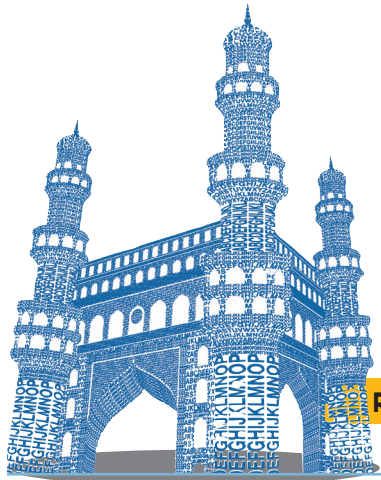




HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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2,601 Rythu Vedikas to Host Seed Melas from Today



Hyderabad, June 22: In view of prevailing weather uncertainties and the possibility of drought conditions associated with El Niño, the Telangana Government will organize seed fairs at 2,601 Rythu Vedikas across the State from June 23 to June 30 to ensure farmers have access to quality certified seeds and scientific agricultural guidance. The initiative aims to promote the cultivation of drought-resistant and less water-intensive crops such as pulses, oilseeds, millets, and vegetables while enabling farmers to procure quality seeds at a single platform. According to the Agriculture Department, extensive arrangements have been made to ensure the availability of certified seeds at affordable prices. The fairs will offer seeds of pulse crops including green gram (moong), black gram (urad), and red gram (pigeon pea), as well as oilseed crops such as sesame and groundnut. Various millet and vegetable seeds will also be available for purchase. To support integrated nutrient management, modern fertilizers including Nano Urea and Nano DAP will be made available to farmers during the fairs.

Metro Expansion Hopes Rise

Revanth, Kishan Hold Positive Talks With Vaishnaw on Metro Funding

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, accompanied by Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy, met Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in New Delhi on Monday to discuss the release of funds for the Hyderabad Metro Rail project.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, the meeting focused on securing a loan through the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) for the Hyderabad Metro. The discussions were described as positive and constructive.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Revanth Reddy said he would also meet Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday to further pursue the issue.

The meeting comes amid the state government's demand for the immediate release of Rs 13,600 crore towards refinancing the Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-I project, which was taken over by the Telangana government from



Larsen & Toubro (L&T).

The Chief Minister had earlier urged the Centre to clarify its participation in the proposed Phase-II expansion of the Metro project. He also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister Kishan Reddy and BJP MP Etala Rajender to ensure Telangana receives its due share of funds.

Revanth Reddy stated that a Japanese financial agency had extended a loan at an interest rate of four per cent and that the funds were to be routed through

the IRFC to the state government. He alleged that despite obtaining Reserve Bank approval and submitting the required documents, the transfer of funds had been delayed. The Chief Minister had earlier accused Kishan Reddy of obstructing the release of funds, claiming that the Union Minister had met senior Central ministers and opposed the disbursement, alleging it could politically benefit the Congress government in Telangana.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM Revanth Seeks Adilabad Airport Upgrade

New Delhi, June 22:

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday urged Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to develop the upcoming Adilabad Airport with comprehensive infrastructure, including cargo, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), and hangar facilities. The Chief Minister met the Defence Minister at Kartavya Bhavan, the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence, in New Delhi, where he discussed key infrastructure and defence-related projects concerning Telangana.

During the meeting, Mr. Revanth Reddy expressed gratitude to the Defence Ministry for transferring

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



15 Killed as Fire Engulfs Lucknow Building

LUCKNOW, JUNE 22

At least 15 people, most of them students, lost their lives and five others sustained injuries after a devastating fire broke out in a three-storey commercial building in Lucknow's Aliganj area on Monday afternoon. The victims were primarily attending classes at a graphics and animation training centre located on the second floor when the blaze erupted. The building also housed a pet shop-cum-veterinary clinic and a library. Several animals trapped inside the pet facility were reportedly charred to death.

According to officials, the fire began around 2:30 p.m. and raged for nearly three hours before being brought under control. Twelve fire tenders were deployed to the scene. Rescue teams faced significant challenges as many occupants were trapped inside due to the lack of adequate emergency exits.

Eyewitnesses reported that several students jumped from the building in a desperate attempt to escape the

flames and thick smoke. Videos circulating on social media showed young people falling from the structure and being carried to safety by local residents. Police have registered an FIR and arrested three building owners — Ram Krishna Upadhyay, Virendra Prasad Shukla, and Tushar Krishna Jaiswal. In addition, four government officials have been suspended pending investigation for alleged negligence related to building safety and regulatory oversight.

State Urban Development and Energy Minister A.K. Sharma said preliminary findings suggest the fire may have originated in the building's air-conditioning duct system. He noted that dense smoke spread rapidly through the structure, leading to suffocation and hampering evacuation efforts. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who cut short an official visit to Aligarh after receiving information about the tragedy, visited the site and ordered a comprehensive investigation.

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‘Today we hit a sixer’ Eknath Shinde inducts six MPs from Uddhav Sena into his party

HOME LAND

07

SUPPORT TELANGANA'S INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Minister Sridhar Babu meets Union Minister Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, June 22: State IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu requested the Central Government's support for Telangana's industrial development and for achieving the goals of "Telangana Rising Vision 2047." He said the state is developing an industrial ecosystem capable of meeting future challenges and playing a key

role in realizing the Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision, and appealed for the Centre's cooperation. On Monday in Delhi, he held a special meeting with Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and submitted a memorandum on several issues related to Telangana's industrial sector.

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BANDI SANJAY UNVEILS ₹136-CRORE CISF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

New Delhi, June 22: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Monday laid the foundation stone for the new Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Headquarters at CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, and inaugurated infrastructure projects worth Rs.136.03 crore. The nine-storey headquarters, being constructed by CPWD at a cost of Rs.75.78 crore, will serve as the administrative and operational nerve centre of

the CISF, housing key offices, a control room, conference facilities, an auditorium, library and other modern amenities. The Minister also inaugurated three completed projects: the Subordinate Officers' Mess (Aditya) and Advanced Training Building (Abhyas) at the National Industrial Security Academy in Hyderabad, and new residential quarters for CISF personnel in Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu.

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A GOVERNORS' RESHUFFLE MAY BE COMING. THE REAL STORY LIES BEYOND THE NAMES.

TWO UNION MINISTERS, RETIRED IAS OFFICER AMONG FRONTRUNNERS

CENTRE GEARS UP FOR FRESH GOVERNORS' RESHUFFLE



With speculation growing over changes in several Raj Bhavans, the focus should not just be on who gets appointed, but what the appointments reveal about the Centre's political priorities.



KTR accuses Revanth of writing death warrant for FARMERS



HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KTR alleged that the Congress government's "Indiramma Rajyam" has pushed Telangana into a deep crisis and accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of betraying the farming community through the state's latest crop procurement policy. Addressing a BRS constituency-level party workers' meeting in Wardhannapet Assembly constituency of Warangal district on Monday, KT Rama Rao said the Congress government had failed to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Political and bureaucratic circles in New Delhi are abuzz with reports of a possible reshuffle of Governors in key states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh. While official confirmation is awaited, the discussion has once again highlighted the significance of gubernatorial appointments in India's political and constitutional framework.

THE BIG QUESTION

Whenever Delhi begins discussing Governors, the temptation is to focus entirely on the names. Who is in? Who is out? Which politician gets accommodated? Which bureaucrat gets rewarded?

But that is often only half the story. The more important question is this: what does a particular appointment tell us about the government's political thinking at a given moment? That question becomes relevant again amid indications that another round of gubernatorial changes may be on the horizon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

**GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL
TAMPER PROOF PACKING**

3 TIMES BETTER

Thought Leadership Lab Aims to Enhance Quality of Education



- **Three-day conclave organized by the Centre for Civil Society in New Delhi**
- **Education leaders from across India launch a nine-month leadership journey**
- **Next conclave to be held in Jammu & Kashmir**

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

With the objective of strengthening educational philosophy, policy, classroom practices, and assessment systems, the Education Thought Leaders Collective (ETLC), in collaboration with the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), New Delhi, organized a three-day "Thought Leadership Lab – Education: Philosophy, Policy and Practice" from June 20 to 22 in the national capital.

The conclave brought together eminent educationists, school leaders, management representatives, and policy practitioners from across the

country to deliberate on innovative practices, educational reforms, leadership development, and strategies for improving learning outcomes and school quality.

The programme was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Amit Chandra, CEO of the Centre for Civil Society (CCS). Participants underwent intensive sessions on educational leadership, policy, school transformation, public policy, and sustainable improvement in teaching and learning. The Thought Leadership initiative will continue for nine months, during which selected education leaders from various states will engage in collaborative learning, exchange of best practices, and policy discussions. Participants were also honoured with certificates and awards by CCS.

Representing Telangana were Mr. Sadula Madhusudhan, State President of TRS-MA and Chairman of Pragathi Group of Schools, and Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, eminent educationist and environmentalist, National Advisor

of TRSMA, and Chairman of Lotus Lap Group of Schools, Hyderabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sadula Madhusudhan said that the programme provided a valuable platform for discussions on educational philosophy, classroom practices, school leadership, and quality enhancement. He noted that interactions with school leaders from different parts of India enabled participants to understand several innovative approaches and best practices that could be implemented in their own institutions. He described the programme as an enriching experience that fostered collaboration among educational leaders.

Dr. Komatireddy Gopal Reddy stated that extensive discussions were held on the effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020), school assessment systems, teacher effectiveness, and improving student learning outcomes. He highlighted that special sessions focused on the formative assessment principles advocated by renowned

educational expert Dylan William.

He explained that formative assessment is not merely about conducting examinations but about continuously understanding where learners are, where they need to reach, and how teachers can adapt instruction to bridge the gap. According to him, continuous assessment embedded in daily teaching practices has the greatest impact on student learning. Discussions also covered effective feedback, peer assessment, self-assessment, and strategies to make students active owners of their learning.

Dr. Gopal Reddy further appealed to all State Governments that have not yet implemented the provisions under the amended Section 16 of the Right to Education Act to conduct Board Examinations for Classes V and VIII. He observed that such assessments would help strengthen foundational learning, enhance academic standards, and improve accountability in school education.

Mr. Nitesh Anand, Coordinator at CCS, announced that the Thought Leadership initiative would continue over the next nine months and emphasized the importance of building a strong national network of education leaders. He informed participants that the next leadership conclave is proposed to be held in Jammu and Kashmir, providing another opportunity for educators from across the country to share experiences and collaborate on educational transformation.

During the three-day Thought Leadership Lab, participants engaged in intensive deliberations on educational philosophy, school leadership, formative assessment, public policy, teacher development, learner-centered pedagogy, and quality education. Education leaders expressed confidence that the initiative would create a vibrant community of thought leaders and contribute significantly to strengthening school education in India.

— Special Correspondent, New Delhi

NITHM conducted a 15 days Hospitality Training

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

The Valedictory was conducted on 22nd Jun'26 at NITHM. Guest of honor was Shri. Ranjeet Nayak, IFS, Director of Tourism & ED Forest Dept. Corporation Govt. of Telangana along with Prof V. Venkata Ramana, Director NITHM, Mr. Mayur Patnala, Founder and Global CEO Nirmaan Organization.



In his address, Prof. Venkata Ramana, the Director of NITHM encouraged the trainees to do well in their careers. He spoke about NITHM's plans to help rural youth build successful careers and assured that more skill development programs would be organized in the future. Prof. Venkata Ramana also asked the trainees for their feedback and listened to them carefully. He said that the learning and experiences gained at NITHM should remain a valuable and lifelong memory for them.

In his address Shri. Ranjeet Nayak, IFS – mentioned that he met Director NITHM at the SUMBIT on Telangana rising, the discussion was on, eco tour-

ism and this idea of the forest training program came up. The aim is to train the locals from the tribals forest department, with the opportunities for employment.

In his address Mr. Mayur Patnala, Founder and Global CEO Nirmaan Organization. Mentioned that his organization facilitates CSR and government programs, they have been working for the last 21 years in tribal areas Served in skill development in government. He said it is challenging to mobilize and sustain the people for a long time. Nirmaan works with 250 corporations and started in 2005, Inspired by Abdul Kalaam. A group of 10 students

started this by saving 1 rupee. Have 10000 volunteer 66. Nirmaan is a vehicle between people and organizations. We are facilitators.

Intentions should be pure to be ruthlessly transparent, so lot of hard work. The success of the program goes to the faculty's, who trained the candidates, Dr. Chef MK Ganesh, Principal i/c, Chef A Mahesh, Ms Sirisha Murthy, Ms. Payal C; Ms. Sreedevi; Dr. Maheshwara Reddy, Dr. N Yadagiri, Mrs. R Vijayalakshmi; Mr. Bala Krishna, Dr. Niraj Dean (T) and Programme Coordinator: Mrs. Michelle J Francis, Asst Prof (Training & Placements), NITHM.

Swarna Telangana Scheme offers free software training for 36,000 youth

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

In a major skill-development initiative, the Swarna Telangana self-employment training scheme has announced free online training in more than 100 software courses for 36,000 students and unemployed youth across the state.

The programme, implemented by PACE Computer Education in association with the National Skill Academy, aims to equip participants with in-de-

mand technology skills including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Science, Machine Learning, Cyber Security and Cloud Computing.

The key highlights of the scheme included: free online training for 36,000 candidates annually; more than 100 software and technology courses; diploma and PG Diploma-level programmes; course value up to Rs.1.5 lakh offered at no cost; certificates issued upon successful completion and open

to Intermediate, Degree, Engineering, PG students, and unemployed youth. The last date for submission of application is July 31, 2026, and should be applied through PACE computer education official website - www.pacecomputers.org. For further details contact on 9505800047. Organisers say the initiative is designed to improve employability and create opportunities in the software industry for students and job seekers across Telangana.

Mahaprabhu Jagannath Creates History With India's Biggest

- **Animation Trailer Launch**
- **The trailer for the nation's first Pan-India animated film was unveiled by Pujya Shri**
- **Indresh Ji Maharaj before a massive crowd of 10,000 devotees**

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

In a spectacular convergence of deep-rooted devotion and cutting-edge cinematic art, the official trailer for the highly anticipated animated feature film Mahaprabhu Jagannath was officially unveiled by the revered spiritual orator, Pujya Shri Indresh Upadhyay Maharaj Ji. The monumental launch took place on a grand scale during his ongoing Shrimad Bhagwat Katha in Cuttack, Odisha where the trailer was projected before a live audience of over 10,000 devotees making it the biggest physical trailer launch for any Animation film that India has ever witnessed.



The crowd erupted with chants of "Jai Jagannath"; as the visuals flashed across the screens, marking a historic moment where traditional spiritual storytelling seamlessly blended with modern theatrical scale.

Hailed as the first theatrical pan-India animated feature film on Lord Jagannath, Mahaprabhu Jagannath leverages world-class animation to make ancient heritage thrilling and relatable for kids. The newly released trailer beautifully showcases the film's core message of devotion, unity, and faith, framing these timeless values through a vibrant visual language tailored for younger minds. At its heart, the trailer captures the uniquely sweet,

compassionate, and companionable relationship between Lord Jagannath and his devotees. Witnessing the electric energy and the overwhelming response of the 10,000-strong live audience during the launch, Durga Prasad Dalai, Producer and Founder of Ele Animations Pvt. Ltd., shared his excitement "To see ten thousand hearts beating together in devotion while watching our trailer is an experience I cannot put into words. This spectacular reception proves that when you wrap our rich Indian heritage in world-class animation, it deeply moves both the youngest child and the eldest member of the family. We created this film to keep our roots

alive for the next generation in a format that is thrilling, vibrant, and visually spectacular. We are ready to take this divine energy from the holy pavilions, straight to the big screens across India. The ambitious pan-India venture brings together an exceptional lineup of creative talent and production powerhouses, produced by Durga Prasad Dalai under the banner of Ele Animations Pvt. Ltd. building on the massive success of their hit Pogo channel TV series, Jay Jagannath. The film grand vision is helmed by director Shripad Warkhedkar, featuring a compelling and emotionally resonant narrative with screenplay and dialogues authored by Palavi Sharma.

Adding a divine layer to the cinematic experience, Aviral Kumar has composed a soul-stirring musical score to bring this epic story to life across nationwide screens. Following the sheer scale and euphoric reception of its trailer launch at the Bhagwat Katha, Mahaprabhu Jagannath is set to hit cinema halls across the country on 10th July in Hindi, Odia, and Telugu.

University of Hyderabad Registrar Dr. Devesh Nigam Honoured with 'Educational Excellence Pioneer Award-2026'

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

In a proud moment for the institution, Dr. Devesh Nigam, the Registrar, University of Hyderabad (UoH), was conferred with the prestigious "Educational Excellence Pioneer Award-2026". The honour was bestowed upon him at the high-profile Hyderabad Education Conclave 2026, which took place on June 20, 2026.

The conclave, themed "Uniting School & Higher Education Leaders," was organized by Plus Nineone Media and brought together top educational policymakers, Vice-Chancellors, principals, administrative and academic leaders from across the country to discuss the future of the



Indian education ecosystem.

A Recognition of Visionary Leadership

The award recognizes Dr. Devesh Nigam's exceptional contributions, leadership, and pioneering administrative reforms in higher education management. As the Registrar of one of India's premier central institutions and a recognized Institution of Eminence (IoE), Dr. Nigam has played a

pivotal role in driving excellence across administrative frameworks, bolstering student-centric governance, and high-impact academic collaborations.

The plaque was presented by the leadership team of Plus Nineone Media, including Founder & CEO Sandeep Gulati and Co-Founder Ashutosh Dubey. About the Hyderabad Education Conclave 2026 Hosted at The Park, Somajiguda, the conclave featured extensive deliberations on transforming traditional educational boundaries. The day-long event commenced with an inaugural lamp-lighting session featuring prominent figures like Dr. Buddha Chandrasekhar (Chief Coordinating Officer, AICTE,

Ministry of Education) and Prof. (Dr.) V. Balakista Reddy (Chairman, Telangana Council for Higher Education).

Key discussion tracks during the conclave addressed highly contemporary themes:

- AI & Education: Redefining the role of schools and higher education institutions in the age of intelligent systems.
- Bridging Ecosystems: Fostering collaboration between the school and higher education sectors to smooth student transitions.
- Degrees to Outcomes: Moving toward an employability and skills-driven economy under the National Education Policy guidelines.

STRONG EPOXY FOR ANY SEASON • ANY REASON



Planning department signs MoU with Institute for Financial Management

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reiterated that Andhra Pradesh has set an ambitious target of achieving a 15 per cent growth rate as part of the Swarna Andhra 2047 vision. He stated that the state had achieved a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13.5 per cent between 2014 and 2019, while the current growth rate stands at around 11 per cent due to various reasons. The State Planning department today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR), operating under KREA University, to support the implementation of the ten guiding principles under the Swarna Andhra 2047 Vision. State Planning Department Principal Secretary Piyush Kumar and IFMR representative Kapil Viswanathan exchanged the agreement documents. As part of the collaboration, IFMR will oversee the implementation of the programme and support the establishment of Mission Cells for achieving Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) targets and higher growth rates. The institute will work with the Government



Manipur Governor Interacts with Five IDP Students Selected for Free Education in Dehradun

IMPHAL, JUNE 22, 2026 Governor of Manipur, Gajay Kumar Bhalla, interacted with five internally displaced person (IDP) students and their guardians at Lok Bhavan, Imphal. he students have been selected for free education up to Class X at the Information Technology Institute for the Tribes of India-Doon Sanskriti School in Dehradun. Hailing from Moreh and Churachandpur and currently residing in various relief camps in Imphal, the students will receive free education along with boarding, lodging, uniforms, and other essential facilities. The travel expenses of the students from Imphal to Dehradun will be borne by the Assam Rifles. The students

Every Constituency Key to Viksit Haryana 2047: CM Saini

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 22 Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that in order to realize Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat-2047, the Haryana Government has initiated work on the comprehensive vision of Viksit Haryana-2047. With this objective, deliberations were held today with all legislators of the state on Viksit Haryana-2047. The theme of this campaign has been named "Meri Viksit Vidhansabha" (My Developed Assembly Constituency), through which the journey towards a developed Haryana will begin from every Assembly constituency. Addressing a press conference at Haryana Niwas on Monday, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that a roadmap for the next 20 years is being prepared to make Haryana a prosperous, self-reliant and

Tamil Nadu Rejects Mekedatu Dam Proposal

Tamil Nadu has stepped up its opposition to Karnataka's proposed Mekedatu dam on the Cauvery. The state says the project could endanger its water share and farmers' livelihoods.



The Tamil Nadu government will not compromise on the state's rights over Cauvery river water or on farmers' livelihoods in relation to Karnataka's proposed Mekedatu dam project, Minister N Anand said on Monday. He said the government remained firmly committed to protecting farmers and safeguarding Tamil Nadu's historical water rights. Anand, who holds the Rural Development and Water Resources portfolio, said the government had taken several steps after Karnataka renewed its push for the balancing reservoir project. These included consulta-

tions with legal experts, discussions with senior officials and a move before the National Green Tribunal. He also said Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and conveyed the state's opposition to the project. The minister said the Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution on June 19 after accepting the opposition DMK's demand for the formation of a tribunal. He said the tribunal was a strategic move

to ensure that Karnataka and the Union government could not proceed unilaterally with the Mekedatu dam project. Anand also said the government's position was that the 2018 Supreme Court verdict had secured Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water and that no new tribunal could change this. He clarified that the Cauvery Water Management Authority had not rejected Karnataka's Detailed Project Report, but

had returned it to the Central Water Commission without comments, which meant the risk remained. Former DMK minister EV Velu said his party had decided to cooperate with the new government on the issue, and that the Leader of the Opposition had moved a necessary amendment to strengthen the state's legal position. Public Works Minister Aadhav Arjuna said the tribunal was meant specifically to deal with issues linked to the construction of the Mekedatu dam and water-sharing concerns. Tamil Nadu has opposed Karnataka's plan to build the balancing reservoir at Mekedatu, saying it would affect the state's interests. The project is meant to meet Bengaluru's drinking water needs and also generate hydel power, and the state government said it would continue its efforts to protect Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water.



Dr. Hanumathu Purushottam Assumes Charge as Secretary, STI Department

AMARAVATI, JUNE 22: Dr. Hanumathu Purushottam today assumed charge as Secretary to Government, Science, Technology & Innovation Department, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh at AP Secretariat, Amaravati. A renowned scientist and innovation leader, Dr. Purushottam has nearly 40 years of experience in Science, Technology, R&D, IPR, and institution building. He earlier served as CMD, NRDC, Govt. of India, Director at AMTZ, and IPR Chair Professor at Andhra University. **Sharing his vision, Dr. Purushottam said the department will focus on:**

- Strengthening research & innovation infrastructure in the State
- Promoting scientific temper among students and youth
- Building stronger academia-industry-government partnerships
- Supporting startups and emerging technologies
- Using technology for better governance and public services
- Promoting technology transfer and making AP a hub for innovation & entrepreneurship

Sri G.Sai prasad IAS, Chief Secretary Andhra Pradesh, J. Syamala Rao, IAS, Principal Secretary, GAD, and Dr. K. Sarat Kumar, CEO, APCOST, congratulated him and assured full support for implementing the government's vision. The department looks forward to a new phase of growth in science, technology & innovation under Dr. Purushottam's leadership.

Vande Bharat Trains See Surge in Ridership, Revenue on Southern Railway

Chennai, June 22 Vande Bharat Express services operated by Southern Railway continue to witness strong passenger demand, with both ridership and revenue showing substantial growth. The premium trains, connecting major cities across Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, have emerged as a preferred travel option for passengers seeking faster and more comfortable journeys. According to Southern Railway, its 24 Vande Bharat services carried 77.38 lakh passengers during 2025-26, generating revenue of ₹803.86 crore. This marks a significant increase compared to 2024-25, when the trains transported 54.12 lakh passengers and earned ₹540.65 crore. Several services, including the Mangaluru-Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai Egmore-Nagercoil and Kasaragod-Thiruvananthapuram Vande Bharat trains, consistently recorded occupancy levels exceeding 100 per cent, reflecting their growing popularity among travelers.

Manipur CM Urges Collective Push for NEP 2020 Implementation

IMPHAL, JUNE 22, 2026

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh attended the inaugural function of a three-day workshop on "Reforms in School Education of Manipur: An Approach to Implementation, Challenges and Opportunities of NEP-2020" today at the City Convention Centre, Imphal. The workshop was organised by Vidya Bharati Shiksha Vikash Samiti, Manipur. Speaking at the event, Khemchand Singh quoted Nelson Mandela on the importance of education, stating that education is one of the most powerful tools to change the world. He said the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 outlines the responsibilities of the education sector to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Chief Minister stressed that teaching in a child's mother tongue as the medium of instruction up to Class V would help students



learn more effectively and at a faster pace. He expressed hope that the workshop would help achieve the objectives of NEP 2020. Khemchand Singh also noted that due to the current law and order situation in the State, summer vacation had been reduced from three weeks to one week. He said normal functioning of educational institutions and government offices was disrupted for nearly a month after the Tronglaobi incident. To make up for lost time, Saturdays were declared working days for all government departments. He

added that Saturdays would be restored as holidays once pending work is completed. On the successful implementation of NEP 2020, the Chief Minister said everyone shares equal responsibility and the duty should not be left to the government alone. He said NEP 2020 can be implemented successfully only when the government, employees, and people work together with strong determination. Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, Chief Secretary, Manipur, said India aims to become a fully developed nation by the 100th

year of its Independence, guided by the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. He described NEP 2020 as a key driver in this journey, with teachers and education stakeholders playing a major role in shaping the nation's future. Prof. Ganga Prasad Prasain, President of Vidya Bharati Purvottar Kshetra, said that from Class VI onwards, students should be introduced to skill development and vocational courses along with regular academic subjects. He said the aim is to give students practical skills and improve their chances of self-employment. The function was attended by Sapam Nishikant Singh, MLA of Keishamthong; Prof. W. Chandbabu Singh, Vice Chancellor of Dhanamanjuri University; Prof. P. Gunindro, Vice Chancellor of Manipur University of Culture; Shri Ningthoujam Geoffrey, Commissioner for Higher and Technical Education; along with professors and teachers.



Kerala HC upholds free bus travel scheme for women and trans persons

The Kerala High Court dismissed a plea against the Priyadarshini free travel scheme for women and transgender persons. The ruling endorsed the government's policy choice and found no statutory breach.

The Kerala High Court on Monday dismissed a plea challenging the UDF government's Priyadarshini Scheme, which provides free travel for women and transgender persons on ordinary KSRTC buses. The court said the scheme was a policy decision of the government and was meant to benefit working-class women. A division bench of Chief Justice Soumen Sen and Justice Syam Kumar VM found no grounds to interfere with the scheme. It also observed that there was nothing in the policy that went against any statutory provision. The plea was filed by Muhammed Firdouz, who described himself as a public-spirited citizen and taxpayer. In his petition, he argued that the scheme was discriminatory and violated Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution. He said it offered free bus travel to women and transgender persons without any income ceiling, residency requirement or identified disadvantage that it was meant to address. The petitioner also claimed that the scheme would place a burden of around Rs 2 crore a day on the public exchequer, taking the annual cost to nearly Rs 800 crore. The plea further questioned the way the policy was approved and the speed at which it was implemented. Opposing the petition, the state government told the court that similar schemes were already in place in several states, including Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal. After hearing both sides, the court dismissed the petition. The Priyadarshini scheme was one of the five major guarantees promised by the UDF during the Assembly election campaign, and it was implemented after the government assumed office to provide free travel for women and transgender persons on ordinary KSRTC services.



TVK government scraps 46 DMK-era temple projects worth Rs 245.85 crore

The TVK government has withdrawn sanctions for 46 temple-funded projects cleared under the previous DMK administration. The HR&CE Department said court stays and the burden on temple finances led to the shift towards temple and devotee-focused schemes.

The Tamilagam Vетtri Kazhagam (TVK) government has cancelled administrative sanctions for 46 projects worth Rs 245.85 crore that were approved during the previous Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) administration and were to be funded through temple resources. The decision was announced by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department, which said the projects included the construction of marriage halls and commercial complexes across the state. The department cited court stay orders and the financial burden on temples as the primary reasons for withdrawing the approvals. According to the order, administrative sanction has been revoked for 29 marriage hall construction projects estimated at Rs 115.77 crore and 17 commercial complex projects estimated at Rs 130.08 crore. None of the projects had commenced construction despite being announced earlier. In total, approvals for 46 projects valued at Rs 245.85 crore have now been cancelled. The HR&CE Department said the funds earmarked for these projects will instead be utilised for new schemes aimed at benefiting temples and devotees. The move marks a significant policy shift in the use of temple resources, with the government emphasizing temple welfare and religious infrastructure over the previously planned commercial and community development projects.

IRCTC Announces Kashi Tirtha Yatra Special Train

CHENNAI, JUNE 22

IRCTC's Southern Zone has announced the "Kashi Tirtha Yatra" Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train, an 8-night, 9-day pilgrimage tour covering Gaya, Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya from September 9 to 17, 2026. The special train will start from Tirunelveli and provide boarding facilities at Virudunagar, Madurai, Dindigul, Tiruchirappalli, Vriddhachalam, Villupuram, Chengalpattu and Chennai. The return journey will begin on September 15, reaching Tirunelveli on September 17. The train will consist of AC Two-Tier, AC Three-Tier and Sleeper Class coaches, along with a pantry car. The tour aims to provide devotees with a convenient and comprehensive pilgrimage experience to some of India's most revered spiritual destinations.

EDITORIAL

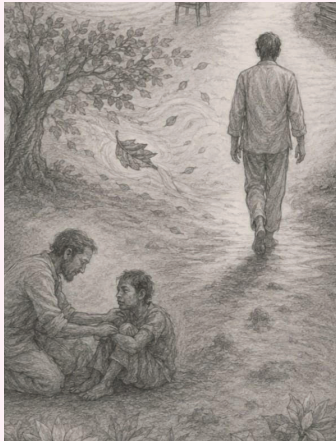
The New Grid:
Why AI is No Longer
an Elective

A decade ago, the public treated the rise of advanced artificial intelligence much like the arrival of the early internet: a fascinating, occasionally disruptive sandbox for early adopters. Today, in the summer of 2026, that sandbox has frozen over. AI has quietly transitioned from a consumer novelty into something far more rigid and unyielding—a core public utility. We are witnessing the birth of “The New Grid.” Much like municipal water or electricity, algorithmic infrastructure now underpins the baseline operations of modern life. It schedules our transit systems, triages healthcare pipelines, manages agricultural yields under shifting climate patterns, and structures corporate logistics.

But unlike the electric grid, which operates on predictable physics and heavily regulated public oversight, the AI grid is being built mid-flight by a handful of private entities. This reality is forcing an uncomfortable reckoning across three fronts: The computational power required to sustain this infrastructure is colliding heavily with global green energy targets. We can no longer separate digital progress from physical constraints; every major technological leap now requires a matching breakthrough in specialized grid capacity or localized nuclear energy. As basic civic services—from filing taxes to disputing a medical claim—become automated on the receiving end, an individual’s ability to navigate algorithmic systems is becoming the new baseline for civic literacy. Those without it are effectively locked out of efficient governance. The Monoculture Risk: When millions of businesses and government agencies rely on the same core underlying models to make decisions, a single systemic bias or edge-case failure doesn’t just crash an app—it stalls an industry. We have arrived at a delicate intersection. Innovation cannot be choked by heavy-handed, retrospective legislation, but critical infrastructure cannot be left entirely to the whims of quarterly corporate earnings. If AI is indeed our new public utility, it requires utility-grade responsibility. This means ironclad transparency regarding training data provenance, standardized stress-testing for systemic vulnerabilities, and a concerted global effort to ensure the physical energy grid can support our digital ambitions without burning the planet. The question for the remainder of 2026 is no longer if we should adopt these systems, but how we govern a world where turning them off is no longer an option. If you had a specific topic, region, or publication style in mind (e.g., a tech-focused publication, a financial paper, or a political op-ed), let me know and we can tailor a piece to that exact angle.

THE ROAD OF
ARRIVAL AND ASH

We arrive
without memory,
without medal,
without name.
A cry
and the universe opens its quiet
ledger.
No caste upon the skin.
No border in the breath.
Only light,
folded within fragile bone.
This earth is not a kingdom.
It is a waiting hall of seasons
chairs arranged
in widening circles of time,
names written briefly
on dissolving mist.
Like a leaf
loosening from its mother tree,
each life drifts
upon an unseen wind.
We gather possessions
as though they anchor us.
We gather identities
as though they define us.
We gather pride
as though it could survive fire.
Yet
No gold clasps the infant’s fist.
No title follows the funeral flame.
Five elements assemble the body
a careful architecture of breath.
Five elements reclaim it
without argument.
Ash remembers nothing.
Dust carries no surname.
In birth — equality.
In living — division.
In death — a vast correction.
We defend
what we cannot keep.
We inherit walls
and call them heritage.
We inherit hatred
and call it history.
But the wind
that carried our first cry
waits patiently
to carry our final sigh.
Before that silent threshold,
no throne stands,
no applause echoes,
no army shields.
Only the quiet arithmetic
of what we gave



and what we withheld.
What remains
when the body becomes memory?
Not power.
Not lineage.
Not the noise of victory.
Only the fragrance of compassion
or the smoke of arrogance.
This road of arrival and ash
is not a marketplace.
It is a bridge.
Walk it lightly.
Let envy fall
like autumn leaves.
Let ego loosen
like a tired crown.
Become a steady star
not blazing to blind,
but glowing to guide.
No victory heals
the wound of humanity.
This earth is wide enough
for kindness.
If hearts were clear,
this world would not need
another heaven.
We do not know
how we came.
We do not know
how we go.
But we know how we walk.
So walk with grace,
that the earth feels lighter beneath
you.
And when you leave,
leave so gently
that even the wind
speaks of you in peace.

...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...
National Poet
7810032847

OPINION

The Fractured Horizon:

GLOBAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AMIDST
THE 2026 GEOPOLITICAL STORM

The global economic narrative of 2026 is one defined by paradox: while technological advancements and AI-driven productivity promised a new era of growth, the harsh realities of geopolitical conflict have fundamentally altered the trajectory. As we navigate the mid-year mark, the global financial system finds itself caught in a “fractured horizon,” where the ripples of regional wars have transformed into waves of systemic instability. This analysis explores how conflict—both direct and spillover—has crippled economic frameworks worldwide and why, despite fiscal efforts, recovery remains a distant shore for many.

The Anatomy of Conflict-Driven
Economic Decay

When a nation descends into war, the economic cost is rarely confined to the battlefield. According to the April 2026 World Economic Outlook by the IMF, conflicts generate persistent output losses that far exceed those caused by standard financial crises. These losses are not merely statistical; they represent the disintegration of supply chains, the evaporation of institutional credibility, and the sudden, often permanent, loss of human and capital productivity.

In 2026, the primary catalyst for this instability has been the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, which effectively choked global energy arteries. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz in March triggered what the International Energy Agency (IEA) described as the “largest supply disruption in history.” This event served as a reminder that in a globalized economy, a localized conflict acts as a contagion, rapidly spreading from the energy sector to food security, logistics, and industrial output.

The Litany of Vulnerability:
A Regional Breakdown

The economic fallout has been uneven, striking emerging markets and commodity-dependent nations with particular ferocity.

The Middle Eastern Core: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economic model—long considered a bastion of stability—faced a systemic collapse. With the Strait of Hormuz blockaded, oil and LNG exports plummeted, leading to a “grocery supply emergency.” Nations dependent on these routes for over 80% of their ca-



loric intake faced immediate inflationary shocks.

The European Industrial Strain: Europe, already navigating the post-pandemic recovery, found its industrial heartland under siege. Chemical and steel manufacturers, faced with surging energy prices and feedstock costs, were forced to impose surcharges of up to 30%. This has fueled fears of permanent deindustrialization, as high costs push manufacturing sectors toward technical recession.

The Developing Market Crisis: For countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and various nations in sub-Saharan Africa, the surge in Brent Crude (past \$120 per barrel in early 2026) was not just an economic burden—it was a social one. Panic buying, fuel shortages, and the diversion of limited fiscal buffers toward essential imports have left these nations with little room for development spending.

Conflict-Stricken Zones: Countries like Sudan, Myanmar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have seen their economies move from “struggling” to “non-functional.” In Sudan, the convergence of civil war and famine has pushed 40% of the population into catastrophic food insecurity, illustrating the absolute failure of economic structures when the rule of law is absent.

Why Recovery Remains Elusive

The persistent nature of these economic scars stems from three critical factors:

Fiscal Crowding-Out: As nations

ramp up defense spending to counter geopolitical uncertainty, social spending is inevitably cannibalized. Research indicates that in a typical wartime boom, social investment drops significantly, potentially sparking social discontent and further long-term instability.

Institutional Erosion: Economic recovery requires trust—in central banks, in trade agreements, and in physical security. Recent conflicts have severely eroded these pillars. When supply chains are disrupted by force majeure or regional blockades, the “just-in-time” delivery model—the backbone of modern commerce—becomes a liability rather than an asset.

Inflationary Persistence: The era of post-pandemic disinflation was effectively halted in early 2026. The current inflationary pressures are supply-driven, meaning that standard monetary policies like interest rate hikes are not only less effective but often exacerbate the risk of stagflation—a combination of stagnant growth and rising prices

The Path Forward: Can the Ships
Right Themselves?

The World Bank and the IMF both emphasize that for these “economic ships” to right themselves, the world requires more than just monetary intervention. It requires:

Early Macroeconomic Stabilization: Targeted debt restructuring for the hardest-hit developing nations to prevent total default.

Supply Chain Diversification: Reducing reliance on single-chokepoint routes (like the Strait of Hormuz) to buffer against regional shocks.

Sustained Peace: The most vital component. Economic recoveries in conflict zones are historically slow and uneven, relying entirely on the durability of peace agreements. Without sustained security, investments in infrastructure and human capital will continue to be short-lived.

As we look toward 2027, the projections remain cautious. While global growth is expected to see a modest rebound to roughly 2.8%, this figure is significantly lower than pre-pandemic norms. The global economy is no longer just “sailing”; it is engaged in a defensive maneuver, navigating the treacherous waters of 2026 with the hope that the horizon will eventually clear, revealing a more resilient and less fragmented world order.



DR. CHITYALA RAVINDER
7798891795

Does Literature Need Grammar?

Few questions in literary history have proved as enduring as this one: does literature need grammar? At first glance, the issue appears to concern language alone. Yet beneath it lies a deeper philosophical tension. Does creativity emerge from rules, or do rules emerge from creativity? Must emotion conform to established forms, or do forms themselves evolve in response to human expression? Such questions have accompanied literature throughout its long and restless journey.

Grammar gives language order. It provides continuity, coherence and a shared framework through which meaning may be communicated. Literature, however, has never existed merely to demonstrate correctness. Its purpose lies elsewhere. It seeks to transform experience into meaning, memory into imagination and emotion into expression. A work of literature is remembered less for its technical precision than for its capacity to move, illuminate and endure.

History itself suggests that language existed long before grammarians sought to codify it. Human beings sang lullabies, narrated myths and preserved collective memories centuries before systems of grammar acquired formal shape. Grammar did not create language; it emerged from observing patterns that life had already produced. In that sense, grammar resembles a historian rather than a legislator. It records the movement of language; it does not command it.

This explains why the relationship between grammar and literature has never been one of master and servant. Throughout history, literature has repeatedly expanded the limits that grammar later came to recognize. Languages survive not through rigidity but through renewal. What appears

unconventional in one age often becomes commonplace in another. Grammar itself remains alive because language refuses to stand still.

Yet complete freedom is no less problematic than excessive regulation. A language without structure risks disintegration; a language governed solely by rules risks becoming lifeless. Dictionaries preserve words, but writers breathe life into them. Rules ensure continuity, while imagination opens new possibilities. The vitality of language depends upon the creative tension between the two.

The history of English literature offers striking illustrations of this enduring dialogue. William Shakespeare is remembered not because he submitted himself unquestioningly to linguistic conventions, but because he expanded the expressive possibilities of English itself. His works introduced new words, stretched familiar expressions and demonstrated that literary genius often reshapes language rather than merely inheriting it. Much of what later generations accepted as natural English first appeared as creative innovation in Shakespeare’s hands.

John Milton carried this experimentation further. In Paradise Lost, he employed syntactical structures influenced by Latin, producing a style that many readers found unconventional. Yet those very departures contributed to the epic grandeur that has secured the poem’s place in literary history. Artistic ambition

occasionally demands a flexibility that strict adherence to convention cannot always provide.

With William Wordsworth, another transformation occurred. Rejecting the artificial diction that dominated eighteenth-century poetry, he argued that the language of ordinary people possessed its own poetic dignity. His work represented a return to simplicity, demonstrating that literary greatness need not depend upon elaborate ornamentation.

Walt Whitman opened yet another chapter. His free verse abandoned many traditional formal constraints and embraced a rhythm shaped by thought itself. What initially seemed like rebellion eventually became one of the defining innovations of modern poetry.

Whitman’s example revealed that new forms often emerge when existing structures can no longer contain changing sensibilities. The twentieth century witnessed even more radical experiments. James Joyce pushed language to extraordinary limits in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, exploring the possibilities of consciousness, memory and linguistic association. Conventional grammar frequently gave way to artistic necessity. The resulting works challenged readers, yet they also expanded the horizons of literary expression.

Virginia Woolf, through her stream-of-consciousness narratives, transformed the architecture of fiction. The rhythms of inner life demanded forms that differed from traditional storytelling. In her novels, syntax itself becomes part of the emotional landscape, demonstrating that

literary innovation often arises from the desire to capture experiences that older conventions struggle to represent.

Even T. S. Eliot, one of modernism’s most influential voices, never regarded tradition as something to be discarded. For him, literary innovation emerged through a dialogue with the past rather than through its rejection. His work reminds us that originality and inheritance are not enemies but partners in the evolution of art.

These examples reveal a recurring truth. Great writers rarely transcend grammar because they are ignorant of it. More often, they move beyond convention because they understand both its possibilities and its limitations. To surpass a rule is not the same as to dismiss it. Literary innovation frequently arises from creative engagement rather than outright defiance.

The question, therefore, admits no simple answer. Literature cannot flourish in complete disorder. Yet order alone has never produced masterpieces. What gives lasting vitality to language is the continuous interplay between discipline and imagination, continuity and change, structure and freedom.

Perhaps this explains why literary history remembers voices more readily than rules. Grammatical systems evolve. Conventions shift. Standards change with time. Yet a great poem, a memorable line or a story that touches the human heart continues its journey across generations.

And perhaps somewhere within that journey lies the true grammar of literature—not a fixed system of rules, but the enduring human impulse to give shape to experience and meaning to life.

D. CHANDRABHANU
SENIOR TEACHING FACULTY

Sahitya Press Parishad Honours New PCS Officers

District Magistrate Shares Success Mantra with Aspirants in Uttarkashi

SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, June 22: A grand felicitation ceremony was organized under the aegis of the Sahitya Press Parishad to honour the candidates who successfully cleared the Provincial Civil Services (PCS) Examination conducted by the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission. The event celebrated the achievements of the newly selected officers and served as a source of inspiration for hundreds of students preparing for competitive examinations. District Magistrate Prashant Arya attended the programme as the Chief Guest, while Superintendent of Police Kamlesh Upadhyay and Chief Development Officer Jai Bharat Singh graced the occasion as distinguished guests. The dignitaries felicitated the successful candidates with mementos and certificates and congratulated them on their remarkable accomplishment. Speaking on the occasion, District Magistrate Prashant Arya emphasized that civil services are not merely a prestigious career option but a powerful platform for public service. He stated that the true essence of governance lies in reaching the last person in society and ensuring that government schemes and services benefit those who need them the most. Congratulating the newly selected officers, he said their success had brought pride and recognition to Uttarkashi and expressed



confidence that they would contribute meaningfully to the development of Uttarakhand and the nation. Superintendent of Police Kamlesh Upadhyay and Chief Development Officer Jai Bharat Singh also addressed the gathering and appreciated the dedication, perseverance, and hard work demonstrated by the successful candidates. They encouraged young aspirants to remain focused on their goals and to cultivate discipline, determination, and a spirit of service. One of the highlights of the programme was the interactive session between the newly selected PCS officers and students preparing for various competitive examinations. The aspirants enthusiastically participated in the discussion and sought guidance on subjects ranging from examination strategy and time management to stress management and maintaining motivation during long preparation periods. Sharing their personal journeys, the successful candidates candidly spoke about the challenges, failures, and set-

backs they encountered while preparing for the examination. They emphasized that success is not achieved overnight but through continuous effort, consistency, and self-improvement. The officers advised students not to be discouraged by temporary failures and instead view them as opportunities to learn and grow stronger. They highlighted the importance of regular study habits, self-discipline, and maintaining a positive mindset throughout the preparation process. The interaction proved highly motivating for the students, many of whom described the session as an invaluable learning experience. The practical tips and real-life experiences shared by the officers provided aspirants with greater clarity and confidence regarding their own preparation journeys. Office bearers of the Sahitya Press Parishad expressed their gratitude to the chief guest, distinguished guests, successful candidates, students, and attendees for making the programme a success.

20% Job Quota for Ex-Agniveers in Gujarat

GANDHINAGAR, JUNE 22:

In a significant step aimed at supporting former Agniveers after the completion of their military service, the Gujarat government has announced a 20 per cent reservation for ex-Agniveers in direct recruitment to Class III government posts across various departments. The decision was announced by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel through a post on social media platform X on Sunday. The initiative is designed to provide stable career opportunities to youth who have served under the Centre's Agnipath recruitment scheme. Along with reservation benefits, the state government has also introduced several relaxations to facilitate the transition of ex-Agniveers into civilian government services. According to the Chief Minister, former Agniveers will be exempted from physical fitness tests in relevant recruitment drives, considering the rigorous military training and physical standards they have already undergone during their service period. Additionally, candidates will be granted age relaxation of up to three years in the prescribed upper age limit for various recruitments. The Gujarat government has gone a step further by providing special age-relaxation benefits for the first batch of Agniveers. Guidelines have been issued to grant up to five years of relaxation in the upper age limit for members of the inaugural batch, ensuring that they receive ad-



equate opportunities to secure government employment after completing their tenure. The reservation and relaxation benefits will apply to recruitment in several uniformed services and security-related positions. These include posts such as Armed Police Sub-Inspector, Armed Police Constable, State Reserve Police (SRP) Platoon Commander, and Police Constable. The move is expected to strengthen the state's law enforcement agencies by bringing in personnel who already possess discipline, leadership skills, and operational training gained through military service. Apart from police and security services, former Agniveers will also be eligible for benefits in other government departments. The Chief Minister stated that the reservation and concessions would be extended to direct recruitment for Jailor Group-II posts under the Jail Department, Jail Sepoy positions, as well as Forest Guard Class III and Forest Watcher Class III posts under the Forest and Environment Department. Officials believe that the expe-

rience acquired by Agniveers during their service in the armed forces can be effectively utilized in public administration, policing, prison management, and environmental protection. The policy is also expected to encourage more youth to join the Agnipath scheme with the assurance of better post-service employment prospects. The announcement aligns with broader efforts undertaken by the Central Government and several state governments to create meaningful career pathways for Agniveers after they complete their four-year tenure. Introduced in 2022, the Agnipath scheme recruits young men and women into the Army, Navy, and Air Force for a fixed term, with a portion of recruits retained for longer service based on performance. With the latest decision, Gujarat joins the growing list of states implementing special provisions for ex-Agniveers, reinforcing the government's commitment to recognizing their contribution to national service and ensuring their successful integration into the civilian workforce.



GM NFR Inspects Kamakhya Station

Takes Stock of Arrangements for Ambubachi Mela

MALIGAON, 22 JUNE, 2026

Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), conducted a comprehensive inspection of Kamakhya Railway Station on 22 nd June, 2026 to assess the preparedness and passenger management arrangements for the Ambubachi Mela being held from 22 nd to 25 th June, 2026. The annual religious event is expected to witness a significant influx of devotees from various parts of the country, necessitating extensive operational and passenger facilitation measures by the Railways. During the inspection, the General Manager assessed various facilities and arrangements put in place for the convenience, safety and security of pilgrims, including crowd management measures, passenger amenities, cleanliness, drinking water facilities, medical assistance, help desks and security deployment. He interacted with railway officials and staff deployed at the station and reviewed the operational readiness to handle the anticipated surge in passenger traffic during the mela period. The General Manager emphasized the importance of maintaining constant vigilance, ensur-

ing effective crowd control and providing prompt assistance to passengers. He also guided concerned officials to remain alert at all times, closely monitor passenger movement, coordinate effectively with security agencies and civil authorities, and ensure smooth train operations throughout the festival period. To cater to the anticipated rush of pilgrims, NFR is operating several special unreserved train services, connecting Kamakhya with important destinations across Assam and North Bengal. In addition, various regular passenger trains have also been temporarily augmented to enhance carrying capacity and facilitate smooth travel for devotees during the Ambubachi Mela period. The General Manager also directed concerned officials to focus on passenger safety, cleanliness and seamless service delivery, while ensuring that adequate information and guidance are available to devotees arriving at and departing from Kamakhya Railway Station. Northeast Frontier Railway has made extensive arrangements to facilitate the movement of pilgrims during the Ambubachi Mela and is committed to providing a safe, comfortable and hassle-free travel experience to all passengers.

Healthcare Sector Applauds Bengal Budget Focus on Growth

KOLKATA: (JUN 22)

Healthcare industry leaders on Monday welcomed the West Bengal budget, saying its focus on employment generation, women's welfare, healthcare infrastructure and medical education would strengthen the state's healthcare ecosystem and improve access to quality treatment. Reacting to the budget presented by finance minister Swapan Dasgupta in the Assembly, industry stakeholders said the proposed measures have the potential to create long-term benefits for public health while supporting inclusive growth. Parthiv Neotia, joint managing director of Ambuja Neotia Healthcare Venture Ltd, said the budget strikes a balance between economic priorities and social development.



30 arrested for attempting irregularities in NEET-UG re-exam in Bihar

PATNA: (JUN 22)

The police arrested at least 30 people allegedly for attempting irregularities in the NEET-UG re-examination in Bihar, an officer said on Monday. While 18 people working in the exam centres were arrested for violating the biometric verification norms, the majority of the others were impersonators who tried to write the exam in place of the genuine candidates. The re-examination was conducted across the state on Sunday amid tight security after the original undergraduate medical entrance test, held in early May, was cancelled amid widespread allegations of a question paper leak.

President Murmu Interacts with Cheeta Mitras

DR.BHUPNDRA VIKAL

Bhopal (kuno-shropur): President Smt. Droupadi Murmu on Monday interacted with Cheeta Mitras during her two-day visit to Kuno National Park and reviewed the ongoing efforts being made for cheetah conservation. During the interaction, President Smt. Murmu sought information from the Cheeta Mitras about conservation initiatives and awareness activities being undertaken to educate local communities about cheetah behaviour. She held one-on-one discussions with volunteers and appreciated their dedicated voluntary contribution to the project. Cheeta Mitras informed the President that volunteers are present in all villages adjoining Kuno National Park and are actively engaged in spreading awareness among

Reviews Cheetah Conservation Efforts.. President Smt Murmu Lauds Efforts of Cheeta Mitras



residents about cheetah conservation. Villagers are being informed about the measures to be taken if cheetahs move into inhabited areas. They are also being educated that cheetahs generally do not harm humans by nature. Residents are advised to immediately inform the Forest Department if a cheetah is spotted in

a village or agricultural field so that the animal remains safe and unharmed. The volunteers highlighted that the cheetah reintroduction project is of immense importance for restoration of the species in India. Those present during the interaction included Cheeta Mitra Kuldeep Adivasi of Silori, Sangram Adivasi and

Rajnandani Adivasi of Hathedi, Malha Adivasi of Sesaipura, Shivam Adivasi of Palpur, Vinod Adivasi of Paira, Ram-lakhan Adivasi of Karahal, Lalaram Adivasi and Daulataram Adivasi of Sesaipura, and Satish Adivasi of Moravan. Also present on the occasion were Principal Secretary of Forest, shri Sandeep Yadav, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests shri Shubhranjan Sen, Commissioner shri Suresh Kumar, Inspector General shri Sachin Atulkar, Collector Sushri Sheela Dahima, Superintendent of Police shri Sudhir Agrawal, Chief Conservator of Forests Uttam Kumar, Divisional Forest Officer shri R. Thirukural and other officials. It may be noted that the cheetah reintroduction project at Kuno National Park has been underway for more than

three-and-a-half years. Cheetahs have been brought to the park from Namibia, South Africa and Botswana. At present, the country has 52 cheetahs, including 49 in Kuno National Park and three in Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Mandsaur district. A total of 32 cheetahs have taken birth in India, reflecting continued success of the project. Following the interaction with Cheeta Mitras, President Smt. Murmu departed for Gwalior by helicopter. At the helipad, she was accorded a respectful send-off by Governor shri Mangubhai Patel, Minister-in-Waiting and district in-charge minister shri Rakesh Shukla, Member of Parliament shri Shivmangal Singh Tomar, along with public representatives and senior officials.

‘Today we hit a sixer’: Eknath Shinde inducts six MPs from Uddhav Sena into his party

The induction of the six MPs takes the Shinde-led Sena's strength in the Lok Sabha from seven to 13, significantly strengthening the party's position in Delhi.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Monday formally inducted six rebel Shiv Sena (UBT) Lok Sabha MPs into the Shiv Sena, completing what leaders in his camp described as "Operation Tiger" and dealing the biggest blow to Uddhav Thackeray's party since the 2022 split. At a joint press conference attended by all six MPs — Sanjay Jadhav, Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Deshmukh, Omprakash Rajee Nimalkar, Nagesh Patil Ashtikar, and Bhausaheb Wakchaure —, Shinde declared that the second phase of the Shiv Sena rebellion was complete. The Shiv Sena chief also assured the MPs that after joining the ruling side, they would no longer face hurdles in securing funds or carrying out development works in their constituencies. "In 2022, 40 MLAs came with us. Today we have hit a sixer. This is the second phase. Our fight is for Balasaheb's ideology and Hin-

dutva. Wherever there is Shiv Sena ideology, there are real Shiv Sainiks and that is why these six MPs have joined us today," Shinde said. The induction of the six MPs takes the Shinde-led Sena's strength in the Lok Sabha from seven to 13, significantly strengthening the party's position in Delhi. The party has now crossed the two-thirds mark among Sena (UBT)'s nine Lok Sabha MPs, a threshold that could become crucial in any anti-defection proceedings. While Shinde repeatedly framed the move as a battle to preserve Balasaheb Thackeray's ideology and Hindutva, several of the rebel MPs publicly cited stalled development works and lack of access to funds as key reasons behind their decision. Over the past two days, MPs Omprakash Rajee Nimalkar, Nagesh Patil Ashtikar, and Sanjay Deshmukh had argued that remaining in the Opposition had hampered their ability to bring development projects and government funds to their constituencies. Shinde directly addressed those concerns, saying, "I assure all six MPs that their work will not face any hurdles now. There will be no short-



age of funds for development work. From the state government as well as the Centre, all support will be extended." The assurance is significant as it came immediately after the rebel MPs publicly linked their decision to difficulty in securing funds and implementing development projects while being in the Opposition. Shinde said the 2022 rebellion had occurred because "another ideology" had begun dominating the Shiv Sena and claimed that the public had endorsed his decision in subsequent elections. "You saw how the 2022 decision was accepted by the people and what kind of welfare work was done in the past two-and-a-half years," he said. Responding to Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut's warning of launching "Opera-

tion Tudva" against rebel MPs, Shinde said his party was focused on expanding the Shiv Sena rather than targeting opponents. "We have not come together to crush anybody. We have come together to expand Shiv Sena. We are not stopping anybody, but if somebody comes in our way, we will deal with them the way Balasaheb had taught us," he said. Following the press conference, Sanjay Jadhav rejected suggestions that the MPs had switched camps for personal gain or financial benefits. Meanwhile, Sanjay Dina Patil emerged as the lone rebel MP to openly air grievances against the Sena (UBT) leadership. Patil said his decision was not driven by differences with Uddhav Thackeray, Aaditya Thackeray or Sanjay Raut, but by long-standing issues with an unnamed party leader. "They do not want strong people. They want people who simply follow orders," Patil said, while maintaining that he continued to respect Uddhav and Aaditya Thackeray. Patil also clarified that his remarks were not directed at Sanjay Raut, whom he credited with supporting his politi-

cal career. Shinde individually praised all six MPs and said each had taken the decision after consulting workers and supporters in their constituencies. Referring to Omprakash Rajee Nimalkar, whose move remained uncertain until the last moment, Shinde said he had personally assured him support following the recent court verdict in the murder case involving his father. "The day the verdict came, I told Omraje that Shiv Sena and Eknath Shinde are firmly standing behind you," he said. On June 20, a special CBI court acquitted all eight accused, including former minister Padamsinh Patil, in the case related to the 2006 murder of Omaraje's father, Pavanraje Nimalkar. Padamsinh Patil is the brother of Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar. Omraje had publicly expressed disappointment over the verdict and later revealed that he had spoken to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy Chief Minister Shinde and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The state government subsequently announced that the CBI would challenge the acquittal before the Bombay High Court.

Relief from court in land dispute

There was a conspiracy to implicate me: Shivkumar Gautam



DR.BHUPENDRA VIKAL

Shivpuri : School director and socio-political activist Shivkumar Gautam held a press conference yesterday and presented his side in detail regarding the land dispute issue which has been in the news for the past few days. While providing the journalists with copies of the order passed by the District and Sessions Court, Shivpuri on June 18, 2026, he said that the Sessions Court has canceled the order for registering the FIR against him given by the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court. Shivkumar Gautam said that the court has accepted in its order that on the basis of available facts and documents, prima facie no cognizable offense appears to be made out against him. The Court also noted that the order was passed by the Chief Judicial Magistrate without properly following the procedure prescribed under Section 175(3) of the Indian Civil Defense Code, due to which the said order was set aside. During the press conference, Shivkumar Gautam said that a duly signed contract was made in his favor in the year 2023 regarding the concerned land and on the basis of the same, he later made another contract regarding his share of the land. He said that in this entire matter, a civil suit for specific compliance of the contract is already pending in the court and the dispute should be resolved through legal process. Shivkumar Gautam alleged that

every year during the admission session of the schools run by him, efforts are being made to tarnish his personal and institutional image. He said that in the past too, attempts have been made to affect the reputation of his school through various types of allegations and controversies, but every time the truth has come out. He said that he has become active in public life and politics in recent years and it is possible that some people, uncomfortable with his increasing activism, may have become his opponents. He expressed apprehension that some such elements are systematically trying to create an environment against him. However, he refrained from naming any particular person and said that he has full faith in the judiciary and will continue to respect the legal process in every situation. Shivkumar Gautam said that his main objective is to work in the field of education and social service and he is continuously striving for a better future of children through his schools. He appealed to the parents, students and people of the society not to believe any kind of rumors and form any opinion only after understanding the facts. At the end of the press conference, Shivkumar Gautam said that his faith in truth and justice is as unwavering as before and in the future also he will continue to present his side within the legal and democratic limits.

Iran talks could transform Middle East: Vance

BURGENSTOCK, JUNE 22

US Vice President JD Vance said on Monday that negotiations with Iran had produced agreements on maritime security, regional ceasefire enforcement and nuclear inspections, describing the talks as the foundation for what could become a "truly transformed Middle East."

Speaking to reporters before departing Emmen Air Base in Switzerland, Vance said the latest round of diplomacy had delivered tangible progress, even as both sides prepared for further technical negotiations in the days ahead.

He stressed that the Trump administration would continue to judge Tehran by its actions rather than its promises.

"This is laying a foundation for what could be a truly transformed Middle East," Vance said. "We haven't built the house yet, we're gonna have to keep on building." The Vice President said one of the most significant outcomes was the creation of a mechanism designed to keep shipping lanes open and ensure continued energy flows through the region. "The fundamental thing we got is number one, we set up the mechanism to ensure not only the straight support moves are open, but will stay open," he said.

"We saw, we think, about 15 million barrels of oil come out. That's one of the reasons why oil is so low right now. Obviously, that means lower gas prices, and gas prices are going to keep coming down." Vance also highlighted what he described as a breakthrough on regional security.

"We actually set up the right mechanism to ensure the regional ceasefire to



manage the inevitable conflicts that will come up," he said. "We're working with our allies, from the Israelis to the Gulf Arabs, to make sure that sticks, and we feel very, very good about where that is."

On the nuclear issue, Vance pointed to Iran's agreement to allow inspectors into the country.

"We have the Iranians allowing weapons inspectors, nuclear inspectors into the country for the first time in a long time," he said. "We're obviously going to bolster those inspections, that inspection regime, to make sure they could never have a nuclear weapon."

However, he cautioned that verification remained essential.

"Whether good faith or bad faith, you can't trust anybody's worries; you have to trust what they actually do," Vance said. "My point is that I trust actions, and what the President has asked us to do is verify what they're doing, focus less on what they're saying."

The Vice President said both the United States and Iran had left negotiating teams in Switzerland to continue

working through technical details.

"We continue to make progress on these technical negotiations," he said. "We left a lot of our team, the Iranians left a lot of their team at the resort there to keep on working." Another issue discussed during the talks was the possible release of frozen Iranian funds. Vance said Qatar had agreed to help establish an oversight mechanism to ensure the money was used in accordance with conditions set by the negotiations.

"We actually asked the Qataris to help us set up the mechanism, so that we can ensure that the money goes where we want it to go, and they agreed to do that," he said.

"Fundamentally, that money is not going to be unfrozen unless we continue to see progress, and that will obviously be a big part of the negotiation in the days to come." Vance also brushed aside suggestions that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had intentionally snubbed him before negotiations began.

"No, I mean, trust me, I've spent a lot of time dealing with the Iranians over the last few months. Sometimes I find them extremely confusing as negotiators," he said. "They could be confusing negotiators, but we feel like we're making progress."

He also mocked speculation that the talks were on the verge of collapse after social media reports suggested the Iranian delegation would walk away.

"What I did find kind of funny is that after that initial meeting, there was this, you know, sort of social media firestorm where everybody said the Iranians are going to leave, and then we proceeded to talk to them for like the next nine hours," he said.

AIR POLLUTION

Dr. Kandepi Rani Prasad

The nature in which living beings interact with their surroundings is called 'atmosphere'. It is the world in which non-living beings interact with the atmosphere. In other words, 'atmosphere' is what is composed of physical, chemical and natural forces.

The atmosphere is adversely affected by the new tools invented by man. Due to the industrial progress achieved by man, many substances and gases are released into the atmosphere. As a result, all living beings and the atmosphere are polluted. The bad effects of other living beings and non-living beings, including humans, are called 'atmosphere pollution'. The substances that pollute the atmosphere are called 'pollutants'. These pollutants are of two types. 1. Natural pollutions 2. Artificial pollutions. Pollution caused by natural processes in nature is called natural pollutions. Pollution caused by human activities other than nature is called artificial pollutions. Moreover, depending on the stage of pollution in which pollutants enter the atmosphere and form, there are two types of pollutants: primary pollutants and secondary pollutants.

Sulfur dioxide, mercury, DDT, etc. pollute the atmosphere in the same state as they enter the atmosphere. Therefore, these are called 'primary pollutants'. 'Secondary pollutants' are formed by the reactions between primary pollutants. For example, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides are primary pollutants. When these two react together in the presence of light, peroxyacyl nitrates are formed. These damage the atmosphere. Therefore, these are secondary pollutants.

Pollution caused in the atmosphere due to human activities can be classified into eight types.

1. Air pollution
2. Water pollution
3. Land pollution
4. Sound pollution
5. Marine pollution
6. Thermal pollution
7. Solid waste pollution
8. Radioactive pollution.

Carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides become pollutants when their levels in the atmosphere exceed the permissible levels. Pesticides enter the atmosphere due to human activities and become harmful. Agricultural and livestock wastes are non-biodegradable pollutants. Substances produced by human activities harm the atmosphere. Such substances are called 'pollutants'.

Mainly, if we look at air pollution, there are many types. Nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, ammonia, fly ash, aerosols, hydrocarbons cause air pollution. Smog causes respiratory diseases, allergies, and asthma in humans. Due to the formation of smog in the atmosphere, oncoming vehicles cannot be seen and accidents occur. 'Smag' is formed by nitrogen, oxides, sulfur dioxide,

hydrocarbons, ozone gas, and other particles in the atmosphere. If ammonia increases in the atmosphere, photosynthesis slows down. Furthermore, ammonia released from industries causes eye irritation and sore throat. Nitrous oxide causes lung and respiratory diseases. This causes acid rain. This gas released from industries affects human hemoglobin. Respiration slows down in plants, leaves fall and then plants die. Chlorofluorocarbons cause the ozone layer to break down.

Due to holes in the ozone layer, ultraviolet rays from the sun directly reach the earth, causing many damages. It can be seen how much damage this causes if a single chlorofluorocarbon molecule breaks down about one lakh ozone molecules. Fly ash not only causes air pollution but also water pollution. Fly ash is the gas produced when coal is burned in thermal power plants, due to

rain. Acid rain causes great damage to people, crops, and water resources. In this way, the atmosphere is polluted by sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide gases.

"And why are these gases being released in large quantities? The reason for them is human civilization. Pollution is caused by the increased use of coal, kerosene, petrol and diesel used as fuels for vehicles. In addition, gases like coal and diesel are used in thermal power plants for electricity generation. Harmful gases always enter the atmosphere. Waste materials released from industries, radioactive rays emitted from nuclear materials used in nuclear power plants, paints used for automobile vehicles, etc. are very harmful. Especially due to cutting down forests, the ecological balance is disturbed, the oxy-



which fertile lands turn into barren lands. Fly ash is a type of ash that causes disruption to motor vehicles and aircraft. It causes respiratory problems and vision problems. Petroleum products and gasoline are examples of hydrocarbons. Hydrocarbons are compounds of hydrogen and carbon. Lead is released in petroleum products. This causes mental retardation in children. It also stunts the growth of plants. These are the main causes of lung cancer.

The suspended particles of solid and liquid particles less than one micrometer in size in the air are called 'aerosols'. Sulfur dioxide not only irritates the eyes and respiratory tract of humans but also damages the lungs. Generally, atmospheric air contains 78.32 percent nitrogen, 20.16 percent oxygen, and 0.38 percent carbon dioxide. Some other substances are added to these and pollute the air. The World Health Organization defines air pollution as follows - Air pollution is the presence of certain substances in the air at levels that are harmful to humans and the environment. Motor vehicle exhaust contains high levels of carbon monoxide. This is a dangerous toxic gas.

Sulfur dioxide is responsible for the discoloration of world-famous monuments like the Taj Mahal. Sulfur dioxide also causes nasal congestion and breathing difficulties. When it rains, it dissolves in rainwater and turns into sulfuric acid. This is what causes acid

gen content decreases and the carbon dioxide content increases. Smoke and harmful gases are released into the atmosphere during natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and fires. Everyone should take action to prevent air pollution that is causing damage in these ways. The Indian government introduced the 'Air Pollution Act' in 1981. And in 1986, the 'Environment The 'Conservation Act' has also been implemented. Smoke, ash, and toxic gases emitted from industries should be released into the atmosphere only after filtering them with filters.

In addition, such industries, such as thermal power plants and nuclear reactors, should be built away from people's homes. Instead of fuels like petrol and diesel used for trains and vehicles, biofuels should be used. This will greatly reduce air pollution. By protecting forests, trees will grow and the oxygen content will increase. If the waste emitted from factories is reused, a lot of pollution will be reduced. Students in schools and colleges should be made aware of air pollution. Thus, we can see that air pollution laws are implemented. Not only humans but also all living things, trees and plants are being harmed due to air pollution. Carbon monoxide gas is increasing due to toxic gases. Everyone has the responsibility to ensure that such harmful gases are not in the atmosphere. We all have the responsibility to protect the ozone layer and prevent many diseases.

Qatar: 12 indian nationals die in gas facility explosion

DOHA, JUNE 22

Qatari authorities on Monday confirmed that 12 Indian nationals have died in the Ras Laffan incident on Sunday night, the Embassy of India in Qatar stated. We extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the departed souls," the embassy wrote on X.

Qatari authorities have also confirmed that all those injured in the incident are in stable condition and are receiving appropriate medical treatment.

The Embassy is working in close contact with the Qatari authorities to extend all possible help to the Indian

nationals and their families affected by this incident, including ensuring that the mortal remains of the deceased are sent to India at the earliest.

According to a statement by the Qatari Ministry of Interior, 13 people died, and 66 others were injured due to a technical malfunction during an operation at a factory in Ras Laffan Industrial City. The statement also noted that authorities are continuing their procedure to verify the circumstances of the incident to accurately determine its technical causes and take the necessary measures in accordance with the applicable legal and technical frameworks.

It also highlighted that no leaks

were detected resulting from the incident that would pose a threat to the safety of individuals or the surrounding environment. The Ministry also extended its condolences to the families of the deceased. In a statement on X, QatarEnergy said there was an operational incident during the start-up of operations at Ras Laffan Industrial City, which resulted in an explosion and fire at the Barzan local gas supply facility in the evening hours of Sunday, June 21, 2026. Emergency response teams were deployed immediately to contain the fire, which is now under control. QatarEnergy added that it will continue to communicate the latest available information.



PAKISTAN'S DEFENCE MINISTER RAISES THE SPECTRE OF WAR OVER RIVER FLOWS AS INDIA PUSHES AHEAD AFTER THE SUSPENSION OF THE INDUS WATERS TREATY



THE CRISIS BEHIND THE CRISIS
BEYOND THE RHETORIC AND THE THREATS LIES
PAKISTAN'S DEEPENING WATER EMERGENCY—
POOR MANAGEMENT, SHRINKING RESERVES
AND A FUTURE RUNNING DRY

PAKISTAN'S DEFENCE MINISTER RAISES THE SPECTRE OF WAR OVER RIVER FLOWS AS INDIA PUSHES AHEAD AFTER THE SUSPENSION OF THE INDUS WATERS TREATY. BEHIND THE FIERY STATEMENTS LIES A LARGER BATTLE INVOLVING TERRORISM, NATIONAL SECURITY, WATER SCARCITY AND THE FUTURE OF SOUTH ASIA'S MOST VITAL RIVER SYSTEM.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

A sharp warning from Pakistan's Defence Minister has brought the Indus river dispute back into the spotlight. As India continues to reassess water cooperation following the Pahalgam terror attack, Islamabad is portraying water as a matter of national security. Yet beyond the rhetoric lies a harder

reality. India's ability to alter river flows remains limited in the near term, while Pakistan's deepening water crisis is rooted as much in domestic challenges as in regional tensions. The latest exchange signals that water is no longer being discussed merely as a shared resource. It is increasingly being viewed through the prism of strategy, security and political leverage.

South Asia's most sensitive fault line has acquired a new dimension. The argument is no longer confined to diplomacy, terrorism or military preparedness. It now runs through the rivers that descend from the Himalayas and sustain millions of lives on both sides of the border. Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has delivered a warning that has instantly drawn attention across the region. Khawaja Asif made these statements in an interview with ARY News (Reported on 21-22, 2026). Declaring water to be a matter of national security, he has stated that Pakistan would not remain passive if it believes India is taking steps that threaten its water interests. 'The

moment we feel our national security is under threat, and water is part of our national security, we will go to war against India" he said on Sunday. The statement has injected fresh tension into an already strained relationship between the two neighbours. The warning comes at a time when the shadow of the Pahalgam terror attack still hangs heavily over bilateral relations. India's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance after the attack marked a decisive change in policy. For decades, water cooperation survived wars, diplomatic breakdowns and military crises. The treaty remained one of the few functioning bridges between two countries that often disagreed on almost everything else.

A TREATY UNDER STRAIN

That bridge is now under severe strain. New Delhi's position is rooted in a larger security argument. Indian policymakers have increasingly questioned whether arrangements built on mutual trust can continue unchanged when concerns over cross border terrorism remain unresolved. The suspension of the treaty has therefore become more than a technical water issue. It has evolved into a strategic message. Yet, amid the political noise, an important reality is often overlooked. Rivers are not pipelines controlled by a single switch. The impression created by political speeches is that India can instantly stop water from flowing into Pakistan. The physical realities tell a different story. The Indus river system carries enormous volumes of water generated by glaciers, snowmelt and monsoon rainfall. Existing infrastructure allows regulation and management of flows within limits, but any large scale diversion would require years of investment, major storage facilities and extensive engineering works.

THE CRISIS BENEATH THE RHETORIC

That reality does not diminish Pakistan's concerns. Water scarcity has emerged as one of the country's most pressing challenges. Agricultural regions are under pressure. Groundwater reserves are shrinking. Population growth continues to place greater demands on limited resources. Climate variability is adding another layer of uncertainty to an already difficult situation. The uncomfortable truth facing Pakistan is that many of these pressures existed long before the current dispute. Water experts have repeatedly highlighted issues involving storage capacity, irrigation efficiency, groundwater management and provincial disputes over allocation. The suspension of treaty mechanisms has increased anxiety, but it has not created the

underlying crisis. That is why the present confrontation carries significance far beyond the language of immediate threats. What is unfolding is a contest over leverage. India seeks greater control over the utilisation of waters available within its legal and geographical reach. Pakistan seeks to ensure that the river system continues to provide the lifeline upon which much of its agriculture and economy depend. Between those positions lies a widening gap filled with mistrust.

THE DANGER OF TURNING WATER INTO A WEAPON

The greatest concern is not the prospect of an immediate military conflict. The greater concern is the gradual transformation of water into a strategic weapon in public discourse. Once that mindset takes hold, every dam becomes a geopolitical statement, every canal becomes a diplomatic flashpoint and every engineering project becomes a subject of suspicion.

THE POLITICS OF THE INDUS ENTERS A NEW ERA

The latest war talk over water should be viewed not merely as a headline grabbing exchange but as a signal of a deeper transformation in regional politics. The Indus Waters Treaty once stood as evidence that practical cooperation could survive even the harshest political storms. Today, that assumption is being tested as never before. India and Pakistan are entering an era in which water, security and national strategy are becoming increasingly intertwined. The challenge for both nations is clear. They can allow suspicion to dictate the future of the rivers that sustain millions, or they can eventually rediscover the value of stability in a region where every drop of water carries economic, political and strategic weight. The stakes could hardly be higher.

THE CRISIS BEHIND THE CRISIS

While headlines focus on India and the Indus Waters Treaty, a quieter story is unfolding inside Pakistan itself. Water availability per person has fallen dramatically over the decades. Rapid urban growth, pressure on groundwater reserves, ageing irrigation systems and recurring climate shocks have combined to create a structural challenge. Experts warn that even if every treaty mechanism were fully restored tomorrow, Pakistan would still face difficult choices about water conservation, storage and distribution. The current dispute has therefore exposed not just a diplomatic fault line but a domestic policy challenge that cannot be solved by rhetoric alone.



Starmer leaves
India-UK
relations on
strong footing
for next UK PM,
say experts
BY ADITI KHANNA

LONDON: (Jun 22) Keir Starmer, as British Prime Minister, not only oversaw the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India but leaves bilateral relations on a solid footing for his successor to build on, British Indian experts said on Monday.

Starmer's resignation sets the clock ticking for the Labour Party to elect its new leader, with newly elected member of Parliament Andy Burnham looking set to take charge at 10 Downing Street in the coming weeks. "When it comes to India, it is under his prime ministership that the UK-India Free Trade Agreement was signed, something that we started negotiating way back in January 2022," said Lord Karan Bilimoria, founder of Cobra Beer and co-chair of the India All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).

Kunal Shah Joins
Rising League
of Global Indian
Executives
NEW DELHI: (JUN 22)

The appointment of Kunal Shah as the global head of WhatsApp marks a significant addition to the growing list of Indian-origin executives steering the world's most influential technology companies. Shah, the founder of the fintech platform CRED, is transitioning to Meta's global leadership team to lead the global tech giant's messaging platform, a move that follows a path laid by a generation of leaders who have moved from the Indian ecosystem to the pinnacle of Silicon Valley. This transition places Shah within an elite group of professionals who manage platforms with billions of users and trillions of dollars in market value, reinforcing the trend of Indian talent being sought after for the strategic vision required to lead global digital services.

Telangana
pitches for 44 pc
import duty on
crude palm oil,
exclusive RFCL
urea allocation
NEW DELHI: (JUN 22)

Telangana on Monday urged the Centre to restore import duty on crude palm oil (CPO) to 44 per cent from the current 10 per cent, and to exclusively allocate urea produced at the Ramagundam Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (RFCL) plant to the state, pressing both demands ahead of the critical kharif sowing season.

State IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu raised the issues during a meeting with Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi, an official statement said.

On fertilisers, the minister cited disruptions faced by the state last year, arguing that exclusive allocation of RFCL output would provide supply stability. On palm oil, he said restoring the higher tariff was essential to protect the livelihoods of oil palm farmers.

MONEY MATTERS
Sensex closes 291 points higher,
Nifty above 24,100; RIL up 1%

Benchmark indices ended higher on Monday, extending their recent rally as investors cheered progress in US-Iran peace talks, lower crude oil prices and gains in Reliance Industries following its annual general meeting.

The S&P BSE Sensex rose 291.17 points, or 0.38%, to close at 77,094.07, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 89.80 points, or 0.37%, to settle at 24,102.90. Both benchmark indices have now risen in six of the last seven trading sessions, helped by easing geopolitical tensions, softer crude oil prices and signs that foreign investor selling pressure is moderating.

RELIANCE, IT STOCKS LEAD THE GAINS

Reliance Industries emerged as one of the biggest contributors to Monday's gains, climbing 1.31% after investors reacted positively to announcements made at the company's AGM. Technology stocks also staged a recovery



after Friday's sharp selloff triggered by Accenture's cautious outlook. Tech Mahindra rose 1.87%, Infosys gained 1.29%, while TCS, HCLTech and other IT counters ended in positive territory, helping the Nifty IT index advance 0.74%. Among Sensex stocks, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Reliance Industries, Infosys, BEL and Bajaj Finserv were among the top gainers.

PEACE TALKS AND LOWER OIL PRICES SUPPORT SENTIMENT

Investor sentiment remained supported by developments in the Middle East after the first round of US-Iran

talks ended with progress on a roadmap for a final agreement within 60 days. The negotiations helped calm concerns over a prolonged disruption in the region and reduced fears surrounding global oil supplies. Brent crude slipped below the \$80-per-barrel mark and was trading around \$79.36, down 1.5%. Lower crude prices are particularly beneficial for India as they help contain inflation, reduce import costs and support the rupee.

BANKING, HEALTHCARE AND MEDIA SHINE

Sectoral performance remained

largely positive, though gains were selective rather than broad-based. Nifty Media was the top-performing sector, rising 1.42%, followed by Nifty Pharma (+1.24%), Nifty Healthcare (+1.05%), Nifty Oil & Gas (+0.92%) and Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank (+0.76%). Banking stocks also remained firm, with Nifty Financial Services gaining 0.65% and Nifty PSU Bank rising 0.54%. The healthcare pack continued its recent outperformance, reflecting investors' preference for defensive sectors amid lingering global uncertainties. The broader market continued to outperform benchmark indices. The Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 0.60%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 rose 0.34%. Nifty Midcap Financial Services added 0.48%. India VIX fell nearly 1% to 12.84, indicating reduced market volatility and improving investor confidence.

MONSOON REMAINS A KEY WATCHPOINT

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said markets trad-

ed in a narrow range with a positive bias as investors monitored developments in US-Iran negotiations. He noted that utilities, banking and healthcare stocks supported the market, while investors increasingly adopted a stock-specific approach.

Nair, however, cautioned that the slow progress of the southwest monsoon remains a concern and could create inflationary pressures if rainfall does not improve in the coming weeks. Despite that risk, he said the broader outlook remains constructive, supported by resilient earnings growth and continued policy support. Markets will continue to track developments in US-Iran negotiations, crude oil prices and monsoon progress. Investors will also watch foreign institutional investor flows, the rupee's trajectory and upcoming corporate earnings for fresh direction. For now, lower crude prices, stable macros and improving risk appetite continue to provide support to Indian equities.

India adds record
2.7 GW of rooftop
solar capacity in Q1

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

In the first quarter of the Calendar Year 2026 (January-March), India added a record 2.7 GW of rooftop solar capacity, marking the sector's strongest-ever quarterly performance. According to a report by Mercom India Research, installations surged 125 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) with India's cumulative rooftop solar installations reached 23.5 GW at the end of March 2026. It said the surge in rooftop solar installations was largely driven by robust residential demand under the PM Surya Ghar scheme and rapid adoption across large states, including Uttar Pradesh. The residential segment accounted for nearly 82 per cent of the total rooftop installations in the March quarter, demonstrating the role of households in driving India's clean energy transition. The industrial, commercial, and government segments followed at 11 per cent, 7 per cent, and 0.4 per cent of the quarterly additions, respectively, the report showed. Installations

during the quarter were driven by subsidy-backed systems, simplified approval processes, and increasing state-level implementation support under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the Mercom India report stated. He top 10 states accounted for 80 per cent of cumulative rooftop solar installations as of March 2026. These included Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana. Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat led rooftop solar installations during the March quarter, accounting for more than 17 per cent, 16 per cent and 15 per cent of installations, respectively. In terms of cumulative installed rooftop solar capacity, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh continued to lead, accounting for approximately 24 per cent, 16 per cent, and 9 per cent of total installations, respectively. Meanwhile, Assam recorded the highest compounded quarterly growth rate at nearly 40 per cent between Q1 2025 and Q1 2026.

India wants lower tariffs in US trade deal;
hopes to sign 1st phase before July 24

India is pressing the United States for lower tariffs and better market access in the proposed trade pact. The talks also carry wider significance as both sides weigh sensitive sectors and broader strategic cooperation.

India is pushing for lower tariffs and better market access as part of its proposed trade agreement with the United States, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday, while expressing hope that the first phase of the pact could be signed before July 24. Speaking at a media conclave in New Delhi, Goyal said negotiations with the US are taking longer than expected because of tariff-related issues, but both sides remain engaged in discussions. "I will be the happiest person if the first tranche of the trade deal with the US is signed before July 24," Goyal said, according to Reuters.

WHY THE DEAL IS TAKING TIME



Goyal said the trade pact has taken longer to finalise because of the 50% tariff that was initially imposed on Indian goods. The minister noted that India is seeking preferential tariffs under the agreement. In simple terms, this would mean lower duties and easier access for Indian products and services in the US market, helping exporters become more competitive. The proposed deal is also expected to include rules of origin provisions, which determine where products are manufactured and whether they qualify

for trade benefits, as well as measures aimed at boosting investment flows between the two countries.

INDIA WANTS TO PROTECT KEY SECTORS

While India is keen to expand trade with the United States, Goyal stressed that the government will protect the interests of sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and dairy. The minister said the interests of farmers, fishermen and the dairy industry remain a key consideration in the negotiations. These sectors have traditionally been among the most closely

guarded areas in India's trade talks, with New Delhi often taking a cautious approach to opening them up to foreign competition.

MORE THAN JUST TRADE

Goyal said India and the United States are not only discussing tariffs and market access but are also working to deepen cooperation in strategic areas. According to the minister, both countries are seriously engaged in expanding cooperation in defence, critical minerals and investment. The comments come as India and the US continue to strengthen economic and strategic ties amid growing geopolitical competition and efforts to diversify global supply chains.

SERVICES SECTOR COULD BE A BIG WINNER

The minister also said India expects trade agreements with both the United States and the European Union to create new opportunities for

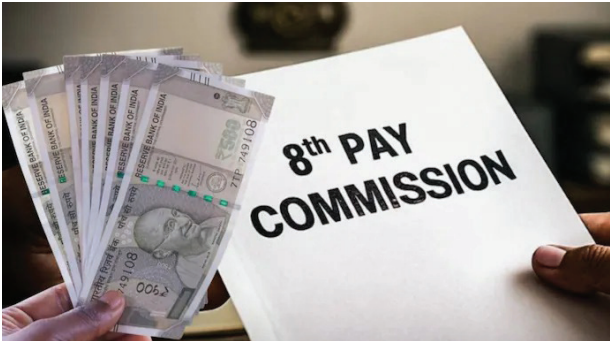
the country's services sector.

India is one of the world's largest exporters of services, including information technology, consulting, engineering and business process management. Greater market access for Indian professionals and companies in these sectors could become one of the biggest gains from future trade agreements. Apart from the United States, India is working on trade agreements with several other partners. Goyal said New Delhi is aiming to conclude trade pacts with Canada, Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as part of its broader strategy to expand exports and strengthen economic ties with key markets. The India-US trade agreement is being closely watched by businesses and investors, as it could shape trade flows, investment opportunities and economic relations between the world's largest and fifth-largest economies for years to come.

8th Pay Commission in Lucknow

Why salaries, pensions and fitment factor are in focus

With the 8th Pay Commission holding fresh talks in Lucknow, expectations around pay revisions and pension increases are once again in focus. The discussions could help shape the recommendations that follow.



These include employee unions, pensioner associations and representative groups from different sectors.

The objective is to understand key issues related to pay structures, allowances, pension revisions and other service-related matters. The feedback received during these consultations could play an important role in determining the Commission's final recommendations.

The Lucknow meeting is part of a broader consultation exercise that has already seen discussions in April, May and June. More meetings are planned in July, with additional visits expected across states and union territories.

WHY IS THE COMMISSION MEETING STAKEHOLDERS?

Before submitting its recommendations to the government, the 8th Pay Commission is gathering feedback from various stakeholders.

8th Pay Commission.

Government employees are keenly watching developments as the Commission evaluates demands related to pay revisions and allowances. However, the final recommendations will need to strike a balance between employee expectations and the government's financial position.

WHY PENSIONERS ARE PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION

The outcome of these discussions is not important only for serving employees. Nearly 69 lakh pensioners and thousands of family pension beneficiaries are also closely monitoring the Commission's work. Any change in salary structures could eventually lead to revisions in pensions and retirement benefits. This is why pensioner groups are actively participating in the

consultation process.

FITMENT FACTOR UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

A major topic in the ongoing discussions is the fitment factor. The fitment factor is the multiplier used to revise existing salaries and pensions when a new Pay Commission is implemented. It plays a crucial role in determining the size of any increase in pay and pension. Adhil Shetty, CEO of BankBazaar, said, "The 8th Pay Commission has moved into the consultation phase, with employee unions and pensioner groups presenting their demands on pay revision, pensions and allowances. For millions of government employees and retirees, the biggest question is what the new pay and pension structure could look like."

He added, "One of the most closely watched aspects is the fitment factor, which determines how existing salaries and pensions are revised."

DEMANDS HAVE ALREADY STARTED EMERGING

According to Shetty, some employee organisations have suggested a higher fitment factor than the one used by the 7th Pay Commission. "For context, the 7th Pay Commission adopted a fitment factor of 2.57, raising the mini-

mum basic pay from 7,000 to 18,000. This time, some employee organisations have proposed a fitment factor of 3.83, which would raise the current minimum basic pay of 18,000 to nearly 69,000 if accepted," he said. However, he cautioned that these figures are demands made by employee groups and should not be treated as the Commission's likely recommendation. "That remains a demand rather than a recommendation. The commission will ultimately have to balance employee expectations, inflation trends and fiscal realities," Shetty noted.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Lucknow meeting is one of several consultations planned by the Commission before it prepares its recommendations. Inputs received from employees, pensioners and other stakeholders will be reviewed as part of the process. "The commission's recommendations will affect nearly 55 lakh employees and 69 lakh pensioners across the country," Shetty said. For now, the discussions in Lucknow are being closely watched because they offer an early glimpse into the issues that could shape the future pay and pension structure for millions of people across India.



INALSA Launches
SteelChef DW5.5 Air Fryer
with Smart Features

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE 2026

INALSA, one of India's established home appliance brands, has announced the launch of the SteelChef DW5.5 Air Fryer. With an MRP of ₹13,999, the product is currently available exclusively on Amazon at a special launch price of ₹5,999, offering consumers savings of up to 60%. As consumers become more mindful of the materials used in everyday cooking, stainless steel continues to remain a trusted choice in Indian kitchens. Long valued for its durability and familiarity, the material is now influencing appliance preferences as well, with more households seeking stainless steel components in products they use regularly. Following the launch of the Nutri Fry DuoSlim, INALSA has expanded its air fryer portfolio with the introduction of the SteelChef DW5.5, bringing a new focus on material innovation to the category. The appliance offers a 5.5-litre cooking capacity suited to everyday family meal preparation and is powered by a 1600W heating system that supports eight cooking functions, including frying, baking, grilling, and roasting. These modes allow households to prepare a wide range of dishes using significantly less oil than conventional frying methods. For greater cooking control, the appliance features adjustable temperature settings from 80°C to 200°C alongside a variable timer that runs up to 60 minutes. The appliance incorporates an SS304 food-grade stainless steel cooking pan and stainless steel separators across all contact areas, ensuring that every surface involved in the cooking process is made from a material with a well-established record in Indian kitchens. Unlike coated cooking surfaces, which can raise durability and re-

liability concerns over extended use, SS304 stainless steel maintains its integrity across repeated cooking cycles, offering a more dependable interior environment for daily meal preparation. Built around this growing material awareness, the INALSA SteelChef DW5.5 air fryer brings SS304 food-grade stainless steel into the cooking chamber itself, placing a trusted material at the centre of the cooking experience rather than treating it as an exterior finish. Speaking on the launch, Mr Jitendra Chauhan, CEO of INALSA said: "The strong response to our DuoSlim Air Fryer reinforced a growing consumer focus on healthier lifestyles and smarter cooking solutions. As these expectations evolve, we felt there was an opportunity to create a product that combines modern technology with trusted materials. Air fryers have transformed everyday cooking, but the materials used inside them have largely remained unchanged. With the SteelChef DW5.5, we have brought SS304 stainless steel into the heart of the cooking experience, delivering a solution that is modern, convenient, and designed for everyday use." Further supporting ease of use, the SteelChef DW5.5 includes a clear cook viewing window that allows users to monitor the cooking process during the cycle without opening the basket and disrupting internal heat circulation. An intelligent touch control panel provides straightforward access to all cooking settings and functions.

With the SteelChef DW5.5, INALSA brings together trusted materials, reduced-oil cooking, and everyday cooking convenience in a single appliance reflecting a broader understanding that what food touches during cooking matters just as much as how it is cooked.





The Soul of Central Spain

A Journey Through Castilla-La Mancha

Away from the crowded Mediterranean beaches, the cosmopolitan energy of Barcelona, and the relentless pace of Madrid lies a region that many travelers overlook but few ever forget. Stretching across the heart of Spain, Castilla-La Mancha is a land of vast horizons, timeless villages, medieval fortresses, and legendary windmills. It is a place where history, literature, gastronomy, and tradition come together to create one of the most authentic travel experi-

ences in Europe. Immortalized in Miguel de Cervantes' masterpiece *Don Quixote*, Castilla-La Mancha is often associated with the image of a lone knight charging at windmills. Yet this remarkable region is far more than a literary setting. It is the cultural and historical backbone of Spain, offering visitors an opportunity to explore landscapes untouched by mass tourism, discover centuries-old traditions, and experience the warm hospitality of rural Spanish life.

A Land Defined by Space and Silence

One of the first things visitors notice about Castilla-La Mancha is its immense sense of space. The region occupies a large portion of Spain's central plateau, known as the Meseta Central. Endless fields stretch toward the horizon, broken only by vineyards, olive groves, castles, and white-washed villages. The landscape changes dramatically as one travels through the region. In the province of Cuenca, steep limestone cliffs plunge into deep river gorges. The Montes de Toledo are covered with dense forests that shelter wildlife including deer, wild boar, and Iberian eagles. Meanwhile, the volcanic terrain of Campo de Calatrava reveals a geological history that few visitors expect to find in central Spain.

The changing seasons add further beauty. Spring transforms the plains into a patchwork of green fields and wildflowers. Summer bathes the countryside in golden sunlight, creating scenes that seem unchanged for centuries. Autumn brings grape harvests and the blooming of purple saffron flowers, while winter covers the highlands with crisp frost and clear blue skies.

This dramatic yet peaceful landscape has inspired painters, writers, and poets for generations. It is easy to understand why Cervantes chose these plains as the backdrop for one of literature's greatest adventures.

The Legacy of Three Cultures

Few regions in Europe showcase cultural coexistence as vividly as Castilla-La Mancha. For centuries, Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived side by side, shaping the architecture, traditions, and identity of the region.

This period, known as *La Convivencia*, left an enduring mark on local culture. Visitors can see Islamic influences in decorative brickwork, Jewish heritage in synagogues and historic quarters, and Christian traditions reflected in cathedrals and monasteries.

The result is a fascinating cultural mosaic where different civilizations contributed to a shared heritage. This blending of influences is especially evident in Toledo, one of Spain's

most historically significant cities. Beyond architecture, the legacy survives in local crafts. Toledo's world-famous swords have been forged for centuries using techniques passed down through generations. Talavera de la Reina is celebrated for its colorful ceramics, while traditional embroidery from Lagartera remains highly prized throughout Spain.

Festivals also preserve this rich cultural heritage. Religious processions, historical reenactments, and harvest celebrations continue to bring communities together, ensuring that ancient customs remain alive in the modern era.

Toledo: The Imperial Jewel

No visit to Castilla-La Mancha is complete without exploring Toledo. Perched on a hill surrounded by the Tagus River, this UNESCO World Heritage city is often described as an open-air museum.

Once the capital of Spain, Toledo served as a political, cultural, and religious center for centuries. Its narrow streets wind through a maze of churches, synagogues, mosques, and palaces, each reflecting a different chapter of the city's history.

The magnificent Santa María

Cathedral stands among the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Europe. The imposing Alcázar fortress dominates the skyline and offers spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. Visitors should also explore the Synagogue of El Tránsito and the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, both remarkable examples of Spain's multicultural heritage. Art lovers can discover the works of El Greco, the celebrated painter whose dramatic style became closely associated with Toledo.

As evening falls, the city takes on a magical atmosphere. The illuminated monuments, stone streets, and centuries-old buildings create an unforgettable setting that transports visitors back in time.

Cuenca: Architecture on the Edge

If Toledo represents the historical soul of Castilla-La Mancha, Cuenca showcases its architectural daring.

Built atop a narrow ridge between two deep river gorges, Cuenca appears to defy gravity. The city's most famous landmarks are the Casas Colgadas, or Hanging Houses, which cling dramatically to the cliff edge.

These medieval structures

The Flavors of Castilla-La Mancha

The cuisine of Castilla-La Mancha reflects the resilience and creativity of its people. Often described as *cocina de raíz*—root cuisine—it is deeply connected to the land and its traditions.

At the center of local gastronomy is Queso Manchego, Spain's most famous cheese. Produced exclusively from the milk of Manchega sheep, it ranges from mild and creamy to intensely rich and aged.

Another regional favorite is Pisto Manchego, a flavorful dish made from tomatoes, peppers, onions, and zucchini slowly cooked in olive oil. It is often topped with a fried egg and served with crusty bread.

For a more substantial meal, travelers should try Gazpacho Manchego. Unlike the cold tomato soup from Andalusia, this version is a hearty game stew featuring rabbit, partridge, and flatbread soaked in aromatic broth. Atascaburras, traditionally prepared during winter, combines potatoes, salted cod, garlic, olive oil,

walnuts, and eggs into a rich and comforting dish. Meals are often accompanied by local wines, which have undergone a remarkable transformation in recent decades.

The Wine Renaissance

Castilla-La Mancha possesses the largest continuous vineyard area in the world. For many years, the region was known primarily for producing bulk wine. Today, however, it has emerged as one of Spain's most exciting wine destinations.

Modern winemakers have embraced innovation while preserving traditional methods. The result is a growing reputation for high-quality wines that express the character of the local landscape.

Tempranillo, known locally as Cencibel, produces elegant reds, while Airén creates fresh and distinctive whites. Wine tourism has flourished as visitors seek authentic vineyard experiences away from the more crowded wine regions.

Many wineries offer guided tours, tastings, and opportunities to learn about the winemaking process from grape to bottle.

have become symbols of Spain's architectural ingenuity. Viewed from the San Pablo Bridge, they create one of the most iconic scenes in the country.

Yet Cuenca offers much more than spectacular views. Its historic center is filled with charming squares, churches, and cobbled streets. The Gothic cathedral, one of Spain's earliest examples of Gothic architecture, deserves special attention.

A surprising attraction is the Museum of Spanish Abstract Art, housed within one of the Hanging Houses. The museum provides a fascinating contrast between medieval architecture and modern artistic expression.

Consuegra and the Windmills of Don Quixote

For many travelers, the image most closely associated with Castilla-La Mancha is that of white windmills standing against a bright blue sky.

Nowhere captures this image better than Consuegra. Situated atop Cerro Calderico hill, twelve historic windmills overlook the surrounding plains alongside the imposing Castillo de la Muela. These windmills are believed to have inspired Cervantes' famous episode in which Don Quixote mistakes them for giants and charges into battle.

Today, visitors can enter several restored windmills to learn about traditional milling techniques. The panoramic views from the hilltop are among the finest in central Spain, especially at sunrise and sunset.

Each October, Consuegra hosts the Saffron Rose Festival, celebrating one of the region's most valuable agricultural products.

Almagro: Spain's Theatrical Treasure

Hidden within Ciudad Real province lies one of Spain's most charming historic towns. Almagro is renowned for its beautifully preserved Plaza Mayor and its extraordinary theatrical heritage.

The town is home to the Corral de Comedias, the only fully preserved 17th-century open-air theater still operating in the world. Visitors can attend performances much as audiences did centuries ago during Spain's Golden Age.

The annual International

Classical Theatre Festival attracts performers and spectators from around the globe, transforming the town into a vibrant cultural hub.

Walking through Almagro feels like stepping into another era, with elegant mansions, convents, and arcaded squares preserving the spirit of old Spain.

Practical Travel Tips

The best times to visit Castilla-La Mancha are spring and autumn. These seasons offer pleasant temperatures and showcase the countryside at its most beautiful. Travelers should remember that smaller towns often observe a traditional afternoon break between approximately 2:00 PM and 4:30 PM. Rather than viewing this as an inconvenience, visitors can embrace the local rhythm by enjoying a leisurely lunch. While Toledo and Cuenca are easily accessible from Madrid via high-speed rail, renting a car provides the greatest freedom for exploring windmill routes, castles, vineyards, and natural parks.

Comfortable walking shoes are essential, particularly in historic towns where steep streets and cobbled pathways are common.

Why Castilla-La Mancha Matters

In a world where many destinations are becoming increasingly crowded and commercialized, Castilla-La Mancha remains refreshingly authentic. It does not seek attention through flashy attractions or mass tourism. Instead, it invites travelers to slow down and connect with Spain's deeper cultural roots.

Whether standing beside a centuries-old windmill, wandering through the medieval streets of Toledo, admiring Cuenca's hanging houses, or sharing a traditional meal in a family-run tavern, visitors encounter a Spain that feels genuine and timeless.

Castilla-La Mancha is more than a destination—it is an experience of history, culture, and landscape woven together into a uniquely Spanish story. For those willing to venture beyond the familiar tourist trail, it offers an unforgettable journey into the quiet, majestic heart of the nation.





CRICKET

Mushfigur Rahim named ICC Men's POTM for May



DUBAI: Veteran Bangladesh batter Mushfigur Rahim has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for May 2026 after playing a pivotal role in his team's dominant 2-0 Test series sweep over Pakistan in the ongoing ICC World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle. Mushfigur beat competition from fellow Bangladeshi teammate Taijul Islam and Nepal all-rounder Dipendra Singh Airee to win the award for the second time in his career. He previously won it in May 2021. The 39-year-old was Bangladesh's top performer with the bat, scoring 253 runs in the two Tests at an average of 63.25. This helped the Tigers achieve a second consecutive Test series sweep over Pakistan and move up in the World Test Championship standings. "It is a great honour to be named the ICC Player of the Month again. I am especially happy that this recognition came for my performances in Test cricket," Mushfigur said after receiving the award.

Record-breaking Messi helps Argentina reach knockouts with 2-0 win over Austria



DALLAS, JUNE 22

Lionel Messi produced another magical display and nailed a few records, scoring a brace to help defending champions Argentina beat Austria 2-0 in a Group J match and advance to the knock-out stages of the FIFA World Cup 2026 at the Dallas Stadium in Dallas on Monday. Messi made it to the record books by scoring his 17th and 18th goals in World Cups, setting the record for most individual goals in the history of the tournament. Two days before his 39th birthday, the Argentine talisman brushed aside missing a penalty early in the first half, to give his team the lead in the 38th minute and then doubled it seconds before the end of the match to seal a memorable victory for the defending champions. With their second Group J win, Argentina secured their progress to the last 32. If Jordan fail to beat Algeria later in the day, they will be confirmed as group winners. The day belonged to Messi as he scored his first goal of the day in the 38th minute, setting the record for most individual goals by any player in the

tournament's history. This was Messi's 17th goal in the FIFA World Cup and also his fourth in the 2026 edition. Messi not only broke the tournament's scoring record, but he also joined Just Fontaine of France and Jairzinho of Brazil as the third man to score in six successive World Cup games. This is Messi's fourth goal of this tournament, taking his tally to 17 at the World Cup. He then made it five goals for the 2026 edition towards the end of the match. Messi improved on the record of 16 goals held by Miroslav Klose of Germany. The list is now led by Messi with 17 goals, followed by Klose at 16 and Ronaldo (Brazil) at 15 goals. Kylian Mbappe of France and Gerd Müller of Germany are next in the list with 14 goals. He then extended his record by scoring an opportunistic goal in the fifth minute of added time (90+5) to make it 2-0 for Argentina. Reigning tournament champions Argentina fought off some tough challenges from Austria before Messi led their fine comeback with a superb goal. He got possession of the ball and passed it to Thiago Almada. Almada sent a masterful pass

back to Messi, who received the ball and launched a great shot to beat Austria's Alexander Schlager. He could have set the record a few minutes earlier, but missed a penalty. At half-time, Argentina were leading Austria 1-0 in the match played at the Dallas Stadium in Dallas. Argentina came back strongly to impose an offensive style of play. They dominated play in the opening minutes but could not take the lead as Messi missed a penalty, which caused them to lose control of the proceedings. Austria dominated the next few minutes of play and managed to take control of the game, pressing high and cutting off the opponent's build-up. Playing aggressively, they kept the game even for the next 15 minutes. However, they were completely ineffective, as they could not translate their dominance into a goal. Argentina then wrested back the initiative when Messi created a play in midfield. He combined well with Thiago Almada to create a good opportunity and then converted it to give Argentina a 1-0 lead and set the record for most individual goals scored by a player.



You Can Do This : Let's Move

(On the occasion of "International Olympic Day" on 23 June)

Sport is joy, sport brings people together. Sport and physical activity are also the low-cost, high-impact tool for healthy bodies, healthy minds, and resilient communities. Physical inactivity is a silent global health emergency - one that is shortening lives and straining health systems. The famous slogan of games and sports is "Healthy Mind in Healthy Body", indicates the importance of physical fitness for proactive functioning of mind. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) by 'Baron Pierre de Coubertin' in Paris in 1894. This day started on 23 June 1948 to promote sports, health among all age groups, and the values of the Olympic Movement like excellence, friendship, and respect.

goal of bringing people together through fair competition and unity. "International Olympic Day" is celebrated annually on 23 June to commemorate the foundation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) by 'Baron Pierre de Coubertin' in Paris in 1894. This day started on 23 June 1948 to promote sports, health among all age groups, and the values of the Olympic Movement like excellence, friendship, and respect.

International Olympic Day-2026 Theme

In essence, International Olympic Day is about coming together to "Move, Learn, and Discover", the pillars of the day, making it a celebration of health, culture, and education through sport. The theme of International Olympic Day-2026 is "You Can Do This ! Let's Move" Shining light on the benefits of playing sport and working out together, celebrating all the inspiration, connection, and enjoyment this brings. Today, more than 150 NOCs organise Olympic Day Runs across continents, uniting communities and encouraging mass participation on sports with a simple message of "Get Active, Be Healthy". On this day the sportsmen, sports lovers organise locally the Olympic Day Run for Fun, in addition to the other sports related activities in educational institutions.

- Prof: Madhusudhan Reddy Burra 9949700037.



Tilak Varma's century outshines Aman Rao's onslaught, leads Medak Falcons to 3-wkt win

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

Medak Falcons' captain Tilak Varma led from the front as his side pulled off a heist to chase down 259 against Warangal Warriors and clinch a three-wicket win in Match 3 of the Hyderabad Cricket Association's TG20 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad on Monday. Warriors captain Aman Rao Perala set the tone for the high-scoring contest with his blazing 32-ball century, scoring 142 in 48 balls to help his side post a daunting target of 259. In reply, Tilak's unbeaten 136, which included 14 fours and 8 sixes, along with a crucial cameo from Vikram Naik (27 off 12), led the Falcons home after they were 190/6 in the 15th over, helping them get over the line with two balls to spare. Warangal Warriors got off to a flying start courtesy Aman, who came out all guns blazing and raced to a scintillating 17-ball half-century. Alongside Harshit Choudhary, he put the Medak Falcons bowlers under immense pressure from the outset, with the pair powering the Warriors to 101/0 in the powerplay -- the highest powerplay score of the tournament so far. The opening duo continued to pile on the runs, adding 133 for the first wicket before N Surya Teja finally provided the breakthrough by dismissing Harshit for a brisk 35 off 23 balls in the ninth over. By then, however, the foundation for a massive total had already been laid. Aman showed no signs of slowing down after his partner's departure, continuing his assault with a range of clean and powerful strokes all around the ground.

The opener went on to become the first batter to score a century in the Sreenidhi University TG20, reaching the landmark in just 32 deliveries and producing one of the most memorable knocks of the tournament so far. The 22-year-old, who was picked by the Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2026, anchored the Warriors to 146/1 at the halfway stage of the innings. His side amassed 200 in the 14th over before Rahul Kunta bagged the crucial wicket of Aman for the Falcons. That brought an end to his 142-run marathon knock off 48 balls, which included 12 fours and 13 sixes. Falcons managed to contain the damage towards the backend of the innings with Tilak Varma and Madhukar Manne chipping in with a couple of wickets between them. Despite that, Murugan Abhishek's quickfire 15-ball 32 guided Warriors to a daunting total of 258/7. The run chase began in an exhilarating manner. Despite conceding 17 runs, Anirudh Srivatsa provided the early breakthrough for his side by dismissing Naman Agarwal (12 off 4) in the first over. Tilak got off the blocks quickly to ensure that the Falcons kept up with the required run rate as they scored fifty in the fourth over. Although Shrunjith Reddy (25 off 12) was run out in the last over of the powerplay, Falcons amassed 85/2. The Team India T20I vice-captain continued to march on, registering his half-century in 22 balls to help his side past the 100-run mark in eight overs. Even though Shaunak Kulkarni got the better of Ravi Teja in the ninth over, Falcons stayed in the hunt.

WRPL: Delhi Redz book summit clash with Chennai Bulls

HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

The seventh day of the Rugby Premier League Season 2 witnessed Delhi Redz secure a spot in the Women's Final with a 26-14 victory against Kolkata Banga Tigers, while Hyderabad Heroes and Chennai Bulls also secured victories at the Ganti Mohana Chandra Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Gachibowli, Hyderabad on Monday.

Delhi Redz trounce Kolkata Banga Tigers

With a place in the Women's Final at stake, Kolkata Banga Tigers made a flying start as Sofia Gonzalez scored an early try before Ujjwala Ghuge extended their lead. Delhi Redz responded in the second quarter through Eden Kilgour, while Dumuni Marndi's powerful run brought them closer. Silika Qalo gave the Redz the lead early in the final quarter after a fortu-

nate bounce, and Isadora Lopes added another try as Delhi completed a strong comeback to secure their place in the final.

Hyderabad Heroes beat Bengaluru Bravehearts 45-7

In the men's section, Bengaluru Bravehearts dominated possession early but could not break through Hyderabad Heroes' defence. Maurice Longbottom opened the scoring late in the first quarter before Taitaifono Tavita took control, scoring one try and setting up Ravuama Seruvakula in the second period. Sumit Kumar Roy and Diego Ardao added to Hyderabad's advantage as the Heroes' pace proved too much for Bengaluru. Tavita scored again in the fourth quarter, and although Akuila Rokolisoa got the Bravehearts on the board, Longbottom's late drop goal sealed a comfortable victory.



Chennai Bulls men win against Delhi Redz

Chennai Bulls controlled possession from the outset and took the lead through Marika Korobete, who added a second try in the

next quarter to strengthen their advantage. Hitesh Dagar pulled one back for Delhi Redz, but a tight third quarter saw neither side able to break through. Marcus Kershaw extended the Bulls' lead in the final

period, and despite pressure from the Redz in extra time, Chennai's defence held firm to secure the victory.

Kolkata Banga Tigers hold Mumbai Dreamers

In another clash in the men's section, despite an early yellow card, Kolkata Banga Tigers struck first through Vuiviwa Naduvalo on the counterattack and went on to dominate possession, with Ajay Deswal adding another try. Naduvalo scored again before half-time as the bottom-placed Tigers frustrated the unbeaten Dreamers. The Dreamers responded after the break through a penalty try and two scores from Liam Poulton to take the lead. Brady Rush restored Kolkata's advantage in the final quarter, but Lucas Mignot replied soon after as the match ended in a thrilling draw.

Ex-Wimbledon champ Vondrousova handed a four-year ban for refusing anti-doping test

MIAMI (USA), JUNE 22

Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova has been handed a four-year suspension after refusing to provide a sample during an out-of-competition anti-doping test, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) announced on Monday. The 26-year-old Czech star -- a winner of the Wimbledon women's singles in 2023 -- failed to provide a sample when confronted by a doping control officer at her residence in December 2025. Vondrousova reasoned that she was under considerable stress, had serious mental health issues, and was also in fear for her personal safety and the safety of the family as reasons for refusing the test. But an independent tribunal considered all her claims, as well as hearing the Doping Control Officer. They ruled there was "no compelling justification" for her actions, and therefore extended her provisional ban until June 21, 2030. The Czech, who is currently ranked 122 in the world, will miss out on a significant part of her career due to the ban. ITIA chief executive Karen Moorhouse said, "We understand that the testing process is uncomfortable and can be an additional burden on



players, already facing pressures and scrutiny, but it is essential to protect our sport from the threat of cheating. "We take the safety and welfare of both players and testing staff seriously. Testers are highly professional and trained and are provided with an ID on their person at all times. In all cases where the tester reports they did not know the player, they are testing whether the gender of their witnesses matches that of the player. Players have the right to check the tester's credentials, can verify identity, and can ask for additional forms of ID, too. "Testing procedures at players' homes always respect private lives and property of the athletes, to the

extent required by effective national legislation of the jurisdiction in which testing is occurring. "We are aware that such procedures may present challenges for players and will continue to offer support and work with players to ensure the best possible testing experience, whenever possible." Vondrousova, who became the first unseeded player in history to win a women's singles title at Wimbledon in 2023 when she beat Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in straight sets, is forbidden to play, coach, or attend any events organised or sanctioned by the ITF, WTA, ATP, Grand Slam tournaments, or national tennis association while her ban continues.

Golf: Talwar records best overseas finish of season with tied-12th at England Open

WORCESTERSHIRE, JUNE 22

Saptak Talwar produced his best performance outside India this season, narrowly missing out on a top 10 finish as he ended tied 12th at the English Open on the HotelPlanner Tour. The 27-year-old Indian signed off with a four-under 68 to finish at 10-under-par for the week, just one stroke shy of a share of seventh place after an impressive final-round charge at The Vale Golf Club. It was Talwar's best finish outside India and his second-best result of the season after finishing runner-up at the DP World PGTI Open in March. Starting the final day in a share of 24th at six-under, Talwar climbed rapidly up the leaderboard with his strongest round of the tournament. He made five birdies against just one bogey, picking up shots on the second, 11th, 13th, 15th, and 17th holes. A birdie on the closing 18th would have earned him a place inside the top 10, but he settled for par to finish tied 12th. Talwar had opened the week with a three-under 69 before adding rounds of 71 and 70 to remain in contention heading into



the final round. His closing 68 highlighted an encouraging return to form ahead of the coming weeks on the HotelPlanner Tour. The tournament was won by American John Catlin, who claimed his maiden HotelPlanner Tour title after a marathon seven-hole playoff against Norway's Kristian Krogh Johannessen. Catlin carded a bogey-free five-under 67 in the final round, while Johannessen fired a flawless six-under 66 to erase a one-shot overnight deficit. The Norwegian birdied the 16th and 17th holes to draw level after Catlin had held a two-shot advantage through 15 holes.





Will Anushka Return to the Spotlight?

The star who redefined female-centric cinema continues to command immense love from audiences, but the big question remains — when will Anushka Shetty announce her next film?

Few actresses in Telugu cinema have enjoyed the kind of admiration and longevity that Anushka Shetty has achieved. With a career spanning nearly two decades, the actress has successfully balanced commercial entertainers and women-centric films, carving a unique space for herself in the industry.

Known for her powerful screen presence and dignified performances, Anushka became a household name through a series of memorable roles that showcased both her acting talent and versatility.

The actress was last seen in Ghaati. Ahead of the film's release, Anushka had indicated that she intended to take up more projects and remain active professionally. However, months have passed since the film's arrival, and there has been no official announcement regarding her next venture.

The silence surrounding her upcoming projects has left fans both curious and concerned. Social media platforms frequently witness discussions about when the actress will return to the big screen in a major role.

Industry insiders suggest that Anushka has become extremely selective about the projects she accepts. Reports indicate that physical transformation requirements and

fitness-related challenges have made her cautious while choosing scripts. Filmmakers too are said to be carefully designing projects that suit her strengths and screen image.

Despite the delay, Anushka continues to enjoy a massive fan following across Telugu, Tamil and other South Indian markets. Producers reportedly remain keen to collaborate with her, considering her strong box-office pull and loyal audience base.

There have also been occasional reports linking the actress to digital and OTT projects. However, none of these discussions have materialized into official announcements so far.

Interestingly, Anushka's journey to stardom remains one of the most inspiring in the industry. Before entering films, she worked as a yoga instructor and trained under renowned yoga guru Bharat Thakur. Her life changed after she entered cinema and made her debut with Super in 2005.

From the fantasy blockbuster Arundhati to the thriller Bhaagamathie, Anushka established herself as one of the few actresses capable of carrying films entirely on her shoulders. Her portrayal of Devaseena in the Baahubali franchise further elevated her to pan-Indian fame.

Films such as Vedam, Rudhrnadevi, Size Zero and Miss Shetty Mr. Polishetty showcased different shades of her acting abilities and reinforced her reputation as an actress willing to experiment with unconventional roles.



Kajal Opens Up About NBK111 'A Powerful Role'

Kajal Aggarwal is all set to share screen space once again with Nandamuri Balakrishna in NBK111, and the actress has now offered fans an exciting glimpse into her character in the upcoming action entertainer directed by Gopichand Malineni.

Speaking at a recent event in Vijayawada, Kajal expressed her happiness about being part of the prestigious project and reuniting with Balakrishna after the success of Bhagavanth Kesari.

"I am a part of NBK111. It is a pleasure working with Balayya sir. He is a legend. He is very jovial and keeps the atmosphere on the sets light and cheerful," Kajal said.

The actress also revealed that her role in the film is unlike anything she has portrayed before. "My role is very exciting and very different. It is a powerful character. Playing such a strong role opposite Balayya sir is truly a dream come true," she added.

The statement has generated considerable excitement among fans, especially because Kajal's role in Bhagavanth Kesari received appreciation for its emotional depth and mature portrayal. Her reunion with Balakrishna is now being viewed as one of the major attractions of NBK111.

Directed by Gopichand Malineni, who previously delivered the blockbuster Veera Simha Reddy with Balakrishna, the film is expected to be a high-octane commercial entertainer packed with action, emotion and powerful performances. The director is reportedly designing the film on a grand scale, keeping Balakrishna's mass image in mind.

Industry sources suggest that Kajal's character will have substantial importance in the narrative rather than being limited to a conventional commercial heroine role. Her comments about the role being "powerful" have further increased curiosity

among audiences.

Kajal Aggarwal has enjoyed a successful career spanning more than fifteen years in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi cinema. She made her Telugu debut with Lakshmi Kalyanam and rose to stardom with Magadheera, which remains one of the landmark films of her career.

Over the years, she has worked with almost every leading star in South Indian cinema, including Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Prabhas, Jr NTR, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Pawan Kalyan and Vijay. Films such as Darling, Mr. Perfect, Businessman, Thuppakki and Mersal further established her as one of the industry's most bankable actresses. After taking a brief break following motherhood, Kajal made a successful comeback with projects across multiple languages and digital platforms. The actress has consistently emphasized the importance of choosing meaningful roles that offer scope for performance. Apart from NBK111, Kajal is also balancing several projects in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, reaffirming her status as one of the busiest actresses in Indian cinema.



Vijay Deverakonda: Theatre Gave Me the Freedom to Dream

Vijay Deverakonda has opened up about the role theatre played in his life, saying that the stage gave him the freedom to explore his talent and discover his true passion for acting. Reflecting on his early days, the Arjun Reddy star said he was not looking for specific opportunities but was eager to grab any platform that would help him improve his craft.

"I think it's as much about what you like or what you want, it's more about giving me any opportunity to do anything," Vijay said. He added that his only goal at the time was to learn, grow and allow people to recognize his talent. The actor credited theatre for helping him channel his energy positively and develop confidence. According to Vijay, theatre not only shaped him as an actor but also as a person.

"Theatre unshackles you in a way. It frees you up," he said. Starting his career with supporting roles, Vijay gradually earned recognition through films like Yevade Subramanyam and Pelli Choopulu before becoming a youth icon with the blockbuster Arjun Reddy. He later strengthened his position with successful films such as Geetha Govindam, Dear Comrade, Taxiwaala and Kushi.

On the work front, Vijay is reportedly set to reunite with Rashmika Mandanna for the period drama Rana-Baali. The actor also has Janardhana and VDXShoryuv in his upcoming lineup. Even after achieving stardom, Vijay continues to acknowledge the importance of theatre, which he believes laid the foundation for his successful journey in cinema.



SUMMER CHIC, THE MALAIKA WAY

Malaika Arora has once again set social media abuzz with her latest glamorous photos, giving fans a glimpse of her chic summer style. Sharing a series of pictures on Instagram with the caption "Summer ready," the actress was seen posing in a grey crop top, matching trousers and a stylish jacket. Her long wavy hair and effortless charm added to the elegant look. The actress also shared selfies from her makeup room, offering fans a behind-the-scenes glimpse of her photo-shoot. Known for her fitness and wellness journey, Malaika recently celebrated International Yoga Day by sharing how yoga has become an integral part of her life, helping her find balance and inner peace.



Ritu Varma's Saree Magic

In a stunning new photograph, actress Ritu Varma looks radiant as she poses gracefully in a delicate light blue-green saree adorned with subtle embroidery. Seated against a serene backdrop, the actress exudes warmth and sophistication with her signature smile, soft wavy hair and minimal yet elegant jewellery.

The refreshing traditional look has quickly caught the attention of fans, who continue to admire Ritu for her understated fashion choices and natural beauty. Her effortless style perfectly blends contemporary elegance with timeless grace, making the actress one of the most admired personalities in South Indian cinema.

Born on March 10, 1990, in Hyderabad, Ritu Varma began her journey in the entertainment industry through short films and modeling assignments. She made her Telugu film debut with a supporting role in Baadshah (2013) before landing her first lead role in Prema Ishq Kaadhal the same year.

Her breakthrough came with the critically acclaimed romantic

comedy Pelli Choopulu (2016), which not only became a commercial success but also earned her widespread recognition. The film won her the Nandi Award and the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actress.

Over the years, Ritu has carved a niche for herself with her selective scripts and natural performances. Films such as Kannum Kannum Kollaiyadithaal, Ninnila Ninnila, Mark Antony and Swag showcased her versatility across Telugu and Tamil cinema.

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Ritu has built her career on content-driven roles, earning praise from both audiences and critics for her grounded performances and screen presence.

