced filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma to three months imprisonment in a cheque bounce case and issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against him. Judicial Magistrate (First Class) in Andheri, Y P Pujari, on Tuesday convicted Varma for the offence punishable under the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act.

The court also directed the filmmaker to pay compensation of Rs 3,72,219 to the complainant within three months from the date of the order. The detailed order was not available yet.

Since Varma was not present before the court when the order was passed, it issued a standing non-bailable warrant against him for his arrest for execution of the sentence as per the Code of Criminal

More funds to boost rural development

SAI SURYA ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has announced a fresh allocation of Rs 2,773 crore to boost rural development across the state, following the earlier sanction of Rs 2,682.95 crore. The funds will be utilized for critical infrastructure projects, including roads, drainage systems, and other essential amenities in villages.

Out of the newly sanctioned funds, Rs 1,419 crore is earmarked for CRR roads, Rs 1,288 crore for MRR funds, and Rs 66 crore under the PM Jan Man scheme. Additionally, Rs 197 crore has been allocated for rural connectivity under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), which includes the construction of BT roads to 25 tribal temples.

The funds will support the construction of BT roads, CC roads in SC colonies, drainage canals, and road connectivity in tribal hamlets and

Govt allocates additional Rs 2,773 cr



Out of the newly sanctioned funds, Rs 1,419 crore is earmarked for CRR roads, Rs 1,288 crore for MRR funds, and Rs 66 crore under the PM Jan Man scheme

remote villages. Minister Seetakka, who has been instrumental in securing these funds, expressed gratitude to Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for prioritizing rural development.

Speaking at the Praja Bhavan, Minister Seetakka emphasized the government's commitment to rural progress. "Our government is giving top priority to rural development by

allocating unprecedented funds. We sanctioned Rs 2,682 crore in the first phase, and now another Rs 2,773 crore has been approved. These efforts will transform villages across Telangana," she said.

The government also addressed logistical challenges faced by Panchayati Raj and rural engineering officials by providing vehicle allowances. A budget of Rs 5 crore has been allocated to equip 237 engineer-

ing officials, including executive engineers (EEs), deputy EEs, and superintending engineers (SEs), with vehicles for efficient project monitoring. Each official will receive Rs 33,000 per month as a vehicle allowance.

Panchayati Raj Department ENC Kanaka Ratnam expressed gratitude to the government for addressing the longstanding issue of vehicle shortages. "Previously, the lack of vehicle allowances caused significant hardships for engineers working in remote areas. We are deeply thankful to the government and Minister Seetakka for resolving this issue," she said.

The additional funds and vehicle provisions are expected to significantly accelerate rural development projects and ensure efficient supervision of ongoing works. Minister Seetakka reaffirmed the government's commitment to allocating more funds in the future to further enhance rural infrastructure.

ACROSS THE STATES



Old Pension Scheme will remain in Himachal : CM

Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu on Thursday said the Old Pension Scheme will continue as long as Congress is in power in Himachal Pradesh.



'What are we without our land,' says Omar

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday asserted the importance of a land and its people in forging their identity and exhorted them to never let it go.



SAD crisis: Akal Takht calls meeting of 'Singh Sahibans'

Amid resentment over the alleged non-compliance of the Akal Takht's December 2 edict related to reorganizing the embattled SAD, Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh Thursday called a meeting of the five Sikh high priests on January 28.

'80% people could have avoided blindness with timely treatment'

SAI SURYA ■ MATHURA (UP) Nobel laureate Kailash

Satyarthi said Thursday there are 7 crore people blind in the country and 80 per cent of them could have avoided losing their sight if they had received timely treatment.



addressing the inauguration ceremony of 'Kalyanam Karoti Netra Sansthan' located on the Mathura-Goverdhan road.

Cricket competitions for artists under the auspices of Aruna Hospital in Hastinapuram...

-Dappu artists are the ones who awaken the society. Youth leader and social activist Vallamla Santosh Yadav. -Santosh Yadav presented prizes to the winners

Marriguda , Surya News : Dappu artists are the ones who awaken the society.. Dappu artists played the role of journalists in the era of technology, said youth leader and social activist Vallamla Santosh Yadav.



Ayushman Bharat best of all schemes, says Amit Shah

SAI SURYA ■ SURAT

Union Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) was the best among the public welfare schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a trust-run cancer hospital and a sanatorium on Dumas road here , the Union Home minister also said the PM "has done several historical works in just one lifetime".

"But if you ask me to point out the best one among all these schemes, I will say Ayushman Bharat Yojna. Under this scheme, nearly 60 crore citizens are now eligible to get free treatment of up to Rs 5 lakh," Shah opined.

The cancer hospital , built by a trust at a cost of Rs 250 crore, that was inaugurated here will accept patients having

Ayushman Bharat card, he added.

"The Modi government took several steps to improve the healthcare scenario in the country. India's healthcare budget rose from Rs 37,000 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 98,000 crore under the Modi government, which indicates a three-fold increase in allocation. The PM adopted a holistic approach for improving health services in the country," he said.

In 2014, there were 387 medical colleges which used to produce 51,000 MBBS doctors, while the number of medical colleges went up to 766, producing 1.15 lakh MBBS doctors, Shah pointed out.

Other initiatives include promoting the AYUSH sector, providing clean drinking water and promoting sports to increase immunity and resistance power among citizens, the Union minister said.



Was Saif really attacked, wonders minister Nitesh Rane

SAI SURYA ■ PUNE

Maharashtra minister and BJP leader Nitesh Rane sparked a controversy on Thursday after he raised questions over the knife attack on Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan wondering if the Bollywood star was "really attacked or if he was acting".

The statement from Rane comes a day after former Rajya Sabha MP and Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Nirupam raised questions about the actor's swift return to normal life

following a six-hour surgery for deep stab wounds.

Rane further spoke on perceived biases, claiming that while many speak out when a 'Khan' is attacked, similar attention is not given to Hindu actors. He was referring to late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, who died by suicide in June 2020, and said that opposition leaders like Jitendra Awhad and Supriya Sule had remained silent on Rajput's case but were now vocal about Khan's situation. "Opposition leaders

Jitendra Awhad and Supriya Sule did not speak about (late actor) Sushant Singh Rajput. She is concerned only about Saif Ali Khan," Rane alleged.

The statement of Rane drew sharp criticism from Congress, which accused the government of mixing religion and politics. In response, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole condemned Rane's remarks, labelling them as an attempt to create a "religious divide" and distract from pressing issues. "Mixing religion and politics is BJP's agenda to divert the attention from issues being faced by people," he said. He urged police to focus on capturing the actual perpetrator rather than politicising the situation and alleged that there are discrepancies in the probe as some reports suggest that the individual caught on CCTV may not be the same as the one arrested. "Instead of raising Hindu-Muslim angle in law and order situations, police must catch the real culprit.

Unemployment, inflation rising due to wrong policies: Congress

SAI SURYA ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday said the "ever-increasing" unemployment and inflation due to "wrong policies" of the Modi government have made life extremely difficult for lower and middle class families, and asserted that the country now needs a budget that provides relief from rising prices.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a media report on X which claimed that "back-breaking inflation in the last 10 years has emptied the pockets of the common people". "The Modi government has only taken care of its rich friends in the last ten years. Ever-increasing unemployment and inflation due to wrong policies of the government have made life extremely difficult for lower and middle class families," Ramesh said in a post in Hindi on X.



pulses, petrol, diesel and vegetables are "skyrocketing", he said. "The burden of EMIs and daily needs is increasing on every household. The country now needs a budget that provides relief from inflation!" he said. Will the government take any concrete steps after listening to the problems of the people, Ramesh asked.

The Congress on Wednesday claimed that it is becoming clear that the "disappointing" Quarter 2 GDP

growth numbers are not a blip but a clear slowdown in the economy and the post-pandemic bump is not broad-based enough to power long-term growth.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday also hit out at the Modi government over its economic policies and asserted that real development is when everyone progresses, there is a fair environment for business, a fair tax system and the income of workers increases.

Lawyers' names runs into 10 pages, order is few pages

SAYS SC ON MARKING APPEARANCES

SAI SURYA ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday raised concern over a large numbers of lawyers marking their appearance in cases, and their names running into several pages, whereas an order was only a few pages.

A bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma said if a lawyer was assisting the court "effectively" it had no problem in adding the appearance.

"Names of lawyers go into 10 pages and the order will go into only a few pages. We are not passing any orders on how the names of advocates should be included in the order. Since you are representing the Bar, we are hearing out," it said.

The top court said though many lawyers appeared with the arguing counsel, nobody



argued when asked to.

"Or we would have clearly said you have no locus. Whoever is attached with the lawyer, their names are there. It cannot be done like that. When we see they are assisting you effectively, their names are there. We will pass the orders," the bench told senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Supreme Court Bar

Association (SCBA). Sibal submitted the SCBA and the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association would submit a proposal to regulate the issue.

"You are right; 30-40 names cannot be given. But some reasonable, fair procedure to ensure that genuine people who are here and their names should be added," he said.

Republic Day to showcase military prowess

SAI SURYA ■ NEW DELHI

Some of the cutting-edge defence platforms including BrahMos, Pinaka and Akash will be part of the 76 th Republic Day celebrations on Kartavya Path with Army's Battle Surveillance System 'Sanjay' and DRDO's surface-to-surface tactical missile 'Pralay' set to be showcased in the ceremonial parade for the first time , officials said on Thursday.

India will display its military prowess and vibrant culture heritage on the majestic boulevard here on January 26, and the flypast will feature 40 IAF aircraft and three Dornier aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard . Lt Gen Bhavnish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area will be the Parade Commander while Parade Second-in-



Command would be Chief of Staff (COS), Delhi Area, Maj Gen Sumit Mehta.

Interacting with mediapersons here soon after the completion of the full dress rehearsal of the parade, Maj

Gen Mehta said the solemn event will showcase India's military prowess with a number of cutting-edge platforms, a range of vibrant tableaux as well as the country's rich heritage. T-90 'Bhishma' tanks,

BrahMos and Pinaka missile systems, Akash weapon system, Sarath (Infantry Carrying Vehicle BMP-II), Short Span Bridging System 10m, Nag Missile System, multi-barrel rocket launcher system

'Agnibaan', and 'Bajrang' (Light Specialist Vehicle) will take part in the parade.

Asked what factors were kept in mind while lending names to such platforms such as 'Agnibaan' and 'Bajrang', the COS, Delhi Area said, "Specialised vehicles made under 'Atmanirbhat Bharat' vision earlier reflected their capabilities, such as all-terrain vehicles, specialised mobility vehicle. We have given them names, they were not christened earlier. When they were being named, our cultural heritage was also acknowledged through the names."

Asked which platforms are taking part in the Republic Day celebrations for the first time, Maj Gen Mehta said, Battle Surveillance System 'Sanjay' and DRDO's 'Pralay' weapon system will be seen in the parade for the first time.

The Indian Army will be represented by a mounted column, eight mechanised contingents, and six marching contingents, officials said. The mounted column will be represented by the 61 Cavalry.

The marching columns will consist of contingents from Brigade of the Guards contingent, Jat Regiment, Garhwal Rifles Regiment, J&K Light Infantry (JAKLI) regiment and a contingent of the Corps of Engineers. While 75 years of enactment of the Constitution is the focus of Republic Day celebrations this year, the theme for the tableaux is 'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas'. Sixteen tableaux from various states and Union Territories and 15 from central government ministries, departments and organisations will be part of the ceremonial parade.

Trump's ultimatum

Trump's plain talk on the Ukraine war— 'end it or face sanctions'— could mark a turning point in the conflict

In a dramatic intervention, US President Donald Trump has asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to bring an immediate end to the ongoing Ukraine war. Labeling the conflict 'ridiculous,' Trump warned of severe economic sanctions and tariffs against Russia if Putin failed to negotiate peace. The threat marks a sharp escalation in Trump's rhetoric on a war that has already claimed the lives of over a million soldiers on both sides. Speaking on Truth Social platform, Trump reaffirmed his affinity for the Russian people and his respect for Putin but did not shy away from criticising the Russian leader for prolonging the bloody conflict. "We must never forget that Russia helped us win the Second World War, losing almost 60 million lives in the process," Trump said, highlighting historical ties while urging an end to the ongoing devastation. Trump's approach combines a mix of hardline economic threats and diplomatic overtures. In his straightforward message he suggested that the economic repercussions of prolonged conflict would be catastrophic for Russia. He emphasised that his preference was for a peaceful resolution.



The Ukraine war, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, has dragged on for nearly three years. The conflict has claimed the lives of nearly a million Russian soldiers and 700,000 Ukrainian troops. These staggering figures underscore the war's devastating impact, making it one of the deadliest conflicts of the 21st century. Economic consequences have also been severe, particularly for Russia. International sanctions, coupled with the strain of prolonged military operations, have left the Russian economy struggling with inflation and stagnation. Trump pointed to these economic pressures as a potential leverage point, suggesting that a peace deal is in Russia's best interest. Trump's ultimatum reflects a marked departure from his earlier, more ambiguous stance on the conflict. Trump administration is in direct talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Trump himself plans to engage with Putin directly. He appears intent on delivering on that promise with a mix of economic coercion and diplomatic engagement. Despite the grim reality of the war, Trump's comments offers a glimmer of hope for an early resolution. He has emphasised that both Zelensky and Putin should pursue a deal, suggesting that the leaders' willingness would be pivotal in ending the conflict. Trump's ultimatum to Putin could signal a turning point in the Ukraine war, but the path forward remains fraught with uncertainty. While the economic pressure could incentivise Russia to negotiate, the deep-seated political and territorial disputes fueling the conflict may prove challenging to resolve. As the world watches, Trump's next moves—whether imposing sanctions, brokering a deal, or recalibrating military aid—will shape not only the future of the Ukraine war but also the broader geopolitical landscape. For now, one thing is clear: Trump is determined to make his mark on history by ending a war that has caused untold suffering and reshaped global politics.

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PICTALK



Tourists pose for pictures at the Taj Mahal, in Agra

Can suspending commodity derivatives rein in food price



SANJAY RAWAL

The debate over whether speculative trading in futures commodity markets drives food price inflation remains unresolved in India and across Asia

While there are several concerns in India and across Asia, certain policy and key opinion circles that food price inflation is catalysed or influenced somehow by speculative trading in the futures commodity markets. Even while opinions are divided in policy circles and among economists who have studied and examined the nature of the relationship between food inflation and commodity and derivative futures trading contracts, and no empirical evidence hitherto seems to have been found despite numerous studies undertaken in India.

It would be worth mentioning that a detailed empirical research study conducted by leading researchers from the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur specifically studied three suspension events in India of futures traded commodities, which led the researchers to firmly state that the counterfactual for each of the examined episodes confirms that even in the absence of trading suspensions, food prices or inflationary trends would have followed their dynamic path.

Any upward price volatility could ostensibly be the effects or counter-effects of various extraneous domestic or global (especially geopolitical) factors. It is also equally understandable and natural for any governing policy institution to be both fully cognisant and mindful of food price inflationary trends, and the fact that rising food prices can have a cataclysmic effect on food security and thus, by extension could have substantive socio-economic impact.

Successive policy establishments and ecosystems have always been overly cautious, ever since futures trading commodity derivatives exchanges were established in the early 2000s. Despite the mandate of such commodity exchanges that futures trading contracts encourage effective and fair price discovery and risk hedging, which consequently safeguards the commodity value chain from price risk which is a result of a fundamental play between demand and supply the apprehensions



concerning these market-driven tools continued to remain, manifesting itself the way of multiple instances of suspensions on certain commodity derivative contracts. While trading suspensions have been a constant feature since 2007-2008, under the advisement of the price monitoring mechanisms and agencies within the government policy ecosystem, there never has been an occasion when suspensions of commodity trading exceeded more than a year in a single stretch, barring the odd 'sensitive' food commodity. So as a commodity markets expert, with a domestic and world view of ongoing trading in global commodity markets, one begs to specifically ask - Do derivatives trading suspensions really rein in food price inflation?

Researchers have constantly alluded to synthetic control methodologies to apply to their studies for studying specific suspensions, their findings fairly and comprehensively conclude and determine that there is no empirical evidence that derivatives suspension had any impact whatsoever on food prices. On the contrary, from specific instances studied, such as those of Bengal Gram (Chana)



SUCCESSIVE POLICY ESTABLISHMENTS AND ECOSYSTEMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OVERLY CAUTIOUS, EVER SINCE FUTURES TRADING COMMODITY DERIVATIVES EXCHANGES WERE ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY 2000S

in August 2021 and Mustard Seed Derivatives in October 2021, analysis from the said report from IIM Udaipur shows that prices of both commodities, Chana and mustard oil, would have continued on the same price trend path even without the suspension. To specifically quote a potent segment of the said study - it clearly articulates that the conducted research does not find any role of futures market trading on price changes, nor does it find any empirical evidence of the impact of suspension of trade on price behaviour in the period after suspension. Rather, the analysis shows that prices of commodities such as mustard oil would have had a similar trend even without the suspension. Furthermore, the study finds that before the suspension futures market had a dominant share of 64 per cent in discovering the true and fair price of the mustard seed commodity derivative.

The study goes on further to articulate that commodity derivative suspensions hurt genuine participants discourage the growth of domestic agri-derivatives markets and resultantly impact the growth of price hedging prospects of the commodity value chain

including CBOs (Cluster Business Organisations) and FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations), while consequently hurting the value realisation and income levels of farmers.

It also adversely impacts India's position in providing a global price benchmark, despite the country being a major producer and consumer of several agricultural commodities. Needless to say, as an active observer of the Indian agri-based commodity trading ecosystem, it behove advocacy and argument that summary commodity suspensions as a method to arrest or contain food price inflation should not be adopted and further the suspension of futures trading contracts of agricultural commodity derivatives must be revoked. In closure, one must say emphatically that the development of the agri-derivatives market is supported in India, which in turn will lead to fair price discovery and transparent hedging of price risks, eventually creating a positive socio-economic impact for farmers and the agri-ecosystem in India.

(The writer is national president of Commodity Participants Association of India; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PANIC KILLS PASSENGERS

Madam — Twelve passengers on the Pushpak Express were killed and 55 injured after jumping from the tight-packed unreserved coaches onto the track in panic, fearing a fire (they don't even notice or hear approaching trains), only to be run over by the Karnataka Express near Pachora railway station in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Unable to understand when the public will get some sense. Why do they need to wander on tracks even if they had jumped out of a train that they thought was on fire?

Though for this sad mishap we definitely cannot blame the railways from any angle. Even though people may have agreed with me that Indians have lost trust and faith in the railway administration to such an extent that without verifying the rumour, they believe it (smoke that perhaps sparked rumours of a fire) and act accordingly. This shows total distrust of the railways. This is not the first instance; the Jalgaon tragedy revives the painful memory of a similar accident in which 21 women and a boy lost their lives in Mumbai's Goregaon.

On October 13, 1993, passengers on Western Railway's 'ladies special' local between Borivali and Kandivali jumped off a first-class compartment onto the tracks after seeing smoke rise from the undercarriage of their stationary train. Whatever, we all know how our system works. It's the responsibility of people who travel to take care of themselves, not the railway. Yes, it is really tragic for people to lose their lives. It is a big loss to their families. A moment of profound grief and sorrow. May God give strength to all the deceased family members at this difficult time. May their souls rest in peace. Om Shanti.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

FREEBIES HURT ECONOMY

Madam—The growing trend of offering freebies during elections, such as in the Delhi Assembly polls, poses significant challenges to both the economy and democracy. Economically, these promis-

US withdraws from WHO



In a tearing hurry to make America great again, Trump bombed his country and the rest of the world with a slew of executive orders. He withdrew the US from the World Health Organisation, alleging that the global agency had mishandled the COVID-19 pandemic. His own handling of the coronavirus catastrophe was dreadful—over 3,50,000 deaths were reported in the US in 2020, the final year of his first term—but those glaring lapses are of no con-

sequence to him now. He has washed his hands of international collaboration to combat any future pandemic. Trump also signed America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement, whose main goal is to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Last year ended as the planet's hottest on record, and the target looks even more improbable now with the US jumping ship. In an irrational way, the President pardoned 1,500-odd protesters who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in a bid to prevent lawmakers from certifying his election defeat. The incident was a big blow to American democracy. In stark contrast, there is bad news for those desperate to sneak into the US, as Trump has declared illegal immigration at the US-Mexico border a "national emergency." It's America First for him—and the world must brace itself for the worst.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

es strain public finances, divert resources from critical sectors, and create an unsustainable dependency culture. Over time, this undermines fiscal discipline and hampers long-term development. In the democratic sphere, freebies erode accountability, manipulate voter choices, and shift focus away from systemic reforms. They often favour immediate political gains over addressing structural inequalities, weakening institutions, and fostering inequity. While welfare measures are essential for uplifting marginalised groups, they must be carefully balanced with sustainable policies. Policymakers should prioritise structural reforms, economic growth, and targeted welfare instead of indulging in competitive populism. Ultimately, a balanced approach is key to safeguarding both fiscal health and the integrity of democratic processes.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

RUPEE'S FURTHER DECLINE EXPECTED

Madam — India's Weakening Rupee and its expected Impact on the Indian Stock

AI and defence dynamics: Global trends and India's adaptation

India is harnessing AI to enhance national security, counter threats and establish itself at the forefront of the defence innovation landscape

Cross-border terrorism and geopolitical tensions, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Israel-Iran hostilities, have driven unprecedented defence spending since World War II. To counter these threats, nations are leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to build resilient defence systems. AI enhances national security by enabling robust decision-making to detect, analyse, and address complex threats across multiple fronts.

The Shift Towards AI in Defence

AI is transforming defence strategies, reducing reliance on human personnel. The US military's active-duty personnel are at their lowest levels in eight decades, while the U.K. has seen a 30 per cent reduction since 2000, largely due to AI-driven tools replacing soldiers in high-risk operations. With advancements in IoT and data analytics, experts predict a significant increase in AI-based defence systems globally. **India's AI-Driven Defence Evolution**



India, a leading G20 nation, is actively integrating AI into its defence framework to counter internal and external threats. Initiatives like the 2022 launch of 75 AI-enabled defence products highlight India's focus on cybersecurity, automation, and autonomous systems. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) allocates \$12.6 million annually for AI projects, including the establishment of an AI center at the Military College of Telecommunication

Engineering (MCTE). Additionally, the 2024 launch of India's first AI Data Bank aims to enhance national security through real-time analytics and predictive capabilities. **AI in Security and Surveillance**

AI aids investigation agencies in video surveillance and threat detection, analysing behaviour, communications and psychological patterns to identify risks. Using both Strong AI (mimicking human cognition) and Weak AI

(focused tasks), intelligence agencies enhance security, mitigate breaches and safeguard civilians and public institutions.

Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite promising advancements, AI adoption in India's defence faces challenges, including data privacy, cybersecurity and ethical concerns surrounding autonomous systems. To remain competitive, India must increase investments in research, collaborate internationally and address accountability issues tied to AI-driven military operations.

Conclusion
By adopting a risk-based regulatory framework, India can ensure the ethical and effective deployment of AI in defence. While challenges persist, the ongoing innovations and strategic initiatives signal a future where India's defence capabilities transcend traditional methods, embracing AI as a cornerstone of national security.

(The writer is Co-founder & CEO, Innefu Labs; views are personal)



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