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## SIBLING SWAP IN PEDDI

BOX-OFFICE 12

## KHARGE, KHERA, AND MEENAKSHI AMONG 7 CONGRESS RS CANDIDATES



Congress has announced seven candidates for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections across five states. Party president Mallikarjun Kharge will seek re-election from Karnataka, while Meenakshi Natara-

jan has been nominated from Madhya Pradesh. Praveen Chakravarty and Pranav Jha will contest from Tamil Nadu and Jharkhand respectively, with Neeraj Dangi renominated from Rajasthan.

# BIG CABINET SHAKE-UP?

10-12 MINISTRIES LIKELY TO SEE MAJOR CHURN

- Sitharaman to Education?
- Piyush Goyal to Finance?
- More Role for NDA Allies
- Younger Faces, Regional Balance in Focus
- Several Exits, Shifts and New Entrants

**SOUTH IN FOCUS**  
Telangana & Andhra Names in Buzz. Women's Quota, Ally Balance Drive Reshuffle Talks

**CABINET RESHUFFLES ARE NOT ABOUT MINISTRIES. THEY ARE ABOUT POLITICAL POSITIONING FOR THE YEARS AHEAD**

— POWER CORRIDORS, NEW DELHI

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

Delhi's political atmosphere is thick with speculation over a possible Union Cabinet reshuffle in mid June. Rumours suggest changes across several ministries, greater accommodation for NDA allies, induction of younger faces, and possible movement of senior ministers into party responsibilities. At the centre of the buzz lies an explosive claim that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman could be shifted to Education while Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal may take charge of the Finance Ministry. While the chatter

has intensified across political and bureaucratic circles, the real story is not about individual names alone. It is about the next phase of the Modi government's political strategy, governance priorities, coalition management, and preparations for crucial electoral battles ahead.

The season of political whispers has returned to New Delhi with remarkable intensity. Every corridor of power, from North Block to party headquarters and from ministerial offices to diplomatic lounges, appears to be discussing one question. Is Prime Minister Narendra Modi preparing for a major overhaul of his

Council of Ministers?

The speculation is not emerging in a vacuum. The timing itself gives credibility to the possibility of significant changes. The Modi government has crossed another important milestone in its third term. The Union Budget has already been presented. State elections are approaching in politically sensitive regions. The BJP organisation is undergoing adjustments in several states. NDA allies have become more important than at any point during the previous decade. Under such circumstances, a reshuffle would not be surprising.

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# Land Acquisition First Big Civil Works Later

### CM Revanth promises ample state funds for pending Palamuru irrigation infrastructure. Reviews Mahabubnagar Irrigation Projects

HYDERABAD, JUNE 4

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy directed officials to complete major irrigation project works under the Palamuru-Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS) in the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. He said priority should be given to completing land acquisition, as the project cannot progress without it. The

CM added that the state govt was ready to provide funds for both land acquisition and project works. "It is the responsibility of the district collectors to coordinate with local MLAs and other elected representatives. Collectors must also visit the field to ensure a speedy land acquisition process," the CM said.

CM Revanth, along with Telangana Irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy

and minister Jupally Krishna Rao, visited various project sites in Mahabubnagar on Thursday. At Makthal, Karnataka, ex-irrigation minister BS Boseraju also joined the visit and participated in an aerial inspection. His participation came in view of the Telangana govt's proposal for a barrage across the Bheema and Krishna rivers, downstream of the Narayanapura dam.

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## "TELANGANA RESTRUCTURES LAND VALUES SCIENTIFICALLY"



HYDERABAD, JUNE 4

Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy announced that significant reforms are underway in the revenue department and its aim is to deliver exceptionally high-quality services to the residents of Telangana, characterised by speed and transparency.

The Minister personally reviewed the progress of the integrated sub-registrar office construction project in Talim, Gachibowli on Thursday. Earlier in the day, the Minister had engaged in discussions with journalists at the Secretariat. On the occasion, he clarified that the government has absolutely no intention of increasing registration charges in the state. The Minister stated that the previous BRS government had increased the rates from 6 to 7.5 percent. He said, keeping the public interest in mind—and recognising that even a one percent hike would impose a financial burden of thousands of crores of rupees on the people, the State government has revised land values using a scientific approach that aligns closely with market realities.

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## JUSTICE FOR ALL TELANGANA ACTIVISTS OUR PRIMARY GOAL



HYDERABAD, JUNE 4

Government Advisor K. Keshavaram has clarified that the primary objective of the Congress government is to ensure justice for all activists, who participated directly or indirectly in the movement for the achievement of a separate Telangana state.

An all-party meeting was held at the Secretariat on Thursday with the committee constituted under the chairmanship of K. Keshavaram, aimed at ensuring recognition and respect for Telangana activists. Later, speaking to the media, Keshavaram, along with Committee Members, including Minister Ponnampalabharathi, MLCs Kodandaram and Addanki Dayakar, Ramulu Nayak and Shoban Reddy, said that the State government had constituted a committee to identify the activists of the Telangana movement. An all-party meeting was convened for this purpose. The meeting was held with the recognised political parties, specifically those associated with the movement to facilitate the identification of activists.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

# KTR slams Balka Suman's arrest

HYDERABAD, JUNE 4

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has declared the arrest of former MLA Balka Suman to be politically motivated. He contends that the Congress administration orchestrated Suman's detention to distract the public from alleged financial misconduct within the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL).

During a press interaction following a visit to Suman at Chanchalguda Jail on Thursday, KT Rama Rao highlighted that the BRS has been actively exposing significant corruption scandals since the Congress government took office. These include an alleged Rs 15,000 crore fraud related to Site Visitation Certificates, reportedly involving the Chief Minister's brother-in-law, and



improprieties in solar tenders, which were brought to light by BRS leader T. Harish Rao.

The BRS working president asserted that Suman was charged under the PDDP Act

and incarcerated for his advocacy of Singareni workers and for raising concerns about discrepancies within the coal company. He pointed out that the judiciary itself had ques-

tioned the police's overreach and consequently nullified some of the charges brought against the former MLA.

The BRS working president further stated that approximately 40 lakh metric tonnes of coal, valued at about Rs 1,600 crore, appear in Singareni's accounts without any corresponding mining activity having taken place. He called for accountability from both the state government and the central government, which holds a 49% stake in SCCL.

Announcing his intention to formally request an investigation from Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy, he also questioned the silence of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy regarding the alleged scam.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

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**3 TIMES BETTER**

FROM PAGE 1

The minister reviewed the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal lift irrigation scheme works and proposed additional barrages. Officials presented the irrigation project proposals through maps at an exhibition. Later, he visited Gudem Doddi in Gadwal mandal, inspected the pump house (stage-1), and held a review meeting with irrigation officials at Somasila.

Telangana irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy said that top priority would be given to land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) issues in the implementation of the PRLIS. He made it clear that civil works would be undertaken on a large scale only after completion of land acquisition-related components. Briefing on the progress of PRLIS and associated reservoirs, the minister said that significant progress had been achieved in

## Land Acquisition First Big Civil Works Later

several components.  
**Narlapur Reservoir: 100% completion reached.**  
**Yedula Reservoir: Crossed 95% completion.**  
**Vattam Reservoir: Banks completed; concrete and embankment works are in progress.**  
**Karivena Reservoir: Most embankment works completed; a portion of the concrete works is currently in progress.**

**Focus on Trunk Infrastructure**  
N Uttam Kumar Reddy emphasised that

available resources should be utilised primarily for critical trunk infrastructure that would yield maximum benefits.

He directed engineers to prepare realistic work plans linked to clear financial requirements and timelines. He also instructed them to expedite court-related cases and ensure that stay-on-work orders are vacated. Officials were asked to submit advance projections of monthly fund requirements to enable more effective financial planning. In a clear policy direction, the minister reiterated that officials must prioritise the completion of all land acquisition-related works.

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"Suggestions and recommendations were solicited regarding their expectations and viewpoints. We will also invite and hold discussions with student unions, advocates, doctors, journalists and other individuals associated with the movement. The primary objective of this initiative is the identification of the movement's activists. Measures are being undertaken to identify the first-generation activists of the movement," he said. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said the committee, established by the Congress government to identify activists of the Telangana movement, has invited representatives from all political parties, with two members from each party.

"In addition to political parties, we will also invite and hold consultations with em-

## JUSTICE FOR ALL TELANGANA ACTIVISTS OUR PRIMARY GOAL

ployees, students, journalists, and lawyers. We are committed to ensuring justice for all those who suffered injuries or sustained losses across various sectors. We will recognise and honour poets, artists, and everyone else who contributed to the realisation of the state of Telangana," he said. The Minister stated that the committee's office will be inaugurated at the Martyrs' Memorial Stupam soon.

"The government has solicited suggestions from all stakeholders regarding how best to honour and recognise the activists of the Telangana movement. We will accept

advice and suggestions that transcend political lines, and we will receive representations both online and offline," he said. MLC Kodandaram stated that activists are appealing for support, noting that they had sacrificed the valuable time of their youth during the Telangana movement. He mentioned that various Joint Action Committees (JACs) representing these activists exist, and affirmed that they would meet with all of them.

Furthermore, MLC Kodandaram clarified that JACs representing all universities also exist, and that they would hold meetings with them as well.

## From Values to Visions: St. Peter's CPDP 2026-27 Aims to Shape Thoughtful, Resilient Learners

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI,  
JUNE 04, 2026

St. Peter's High School, Bowenpally, inaugurated its Continuous Professional Development Programme (CPDP) for 2026-27, reaffirming its steadfast commitment to the CBSE framework and the aspirations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The inauguration ceremony blended traditions with a forward-looking agenda designed to elevate pedagogical practice and student learning, signaling a decisive step toward preparing both teachers and students for a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

The day began with a reverent Prayer Service and the Lighting of the Lamp, underscoring the school's values-driven approach to education. The keynote address, delivered by J. Sunil Kumar, Regional Officer of CBSE Hyderabad, set a powerful tone for the programme. He reminded the educators that great teachers transcend the mere transfer of knowledge and become the child's real heroes—guiding minds, nurturing values, kindling curiosity, and shaping character in ways that endure beyond the classroom. His call for lifelong learning and learner-centered practices aligned with the standards and aspirations of CBSE and NEP 2020, reinforcing the notion that teaching is an ongoing journey of growth and adaptation.



The school's CPDP 2026-27 is designed to strengthen core pedagogical competencies and introduce forward-thinking instructional strategies. The programme aims to deepen learning through experiential experiences, establish clear competency-based outcomes, and integrate computational thinking and AI literacy into the curriculum. At the same time, a strong emphasis will be placed on socio-emotional learning to support resilience and well-being, ensuring students develop empathy and emotional intelligence alongside academic achievement. Career guidance will be integrated to help students navigate future possibilities with clarity and purpose, while holistic development will balance academics with creativity, social responsibility, and ethical growth.

Correspondent Mr. TA Reddy highlighted that the CPDP will advance pedagogical practices across multi-

ple domains, reinforcing the school's mission to empower educators and nurture future-ready learners. The initiative reflects St. Peter's commitment to an education that is both rigorous and deeply human, rooted in values while expanding the horizon of what students can achieve. The programme's launch signals a year of transformative professional development aimed at translating teacher growth into enriched classroom experiences, stronger student outcomes, and a more dynamic learning environment.

St. Peter's High School reaffirms its motto, "Rooted in Values, Nurturing Minds. Inspiring Futures," as it embarks on CPDP 2026-27. This renewed pledge underscores a commitment to cultivate value-driven, inquiry-led education and to empower both teachers and students to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing world.

## KTR slams Balka Suman's arrest

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KTR accused the government of hypocrisy, recalling instances where Revanth Reddy, as the then PCC president, faced no repercussions for inciting violence by calling for the bombing of Pragathi Bhavan, nor did Union Minister Bandi Sanjay for his threat of a "surgical strike" on Hyderabad's Old City.

Additionally, Rama Rao criticised the Congress government for neglecting Singareni workers by failing to convene the Medical Board for compassionate appointments for nearly eleven months. He noted that Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka instead announced a vigilance inquiry into approximately 19,000 succession jobs granted during the BRS administration, creating undue distress for the workers' families.

KT Rama Rao said that Suman has remained resolute, urging party colleagues to persist in their fight for Singareni employees' rights rather than be concerned about his imprisonment. "Jails and cases are nothing new to us. The BRS will continue its campaign until the alleged irregularities are fully exposed," KTR said.

## "TELANGANA RESTRUCTURES LAND VALUES SCIENTIFICALLY"

FROM PAGE 1

The Minister further added that the powers of Sub-Registrars were curtailed with the specific intent of eliminating any scope for irregularities.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the minimum value of agricultural land in the rural

areas of the state has been fixed at ₹2.75 lakh per acre, while it has been set at ₹5 lakh per acre within Municipal Corporations, ₹10 lakh within the HMDA limits, and ₹15 lakh within the ORR limits. He further noted that the revised land values would be reviewed in case of any discrepancies or anomalies.

The Minister announced that for inquiries, doubts, or complaints regarding the revised land values, one may contact the toll-free number 1800 599 4788 or the WhatsApp number 8247619983. "It is not possible to cancel the City. Lands are not being given away for free in Future City. If it were cancelled, the government would be required to refund the money. This is not a feasible undertaking," Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy clarified.

## CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

# BIG CABINET SHAKE-UP?

FROM PAGE 1

In fact, many political observers would argue that it would be entirely consistent with the Prime Minister's governing style.

Unlike governments that treat Cabinet reshuffles as exercises in damage control, the Modi administration has often used them as instruments of political engineering. Ministries are not merely departments of governance. They are tools of messaging, electoral preparation, coalition management, caste balancing, regional representation, and performance assessment. Every portfolio change sends a signal. Every induction carries a political message. Every exit tells a story.

That is why the current round of speculation deserves closer examination.

### THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE BUZZ

The most persistent reports suggest that between ten and twelve ministries could witness changes. Some ministers may be dropped. Others may be shifted. A few new faces could be inducted. Certain leaders may move from government to organisational responsibilities. Others may move in the opposite direction.

The ministries reportedly being discussed include Railways, Corporate Affairs, Coal, Textiles, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and Information Technology, Rural Development and may be a few more. Some reports indicate that at least three to four Cabinet Ministers and multiple Ministers of State could be shown the door.

Such numbers are substantial enough to attract attention but not so large as to constitute a complete restructuring of government. In political terms, this would represent a significant tune up rather than a total engine replacement.

The BJP leadership has several objectives that must be addressed simultaneously. It needs to reward performance. It needs to address areas where delivery has fallen short of expectations. It needs to prepare for future electoral battles. It needs to accommodate coalition partners. It also needs to create opportunities for emerging leaders without unsettling the government's overall stability.

These factors together create fertile ground for a reshuffle.

### WHAT IS DRIVING THE SPECULATION?

- ✧ Post Budget recalibration
- ✧ Preparation for upcoming state elections
- ✧ Greater accommodation of NDA allies
- ✧ Regional and caste balancing
- ✧ Induction of younger leaders
- ✧ Movement of some ministers into party responsibilities

### THE FINANCE MINISTRY RUMOUR THAT SHOOK DELHI

Among all the stories circulating in political circles, one rumour has overshadowed every other discussion. According to corridor chatter, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman could be moved to the Education Ministry while Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal could take over the Finance portfolio.

The mere suggestion has generated extraordinary interest because Finance is not just another ministry. It is the command centre of economic policy. It influences taxation, expenditure, investment, borrowing, reforms, banking, infrastructure funding and fiscal strategy. Any change at the top of the Finance Ministry inevitably attracts scrutiny from markets, investors, industry, economists and international observers.

The origin of the rumour is important. The claim appears to have emerged from insider and bureaucracy focused platforms known for carrying whispers from government circles. Such platforms occasionally identify developments before they become public. However, they also carry numerous speculative reports that never materialise.

As matters stand today, there is no authoritative public confirmation that any decision regarding Sitharaman's portfolio has been taken.

### That distinction is critical.

Political journalism requires separating possibility from probability. Something may be possible without being probable. Something may be under discussion without becoming reality.

At present, the rumour belongs firmly in that category.

### WHY SITHARAMAN REMAINS A CENTRAL FIGURE

Nirmala Sitharaman occupies a unique position in the Modi government. She has become one of the longest serving Finance Ministers in independent India. She has presented successive Union Budgets and has overseen economic policy through extraordinary circumstances, including global disruptions, inflationary pressures, geopolitical instability and post pandemic recovery.

The government's fiscal roadmap, capital expenditure strategy, infrastructure spending plans and taxation framework have all evolved under her stewardship. Removing or shifting a Finance Minister is never a routine administrative decision. Such a move inevitably invites questions about policy continuity. Investors seek predictability. Markets dislike uncertainty. Governments are acutely aware of those realities.

For that reason alone, any change in the Finance Ministry would have to be driven by a compelling strategic calculation rather than routine political adjustment.

"In Delhi politics, rumours are abun-

dant. Finance Ministers are not."

### WHY PIYUSH GOYAL'S NAME KEEPS RETURNING

There is another reason why the rumour refuses to disappear.

Piyush Goyal is among the few senior ministers whose credentials naturally fit discussions about economic leadership. He has handled key portfolios, possesses extensive experience in economic and commercial matters and has previously carried additional responsibility relating to the Finance Ministry.

Within political and business circles, he is often regarded as an articulate advocate of economic reform and industrial growth. Consequently, whenever discussions arise regarding future economic leadership, his name surfaces almost automatically.

However, recurring speculation does not necessarily indicate an impending appointment.

Delhi's rumour machinery often works through repetition. A name mentioned often enough begins to acquire an appearance of inevitability even when no final decision exists. That is precisely why caution remains essential.

### THE EDUCATION MINISTRY EQUATION

The Education Ministry itself occupies an increasingly important place within the government's broader agenda. The implementation of the National Education Policy, reforms in higher education, skill development initiatives, examination controversies and concerns regarding institutional governance have collectively elevated the ministry's political significance.

Supporters of the Sitharaman to Education theory argue that her administrative experience and policy background could be deployed to accelerate educational reforms and align them more closely with the government's long term developmental objectives.

Yet this argument raises another question. If Dharmendra Pradhan is moved, where would he go?

Political reshuffles rarely involve one portfolio alone. They create a chain reaction. One movement triggers another. One promotion creates a vacancy elsewhere. One reassignment generates multiple secondary decisions. That is why observers must evaluate the entire chessboard rather than a single move.

### THE ALLY FACTOR CANNOT BE IGNORED

One of the strongest reasons for expecting some form of Cabinet expansion or reshuffle lies within the NDA itself.

The political arithmetic of the current Lok Sabha is fundamentally different from that of previous BJP governments. Allies matter more. Their demands carry greater weight. Their expectations cannot be ignored indefinitely.

Parties such as JD(U) and TDP are naturally expected to seek a larger voice within the government structure. Increased representation through Cabinet positions or Minister of State roles would be consistent with coalition politics.

This is not unusual. Coalition governments across India's political history have routinely adjusted ministerial representation to maintain alliance stability.

The BJP leadership understands this reality better than most.

### IS MODI LOOKING SOUTH? THE NAMES ECHOING THROUGH DELHI'S RESHUFFLE CORRIDORS

Beyond the headline grabbing speculation surrounding Finance and other heavyweight ministries, an equally important political conversation is gathering momentum in New Delhi. If the current round of whispers is even partially accurate, the forthcoming Cabinet exercise may carry a distinctly southern flavour. The BJP leadership appears conscious that the road to long term national dominance cannot bypass South India. As a result, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have all emerged in varying degrees within the reshuffle conversation.

Among southern states, Telangana is generating the loudest buzz. Political circles are actively discussing the possibility of expanding the state's representation in the Union government. One stream of speculation suggests that senior leader G. Kishan Reddy could be assigned a different responsibility in the future, with some whispers even linking his name to a constitutional post. But mainstream reports indicate that he is not expected to be dropped outright.

Another line of discussion revolves around Bandi Sanjay, whose organisational skills are highly valued within the party. Some insiders believe the BJP may eventually deploy him in a larger party role in Telangana as part of its long term strategy to convert the state into a serious battleground for power. The names most frequently mentioned for possible induction are D.K. Aruna and K. Laxman.

D.K. Aruna's prospects are being discussed particularly in the context of greater representation for women in government. Her organisational experience, national profile and outreach among women voters are viewed as significant assets. K. Laxman, a veteran organisational figure with deep roots in the party structure, is also believed to be strongly in contention for a ministerial assignment if the leadership decides to expand Telangana's footprint in the Cabinet.

In Andhra Pradesh, the conversation centres around alliance management and regional balance. Daggubati Purandeswari continues to figure prominently in political discussions surrounding possible ministerial expansion. Her previous experience in

government, parliamentary standing and political acceptability across multiple sections make her one of the most frequently mentioned names whenever representation from Andhra Pradesh is discussed. The state also remains strategically important because of the BJP's partnership with the Telugu Desam Party, making Cabinet arithmetic inseparable from coalition arithmetic.

Tamil Nadu presents a different political picture. The most discussed name remains K. Annamalai. Although there is no reliable indication that a Cabinet berth is imminent, his popularity among younger voters and his visibility beyond Tamil Nadu have ensured that he remains part of the broader national conversation. However, recent political developments have fuelled competing theories about whether his future lies in government, party organisation or a completely different political role. For now, his name continues to generate more curiosity than certainty.

Karnataka occupies a unique position because it already enjoys substantial representation in the Union government. Consequently, the speculation is focused less on new inductions and more on possible political redeployment. There is recurring chatter that a senior minister could eventually be assigned a major organisational responsibility in the South as part of the BJP's next expansion strategy. Such a move would underline the importance the party attaches to strengthening its southern architecture before the next electoral cycle.

Viewed together, these discussions point toward a larger political objective. The reshuffle, if it takes place, may not simply be an exercise in changing ministers. It could become an instrument for accelerating southern outreach, strengthening women's representation, accommodating alliance partners, promoting a younger generation of leaders and preparing the BJP's organisational machinery for the next phase of political competition. Whether these names ultimately make the final list remains uncertain. What is beyond doubt, however, is that South India has moved from the margins of the conversation to the centre of the strategic calculations unfolding in New Delhi.

### THE SILENT BATTLE INSIDE THE BJP

While public attention remains focused on ministerial names, another contest is unfolding quietly within the BJP. Several organisational positions across states require strong leadership ahead of upcoming electoral battles. Some senior ministers are believed to be under consideration for party responsibilities rather than governmental roles. Such assignments may appear less glamorous than Cabinet positions, but they often carry enormous strategic importance.

In the BJP's political culture, organisational responsibility frequently serves as

a pathway to future advancement. Therefore, a move from government to party organisation should not automatically be interpreted as a demotion.

Sometimes the most important battles are fought far away from television cameras and ministerial offices.

### THE BIGGER QUESTION IS MODI'S NEXT PHASE

Ultimately, the fascination with names risks obscuring the larger story.

The real question is not whether one minister stays or another moves. The real question is how Prime Minister Narendra Modi intends to shape the next phase of his government.

- ✧ Will he prioritise governance delivery?
- ✧ Will he strengthen coalition management?
- ✧ Will he elevate younger leaders?
- ✧ Will he reward electoral effectiveness?
- ✧ Will he bring greater regional representation into the Cabinet?
- ✧ Will he deploy senior ministers to politically critical states?
- ✧ These are the calculations that will determine the final outcome.
- ✧ The Cabinet reshuffle, if it occurs, will not merely be about ministries. It will be about political positioning for the years ahead.

### THE LAST WORD FROM THE POWER CORRIDORS

As of now, the possibility of a mid June Cabinet reshuffle appears credible. Reports suggesting movement across multiple ministries fit the broader political context. Greater representation for NDA allies appears logical. Organisational redeployment of certain leaders is entirely plausible. Changes in several performance sensitive ministries cannot be ruled out.

However, the headline grabbing claim involving Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal remains a matter of speculation rather than established fact. No official confirmation exists. No authoritative announcement has been made. The government continues to function with its current ministerial structure.

Delhi's political theatre has always produced more rumours than realities. Yet every major political development begins as a whisper before becoming a headline.

The coming days will reveal whether this is merely another season of corridor gossip or the first signal of a significant restructuring within the Modi government's power architecture. Until then, the smart observer will keep one eye on the rumours and the other firmly on the official notifications.

## STAR Hospitals Releases Free Public Health Book

- **'The Human Bone Joints Explained' to Help People of All Ages**
- **Protect Their Mobility and Live Pain-Free**

HYDERABAD

As sedentary lifestyles, poor posture, and shifting demographics spark a worrying surge in premature joint degradation, STAR Hospitals has officially announced the launch of a comprehensive public health resource: Titled "The Human Bone Joints Explained: The Ultimate Guide to Joint Health and Care".

The book was officially unveiled during a special launch event held on 4th June 2026 (Thursday) at 11:30 AM onwards at the 5th Floor Auditorium, STAR Hospitals, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. In a unique tribute to patient-centered care, the book was unveiled by three beneficiary patients whose lives and mobility were positively transformed through the orthopaedic expertise and treatment of Dr. Neelam V. Ramana Reddy.

The book covers the foundational clinical insights, wisdom, and case observations of Dr. Neelam V. Ramana Reddy (Sr. Consultant - Robotic Joint Replacement & Orthopaedic Surgery at STAR Hospitals, Banjara Hills), this essential guide translates complex musculoskeletal mechanics into highly accessible layman's language. To maximize public impact, the book has been made entirely free to download and read for



everyone.

Drawing from 25 years of orthopaedic excellence and patient care, the book transforms decades of clinical experience into practical, real-world guidance to help individuals prevent, manage, and better understand joint-related conditions before they significantly impact quality of life.

### A Growing Crisis: Why This Book is Urgently Needed

While joint pain was historically viewed as a natural byproduct of senior aging, orthopaedic specialists are witnessing a troubling paradigm shift: joint degeneration is rapidly affecting younger populations. Long hours of desk-bound work, minimal physical activity, urban posture issues, and rising obesity rates mean that individuals in their 30s and 40s are now presenting with cartilage thinning and advanced joint wear. This growing concern is increasingly

evident across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, where changing lifestyles, urbanization, and rising life expectancy are contributing to a growing burden of musculoskeletal disorders and mobility-related health challenges. Orthopaedic specialists are witnessing a steady increase in patients seeking treatment for arthritis, joint degeneration, sports injuries, and mobility limitations across both states.

The socioeconomic friction of this crisis is severe. Musculoskeletal conditions affect roughly 1.71 billion people globally, serving as the leading contributor to disability worldwide. In India, knee osteoarthritis is one of the fastest-growing chronic conditions, severely disrupting not just individual careers but entire families. When a primary breadwinner or caregiver loses mobility, the emotional and financial burden of care, lost productivity, and declining independence ripples across the household.

Every year, thousands of patients from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh visit orthopaedic specialists for the diagnosis and treatment of joint disorders, highlighting the urgent need for greater awareness, preventive measures, and timely medical intervention.

### Awareness & Prevention: The Ultimate Shield

"Movement is the currency of vitality," states Dr. Neelam V. Ramana Reddy. "To live is to move, and to move is to live. A joint must be perfectly balanced to last for decades, but the best surgery is always the one you never have to undergo." The core philosophy of The Human Bone Joints Explained is that awareness and proactive prevention represent the single best approach to joint health. The book serves as a vital guide to help the public identify the "tipping point" where conservative care (like physiotherapy and weight management) is sufficient versus when modern surgical intervention becomes a necessary tool to restore quality of life.

### Key Features of the Book

- **The Anatomy Demystified:** A plain-English breakdown of cartilage, synovium, ligaments, and tendons - explaining exactly why joints "creak and squeak."
- **The Lifestyle Shield:** Actionable, expert advice on weight management, an anti-inflammatory diet rich in Omega-3, structural posture correction, and low-impact exercise (swimming, cycling, and flexibility training).

## Poet Raju Emerges Winner in Prestigious Poetry Competition

HYDERABAD

With the noble objective of preserving and promoting the Telugu language while bringing together poetic voices from across the globe, Vishva Sahiti Kalavedika organized the prestigious poetry competition titled "The Invisible Wound."

In this highly acclaimed competition, renowned national poet, writer, and translator

Dr. Peruka Raju secured a winning position with his thought-provoking poem. Through his powerful verses, Dr. Raju vividly portrayed the hidden struggles, emotional conflicts, and unseen social and personal wounds that silently affect individuals and society.

The competition received



an overwhelming response from Telugu poets and literary enthusiasts worldwide. Hundreds of entries were submitted, reflecting exceptional creativity and literary excellence.

The winning poems were selected based on the depth of emotion, literary style, thematic significance, and overall artistic merit.

### EASTERN RAILWAY

Detailed Tender No.: EPC-02-CAO-C-ER-2026, dated 02.06.2026. Open EPC E-Tender in single stage - Two Packet System: Tender for e-tendering is invited by Chief Administrative Officer/Con/Eastern Railway/Kolkata, 4th Floor, 14 Strand Road, NKG, Kolkata-700001 for the following work: **Name of work:** Execution of Doubling of BG track between Ranaghat Jn. (Excl.) and Bangoan Jn. (Excl.) from Km 1.027 to Km 32.195 including Electrification & Signalling works. **Approx. Value:** ₹ 239,91,32,155.21. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,79,82,700/-. **Cost of tender document:** 0.0. **Completion period:** 730 days. **Date of closing:** 17.08.2026 at 11:00 hrs. The tender documents and other details can be obtained from the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through the e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer if received, shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected. (CON-09/2026-27) Tender Notice is also available at websites: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) / [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

### RAIL WHEEL FACTORY

Yalahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064 Website: [www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in) E - TENDER: On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer invites electronic tender for the following work online through the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> (Works) **E - TENDER NOTICE No: RWF/M/O/AMS/2026-27/26 dtd. 02/06/2026** **Tender No.:** RWF/M/O/AMS/2026-27/26. **Name of the work:** Outsourcing of Rough turning/semi finishing of 6,000 numbers of Box-N axles at firm premises. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,61,61,600.00. **EMD:** Rs. 9,23,200/- **E - TENDER NOTICE No: RWF/M/O/AMS/2026-27/27 dtd. 02/06/2026** **Tender No.:** RWF/M/O/AMS/2026-27/27. **Name of the work:** Outsourcing of Rough turning/semi finishing of 6,000 numbers of 25T axles at firm's premises. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 4,61,61,600.00. **EMD:** Rs. 9,23,200/- **Date & Time of Closing of Tenders:** 24/06/2026 at 10:30 hrs. **Completion Period:** 06 months. Tender notice and eligibility criteria can be viewed on our website [www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in) DY, CME/AP

### EASTERN RAILWAY

Open Tender Notice No.: TRD-WC-T-2026-27-13, date 03.06.2026. E-Tender is invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Eastern Railway, Asansol Division, Station Road, Asansol, Pin-713301 for the following works from required tenders having valid Electric contractor license and Supervisory license and capable to complete the following work financially: **Tender Case No.:** TRD-WC-T-2026-27-13. **Name of the work:** The following TRD works: (i) Replacement of overage old structures in Galsi-Panagarh section of Asansol Division. (ii) Replacement of over aged catenary wire & contact wire and droppers (Khana-Durgapur). **Tender Value:** ₹ 42,55,46,196.97. **Earnest money:** ₹ 85,10,900/-. **Completion period for the work:** 12 (Twelve) months from the date of issue of letter of acceptance. **Date and time of opening:** 14.07.2026 at 15:00 hrs. **Validity of offers for the work:** 90 days from the date of opening. Complete details can be seen in the Railway's website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) (ASN-128/2026-27) Tender Notice is also available at websites: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) / [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

### ONSITE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF PARCEL SCANNERS

Tender No.: C-LMG-02-2026; Dated: 29-05-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Name of work:** Onsite supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 15 (Fifteen) Nos. parcel scanners at 15 stations over N.F. Railway, namely Katihar, New Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, New Cooch Behar, Alipurduar Junction, Dhupguri, Kamakhya, Guwahati, Dimapur, Sairang, Agartala, Silchar, Mariani, New Tinsukia and Dibrugarh, along with 05 (five) years comprehensive warranty and maintenance as per specification. **Advertised Value:** ₹ 15,42,18,330/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 30,84,400/- **E-Tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 25-06-2026.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender is available on website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Sr. DEE/TRD/Lumding **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** Serving Customers with a smile

### STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No.: S/50/Sr.DMM/KIR/PUB/e-Tender/2026-27/01, Dtd: 02-06-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works. **Sl.No.:1; Tender No.:** KT255205B; **Closing/Opening Date:** 29-06-2026. **Brief Description:** Supply, installation and commissioning of EOT Crane, Cap-30 T, Spec.- COFMOW/IR/EOTC/2020, Rev.-0 or latest. **Consignee:** - SSE/IC/C&W/New Jalpaiguri, NFR (West Bengal); Qty-01 No. **Note:** - For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders. **Divisional Materials Manager, Katihar** **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** Serving Customers With A Smile

## Physics Teachers' Training Programme Concludes at GITAM

HYDERABAD

The three-day Residential Professional Development Programme (RPDP) for Physics Teachers on "Advanced Concepts, Pedagogy, and Educational Tools" concluded successfully at the Hyderabad campus of GITAM Deemed to be University. The programme was organized by the Department of Physics, School of Science, in association with the Indian Physics Association.

The programme was designed to strengthen Physics education at the school and undergraduate levels by integrating conceptual understanding with experimental learning and innovative pedagogical approaches. It emphasized the promotion of scientific curiosity, active learning, conceptual clarity, and hands-on experimentation in classroom teaching.

The RPDP brought together eminent academicians, educationists, and researchers from premier institutions across the country. Through expert lectures, demonstrations, and interactive sessions, participants gained valuable insights into



advanced Physics concepts, modern educational technologies, ICT-enabled teaching methodologies, low-cost experimental techniques, simulations, and effective student assessment strategies.

The programme covered a wide range of contemporary topics, including electromagnetic theory, photonics, quantum computing, superconductivity, magnetism, nuclear radiation, do-it-yourself (DIY) physics kits, innovative classroom pedagogy, and learning assessment methods.

During the first two days of the programme, participants attended lectures, demonstrations, and interactive sessions by renowned physicists and educators, including Prof. S.

AnanthaRamakrishna (Dean of Sciences, GITAM), Prof. B. V. R. Tata (Distinguished Visiting Professor), Prof. T. S. Natarajan (Former Professor, IIT Madras), Prof. Vibhor Singh (IISc Bengaluru), Prof. G. Ravi Kumar (Distinguished Professor, GITAM), and Prof. G. A. Rama Rao (Former Scientific Officer, BARC). The sessions covered advanced Physics concepts, their real-world applications, and effective classroom and laboratory teaching approaches, incorporating hands-on experiments, demonstrations, simulations, and low-cost experimental techniques to enhance student engagement and conceptual understanding.

On the third day, a special session on Physics education,

pedagogy, and learning assessment was jointly conducted by Prof. Vanaja (Department of Education & Training, MAN-UU, Hyderabad), Prof. Deepa Chari (Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, TIFR Mumbai), and Dr. Richa Sharma (School of Education, GITAM Hyderabad). The session focused on learner-centric teaching practices, classroom engagement, experiential learning, and outcome-based assessment strategies aimed at strengthening Physics education at the school and undergraduate levels.

Participants highly appreciated the initiative and noted that exposure to advanced concepts, hands-on experiments, and innovative teaching practices is essential for improving Physics education in the current academic landscape. They expressed gratitude to GITAM for providing a unique platform to interact with distinguished experts and enhance their professional competencies.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. G. Sai Preeti and Dr. T. Vishwam of the Department of Physics, School of Science, GITAM Hyderabad.

## University of Hyderabad Secures All-India Rank 4 Among Central Universities

IIRF India Rankings 2026

HYDERABAD

The University of Hyderabad (UoH), an Institution of Eminence (IoE), has reaffirmed its position as one of the country's premier seats of higher learning by securing the 4th Rank nationally among Central Universities in the newly released International Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) India Rankings 2026. Additionally, UoH holds the proud distinction of being the Rank 1 Central University in the State of Telangana.

The prestigious annual league tables, which evaluate top-performing higher education institutions across Universities, Engineering, and Business Schools, highlight UoH's sustained institutional development, robust research environment, and outstanding academic outcomes.

The IIRF India Rankings 2026 are recognized for their rigorous methodology. This year, institutions were thoroughly scrutinized using nine meticulously defined evaluation parameters, assessing both the qualitative and quantitative impact of the university's academic ecosystem:

**Academic Excellence & Perception:** Heavily driven by Academic Reputation, Peer Perception, and vital Alumni Feedback across global circuits.

**Research & Output:** Focusing deeply on Research Outcome, measuring the overall volume of peer-reviewed publications, institutional research income, and international citations.

**Employability & Outreach:** Evaluating Graduate Outcome & Employability alongside Employer Reputation & International Outlook to measure industry readiness.

**Inclusivity & Growth:** Tracking Demand Ratio & Student Profile, Wellbeing and Institutional Development, and Impact and Value Addition to assess societal contributions. Transparency: Backed by Public Perception & Data Verification metrics to ensure institutional accountability.

## Siraj Hussain Appointed Master Trainer for Bhupalpally Constituency

KARIMNAGAR



State Congress leader Siraj Hussain has been appointed as the Master Trainer for Bhupalpally Assembly Constituency to oversee the training and coordination of Booth Level Agents (BLAs) as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The appointment was made by Telangana PCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud.

Speaking on the occasion, Siraj Hussain expressed gratitude to the party leadership for reposing confidence in him and assured that he would discharge his responsibilities effectively. He stated that a comprehensive training program would be conducted for BLAs to enhance their knowledge and capabilities in the electoral roll revision process. He emphasized that every effort would

be made to make Bhupalpally Assembly Constituency a model constituency in the state in the implementation of BLA training programs. He further noted that extensive awareness and training initiatives would be undertaken to ensure that the electoral roll revision process is carried out transparently and efficiently. Siraj Hussain said he would work dedicatedly to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to him and contribute to the strengthening of the Congress party. He also thanked Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, PCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Tummala Nageswara Rao, Adhuri Laxman Kumar, as well as party leaders Medipalli Satyam and Kavvampalli Satyanarayana for their support and encouragement.

## Koppula Latha inaugurated the newly yoga practice centre



**HYDERABAD:** Former Corporator Koppula Latha Narasimha Reddy inaugurated the newly established Yoga Practice Centre at Road No. 2, Chandishwari Colony, in Mansoorabad Division. On this occasion, she stated that all women should make use

of this yoga center and practice yoga regularly. She explained that yoga benefits not only physical health but also mental well-being. Members of the Bharatiya Yoga Sanstha as well as residents of the colony participated in the program.

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## SHORT TAKES

### Inspection of Land Parcels for Indiramma Housing



**HYDERABAD:** The government has accelerated the process of identifying suitable land parcels for implementing the Indiramma Housing and LIG (Low Income Group) Housing Scheme within the CURE area limits. As part of this initiative, the Housing Board and Revenue Department officials have already identified lands in several locations. On Thursday, Housing Department Special Chief Secretary V.P. Gautham toured various areas in the Khairatabad Assembly Constituency. During the visit, he personally inspected Housing Board lands and other government-owned lands in the constituency. He directed officials to prepare comprehensive plans regarding the type of housing and development projects that could be undertaken in these locations. He conducted an extensive review for nearly three hours along with Revenue and Housing Department officials.

Mr. Gautham instructed officials to take war-footing measures to complete the pending 2BHK housing units at Ambedkar Nagar. Since the government has approved the construction of 12,000 houses under a pilot project in the CURE area, he directed officials to prepare appropriate proposals to facilitate the implementation of the project. The Special Chief Secretary reviewed details from officials regarding the allocation of lands for various schemes, particularly slum redevelopment projects and LIG housing construction. He also discussed the course of action to be taken regarding lands that are not suitable for housing projects.

## Shabbir Ali slams Pawan Kalyan over BJP agenda in Telangana

**■ Congress leader says Jana Sena chief is inventing issues after repeated rejection by Telangana voters**

HYDERABAD

Advisor to the Telangana Government Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Thursday strongly criticised Jana Sena Party chief and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan over his remarks on Telangana, alleging that he was attempting to advance the BJP's agenda of communal polarisation in the State. Shabbir Ali said Pawan Kalyan's comments on alleged opposition to the national anthem or national song in Telangana were baseless and irresponsible. He said no such issue existed in the State and accused the Jana Sena chief of trying to create a false controversy to gain political attention.

"Pawan Kalyan is trying to convert his wild filmy imagination into a political narrative. Telangana has no dispute with the national anthem, national song or the idea of India. These imag-



inary claims are being raised only to create suspicion, provoke emotions and help the BJP's polarisation politics," Shabbir Ali said.

He said Telangana had always upheld constitutional values, secularism and national unity, while also protecting its own identity and self-respect. He said the BJP and its allies repeatedly tried to manufacture emotional disputes whenever they failed to gain people's confidence through real issues. Shabbir Ali said people of Telangana were mature enough to understand the political design behind Pawan Kalyan's remarks. He said Jana Sena, which had no significant organisational base in Telangana, was trying to use religious and regional rhetoric as a shortcut to visibility.

"The people of Telangana know

the difference between genuine politics and political acting. Pawan Kalyan may be a successful actor, but Telangana cannot be treated as a film set where imaginary scenes can be created for applause," he said.

Referring to Pawan Kalyan's announcement that Jana Sena would actively contest the next Telangana Assembly elections, Shabbir Ali said the statement sounded as if the party had never entered the State's electoral field earlier. He pointed out that Jana Sena had already contested the 2023 Assembly elections in alliance with the BJP from eight constituencies, but all its candidates lost their deposits.

He said Jana Sena secured only about 0.25 per cent vote share in the 2023 Assembly elections. In the February 2026 municipal elections, he said the party fielded 336 candidates across municipalities and municipal corporations, but won only one ward each in Neruducharla and Mancheril, with an overall vote share of about 0.3 per cent. "These numbers are not political allegations; they are the people's verdict. Tel-

angana has already shown Jana Sena where it stands. Instead of reviewing why his party was rejected, Pawan Kalyan is trying to blame Telangana and create a controversy," Shabbir Ali said.

He said any party was free to contest elections in Telangana, as the Constitution allowed political activity across the country. However, he said the right to contest did not include the right to insult a State, hurt public sentiment or provoke communal feelings.

Shabbir Ali advised Pawan Kalyan to focus on fulfilling his responsibilities in Andhra Pradesh instead of trying to create political space in Telangana through controversy. He said the people of Telangana would not accept leaders who visited the State only to deliver provocative speeches and then disappear.

The Congress leader demanded that Pawan Kalyan withdraw his remarks and apologise to the people of Telangana. He said political parties should compete democratically, but they must not weaken communal harmony or insult the sentiments attached to Telangana's formation.

## Adilabad to Get Telangana's Largest Joint Airport After Shamshabad: Adilabad MLA Payal Shankar

ADILABAD

Adilabad MLA Payal Shankar expressed happiness that a new chapter in the district's history has begun, with the support of both the Central and State Governments, aimed at transforming the backward Adilabad district into an industrial and economic hub.

He announced that, after Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Telangana's most prestigious and largest joint airport will be developed in Adilabad over an area of 1,980 acres. He stated that the project is being expedited under the joint supervision of the Central Government, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

As part of this process, MLA Payal Shankar personally met Defence Ministry Joint Secretary Mahanti in New Delhi today and handed over the official land allocation document approved by the Telangana Government for 1,580 acres earmarked for the airport project.

Payal Shankar stated that the State Government has expressed its willingness to allocate even more land than what was requested by the Ministry of Defence. In addition to the 369.45 acres already under Defence Ministry control, the government has agreed to provide 1,580 acres, exceeding the requested 1,550 acres. Of this, 1,500 acres will be allotted to the Defence Ministry and 80 acres to the Airports



Authority of India (AAI).

He further explained that the proposed airport will feature a 9,000-foot runway. To ensure uninterrupted aircraft operations, the Telangana Government has also agreed to bear the substantial cost of ₹310 crore for relocating the existing 765 KV high-tension power lines in the area and has communicated this commitment to the Central Government through an official letter.

The MLA expressed confidence that the construction of this joint airfield will enable the expansion of both Indian Air Force flying training establishments and civil aviation operations in Adilabad, bringing revolutionary changes to the district's defence and transportation sectors. He added that, alongside the airport, the government has already decided to establish an industrial corridor across another 2,000 acres in the district, which is expected to generate large-scale employment and job opportunities for local youth.

On behalf of the people of Adilabad district and personally, MLA Payal Shankar conveyed special thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, as well as Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, for their support and cooperation in advancing the long-cherished dream of an airport for the people of Adilabad.

## Health, Happiness and Longevity through Yoga Practice, says Dr. Umar Alisha

PITHAPURAM

As part of the 21-day celebrations of International Yoga Day 2026, Dr. Umar Alisha, the ninth head of Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Aadiyathmika Peetham, presided over the inaugural function held at Maharshi Mohiddin Badusha Gyan Sabha Mandir, Pithapuram. He said that increasing the practice of yoga will bring health, happiness and longevity. Dr. Makala Satyanarayana, who was the chief guest of the program, said that yoga is very important for everyone to stay fit and urged everyone to adopt yoga and practice it daily.

Wangara Renuka Devi, the convener of Pithapuram Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust, Krishna District, who was the guest of the program, said that yoga has gained recognition



all over the world due to the initiative of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that the coalition government has also gained fame in the state for programs in the name of Yogaandhra. Many people were treated to reduce pain and Modi Health Care Sticks were distributed. Dr. Makala Satyanarayana, founder chairman of Vijayawada

da Yoga Shakti Sadhana Samiti, said that yoga festivals will be organized for the next 20 days. Dr. Umar Alisha felicitated Dr. Makala Satyanarayana, founder chairman of Vijayawada Yoga Shakti Sadhana Samiti. Umar Alisha Trust Central Committee members A.V.V. Satyanarayana organized the program and presented the vote of thanks.

## Every Drop Must Return to the Earth

**\* HMWSSB and KPHB Residents Turn Rain-fall into Hope for Hyderabad's Future.**

HYDERABAD

At a time when cities across India are struggling with falling groundwater levels, shrinking freshwater resources and growing demand, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) took a meaningful step towards water conservation by conducting the Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures and Awareness Programme 2026 at 7th Phase KPHB Colony, Open Gym Park, near LIG 599.

The programme marked the inauguration of a newly constructed Rain Water Harvesting Pit, funded by the residents of 7th Phase KPHB Colony. What may appear to be a small structure in a neighbourhood park carries a powerful message: the future of water security begins not only with governments and departments, but with communities, households and individuals who choose to act before it is too late.

The initiative was inaugurated in the presence of Sri K. Ashok Reddy, IAS, Managing Director, HMWSSB, along with senior officials of the Water Board, residents, welfare association members and public representatives of the colony.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri K. Ashok Reddy reminded citizens that freshwater is not unlimited and that every drop wasted today could become a crisis tomorrow. "Groundwater is invisible, but its impact is visible everywhere. We therefore need to work together to manage and sustain groundwater. Groundwater may be out of sight, but it must not be out of mind," said Sri K. Ashok Reddy, IAS, Managing Director, HMWSSB.

He said water conservation is not merely an official duty,



but a moral responsibility of every citizen. He appealed to people to ensure that rainwater falling on houses, apartments, parks and open spaces is guided into harvesting pits instead of being allowed to flow away as surface runoff. According to him, the Water Board receives thousands of phone calls every day from citizens complaining about low water pressure and shortage in supply. He said such problems are not isolated incidents, but warning signs of a deeper water challenge that urban areas must address urgently.

"If every colony, every apartment, every house and every institution takes responsibility for conserving rainwater, we can avoid severe water shortage in the future," he said.

Sri Ashok Reddy also warned that several cities are already facing water scarcity and that continued wastage of water could push urban areas towards desert-like conditions in the coming years. Referring to changing climate patterns and the possible impact of El Nino, he said rainfall uncertainty could increase and people must prepare by saving every possible drop of rainwater.

The importance of this programme is much larger than a single park or a single rainwater pit. Across the world, water demand has been rising at nearly twice the rate of

population growth over the last century. Nearly a quarter of the world's population is already living in countries facing extreme water stress. India is among the countries where the ratio of water withdrawal to available supply is considered extremely high, crossing 80 percent in several assessments.

Groundwater, which supports drinking water, agriculture, industries and urban life, is being extracted at a rate much higher than its natural recharge. In several parts of India, groundwater levels are falling by more than one metre every year. Deep borewells, rapid construction, concrete roads, sealed open spaces and uncontrolled extraction are making the crisis worse.

The 2019 water crisis in Rajasthan stood as a painful reminder of how quickly water scarcity can affect daily life. Long queues for drinking water, dry wells, parched land and struggling communities showed that water shortage is not a distant future threat, but a present reality in many regions.

In cities like Hyderabad, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation have increased pressure on available water resources. Open soil that once absorbed rainwater has been replaced by concrete surfaces, buildings and roads. As a result, rainwater often flows into

drains instead of entering the ground. This reduces natural groundwater recharge and increases urban flooding during heavy rains.

Rainwater harvesting offers a practical solution to this problem. By collecting rainwater from rooftops, open spaces, parks and paved areas and directing it into recharge pits or storage systems, communities can reduce water wastage, improve groundwater levels and decrease stormwater runoff.

The newly inaugurated rainwater harvesting pit at 7th Phase KPHB Colony is one such effort. Located near the Open Gym Park, the pit will help collect rainwater and allow it to percolate into the ground. Over time, such structures can improve groundwater recharge, support nearby borewells and reduce water stagnation during rains.

The programme also served as an awareness platform to educate citizens about the urgency of water conservation. Officials explained that 97 percent of the Earth's water is saline and found in oceans, making it unsuitable for direct drinking or domestic use. Of the remaining 3 percent freshwater, nearly 2 percent exists in glaciers, icebergs and other frozen forms. This means only about 1 percent of the world's water is readily available for human beings, animals, plants and ecosystems.

## Following NEP 2020 Age Norms

**■ Essential for Better Learning Outcomes: Dr. Komatireddy Gopal Reddy**

HYDERABAD

Educational institutions, parents, and policymakers must strictly adhere to the age-wise admission guidelines prescribed under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to ensure the holistic de-

velopment of children, said Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, National Advisor of TRSMA and Chairman of Lotus Lap Group of Schools.

Speaking on the importance of age-appropriate school admissions, Dr. Gopal Reddy emphasized that the NEP 2020 framework is based on scientific research in child psychology, neuroscience, and early childhood education. He stated that children

should be admitted to Class 1 only after attaining the prescribed age of 6 years and completing the foundational stage of learning.

He pointed out that many developed nations, including Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Estonia, follow age-appropriate school entry policies, ensuring that children are developmentally ready before entering formal schooling. These countries focus on play-based learning, language

development, social-emotional growth, and foundational skills during the early years, leading to stronger academic outcomes in later stages.

Dr. Gopal Reddy explained that the NEP 2020 structure of 5+3+3+4 has been carefully designed to align with the developmental needs of children at different stages. Admitting children before they are developmentally ready often leads to learning gaps, academic stress, reduced confidence, and long-term challenges in understanding concepts.

## Alphores Narendra Reddy Emerges Strong Contender in SUDA Chairman Race

**■ Is the backing of CM Revanth Reddy and PCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud his biggest strength?**

**■ DCC President Medipalli Satyam and MLA Kavvampalli Satyanarayana reportedly extend key support**

KARIMNAGAR

As discussions intensify within the Congress party over the appointment of the next chairman of the Karimnagar Satavahana Urban Development Authority (SUDA), the name of Alphores Educational Institutions chairman and Congress leader Vootkuri Narendra Reddy is emerging as a strong contender.

With the tenure of the current SUDA Chairman, Komatireddy Narendra Reddy, nearing completion, political circles are debating whether the Congress leadership will opt for a fresh appointment or grant him another term.

**Strong Political Connections**

Having joined the Congress party in 2018, Vootkuri Narendra Reddy has built a reputation as a loyal and controversy-free

leader. He has remained active in party affairs and maintained cordial relations with leaders across various factions.

Despite narrowly losing the Graduate MLC election as a Congress candidate, he has continued to play an active role in party activities. According to party circles, his close rapport with Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Telangana PCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud is being viewed as a major advantage.

He is also said to enjoy good relations with senior leaders, including ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Ponnampalabhar. Reports suggest that Medipalli Satyam, Kavvampalli Satyanarayana, and several district-level leaders are also favorably inclined toward his candidature.

**Administrative Experience and Development Vision**

Supporters of Narendra Reddy point to his extensive administrative experience in building Alphores Educational Institutions into a recognized educational network across Telangana. Having managed a large system comprising hundreds of employees and thousands of students, they believe he possesses the organizational skills



required to lead an important urban development body like SUDA.

They argue that Karimnagar's expanding urban landscape requires visionary leadership capable of driving infrastructure development and planned urban growth, qualities they believe Narendra Reddy possesses.

**Komatireddy Seeking Another Term**

Meanwhile, current SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy is reportedly making efforts to secure an extension of his tenure. Known to be associated with Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, he is said to be seeking support from the party leadership for another term.

Political observers note that he is also maintaining coordination with Minister Ponnampalabhar while mobilizing support for his continuation.

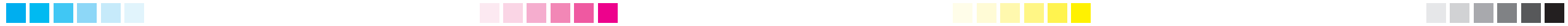


His supporters argue that his long-standing service to the Congress party deserves recognition through a renewed term.

**Final Decision Lies with the High Command**

While the final decision on the SUDA chairmanship rests with the Congress high command, Alphores Narendra Reddy's name is currently being discussed prominently in political circles. His perceived strengths include party loyalty, a controversy-free image, administrative experience, and strong connections with both state and district leadership.

At the same time, the efforts of incumbent chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy to retain the position have made the contest increasingly interesting. Political observers now await the Congress leadership's final decision on who will lead SUDA in the coming term.





## ATA Delegation met YS Jagan Mohan Reddy

**Amaravati, June 3:** Representatives of the American Telugu Association (ATA) met Andhra Pradesh former Chief Minister and YSRCP President Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. They met him in Amaravati and invited him to attend the 19th ATA Convention, which is being held in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. On this occasion, Jagan inquired about the welfare and well-being of Telugu people living abroad. The convention is expected to be attended by prominent political leaders, film personalities, and artists from

both Telugu-speaking states. Former Chief Minister Jagan expressed his willingness to send representatives from the YSRCP to participate in the convention and wished for the grand success of the ATA event. He also instructed YSRCP General Secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy and Secretary Sambasiva Reddy to extend cooperation to the ATA organizers. Among those who met Jagan were ATA President Jayanth Challa, former presidents Bhuvanesh Bujala, Sharath Vemula, Srikanth Gudipati, and other representatives.



## TRAI Organized a workshop on Rating of Buildings for Digital connectivity

VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 04

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Regional Office Hyderabad, organized a workshop on "Rating of Buildings for Digital Connectivity" in Vijayawada, bringing together key stakeholders from Government, Telecom industry.

The workshop aimed at creating awareness about TRAI's "Rating of Properties for Digital Connectivity Regulations, 2024", a major initiative to improve in-building digital connectivity across residential, commercial, and public spaces.

The event was inaugurated by Shri B Praveen Kumar, ITS, TRAI RO HYDERABAD who highlighted the growing importance of robust digital infrastructure. Shri Tejpal Singh, ITS, Advisor, QoS, TRAI, and Shri Dhavuryan Naik Joint Director ITE&C Department Govt of AP addressed the gathering and emphasized collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

In his welcome address, Shri B. Praveen Kumar, Advisor, TRAI RO Hyderabad, under-

lined that digital connectivity has become a basic necessity and noted that a significant portion of data usage occurs indoors, necessitating strong in-building solutions.

The workshop highlighted TRAI's new framework introducing a star rating system (1-5 stars) for buildings based on their digital connectivity readiness. The initiative promotes coordination among property developers, Telecom service providers, and infrastructure providers to enhance user experience and infrastructure quality.

Technical sessions covered regulatory provisions, implementation strategies, and planning aspects of digital connectivity infrastructure, along with a panel discussion involving representatives from TRAI, government bodies, and industry experts.

TRAI reiterated that digital connectivity is now a core utility, and the new rating framework will play a vital role in strengthening India's digital ecosystem and supporting initiatives such as Digital India and Smart Cities.

## Tamil Nadu signs Rs 18,600 crore MoU with L&T

CHENNAI, JUNE 4

The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Larsen & Toubro for three major industrial projects worth Rs 18,600 crore, expected to generate around 8,200 jobs across the state.

Chief Minister V Joseph Vijay witnessed the signing ceremony at the Secretariat after holding discussions with L&T Chairman and Managing Director SN Subrahmanyam. The Chief Minister appreciated the company's continued invest-

ments and assured full government support for future expansion plans. The biggest project is a Rs 15,000 crore data centre expansion in Kancheepuram, expected to create 500 jobs. L&T will also establish an electronics manufacturing facility in Coimbatore with an investment of Rs 2,500 crore, generating around 2,000 jobs.

In addition, the company will expand its shipbuilding facility at Kattupalli in Tiruvallur district with an investment of Rs 1,100 crore, creating nearly 5,700 employment opportunities.

## AP CM CBN to ride Bicycle ride

In Visakhapatnam tomorrow (June 5) to promote environmental protection

CM calls upon people to take a pledge for Environmental protection and plant a sapling

AMARAVATI

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu himself will ride bicycle at Visakhapatnam tomorrow (June 5) as part of the World Environment Day celebrations, reinforcing the message of environmental protection and sustainable living. During his visit to Visakhapatnam tomorrow, the Chief Minister will reach the scheduled programme venue of National Workshop on Seafood Exports at Novotel hotel by riding a bicycle, demonstrating his commitment to promoting eco-friendly practices and reducing carbon emissions.

The Chief Minister appealed to citizens, public



representatives, political leaders and government employees to join the initiative by using bicycles or e-bicycles on World Environment Day and by taking a pledge to protect the environment. He also urged everyone to

plant at least one sapling and contribute towards increasing green cover across the State.

In a message shared through X, the Chief Minister stated that "On the occasion of World Environment

Day tomorrow, let us all take a collective pledge. The Earth is our home and nature is our lifeline. Protecting the environment is our collective responsibility. Let us conserve natural resources and work together to prevent pollution of our air, water and soil. Promoting greenery and using energy resources judiciously are essential for a sustainable future.

On June 5, let us travel by bicycles and e-bicycles and plant a sapling each. During my visit to Visakhapatnam tomorrow, I will travel by bicycle to spread the message of environmental protection among the people. I request everyone to support this initiative and join us in making it a success."

## Undermine self-respect and right to self-governance of people of Telangana"

PAWAN KALYAN OPPOSES SECTION 8

AMARAVATI JUNE 4

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan on Thursday said he has consistently maintained his stand on Telangana, stating that he opposed the implementation of Section 8 after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. He said he believed it would have affected the self-respect and right to self-governance of the people of Telangana. Kalyan said his position on Telangana has remained unchanged since the state's formation and stressed the importance of maintaining mutual respect, peace and cooperation between the two Telugu-speaking states. In a post on X, Kalyan wrote, "My stand on Telangana and the interests of its people has always been consistent. Following the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, while certain law and order concerns were raised, I clearly opposed the implementation of Section 8, as I believed it would undermine the

self-respect and right to self-governance of the people of Telangana. I have always maintained that respecting the aspirations and rights of the people of Telangana is as important as addressing the security concerns of the people of Andhra Pradesh."

"Instead of invoking provisions like Section 8, I believed that special coordination mechanisms, parliamentary oversight, and measures that build mutual trust between the two states would provide a more constructive and lasting solution. I have never supported politics that seek to destabilise Telangana. My belief has always been in protecting the interests of the people of both Telugu states through mutual respect, peace, cooperation, and a spirit of brotherhood," the post read. The Deputy Chief Minister's remarks come a day after he called for greater regional unity between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, asserting that political boundaries cannot divide the

emotional bonds shared by the people of the two states. Addressing recent political exchanges with BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), Kalyan sought to downplay the controversy and emphasised the cordial relationship between the two leaders. "I share a brotherly relationship with KTR garu. I have not seen exactly what he said, but as far as I know, he would not have spoken with the wrong intention," Kalyan said. He emphasised that Telangana remains an integral part of India where anyone can travel or seek medical care freely, adding, "People may put fences on borders, but they cannot put fences around hearts". Addressing the massive political controversy and subsequent police complaints triggered by his recent public meetings in Hyderabad, Kalyan questioned the rationale behind obstructing leaders across state lines, pointing out the deeply intertwined business and cultural ties between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

## State-Level World Environment Day Function to be Held in Gurugram

Union Minister Manohar Lal to be Chief Guest

Chandigarh, June 4 – On the occasion of World Environment Day, the state-level function will be held in Gurugram on June 5, in which Union Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Power Sh. Manohar Lal will attend as the Chief Guest, while Haryana Forest, Environment and Wildlife Minister Rao Narbir Singh will be present as a special guest. The event will showcase various initiatives related to environmental conservation, cleanliness, waste management, and green development. A government spokesperson informed that Union Minister Sh. Manohar Lal will inaugurate the bioremediation pilot project and launch new initiatives related to environmental protection. A plantation drive will also be organized on the occasion, aimed at increasing green cover and spreading the message of environmental conservation.

It is noteworthy that the theme of this year's World Environment Day is "Na-

ture-Inspired Solutions for Our Climate and Our Future." The theme conveys a message of addressing the challenges of climate change, conserving natural resources, promoting biodiversity, and encouraging sustainable development.

The Haryana Government is implementing various schemes and campaigns on the ground with the objective of turning environmental protection into a mass movement. Minister Rao Narbir Singh has been continuously urging the people of the state to plant more trees, promote water conservation, adopt cleanliness, and avoid the use of single-use plastics. The state government's goal is to ensure that environmental conservation is not limited to government programmes alone, but becomes a broad social movement through public participation, so that a clean, green, and safe environment can be ensured for future generations.

## "Congress betrayed, backstabbed us"

CHENNAI JUNE 4

The DMK on Thursday announced that it will not participate in the INDIA bloc meeting scheduled in New Delhi on June 8, accusing the Congress of "betraying" and "backstabbing" the party after the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls.

DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai said party cadres were angry over Congress allegedly moving closer to TVK. "Congress betrayed us. The cadres are upset and angry, and respecting their

feelings, the leadership has decided not to attend the INDIA alliance meeting," he said.

Senior DMK leader TKS Elangovan also criticised the Congress, claiming the party was no longer part of the INDIA bloc. He said Congress leaders had benefited from the DMK alliance in Tamil Nadu but later distanced themselves. Elangovan alleged that Congress had indicated support for TVK in future elections, which hurt DMK workers who campaigned for the alliance

# Sonowal Discusses 19,209 Crore Maritime Plan

KOLKATA, JUNE 4

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday held detailed discussions with West Bengal Chief Minister Suven- du Adhikari on a proposed maritime investment pipeline worth ₹19,209 crore aimed at transforming West Bengal into eastern India's premier maritime and logistics hub by 2031.

The proposed investments, planned under the Centre's Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, are expected to generate more than 62,500 direct and indirect employment opportunities while significantly strengthening the state's maritime infrastructure, trade connectivity and industrial ecosystem.

During the meeting, both leaders reviewed a range of projects covering ports, inland waterways, shipbuilding, logistics, river transport and port-led industrialisation. Key proposals include the development of the Balagarh Multimodal Logistics Hub, mechanisation and expansion of Kolkata and Haldia docks, strengthening inland waterway connectivity, development of modern shipbuilding and ship repair facilities, cruise tourism infrastructure and riverfront redevelopment projects.

The investment roadmap also includes plans to develop industrial clusters linked to ports, aimed at boosting manufacturing, exports and warehousing activities in the region. Officials said the projects are expected to improve



cargo handling efficiency, reduce logistics costs and increase trade movement through eastern India.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Sonowal said West Bengal holds strategic importance in India's maritime growth due to its geographical location, vast river network and industrial base. He stated that the proposed investments would help transform Kolkata and Haldia into world-class maritime gateways while attracting large-scale private investments into the state.

He added that the Centre is focusing on modernising port infrastructure, improving multimodal connectivity and expanding inland water transport to support economic growth and trade.

According to Sonowal, inland waterways cargo movement in the region has grown nearly five-fold over the last decade, reflecting the increasing importance of river-based transport.

Chief Minister Suven- du Adhikari welcomed the Centre's continued support for maritime and connectivity projects in the state. He stressed the importance of initiatives such as Sagarmala 2.0, the proposed tunnel across the Hooghly River, dredging of National Waterway-1, development of jetty infrastructure and protection of the Hooghly river embankment. He said these projects would improve transportation, strengthen trade networks and support economic activity across West Bengal.

The meeting also reviewed issues related to land availability, irrigation infrastructure and coastal development required for the smooth execution of the projects. Officials said special focus is being given to sustainable development, tourism promotion and green maritime infrastructure. Highlighting the state's maritime progress, Sonowal noted that cargo throughput at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port increased from 46.29 million metric tonnes in 2014 to 70.87 million metric tonnes in 2025-26. The steady rise in cargo movement and logistics activity is expected to further strengthen West Bengal's position as a major trade and maritime gateway for eastern and northeastern India.

## Assam BJP to plant 1 crore saplings on World Environment Day

GUWAHATI, JUNE 4

Ahead of World Environment Day, the Assam unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday highlighted the state government's environmental conservation initiatives, claiming significant progress in forest restoration, wildlife protection and afforestation over the past decade.

State BJP spokesperson Kamal Kumar Medhi said the government has prioritised ecological preservation through large-scale drives to reclaim forest land from illegal encroachments and expand green cover across the state. According to the party, more than 25,000 acres of forest land have been recovered during the last five years.

Among the major operations cited was the eviction drive carried out in the Dahikata Reserved Forest in Goalpara district in November last year, where nearly 600 encroachments were cleared and around 1,150 bighas of forest land restored. Similar action was undertaken in the Rengma Reserved Forest in Golaghat district, where nearly 153 hectares of land were reportedly recovered for afforestation and ecological restoration.

The BJP said restoration efforts in forest regions such as Dhansiri, Daldali and Laokhowa have improved wildlife movement corridors and strengthened biodiversity conservation. Officials claimed that these measures have contributed to the growth of wildlife populations in protected areas and improved habitat connectivity for animals.

The party also highlighted the rise in tour-



ism at major wildlife destinations including Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. According to government data cited by the BJP, tourist arrivals at Kaziranga increased from nearly 1.55 lakh visitors to around 5.48 lakh in recent years, which the party attributed to better wildlife protection, conservation efforts and infrastructure development.

Marking World Environment Day on June 5, the BJP announced a massive statewide plantation campaign coinciding with the completion of 12 years of the NDA government at the Centre. As part of the initiative, the party aims to plant one crore saplings across Assam. BJP workers have also been instructed to plant at least five fruit-bearing trees in every booth area to encourage environmental awareness and community participation in conservation activities.

The party stated that the plantation drive is aimed at strengthening Assam's green cover, combating climate change and promoting sustainable environmental practices at the grassroots level.

EDITORIAL

### From "Unconditional Surrender" to Stalemate: How Trump's War on Iran Backfired

When Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu initiated hostilities against Iran on February 28, their goals were expansive: forcing regime change in Tehran, dismantling the country's ballistic missile and nuclear infrastructure, and severing its ties with regional proxy forces. During the opening phase of the campaign, Mr. Trump dismissed the possibility of diplomatic compromise and insisted on Iran's "unconditional surrender." However, the military campaign proceeded so disastrously for Washington that, a mere ninety days later, Mr. Trump finds himself brokering a provisional ceasefire prolongation and seeking the unblocking of the Strait of Hormuz by offering financial relief to Tehran. Details from a leaked draft memorandum published by American news outlets indicate that Iran would permit shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz to return to operational norms, while the United States would progressively dismantle its naval blockade of Iran's coastlines. Tehran is also set to reclaim control over its impounded financial assets, and the cessation of hostilities would apply across all active theaters, including the Lebanese border. Still, even if finalized by the leadership of both nations, this pact represents a purely introductory framework. Mr. Trump has entirely abandoned his rhetoric regarding Iran's rocket arsenal and its patronage of regional militant networks. His strategic priorities have contracted exclusively to the atomic question, mirroring the exact diplomatic posture adopted by Barack Obama in 2013, which ultimately produced the 2015 joint accord—a treaty Mr. Trump himself dismantled in 2018. If this memorandum is ratified, Iran and America are expected to initiate formal, face-to-face diplomacy centered on atomic limitations.

Mr. Trump's aggressive campaign has completely fallen short of realizing its stated goals. By launching retaliatory strikes against American installations throughout the Persian Gulf and choking off maritime commerce in the Strait of Hormuz, Iran successfully transformed the clash into a broader regional and financial crisis. Mr. Trump declared a pause in fighting on April 8, seemingly recognizing that aerial bombardments were yielding diminishing returns, and subsequently attempted to squeeze diplomatic compromises out of Iran via financial sanctions and naval blockades. Yet Iran refused to blink. Following Mr. Trump's declaration of a total blockade on Iranian maritime trade, Tehran walked away from the bargaining table and sidelined the nuclear discussion. The reality that Washington is currently pursuing, utilizing Pakistan as an intermediary, a memorandum to prolong the truce before reviving atomic talks proves that Tehran's unyielding posture is delivering tangible strategic benefits. Tehran has a history of participating in responsible diplomacy with Western powers. When Mr. Trump walked away from the 2015 atomic framework, Iran was fully adhering to its verified commitments, and it was actively participating in diplomatic discourse as recently as early 2025 and February 2026. Consequently, if Washington genuinely desires a durable treaty, it must bridge the severe lack of confidence and negotiate through reciprocal compromises. If Mr. Trump truly wants a peaceful resolution, a diplomatic breakthrough is entirely achievable. However, if his goal is to extract via negotiations the very capitulation he could not win on the battlefield, he threatens to drag America into another endless, intractable conflict.

# The Knock of Digital Rebellion: Will It Stand the Test of Politics?

Delhi's Constitution Club has traditionally witnessed serious political debates, press conferences, and the white attire of conventional politicians. However, what transpired there last Wednesday hinted at the arrival of a new and unconventional chapter in Indian politics. Three educated youths sat on the stage and loudly demanded the resignation of the country's Education Minister. This demand did not stem from an established opposition party, but from an organization named the 'Cockroach Janta Party'. What was just a satire, a digital joke, and a source of bitter memes on social media timelines until yesterday, is now preparing to take to the streets of the national capital. This movement is a direct by-product of the deep frustration and anger brewing among the country's youth due to the recurring cases of paper leaks in exams like NEET-UG and CBSE. But the major question is: Can the reality of grassroots politics be altered merely by going viral or taking jibes in the digital space? Is this a genuine restlessness of the youth in Indian democracy, or is it just another short-lived spectacle born amidst the glitz of social media?

The three faces considered the backbone of this movement Sourav Das, Vijeta Dahiya, and Ashutosh Ranka possess interesting backgrounds. None of them is an established or seasoned politician. One is an alert journalist and social activist who has been exposing the flaws of the government machinery through RTIs, while the second has been associated with deep research and scriptwriting for major platforms like Dhruv Rathee. Looking at the third face, he is a public policy expert who has studied at global institutions like IIT Kanpur and the London School of Economics. These are the youths who speak fluent English, understand the nuances of the internet, and have the sophistication to present their views in a modern way. On June 6, when the founder of this party returns to Delhi from America and permission for a protest at Jantar Mantar is sought, this digital anger will face its first

real test on the ground. The issue of paper leaks is undoubtedly a highly sensitive and serious matter linked to the future of crores of students and their parents. The resentment of the youth on this issue is one hundred percent justified, but relying on symbols like 'Cockroach' and pure satire to express this anger raises questions about the seriousness of the movement itself.

History is witness to the fact that mere outrage and social media algorithms never bring about permanent change. Trending on social media or getting millions of likes cannot be the benchmark of a revolution. The Cockroach Party has boldly highlighted the real pain and the bitter reality of unemployment simmering within the youth, but when it comes to a concrete and practical agenda, the organization seems clueless. A democratic country cannot be run solely on jokes, memes, and performances. After a point, both the public and time ask tough questions. How will jobs be created? What is the plan to revive the country's faltering economy? What is the organization's stance on the tax structure, police reforms, or foreign policy? The Cockroach Party currently has no concrete answers to these fundamental and complex policy questions. This kind of ambiguity in politics definitely offers one advantage there are no ideological rifts, allowing every disgruntled section to stay connected with you. However, the moment you take a firm stand on any serious issue, internal contradictions and differences begin to surface.

A dangerous aspect of this entire narrative is that it could constantly push the youth toward negativity and absolute despair regarding the system. Criticizing the establishment and asking sharp questions is the soul of democracy, but a healthy democracy also needs citizens who believe that reform within the existing system is possible. When every constitutional and social institution like the courts, media, elections, and universities becomes merely a subject of ridicule and mockery, the general public will lose hope and

stop trying to improve them. This is not a rebellion against a system, but rather a situation akin to surrender or giving up. Furthermore, the movement's claim that it represents the voice of every ordinary, struggling youth of the country does not seem entirely true. Look at its leading faces and the scope of its reach. It primarily appears to be an exclusive club of English-speaking, urban youths who remain online round-the-clock. The youth living in the remote villages of India, the sons of farmers sweating in the fields, the migrant laborers, and those crores of young people who do not even have access to a smartphone or high-speed internet, are completely missing from this entire picture. Gaining popularity on the internet and hitting the dusty roads of the country to garner public support are two entirely different ends of the spectrum.

The second major practical problem is that this entire movement appears to be a show centered around virtually a single individual. When a movement or organization relies on the charisma of a single face, the entire structure collapses like a house of cards the moment that individual falters. In Indian politics, we have the example of the Aam Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal, which emerged from a massive mass movement but later merged into the conventional ways of governance. Operating any real political organization requires a strong organizational framework, a trained cadre, and a clear ideology. The current model of social media is designed precisely to promote resentment, agitation, and sensationalism. If a movement lacks clear principles and the boundaries of discipline, such platforms quickly become easy targets for chaotic elements and rumor-mongers.

An uncomfortable truth is also that existing ruling establishments often find this type of meme-based opposition quite convenient. This digital rebellion of viral posts and witty sarcasm scatters the actual youth energy that could have otherwise transformed into a serious electoral or political challenge. For any powerful gov-

ernment, being mocked on social media is not as big a threat as the fear of an organized, disciplined, and grassroots-level opposition. Even the party's election symbol, the 'Cockroach', is a double-edged sword. Even though this creature has the ability to survive in any adverse condition, its identity in the public psyche is associated only with filth, infection, and disgust. When a symbol goes among the public, it carves out a distinct image that goes beyond its original meaning.

The bottom line is that social media likes and actual political power are two entirely different things. The virtual world can artificially present any movement as massive and impactful, but this online popularity vanishes just as fast as it scrolls past the screen. As soon as a new viral issue emerges, people forget the old debates. Real and permanent change requires patience, years of hard work, and the tedious task of building an organization, which is the most difficult thing to do in this era of the internet. India's youth are genuinely distressed by unemployment, inflation, and an insensitive system, and their anger is one hundred percent real. The credit for bringing this anger to the center of discussion can be given to this digital campaign, but highlighting a problem and finding its practical solution are two different things. Unless these jokes, jibes, and memes translate into a concrete policy plan, this exercise too will be recorded like many other internet sensations in history, which looked like a massive revolution but ultimately failed to bring any real change to the system.



AJAJ KUMAR  
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## World Environment Day - 5

# Environmental Crisis: The World Trapped Between Development and Destruction

Environmental pollution is the biggest global problem of the present time. For the last three decades, it has been felt that the biggest problem at the global level is related to the environment itself. Due to continuous human interference in nature, many natural resources on Earth have been destroyed. Due to reasons such as modern lifestyle, lack of trees and plants on Earth, the monstrous form of environmental pollution, and the ruthless exploitation of nature by humans, a terrifying chasm of imbalance is being created between man and nature. We are now continuously experiencing the rising threats of climate change and a polluted environment. That is why, with the objective of protecting and conserving the environment, 'World Environment Day' is celebrated every year on June 5 across the whole world. This day was declared by the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on June 16, 1972, in Stockholm, to bring political and social awareness towards the environment at a global level, and the first World Environment Day was celebrated on June 5, 1974. The theme of World Environment Day for the year 2026 is 'Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future.'

Although agreements regarding the protection of the environment and the proper exploitation of nature had started in Europe, America, and African countries since the 1910s, in recent decades, many countries around the world have signed several multinational agreements like the Kyoto Protocol, Montreal Protocol, and the Rio Conference. Governments of most countries do appear concerned about the environment, but amidst this environmental concern, some countries keep changing their environmental conservation policies keeping their own interests in mind. The brunt of a polluted environment has to be borne not only by humans but by every living being existing on Earth. It is due to tampering with nature on

a large scale that the giant forests of the world have started burning every year, which, apart from causing losses of trillions of rupees to the global economy, also reduces many species of rare animals and flora to ashes in fierce fires. During the lockdown in the Corona period, an improvement in the state of the environment was observed worldwide, which showed that if we want, the state of the environment can be improved to a great extent, but due to a lack of strong willpower, the expected steps are

modernization and industrialization, we have violated the moral boundaries of nature at every moment, and all this is the result of man's atrocities against nature, the horrific consequences of which are before us.

It is due to human activities that the mixture of pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen, ozone, and particulate matter in the atmosphere has reached such a dangerous level that we are receiving incurable diseases as a gift through breathing. Whether it is the matter

fears of several cities in the world being submerged due to rising sea levels.

Nature has been continuously warning us by showing its fierce form sometimes as cyclones, sometimes earthquakes, sometimes drought, and sometimes famine, about what the picture of our future is going to be if we continue to exploit nature's resources in this manner. But despite witnessing the fierce form of nature every time, we are inviting our own destruction by ignoring these warnings of nature. If we look at the monstrous global problem of environmental pollution worldwide, it is clear that we perhaps do not want to do anything beyond expressing global concern in the name of dealing with climate change. It has been stated in the book 'Pollution-Free Breaths' that due to the faltering balance of the environment, people worldwide are getting trapped in the web of various dreadful diseases, their reproductive capacity is being adversely affected, and their working efficiency is also getting impacted. A major part of people's earnings is spent only on the treatment of diseases. Nature is like our mother, who provides us with plenty of valuable things from her natural treasure, but if, due to our selfishness, we start making the mistake of considering ourselves the master of nature, then how can we blame nature for natural devastation?

(The author is a senior journalist active in journalism for 36 years, environmental expert and the author of several acclaimed books, including 'Pradushan Mukht Saansein' on environment)



YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL  
Senior Journalist

## THE ECLIPSE OF TOMORROW'S SUNS



In Eden's orchard, long ago,  
Where honeyed fruits would blush and glow,  
And perfumed blossoms, bright and fair,  
Wove dreams of wonder through the air,  
The cuckoo stitched the dawn with song,  
The silver streams danced swift along;  
Each tender leaf and budding flower  
Foretold a nation's golden hour.  
But what dark season lost its way?  
What venom found its roots one day?  
What serpent slithered through the shade  
And turned the bloom to ash and blade?  
The trees that stood with sheltering grace,  
Guarding hope in their embrace,  
Now breathe the fumes of fatal fire  
And feed addiction's dark desire.  
The hands of friendship, warm and true,  
Have grown to fangs beneath the dew;  
Their touch once nurtured fields of spring,  
Now bears the poison of a sting.  
The phantom called Intoxication,  
Enemy of every aspiration,  
Moves unseen through youthful dreams  
And tears apart their sacred seams.  
With silken chains and smiling lies,  
It darkens hearts and clouds the skies;  
It steals the crown from noble thought  
And leaves bright destinies distraught.  
Parents gather shattered years,  
Harvesting rivers born of tears  
Teachers watch their lessons fade  
Like footprints washed by evening shade.  
The books that should ignite the mind,  
The truths that elevate mankind,  
Lie buried underneath the smoke  
Where Wisdom's wings are bruised and broke.  
Before the seeds of virtue bloom,  
The weeds of ruin claim their room;  
Before the lamps of learning rise,  
Nightfall descends on youthful skies.  
Like suns eclipsed by Rahu's reign,

Young brilliance sinks in silent pain;  
Like moons devoured by Shadow's breath,  
Their dreams descend to living death.  
This is no ordinary scar,  
No fleeting wound, no distant war;  
It is a thief with unseen hands  
Stealing the future of our lands.  
It murders not the flesh alone,  
But dreams not yet completely grown;  
It burns the harvest in the grain  
And leaves behind a field of pain.  
Awake, before the stars grow dim!  
Awake, before Hope's final hymn!  
Let homes become the fortress wall,  
And schools the light that guards us all.  
Let values bloom where vices creep,  
Let conscience wake from poisoned sleep  
Let purpose blaze in every breast  
Like dawn's first flame upon the east.  
Then shall the fog of ruin flee,  
And chains dissolve in liberty;  
Then shall tomorrow's suns arise  
Unveiled beneath unclouded skies.  
The streams of wisdom shall expand  
And bless the valleys of the land  
The youth, as torches lifted high,  
Shall teach the darkest night to die.  
And India, crowned in living light,  
Shall stand resplendent in the sight  
Of ages yet to sing her praise  
Through ever-brighter, nobler days.  
For drugs may glitter, tempt, and call,  
Yet lure the brightest minds to fall  
While knowledge lights the sovereign way  
And turns the darkest night to day.  
Protect the youth—protect the flame  
Protect the future—guard its name.  
For when the young stand wise and strong,  
A thousand suns shall rise lifelong  
And when those suns their radiance pour,  
No eclipse shall haunt the world once more.

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

## Bhandara-Gondia MLC Poll: BJP, 2 Independents in Fray

**GONDIA: (Jun 4)** Of the seven candidates in the fray for the June 18 Maharashtra legislative council polls from the Bhandara-Gondia MLC seat, four candidates withdrew their nomination forms on Thursday. In a surprising move, Congress' official candidate and former MLA Dilip Bansod and Congress-backed independent nominee Praful Agrawal pulled back their nominations along with Abhishek Karemore and Bhaskar Rahangdale, both independent candidates. With this, BJP's Avinash Bramhankar and two independents Naresh Ishwarkar and Sachin Kumbhalkar are now in the fray. There was strong speculation that Congress-backed Agrawal would stay in the contest and give a strong fight to BJP's Bramhankar, but surprisingly he decided against being part of the contest.

# Can assist, never replace human mind Supreme Court drafts AI rules for judiciary

**The draft, issued by the Supreme Court's Artificial Intelligence Committee, has been placed in the public domain for comments and suggestions until June 20. If adopted, the regulations will apply to the Supreme Court, High Courts, tribunals and statutory commissions performing adjudicatory functions across India.**

The Supreme Court has released draft regulations governing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in courts, making it clear that AI can assist the judicial process but can never replace human decision-making. The proposed framework states that no judgment, order, sentence or finding of fact and law can be based solely on AI-generated outputs.

The draft, issued by the Supreme Court's Artificial Intelligence Committee, has been placed in the public domain for comments and suggestions until June 20. If adopted, the regulations will apply to the Supreme Court, High Courts, tribunals and statutory commissions performing adjudicatory functions across India.

The proposed rules seek to balance technological innovation with judicial independence amid growing use of AI tools in the legal sector. The move comes after courts flagged concerns over lawyers and litigants relying on AI-generated content that, in some cases, cited non-existent judgments and legal precedents.

Under the draft framework, AI can be used for administrative and support functions such as case



management, identifying defects in filings, preparing cause lists, scheduling hearings, legal research, citation verification, document summarisation, automated transcription and translation of judgments into regional languages.

However, the regulations draw a clear line on adjudicatory functions. AI will not be permitted to determine judicial outcomes,

recommend sentences, assess witness credibility or decide questions of fact and law. The draft mandates a "Human-in-the-Loop" approach, ensuring that all final decisions remain exclusively with judges.

The Supreme Court said the regulations are based on principles of human primacy, transparency, accountability, data protection and judicial independence. The

draft also prohibits the use of personal data to train or refine AI systems without appropriate approvals and compliance with applicable data protection laws.

To oversee AI adoption in the judiciary, the proposal envisages a three-tier governance structure, including a permanent apex regulatory authority headed by a Supreme Court judge, AI committees in every High Court, and a dedicated Centre of Research and Excellence on Artificial Intelligence.

The regulations also require all AI tools used by courts to undergo annual audits and periodic reviews. The judiciary hopes the framework will help address case backlogs and improve efficiency while ensuring that technology remains a support tool rather than a substitute for

# Another major corporate scam has reportedly been exposed in the country

**MUMBAI, JUNE 4:**

According to information emerging from an investigation by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Rajesh Exports Limited has allegedly been identified as a fraudulent company. The investigation reportedly found that between 2021 and 2025, the company falsely reported revenue amounting to ₹15.15 lakh crore. SEBI is said to have found that nearly 99.8% of the profits shown in the company's reported group revenue were fake. In this context, SEBI has reportedly taken action against the company's CMD, Rajesh

Mehta, and has barred him from trading in the company's shares. In June 2022, the then minister entered into an agreement with this company for a proposed ₹24,000 crore AMOLED display fabrication plant investment in Telangana. The fact that the then minister, K. T. Rama Rao (KTR), had tweeted "Historic Day for Telangana" regarding this agreement has now become a topic of discussion in political circles. KTR had also praised this allegedly fraudulent company as one of the world's top 500 companies.

# K.F. Announcement of Rustam Award

**Dr. Bhopendra Vikal**

Bhopal : Police Headquarters has announced the K.F. Rustam Ji Awards for the year 2022-23 and 2023-24. These awards are given in three categories: Param Vishisht Category, Ati Vishisht Category and Vishisht Category. SP Dindori Ashish Khare's name is also among the officers who have been selected for these awards in the year 2022-23. Apart from this, Additional SP, DSP, Inspector, Head Constable and Constables have also been selected in the awards in both the years.

Under these awards of different categories, on the selection of Police Headquarters, a revolver and certificate is given in the most special category, a 12 bore gun and certificate in the very special category and Rs. 50 thousand and certificate are given in the special category.

**\*Utmost Exclusive Category\***

Rakesh Khakha, the then Additional Superintendent of Police, District Ratlam (currently Deputy Superintendent of Police, 29th Corps, Datia),



Nagendra Singh Sikarwar, then Deputy Superintendent of Police, Crime-2, Gwalior (currently the City Superintendent of Police, Maharajpura Gwalior), Kanchan Thakur, Acting Inspector Narmadapuram, Rajesh Kumar, Constable, SAF ATS Unit, Bhopalkamesh Singh Constable SAF ATS Unit Bhopal, Very Special Category, Durgesh Armo, then Deputy Superintendent of Police, District Ratlam (currently DSP Women Crime, Betul), Yogendra Sahu, Sub Inspector, Vidisha, Bheru Singh Deora, Assistant Sub Inspector, In-charge Cyber Branch, Dhar, Amaram Makwana, Constable, 8th Corps, SAF, Chhindwara, Wasim Khan, Constable, SAF ATS, Bhopal, Vipul Bhavsar, Constable, 218 Cyber cells will be given to Ratlam.

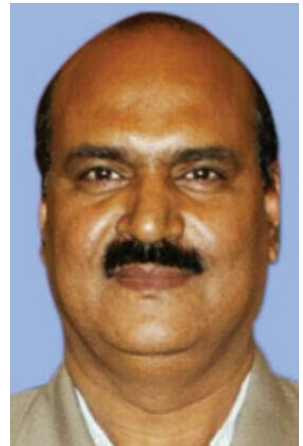
# How successful is the Namami Gange program in preventing the pollution of rivers?

**BY S. N. VERMA**

Despite strong legal provisions in India, river pollution remains a problem due to weak enforcement, poor coordination and inadequate infrastructure. The water quality of many rivers such as the Ganga River has deteriorated due to the increasing demand for water from rivers and other water bodies in the last few years. The situation is expected to be even more serious with the growing impact of climate change. Therefore, in view of the seriousness of the situation, the Government of India had launched the Namami Gange Programme (NGP) in the year 2014-15 for the revival of river Ganga and its tributaries, which was for five years till March 2021 and has been further extended. Under the Namami Gange programme, diverse and holistic measures are taken to clean and revitalise the river Ganga, including wastewater treatment, river bank management, ensuring e-flow, rural sanitation, tree plantation, biodiversity conservation and public partic-

ipation. As per the data presented in Parliament by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, till February 2026, a total of 524 projects have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 43,030 crore, out of which 355 projects have been completed. So far, NRCP has covered 58 rivers in 100 cities spread across 17 states of the country and created a sewage treatment capacity of 3,019 million litres (MLD) per day. The Ganga basin is spread over 11 states, covering 27 percent of India's land area and nourishing 47 percent of the population. In Telangana in South India, work is going on to get rid of six river basins called Musi River, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Cauvery, Mahanadi and Periyar.

Apart from the Namami Gange programme, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) conducts manual monitoring of river Ganga water quality at 112 locations in the five mainstream states Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The water quality of the main flow of river Ganga has improved as per the reports of 2018 and



2025 of the Central Pollution Control Board on Polluted River Sections (PRS). Further, during the year 2025 (January to August), it has been found that the pH and soluble oxygen (DO) at all places of river Ganga meet the prescribed standards for the bathing criteria. However, the entire flow of river Ganga in Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal has been found to conform to bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD) standards in Uttarakhand, except for places and parts of Farukhabad in Uttar Pradesh to Old Rajapur in Kanpur, Dalmou in Rae Bareilly and

Mirzapur downstream to Tarighat, Ghazipur. According to the biological monitoring carried out at 50 locations along the banks of the river Ganga and its tributaries and 26 locations along the Yamuna river and its tributaries during the year 2024-25, the organic water quality (BWQ) was mainly good to moderate.

RIVER CLEANING IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS AND IT IS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS AND UNION TERRITORIES, LOCAL BODIES AND INDUSTRIES TO ENSURE THE NECESSARY TREATMENT OF SEWAGE AND INDUSTRIAL WASTES IN RIVERS AND OTHER WATER BODIES BEFORE DISCHARGE IN RIVERS AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION. Under both the Namami Gange programme and the NRCP, extensive public awareness campaigns have also been carried out to promote a sense of responsibility and participation among the public in the efforts to clean and preserve the Ganga and other rivers of the country,

including educational content, community contact, school programmes, mass communication campaigns, cleanliness campaigns and online engagement. Swachhta Pakhwada Ganga Utsav, Ganga Run, Ganga Rafting Campaign, Trekking, Tree Plantation Campaign, Yoga at Ghat, Ganga Aarti along with social message, Ghat on Haat and many other such activities are also being organised.

The Supreme Court had also made a lot of comments about polluted rivers, but since 2021, it has stopped suo motu cognisance proceedings and has handed over the responsibility of primary surveillance to the National Green Tribunal. The court was of the view that special tribunals like the NGT were better able to continuously monitor these situations. In the MC Mehta v. Union of India, 1987 case, the Supreme Court has held that the right to live in a pollution-free environment is part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. Under this suit, the Supreme Court barred industries from

dumping polluting waste into the river Ganga until they set up treatment plants.

In fact, despite the imposition of strict environmental laws, effective action against industries is not taken due to staff shortages and poor surveillance. For example, factories located on the banks of the Yamuna river regularly dump waste into the river without treatment in the absence of strict regulatory monitoring. More than 60 percent of India's sewage flows directly into rivers without treatment. The involvement of many agencies in river management creates overlap of work and administrative incompetence. For example, state pollution control boards often fail to coordinate with local municipal authorities, slowing down operations on illegal waste disposal. Delays in the acceptance of detailed project reports, slow pace of implementation and reduced utilisation of funds have been observed. For example, only 69 per cent of the funds allocated for the Namami Gange programme were utilised till 2024-25.

# Questions Raised Over Shifting of 11 KV Power Line and Transformer in Sarigad

**BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL**

**Barkot, Uttarakhand (Uttarakhand):** A fresh controversy has surfaced in the Barkot Distribution Division of the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) over the alleged shifting of an 11 KV power line and transformer near the Sarigad petrol pump without obtaining the required departmental approvals and estimates. The issue has triggered serious questions regarding the functioning of the power utility, with local residents demanding an impartial and high-level inquiry into the matter. According to information available, the 11 KV power line and transformer, which were originally located considerably below the roadside in the Sarigad area, were shifted closer to the National Highway between the last week of February and the first week of March this year. Allegations have emerged that the relocation was carried out without following the prescribed departmental procedures.

Under normal circumstances, consumers seeking the relocation of an electricity pole, power line, or transformer are required to submit formal applications, obtain techni-



cal estimates, secure departmental approvals, and deposit the prescribed charges before any work can be undertaken. Against this backdrop, allegations that an entire feeder line and transformer were shifted without due approval have become a matter of public concern. Sources claim that the work was carried out on verbal instructions allegedly issued by the Executive Engineer. Information obtained under the Right to Information (RTI)

Act reportedly indicates that after the matter came to light, the Assistant Engineer sought an explanation from the concerned Junior Engineer. Subsequently, the Junior Engineer also communicated with the National Highway authorities and the Damta Police Outpost regarding the issue. Local residents and cultivators, including Roshan, Vivek Singh, Anoj Singh, Mukesh, and Lalit, have alleged that the department often installs electricity poles

near agricultural fields and private land without obtaining proper consent from landowners. They claim that when residents seek the relocation of such infrastructure, they are required to deposit substantial amounts before any action is taken. In such circumstances, the alleged relocation of an entire 11 KV feeder line and transformer without following due procedure has raised concerns over transparency and accountability.

Villagers argue that shifting a power line and transformer from an established location to another site is not a task that can be executed at the level of a single employee. They contend that such work would ordinarily require the knowledge and approval of higher authorities within the department. The residents have demanded strict action against those found responsible and called for a thorough investigation into the matter.

Responding to the allegations, Assistant Engineer Ajay Semwal stated that as soon as he became aware of the line shifting, he issued a notice seeking an explanation from the concerned Junior Engineer. He acknowledged that if the work had been carried

out without following the prescribed procedure, it would constitute a violation of departmental rules. He further stated that the matter had been brought to the notice of the Executive Engineer.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Engineer Yudhveer Singh Tomar said that upon receiving information about the issue, an inquiry committee headed by the Executive Engineer of the Testing Division was constituted. He added that the inquiry report is still awaited. "If the investigation establishes that the line was shifted without the required estimate and approval, departmental action will be initiated against the officials and employees found responsible," he said.

The matter continues to generate considerable discussion in the region, with residents closely watching the outcome of the inquiry and any subsequent action by the department. The findings of the investigation are expected to determine whether established procedures were bypassed and whether accountability will be fixed in the case.

# Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways Carries Out Study Visit to N F R

**MALIGAON, 4 JUNE, 2026:**

A high level Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, comprising Members of Parliament from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and chaired by Dr. C. M. Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) is undertaking a study visit to Gangtok, Kolkata and Rishikesh from 04th to 09th June 2026. The visit underscores the national importance accorded to railway infrastructure development, connectivity enhancement and capacity augmentation across the country, particularly in the Northeastern region.

As part of the study visit, the Committee visited key project sites of the Sivok-Rangpo Railway Line Project on 04th June 2026, including railway stations, tunnels and bridges and obtained first-hand insights into the progress of this landmark connectivity initiative. IRCON informed the Committee that the 44.96-km Sivok-Rangpo Railway Line, which will provide the first rail connectivity to Sikkim, is targeted for completion by December 2027 and has achieved 77% physical progress so far. The delegation also visited the Rangpo Railway Station site and Tunnel No. 14. The Committee was accompanied by Shri Chetan Kumar Shivastava, General Manager of NFR,



Divisional Railway Manager of Alipurduar Division along with senior Railway officials from Headquarters, NFR (Construction), IRCON and RITES Limited. On 05th June 2026 at Gangtok, the Committee is scheduled to hold an informal discussion with the General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and the Chairman & Managing Director, IRCON International Limited, on the subject "Expansion of Rail Network in Northeast and Union Territories" with special emphasis on the Sivok-Rangpo Railway Line Project. The interaction is expected to provide valuable insights into the ongoing efforts to strengthen rail connectivity, enhance transportation infrastructure and foster sustainable socio-economic development across the Northeastern region.

The study visit underscores the national importance attached to strengthening railway infrastructure in the Northeastern region. The discussions

are expected to highlight the transformative role of railway connectivity in enhancing regional integration, improving accessibility and supporting socio-economic development in remote and strategically important areas. Upon completion, the Sivok-Rangpo Railway Line Project is expected to provide Sikkim with direct rail connectivity, facilitating faster movement of passengers and freight while creating new opportunities for tourism, trade and economic growth. The interaction will also provide an opportunity to deliberate on cross-border railway connectivity initiatives and the unique engineering and infrastructure challenges associated with railway construction in the Northeastern region.

The Committee's visit reflects the continued focus of the Government of India and the Ministry of Railways on expanding rail infrastructure and improving transportation networks across the country.

## US senators challenge immigration freeze

WASHINGTON

Four Democratic senators have challenged a Trump administration policy that has paused immigration and citizenship cases involving nationals from 39 countries, saying the move has stalled green cards, naturalisation applications and work permits while leaving families and employers in limbo.

In a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Joseph B. Edlow, the senators said the policy amounts to an indefinite freeze on legal immigration processing based on nationality.

"We write to express serious concern regarding US Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) overbroad and indefinite pauses on completions of immigration and citizenship cases, particularly when they are based solely on national origin," the senators wrote. The

letter was signed by Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine of Virginia and Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland.

According to the lawmakers, USCIS issued memoranda in December 2025 and January 2026 directing officials to place holds on pending and future immigration benefit requests involving nationals from 39 countries.

The senators said the policy affects green card petitions and applications, naturalisation interviews, citizenship ceremonies and employment authorisation requests.

They also criticised a directive ordering a "comprehensive re-review" of previously approved immigration cases involving individuals from the affected countries who entered the United States on or after January 20, 2021.

"USCIS cannot stop adjudicating or re-adjudicate previously approved applications and petitions based solely on



arbitrary factors such as the subject's national origin, date of entry, or the type of application they filed," the senators wrote.

"This approach is overbroad, imposes significant harm on immigrants and their American families and employers, and raises questions about USCIS's discretion and operational capacity."

The lawmakers said USCIS has provided little information about how the pause is being

implemented. They also questioned reports that some applicants have been required to resubmit fingerprints, adding to delays and uncertainty.

The senators argued that the administration was using a single incident involving a foreign national to justify restrictions affecting applicants across nearly 40 countries.

"Imposing a blanket ban on legal immigration processing based on the actions of a single individual is neither propor-

tionate nor consistent with due process principles that undergird our immigration system," they wrote.

The lawmakers said the consequences are already being felt by families and businesses.

"Our offices are hearing from constituents whose naturalisation interviews have been cancelled, whose green card applications have stalled, and whose employment authorisation documents have lapsed while awaiting renewal," the senators wrote.

"These lapses in work authorisation are forcing individuals out of jobs, threatening their families' financial stability, and creating losses for employers who depend on their contributions."

The letter also raises concerns about a May 2026 USCIS policy memorandum and related guidance that, according to the senators, could force many immigrants seeking permanent residence to return to their home countries to com-

plete the process. The lawmakers said such a change would depart from decades of immigration practice that allowed eligible applicants already in the United States to adjust their status without leaving the country.

The senators asked USCIS to explain the expected duration of the pause, the number of affected applications and the legal basis for nationality-based reviews. They requested a response within two weeks.

"As a country, we have long pledged that individuals who follow the law and navigate our legal immigration system in good faith deserve timely and fair adjudication of their applications," the senators wrote.

"An indefinite, nationality-based freeze on processing, without clear operational guidance, a defined timeline, or adequate transparency, undermines that commitment and imposes real consequences on families and communities across the nation," they said.

## Myanmar President's visit to India reflects bid to counterbalance growing Chinese influence: Report

NAYPYIDAW/NEW DELHI

The recent visit of Myanmar's President U Min Aung Hlaing to India was driven by a sovereign strategic calculation. Despite maintaining ties with China, given Beijing's strong economic footprint in the Southeast Asian nation, the Myanmar government has sought to pursue a strategic counterweight through broader regional engagement. India offers Naypyidaw a partnership that does not evoke the same sovereignty concerns often associated with Beijing's expanding influence, a report has stated.

"Myanmar's President U Min Aung Hlaing arrived in India on May 30 for a five-day official visit—his first foreign trip since being sworn in as president in April 2026. While the visit was expected to be to Beijing, it could be interpreted as Naypyidaw attempting to reduce China's influence and recognition of India's policy of openness, while others prefer to isolate and pressure," a



report in India Narrative detailed. The report highlighted that Myanmar has remained largely isolated since the military seized power in 2021, with Western governments and most ASEAN member states condemning the junta and backing the National Unity Government formed by ousted elected leaders.

"China has filled the resulting vacuum, becoming Naypyidaw's principal economic and diplomatic partner. Beijing's interest was based on securing the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor—a Belt and Road Initiative project that links Yunnan Province to the deep-water port of Kyaukpadaung on the Bay of Bengal.

## India, UK share Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: MEA



NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said in a statement that India and the United Kingdom share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, released amid the visit of the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs. "India and the United Kingdom share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The historical ties have transformed into a robust, multi-faceted, mutually beneficial relationship over the years. The visit of Foreign Secretary Cooper further strengthens the bilateral relationship," read the statement.

During her visit, Cooper called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held the first annual meeting with the External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar to review the India-UK Vision 2035, adopted during the visit of the Prime Minister to the UK in July 2025. According to the MEA, there were key outcomes in the areas of education, critical minerals, and maritime security during the visit.

"During their meeting, both Ministers reviewed the progress made under all five pil-

lars of India-UK Vision 2035, including Growth, Technology and Innovation, Defence and Security, Climate and Clean Energy, and Education," noted the MEA.

The two Ministers agreed that education remained one of the most successful pillars of bilateral cooperation and looked forward to the early convening of the first Ministerial Dialogue on Education.

The Ministry of Education handed over the Letter of Approval to the University of Liverpool to open its Bengaluru campus under India's New Education Policy (NEP), in the presence of EAM, Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan, and the UK Foreign Secretary. "The Liverpool University campus in Bengaluru is expected to begin operations from the next academic year," said the MEA.

"The Memorandum of Understanding between King's College London and the National Maritime Foundation to establish the Regional Maritime Security Centre for Excellence (RMSCE), established under the 'Maritime Security' pillar of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), was also exchanged during the visit," it added.

## Balochistan military crackdown draws human rights alarm

QUETTA

As violence against civilians continues unabated across Balochistan, Pakistani forces are conducting a massive military operation across several districts, deploying thousands of ground troops backed by gunship helicopters, artillery units, drones and armoured vehicles, local media reported, citing sources.

The operation, which began on Tuesday, has impacted several parts of Mastung, Kalat, Noshki, Kech, Khuzdar and Panjgur districts, with reports of casualties and arbitrary detentions sparking severe human



rights concerns. According to residents, mobile data and communication services have been suspended in multiple areas. Pakistan military's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), confirmed that intelligence-based operations were carried out across Balochistan, during which 17 individuals, described as "militants" were

killed, The Balochistan Post reported. Amid the ongoing military operation, one of the most significant incidents was reported in the Balbal area of Zehri in the Khuzdar district.

Reports suggest that helicopters were spotted over the area before the entry of a large contingent of security forces, followed by hours of search operations and gunfire. According to family members and local political leaders, security personnel carried out a raid on the residence of tribal elder and former Khuzdar District Mayor Sardar Naseer Ahmed Musiyani.

During the operation, Mir Khalil Ahmed Musiyani, a lo-

cal political figure and elected union council member, was reportedly shot and taken away in an injured condition, with his family later informed of his death.

Meanwhile, human rights body Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) strongly condemned the ongoing curfew imposed by Pakistani forces in the Balbal area of Zehri, describing it as "military barbarism" and a continuation of the "Baloch genocide". According to the BYC, Pakistan's military helicopters carried out shelling in populated areas, while heavily armed security forces entered the town in armoured vehicles.

## Putin says putting pressure on PM Modi is 'detrimental' to international relations

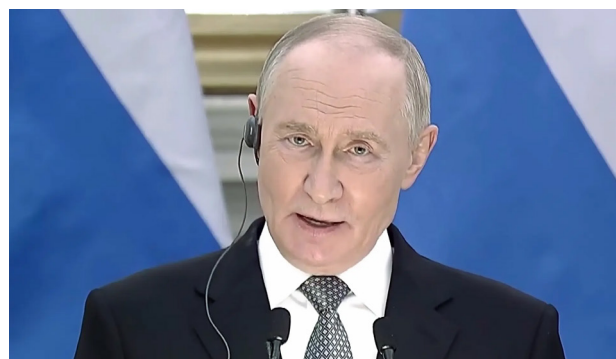
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that putting pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "detrimental to international relations and bilateral ties".

The Russian President said this during his meeting with representatives of international news agencies at the Constanine Palace in St. Petersburg.

"Your question seemed a bit strange to me. You said that the cooperation between India and the US creates difficulties in the relations between Russia and India. I don't think that this is the case," Putin added, addressing questions from journalists, according to the Kremlin.

"Why would you think that? We're ready. We're glad that India is developing its relations with all the countries. It's a great country, 1.5 billion people, a large economy, the largest de-



mocracy, as many people say," he said. Putin noted that it is only natural that India develops its economy in accordance with its interests, with those countries that it deems necessary.

"Another thing is that the US are trying to put pressure on India in some matters. For example, when it comes to cooperation with Russia on some tracks, but everyone has understood that putting pressure on India's PM Narendra Modi, a country

that has the largest population in the world, is detrimental for international relations and for bilateral relations, it doesn't matter where this pressure comes from," the Russian President highlighted.

The annual meeting with representatives of international news agencies traditionally provides an opportunity to discuss international events, economic issues, and Russia's foreign policy in a question-and-answer

format with executives and journalists from leading global media outlets, Russia's state-owned Tass news agency noted.

The meeting is taking place as part of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum which is being held from June 3 to 6.

In December 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin undertook a significant State Visit to India. The visit, spread over two packed days in the national capital, featured summit-level talks, ceremonial engagements and a series of bilateral discussions covering defence, economic cooperation, energy ties and regional security.

During the visit, President Putin held formal talks with Prime Minister Modi, with both leaders reviewing the state of the India-Russia partnership as it completes 25 years since being designated a 'Strategic Partnership'.

## South Korea's Defense minister highlights submarine bid in call with Canadian counterpart

SEOUL

Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back held a phone call with his Canadian counterpart, David McGuinty, on Thursday and underscored the commitment to expanding bilateral defence ties amid South Korea's push to win Canada's submarine procurement project, the defence ministry said.

During the talks, Ahn expressed hope that the two countries would strengthen solidarity as key partners across a wide range of areas, including the submarine project, security and defence cooperation, and broader industrial collaboration. The ministers agreed that their joint exercise last month helped further enhance interoperability between their navies, while reaffirming their shared commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Ahn also praised the port visit of the 3,000-ton ROKS Dosan Ahn Chang-ho submarine to Esquimalt in Victoria last month, which marked the first trans-Pacific voyage by a



South Korean submarine, the ministry said.

The Canadian Patrol Submarine Project (CPSP) is a major procurement program involving up to 12 diesel-electric submarines, which is estimated at up to 60 trillion won (US\$39.7 billion), including construction, maintenance, repair and overhaul. A consortium of Hanwha Ocean Co. and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. has been shortlisted for the project and is competing with Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS). Canada is expected to announce its preferred bidder later this month.

South Korea has proposed a hydrogen-powered truck project as part of its bid for a major

Canadian submarine contract to boost its offer against Germany, according to a Canadian media report. Presidential chief of staff Kang Hoon-sik unveiled the proposal in an interview with Canada's CTV News on Wednesday (local time) during his visit to Canada as President Lee Jae Myung's special envoy supporting Seoul's campaign to supply 12 submarines to Ottawa. During the interview, Kang said South Korea would invest more than \$2.3 billion in Canada to help establish a hydrogen-powered trucking industry and create about 9,000 jobs through a project code-named "Project Beaver" if the Korean consortium wins the submarine contract.

## India condemns killing of UN peacekeeper in Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS

India condemned on Thursday the attack on peacekeepers in Lebanon, which killed a Serbian soldier serving the UN.

"India reiterates the fundamental importance of respecting the sanctity and inviolability of UN premises and personnel," India's UN Mission said in a statement that condemned the attack that occurred on Wednesday.

Condemning the attack that resulted in the seventh fatality since March, Secretary-General António Guterres warned that it could amount to a war crime. His spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, said Sergeant Milovan Jovanovic, serving with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), was killed when a mortar hit a UN position near Marj'iyyun.

Two other peacekeepers, who were wounded in the attack, are being treated at a UNIFIL medical facility in south Lebanon, he said.

"Attacks on peacekeepers must stop," Dujarric said, adding that they are grave violations of international



humanitarian law. UNIFIL said it has launched an investigation to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the peacekeeper's death in an area of heightened tension between Israel and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah, which is backed by Tehran, increased its attacks on Israel following the Israeli bombing of Iran, which the US joined in, and faced a

deadly retaliation.

UNIFIL said it has detected an increasingly high number of trajectories and impacts in South Lebanon. The violence must end."

Nearly 1,000 Indian peacekeepers are among the 10,800 serving in UNIFIL.

There have not been any casualties among Indians in the latest round of attacks on

UNIFIL. The Security Council voted last year to end the UNIFIL operation by the end of this year.

UNIFIL, created 48 years ago, has been struggling to keep the peace in southern Lebanon, where Israel confronts Hezbollah. One of its mandates is to strengthen the weak Lebanese military, which is caught in the middle, and to

help Beirut reassert its authority over southern Lebanon.

Iran has made it a condition for Israel to stop its attacks on Lebanon as a condition for a ceasefire with the US, and the US brokered a cessation of hostilities.

That has been breached by Israeli attacks that have extended to Beirut.

In another attempt to restore the ceasefire, the US convened a meeting with Lebanon and Israel this week, and a renewed effort for a ceasefire was reached on Wednesday.

Guterres welcomed the announcement and called on "Hezbollah and other non-State actors to abide by the decisions of the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority throughout its territory and to advance the exclusive control over weapons by the State."

Dujarric said, "He also calls on Israel to withdraw completely from north of the Blue Line, in full respect for Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity." Israel advanced beyond the Blue Line, which has effectively separated Israel and Lebanon.

## Clean Energy Could Create 44 Lakh Jobs

NEW DELHI JUNE 4

India's clean energy targets, including the goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity and objectives under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, could generate over 44 lakh full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs by 2030. According to a new study released by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) India, rooftop solar is expected to emerge as the largest employment driver, accounting for around 43 per cent of the projected jobs. The study, titled 'Driving Energy Transition: Workforce, Skills, and Gender in India's Renewable Energy Sector', said that rooftop solar could generate the largest share of jobs linked to India's clean energy ambitions, while select clean energy sectors have already added more than 6.5 lakh workers between FY23 and FY26. The study was conducted with technical guidance from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). Speaking about job creation prospects in the sector, MNRE Secretary Santosh Kumar Sarangi said the element of people's involvement is intrinsic to a



successful green transition. "The positive externalities involved in keeping people as the focus of this green transition is intrinsic, and India has shown that our economic growth trajectory as well as sustainability goals can be pretty well aligned," he said. "Last year, we achieved about 51 gigawatts of solar and wind, and hopefully, this momentum will continue and expand in the subsequent years," he added. The study found that rooftop solar accounted for 62 per cent of the 6.5 lakh clean energy workers added between

FY23 and FY26, followed by PM-KUSUM at 16.3 per cent, biomass power at 12.6 per cent and ground-mounted solar at 6 per cent.

Explaining the employment potential of distributed renewable energy, CEEW CEO Arunabha Ghosh said India's energy transition must also be a workforce transition. "The opportunity is about creating livelihoods, building skills, deepening domestic supply chains, and ensuring that the benefits of clean energy reach households, farmers, workers, and entrepreneurs

while also adding gigawatts." Highlighting the role of rooftop solar, Ghosh said, "Rooftop solar shows why distributed renewables matter: they generate clean power while creating more jobs per MW than utility-scale projects." The study estimated that rooftop solar generates around 45 FTE job-years per MW, compared with one FTE job-year per MW for ground-mounted solar and around 0.6 FTE job-year per MW for wind projects. NRDC India Country Director Dipa Singh Bagai said clean energy jobs are essential to India's economic growth, energy security, and climate goals. "This study shows that distributed renewable energy, especially rooftop solar, can create employment across cities, small towns, and rural areas." However, the study highlighted gender disparities in the sector. It found that women account for only 11 per cent of the workforce in solar and wind deployment and manufacturing activities, with most employed in non-technical functions such as human resources, accounting and administration. The report also noted that nearly 13 lakh FTE jobs could be created in operations, maintenance and manufacturing roles.

## NaBFID Launches Infrastructure Institute



MUMBAI, JUNE 4

The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development announced the establishment of the Institute for Infrastructure Development (IID), a dedicated institution that will serve as a comprehensive centre for knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and skill development across the infrastructure financing ecosystem.

The Institute was inaugurated by Smt. Monisha Chakraborty, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the presence of senior officials of the Institution. IID is conceptualized to address credit flow issues in the infrastructure sector, underscoring the critical need for a structured institutional mechanism to impart specialized knowledge, and establish standardized best practices across stakeholders. The establishment of IID in Mumbai was led by Mr. Sanjev Vaid, CHRO, National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development.

The Institute has partnered

with National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) to launch the first programme on Project and Infrastructure Finance. This week-long programme will cover critical aspects including entity appraisal, financial viability, environmental considerations, sector-specific financial appraisal, post-disbursement monitoring among others. The inaugural programme witnessed the participation of 47 professionals from various banks and infrastructure financing institutions.

Going forward, the Institute will introduce specialised courses for State Authorities and Urban Local Bodies to strengthen institutional capabilities in project report preparation, financial structuring, compliance and investor engagement.

Mr. Rajkiran Rai G., Managing Director, National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development "The launch of the Institute for Infrastructure Development marks a significant milestone in strengthening India's infrastructure financing ecosystem. By creating a structured platform for knowledge and skill development, we aim to empower stakeholders to drive

sustainable and efficient infrastructure growth. I take this opportunity to extend sincere appreciation to the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) for their invaluable efforts in curating the inaugural programme of the Institute. Our vision is to position the Institute for Infrastructure Development as a Centre of Excellence that will drive capacity building, enhance capabilities and foster thought leadership in the infrastructure sector."

Smt. Monisha Chakraborty, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision, Reserve Bank of India added "Infrastructure financing stands as a cornerstone of India's development and the launch of this Institute comes at a pivotal moment. By bringing together the expertise of financial institutions, academia, and industry, the Institute will create an inclusive platform for learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. Through this initiative best practices will be reinforced, technical capabilities will be continuously enhanced, and the overall infrastructure financing ecosystem will be further strengthened."

## Digital Fraud Now Run by Cross-Border Crime Cartels

NEW DELHI: Cyber fraud has evolved from isolated forgeries into an industrialized, cross-border criminal enterprise, Maharashtra Principal Secretary Brijesh Singh warned yesterday at the FICCI Next-Gen Forensics Conference. Syndicates are now operating out of highly structured, modular compounds across

Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, executing sophisticated scams like "digital arrests." This geopolitical shift has transformed police investigations. "Earlier it used to be hard disks, but today it's more of logs, artifacts in memory, and crypto transactions," Singh stated.

In response, India's over-

hauled criminal jurisprudence now officially recognizes digital logs as primary evidence. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and state cells are actively deploying advanced forensics to shield the country's massive digital public infrastructure, including UPI, from these overseas syndicates.

## itel Disrupts Bharat's Feature Phone Market with Rugged, AI-Powered 'Aqua' Launch

NEW DELHI

In a major move to redefine low-cost mobile communication for rural and semi-urban India, electronics major itel yesterday announced the launch of the itel Aqua. Positioned under the brand's newly minted 'Inno Series', the entry-level handset is engineered specifically to withstand environmental extremes that routinely destroy standard feature phones. The launch aims squarely at addressing the primary pain points of India's working-class consumer base, where phone hardware is heavily exposed to unpre-

dictable weather and harsh labor conditions. Engineering for Extremes: IP67 & AI Integration The headline feature of the itel Aqua is its IP67 dust and water resistance rating—a specification traditionally restricted to mid-to-high-tier smartphones. According to itel's internal consumer tracking, accidental liquid exposure accounts for a massive 42% of all feature phone replacements in India. The Aqua's chassis is sealed to survive complete submersion in water for up to 30 minutes, alongside protection against mud, desert dust, and coastal humidity. Simultaneously, the device debuts an

industry-first software addition for its segment: AI Environmental Noise Cancellation (ENC).

The algorithm actively filters out aggressive ambient backgrounds—such as factory floors, bustling wholesale markets, and heavy traffic—allowing clean, legible voice routing on both ends of a call. Technical Specifications & Localized Features Beyond its rugged exterior, the device adopts modern convenience standards, most notably transitioning to a universal Type-C charging port alongside a high-density 1,200 mAh battery built for multiday field use.

## Toyota Unveils Refreshed Innova Crysta

MUMBAI, JUN 4

Japanese automaker injects aesthetic and tech enhancements into its 2.4L diesel workhorse, marking 21 years of segment leadership in India.

BANGALORE — Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) yesterday announced the launch of the New Innova Crysta, introducing a suite of premium styling revisions and modern convenience features to India's most successful Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV). The refresh is a strategic move by the automaker to align its legacy product with the rapidly evolving, tech-driven expectations of Indian buyers while fiercely guarding its two-decade-long market dominance.

With over 1.3 million units of the

Innova brand sold domestically, the latest iteration seeks to blend the vehicle's traditionally rugged DNA with a more sophisticated, executive-class appeal.

### Exterior Revisions: A More Assertive Stance

The exterior updates are heavily focused on amplifying the MPV's road presence. Designers have outfitted the front fascia with a newly styled, bolder radiator grille paired with updated front bumper garnishes to project a wider, more authoritative profile.

The rear profile has similarly received structural visual updates, featuring refreshed bumper garnish elements that enhance the vehicle's muscular appeal. Despite these aesthetic updates, the vehicle retains



its signature silhouette and high-ground-clearance practicality that made it a household name across diverse Indian driving conditions.

### Interior Cabin Upgrades & Technical Specifications

Inside, the cabin receives a compre-

hensive material overhaul. TKM has introduced a new dual-tone leather seat upholstery package. This is paired with revised trim finishes across the instrument panel, door casings, and bezels—now featuring "Grace Copper" and wood-pattern highlights.

## MARKETS END FLAT A HEAD OF RBI POLICY

MUMBAI JUNE 4



Indian equity markets ended largely flat on Thursday as investors remained cautious ahead of the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decision scheduled for Friday. Market sentiment, however, received support from reports that the government is considering tax benefits for foreign portfolio investments in government securities. The NSE Nifty 50 index closed at 23,416.55, up 10.95 points or 0.05 per cent, while the BSE Sensex settled at 74,360.01, gaining 13.84 points or 0.02 per cent. According to market experts, equities traded in positive territory during the session after witnessing volatility in recent trading days. Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Research, Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said sentiment improved following reports that the government plans to provide tax benefits to foreign portfolio investors investing in government securities. The proposed move is aimed at attracting foreign capital inflows and supporting the rupee. Khemka noted that easing global concerns and a moderation in crude oil prices also helped improve investor confidence during the session.

## Shriram Mobility Bulletin Flags Pressure on Trucking Sector

HYDERABAD, 04 JUNE

India's mobility and logistics sector witnessed a turbulent yet structurally resilient May 2026. Truck rentals remained wobbly during the month, weighed down by multiple price increases coupled with demand slackness, which prevented fleet operators from passing on the full impact of rising fuel prices.

Truck rental rates across major trunk routes remained broadly stable to marginally positive on a month-on-month basis, with the Bengaluru-Mumbai-Bangaluru route recording a 2.1% MoM uptick. Most other routes held steady or unchanged. On a year-on-year basis, long-haul corridors showed sustained strength — Delhi-Kolkata-Delhi and Bengaluru-Mumbai-Bangaluru surged by approximately 11% YoY each, while Delhi-Mumbai-Delhi and Kolkata-Guwahati-Kolkata rose by around 8% YoY, reflecting durable freight demand across key trade lanes.

Automotive fuel consumption showed seasonal strength in May. Petrol consumption



rose by 6% MoM, driven largely by vacation travellers taking to the roads during the peak summer season, diesel consumption grew by 5% MoM.

FASTag collections witnessed an increase, with transaction volumes rising by 4.2% MoM, and total collection value climbing by 3.7% MoM.

The electric vehicle sales continued at an accelerating pace. Electric cars led the charge with a strong 157% year-on-year growth in retail sales, during May 2026. Electric three-wheelers climbed 87% YoY, while electric two-wheelers surged 78% YoY, signalling a deep-rooted shift in consumer and commercial preferences across segments.

The traditional automotive sector maintained a broadly positive trajectory on a YoY basis. Retail sales of goods carriers rose 10% YoY, while passenger motor cars posted a 24%

YoY increase. Three-wheeler goods carriers recorded a robust 25% YoY gain, and the two-wheeler market grew 7% YoY. Agricultural tractors posted healthy growth of 13% YoY, supported by the onset of the kharif sowing season.

Sudarshan Holla, Joint Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer — Commercial Vehicles, Shriram Finance, said: "May was a turbulent month for the trucking sector. Chakka Jam disruptions in NCR and repeated fuel price hikes created significant strain, but weak demand limited the ability to pass on costs fully. While OEMs welcome the government's support for replacing older BS-IV vehicles with cleaner alternatives in Delhi-NCR, fleet operators remain uncertain about the continued usage of BS-IV trucks that still meet pollution norms post November 1."

## Samsung Unveils Massive 72-Model 'Vision AI' TV Lineup in India

### Tech giant expands AI-powered television ecosystem across premium and mass-market categories

GURUGRAM, JUNE 5:

Strengthening its position in the global home entertainment industry, Samsung India on Thursday launched its expansive 2026 "Vision AI" television portfolio in the country, introducing 72 models across six major display categories.

The South Korean electronics giant, which has maintained global TV market leadership for 20 consecutive years, said the new lineup is designed to bring advanced artificial intelligence capabilities to a wider range of consumers rather than restricting them to ultra-premium televisions.

The 2026 portfolio includes Micro RGB, OLED, Neo QLED, The Frame, Mini LED and UHD TV ranges, with models available in multiple screen sizes and configurations.

AI at the Centre of Samsung's Strategy At the heart of the new lineup is Sam-

sung's "Vision AI Companion" (VAC), an integrated platform combining the company's Bixby ecosystem with external AI technologies such as Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity.

Samsung said the system is intended to transform televisions into "smart lifestyle companions" capable of offering personalised content recommendations, multilingual assistance, music curation and contextual lifestyle suggestions.

The company has also integrated several AI-driven enhancements across all 4K and above models.

### Among the notable features are:

AI Upscaling Pro, which uses the NQ4 AI Gen2 Processor to enhance lower-resolution content with sharper detail and improved contrast.

AI Soccer Mode Pro, designed specifically for sports viewing by reducing motion blur and enhancing stadium sound effects.

AI Sound Controller Pro, which auto-



matically balances dialogue, background music and sound effects for improved audio clarity.

Premium Technologies Debut in India Samsung also announced the India debut of its premium Micro RGB technology

through the R95H and R85H series, available in sizes ranging from 55 inches to 115 inches.

According to the company, the televisions use microscopic self-lit LEDs capable of achieving 100 per cent colour coverage

under the BT.2020 industry standard.

In addition, Samsung expanded its Glare-Free display technology to more OLED models, including the S95H and S90H series, aimed at improving viewing quality in brightly lit Indian households.

### Pricing Across Categories

Samsung's 2026 television lineup begins at ₹36,990 for UHD models, while premium Micro RGB televisions are priced from ₹1,24,990 onwards.

The OLED series starts at ₹1,14,990, Neo QLED models from ₹52,990, Mini LED televisions from ₹42,990 and The Frame series from ₹56,990.

The company highlighted gaming-focused features such as 165Hz refresh rates, Motion Xcelerator technology and Quantum Mini LED precision displays across select categories.

### Focus on Indian Consumers

Speaking at the launch event in Gurugram, Viplesh Dang, Vice-President of

Samsung India's Visual Display Business, said the televisions were designed keeping Indian consumers and living environments in mind.

"Our Vision AI TVs seamlessly integrate local content platforms, enhance multilingual support and offer energy-efficient solutions for India's diverse households," he said.

To boost early adoption, Samsung announced several introductory offers, including complimentary premium soundbars worth up to ₹1,02,990 and Music Studio packages valued at ₹23,990 with select models.

The company is also offering up to 20 per cent cashback, Samsung Care+ warranty benefits and financing options through Samsung Finance+.

The complete 72-model Vision AI lineup is now available across retail stores, authorised dealers and major e-commerce platforms nationwide.



**Is organic food really healthier? Is it worth buying organic? Find out what the benefits of organic food are, what the labels mean, and which foods are the best value.**

**What is organic food?**  
Organic food is produced in compliance with organic farming standards that regulate the way agricultural products are grown and processed. While the regulations vary from country to country, in the U.S., organic crops must be grown without the use of synthetic herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers, or bioengineered genes (GMOs). Organic livestock raised for meat, eggs, and dairy products must be raised in living conditions accommodating their natural behaviors (such as the ability to graze on pasture) and fed organic feed and forage. They may not be given antibiotics, growth hormones, or any animal by-

**The benefits of organic food**  
How your food is grown or raised can have a major impact on your mental and emotional health as well as the environment. Organic foods often have more beneficial nutrients, such as antioxidants, than their conventionally-grown counterparts and people with allergies to foods, chemicals, or preservatives

may find their symptoms lessen or go away when they eat only organic foods.

Organic produce contains fewer pesticides. Chemicals such as synthetic fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides are widely used in conventional agriculture and residues remain on (and in) the food we eat. Organic food is often fresher because it doesn't contain preservatives that make it last longer. Organic produce is sometimes (but not always, so watch where it is from) produced on smaller farms nearer to where it is sold. Organic farming tends to be better for the environment. Organic farming practices may reduce pollution, conserve water, reduce soil erosion, increase soil fertility, and use less energy. Farming without synthetic pesticides is also better for nearby birds and animals as well as people who live close to farms. However, organic farming does often require more land to produce the same amount of food as conventional agriculture, which can increase carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Organically raised animals are NOT given antibiotics, growth hormones, or fed animal byproducts. Feeding livestock animal byproducts increases the risk of mad cow disease (BSE) and the use of antibiotics can create antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria.

# What is Organic Food and What are the Benefits?

## Speak to a Licensed Therapist

BetterHelp is an online therapy service that matches you to licensed, accredited therapists who can help with depression, anxiety, relationships, and more. Take the assessment and get matched with a therapist in as little as 48 hours. Take Assessment HelpGuide is user supported. We earn a commission if you sign up for BetterHelp's services after clicking through from this site. Learn more

## Organic food vs. locally-grown food

Unlike organic standards, there is no specific definition for "local food". It could be grown in your local community, your state, your region, or your country. During large portions of the year it is usually possible to find food grown close to home at places such as a farmer's market.

## The benefits of locally grown food

**Financial:** Money stays within the local economy. More money goes directly to the farmer, instead of to things like marketing and distribution.

**Transportation:** In the U.S., for

example, the average distance a meal travels from the farm to the dinner plate is over 1,500 miles. Produce must be picked while still unripe and then gassed to "ripen" it after transport. Or the food is highly processed in factories using preservatives, irradiation, and other means to keep it stable for transport.

**Freshness:** Local food is harvested when ripe and thus fresher and full of flavor.

Some small local farmers use organic methods but may not be able to afford to become certified organic. Visit a farmer's market and talk with the farmers to find out what methods they use.

## Understanding GMOs

The ongoing debate about the effects of GMOs on health and the environment is a controversial one. In most cases, GMOs are engineered to make food crops resistant to herbicides and/or to produce an insecticide. For example, much of the sweet corn consumed in the U.S. is genetically engineered to be resistant to the herbicide Roundup and to produce its own insecticide, Bt Toxin.

GMOs are also commonly found in U.S. crops such as soybeans, alfalfa, squash, zucchini, papaya, and canola, and are present in many breakfast cereals and much of the processed food that we eat. If the ingredients on a package include corn syrup or soy lecithin, chances are it contains GMOs.

## GMOs and pesticides

The use of toxic herbicides like Roundup (glyphosate) has increased 15 times since GMOs were introduced. The World Health Organization announced that glyphosate is "probably carcinogenic to humans," although there is still some controversy over the level of health risks posed by the use of pesticides.

## Are GMOs safe?

While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the biotech companies that engineer GMOs insist they are safe, many food safety advocates disagree, pointing to older research that links GM foods with toxic effects. While many people think that altering the DNA of a plant or animal can increase the risk of cancer, the American Cancer Society

states that GMO foods are not harmful to human health, or that they would either increase or decrease cancer risk.

## Does organic mean pesticide-free?

As mentioned above, one of the primary benefits of eating organic is lower levels of pesticides. However, despite popular belief, organic farms do use pesticides. The difference is that they only use naturally-derived pesticides, rather than the synthetic pesticides used on conventional commercial farms. While natural pesticides are believed to be less toxic, some have been found to have health risks. That said, your exposure to harmful pesticides will likely be lower when eating organic.

## What are the possible risks of pesticides?

Most of us have an accumulated build-up of pesticide exposure in our bodies due to numerous years of exposure. This chemical "body burden" as it is medically known could lead to health issues such as headaches, birth defects, and added strain on weakened immune systems. Some studies have indicated that

the use of pesticides even at low doses can increase the risk of certain cancers, such as leukemia, lymphoma, brain tumors, breast cancer and prostate cancer. Children and fetuses are most vulnerable to pesticide exposure because their immune systems, bodies, and brains are still developing. Exposure at an early age may cause developmental delays, behavioral disorders, autism, immune system harm, and motor dysfunction. Pregnant women are more vulnerable due to the added stress pesticides put on their already taxed organs. Plus, pesticides can be passed from mother to child in the womb, as well as through breast milk. The widespread use of pesticides has also led to the emergence of "super weeds" and "super bugs," which can only be killed with extremely toxic poisons like 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (a major ingredient in Agent Orange).

## Does washing and peeling get rid of pesticides?

Rinsing fresh produce reduces but does not eliminate pesticides. Peeling sometimes helps, but valuable nutrients

often go down the drain with the skin. The best approach: eat a varied diet, wash and scrub all produce thoroughly, and buy organic when possible.

## The best bang for your buck when shopping organic

Organic food is often more expensive than conventionally-grown food. But if you set some priorities, it may be possible to purchase organic food and stay within your food budget.

## Know your produce pesticide levels

Some types of conventionally-grown produce are much higher in pesticides than others, and should be avoided when possible. Others are low enough that buying non-organic is relatively safe.

## Fruits and vegetables where the organic label matters most

According to the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization that analyzes the results of government pesticide testing in the U.S., the following fruits and vegetables (known as the "Dirty Dozen") have the highest pesticide levels, so are best to buy organic:

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Peaches
- Nectarines
- Bell and Hot Peppers
- Blueberries
- Kale/Collard Greens
- Grapes
- Pears
- Apples
- Cherries
- Green Beans

Fruits and vegetables you DON'T need to buy organic

## Known as the "Clean 15", these conventionally-grown fruits and vegetables are generally low in pesticides:

- Carrots
- Mangoes
- Watermelon
- Kiwi
- Asparagus
- Papaya
- Pineapple
- Avocados
- Sweet Potatoes
- Mushrooms
- Cabbage
- Honeydew Melon
- Sweet Peas (frozen)
- Onions
- Sweet Corn

Buy organic meat, eggs, and dairy if you can afford to

In the U.S., industrially-raised animals may be fed corn, grains, antibiotics, animal byproducts, growth hormones, pesticides, and sewage sludge. These practices can have health consequences for both the animals themselves and people consuming their meat, eggs, or milk.

## Other ways to keep the cost of organic food within your budget

Shop at farmers' markets. Many cit-

ies, as well as small towns, host a weekly farmers' market, where local farmers sell their produce at an open-air street market, often at a discount to grocery stores. Join a food co-op. A natural foods co-op, or cooperative grocery store typically offers lower prices to members, who pay an annual fee to belong. Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, in which individuals and families join up to purchase "shares" of produce in bulk,

directly from a local farm. Local and organic!

## Organic food buying tips

Buy in season. Fruits and vegetables are cheapest and freshest when they are in season. Find out when produce is delivered to your market so you're buying the freshest food possible. Shop around. Compare the price of organic items at the grocery store, the farmers' market, online, and in other venues (even the freez-

er aisle). Remember that organic doesn't always equal healthy. Making junk food sound healthy is a common marketing ploy in the food industry but organic baked goods, desserts, and snacks are usually still very high in sugar, salt, fat, or calories. It pays to read food labels carefully.

## Why is organic food often more expensive?

Organic food is more labor intensive

since the farmers do not use synthetic pesticides, chemical fertilizers, or drugs. Organic certification is expensive and organic feed for animals can cost twice as much. Organic farms tend to be smaller than conventional farms, which means fixed costs and overhead must be distributed across smaller produce volumes without government subsidies.





# Maja Chwalinska stuns Shnaider, becomes first qualifier to reach final in Paris



most improbable -- Grand Slam title. It will be the first meeting between Chwalinska and Andreeva at the WTA Tour Driven by Mercedes-Benz level, a matchup featuring two of the tour's more versatile players. It will also mark Chwalinska's first career meeting with a Top 10 opponent. "I played (nine) matches here already, so there are no secrets," Chwalinska said. "But I watched Mirra a bit. They were playing before us, so I watched her game, and it was incredible. It's just another great experience for me. I will for sure give my all. It's a Grand Slam final." The matchup will be a stark contrast to the power-versus-precision battle Chwalinska navigated against Shnaider, a gruelling and physically demanding two-set duel that required every ounce of her variety and craft.



## Wicketkeeper-batter KS Bharat retires from international cricket

NEW DELHI

In a surprise development, wicketkeeper-batter KS Bharat on Thursday announced his retirement from international cricket at the age of 32. Bharat represented India in seven Tests and featured prominently in domestic cricket for Andhra. "With a proud heart and sense of gratitude, I announce my retirement from international cricket. To play for my country has been the greatest honour of my life. This journey of mine has demanded great resilience and strength, but the Honour to represent India in Tests is worth every moment. "In a family of four, we all lived the same dream over two decades, a big heart to my sister, mom, and dad for creating an environment and support system they have been. I am a product of their love, discipline, and hard work," wrote Bharat in a note on his Instagram account on Thursday.

was sidelined due to recovery from his injuries suffered in a life-threatening car accident. He's also remembered for taking two catches and effecting one stumping when Wriddhiman Saha had a stiff neck during the Kanpur Test against New Zealand in 2021.

But Bharat was inconsistent in his glove work and run-making, which meant that he wasn't considered for the Test team after playing the second Test against England at his hometown, Visakhapatnam. In seven Tests, including playing in the 2023 World Test Championship final against Australia at The Oval, Bharat amassed 223 runs with a highest score of 44 and an average of 20.09.

"Thank you, BCCI, and all the coaches and managers whom I came across in my career and who supported me unconditionally by creating a great environment to play and excel at the highest level. Thank you, Andhra Cricket Association, VDCA, and all office-bearers, for your support and encouragement from my childhood.

FOOTBALL

### Veteran goalkeeper Tom Heaton signs one-year extension



**MANCHESTER:** Veteran goalkeeper Tom Heaton has signed a new one-year contract with Manchester United, extending his stay at Old Trafford and ensuring he remains part of the club's first-team setup for the 2026-27 season. The 40-year-old academy graduate, who returned to United in 2021 for a second spell, continues to be valued for his experience and leadership within the dressing room despite making only three senior appearances since rejoining the club. Announcing the extension, United highlighted Heaton's importance behind the scenes.

IGPL Tour 2026

### Aryan Roopa Anand, Kochhar make bright starts at Bharath Classic



**EL JADIDA (MOROCCO):** Aryan Roopa Anand, who recently achieved his first professional title on the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) Tour in Congo last month, was among the early players to start strong in the opening round of the \$500,000 IGPL Bharath Classic. The Mysuru native, a twice All-India amateur champion, scored a 4-under 68 and trailed the clubhouse leader, Runchanapong Youprayong of Thailand (65), by three strokes. Aryan, who had three sub-par rounds while securing victory in Congo, played alongside Gunn Charoenkul from Thailand and seasoned Guatemalan Jose Toledo. After an opening bogey, he regained his rhythm, birdieing three consecutive holes from the third to the fifth before making a second shot.

PARIS

World No.114 Maja Chwalinska made history in the French Open on Thursday, beating Diana Shnaider in straight sets to move into Saturday's women's final, becoming the first qualifier to reach the women's singles summit clash at Stade Roland Garros in Paris.

Chwalinska produced one of her best performances to overcome Shnaider 7-6(4), 6-4 in the second semifinal and set up a French Open women's singles final against No.8 seed Mirra Andreeva on Saturday.

The 24-year-old Polish player won her ninth match at Roland-Garros - three in qualifying and six in the main draw - to become only the second qualifier to reach a Grand Slam final in the Open era.

The only other player to match her achievement is Emma Raducanu, who won the US Open as a qualifier in 2021. Chwalinska's brand of variety, her changes of spins, speeds, depths, and her defence, incredible speed and stamina earn her victory in just over two hours.

"It's like a dream," said Chwalinska as she fell to the clay in disbelief at what had just happened. "I don't know what's going on. I don't know what to say. I'm just very happy."

After defeating No. 25 seed Diana Shnaider 7-6 (4), 6-4 in 2 hours and 10 minutes on Thursday, the 24-year-old became the first qualifier in tournament history to reach the final. She is also just the third woman to make the Roland Garros final in her main-draw debut, joining Evonne Goolag-



## India favourites in Asian U18 hockey clash, says Pak hockey team official ahead of semis clash

LAHORE

As the Under-18 teams of India and Pakistan get ready to face off in the semifinals of the Asia Cup Under-18 tournament in Japan on Friday, a Pakistan team official has tipped India as the favourite to win the match, saying the rival camp has superior preparation and facilities.

The U18 teams of the archrivals will meet in the continental event on Friday after Pakistan secured their place in the semifinals with a 5-2 win in their final group game on Wednesday in Kakamigahara, Japan.

India dominated Group A with a massive 13-0 win against Kazakhstan and a 1-4 victory over South Korea. Japan also advanced strongly with wins over India (4-2), Chinese Taipei, and South Ko-

rea. Hosts and defending champions Japan face Malaysia in the other semifinal.

"India's preparations for the tournament were extensive as they played five matches with Australian juniors and then toured Europe, while we have 12 play-

ers who are on a tour for the first time and have not played at the international level," the Pakistan hockey official, who refused to be named, told Telecom Asia Sport on Thursday.

"It's a contrast when the two teams train," said the official.

"The Indian team practices with 150 Kookaburra balls, while we have just 12, and the rest are of inferior quality. Their hockey sticks are also superior."

Despite the contrast, the official said Pakistan players are brimming with passion and will try to put on the best show, www.telecomasia.net reported. "Come what may, we will try our best, and when the opponents are India, the level of passion in Pakistani players is different."

Just like at the senior level, India have dominated Pakistan in the junior events, having won seven of the last eight matches with one draw. Pakistan's last victory over India at the Junior level was at Johar Baro in 2016. The semifinal is scheduled for June 5, with the final and third-place playoff to follow on June 6.

## Heliovaara and Patten storm into maiden men's doubles final

PARIS

Harri Heliovaara and Henry Patten moved within one win of a maiden French Open crown after another commanding display on Thursday, reaching the men's doubles final. The second-seeded Finnish-British combination defeated the French pair Quentin Halys and Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-3, 6-4 on Court Suzanne Lenglen, extending their unbeaten run through the tournament and booking their first championship match in Paris.

Already one of the standout doubles teams of the season, Heliovaara and Patten arrived at Roland Garros with titles in Adelaide, Doha, Dubai, and Madrid. Their latest victory keeps them on course for a fifth trophy in 2026 and their first Grand Slam title of the year. The semifinal remained competitive in the early exchanges, with little to separate the two teams. However, the second seed capitalised on their first opening when Herbert surrendered serve with a double fault, allowing Heliovaara and Patten to seize control of the opening set.

The pair continued to dictate the tempo through strong serving and sharp net play. Heliovaara capped off the first set with a delicate volley before another lapse in Herbert's serve handed the favourites an early break in the second.

Backed by a vocal home crowd, Halys and Herbert sought to mount a late challenge, creating opportunities to prolong the contest. But Heliovaara and Patten stayed composed under pressure, refusing to relinquish their advantage. Serving for the match, Patten showed no signs of tension. The Brit delivered a strong first serve on match point, and Heliovaara finished the job with a crisp volley at the net, sealing victory in one hour and 16 minutes.



## Serena Williams to team up with Mboko in Queen's Club doubles return

LONDON

Serena Williams' highly anticipated return to competitive tennis has taken an intriguing new turn, with the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion set to partner Canadian star Victoria Mboko in the doubles draw at the Queen's Club Championships. The pairing was confirmed by Mboko on social media on Thursday, days after Serena announced she would return to the WTA Tour for the first time since her farewell appearance at the 2022 US Open. "The Queen is back. An honour to share the court with one of the greatest athletes of all time this week. Even more excited to play doubles together! Tennis is pretty special," Mboko wrote on Instagram while sharing the news on Thursday.

The duo have received a wildcard entry into the 16-team doubles competition at Queen's Club, marking the start of the grass-court season ahead of Wimbledon. For Serena, the event will represent her first competitive ap-

pearance in nearly four years and her debut at the historic London venue. Although Queen's Club has long been one of the most prestigious stops on the grass-court calendar, women were unable to compete there between 1973 and 2024, making this year's edition the first opportunity for Serena to play at the tournament.

The announcement adds another notable chapter to the remarkable career of the American great, whose achievements have transformed women's tennis. Serena captured 73 WTA singles titles and spent 186 consecutive weeks as world No. 1, matching one of the longest reigns at the top of the rankings in history. She also finished five seasons as the year-end No. 1 player in the world. Her doubles legacy is equally impressive. Alongside sister Venus Williams, Serena won 22 titles and compiled one of the most dominant records in the sport, including a perfect 14-0 mark in Grand Slam doubles finals and four Olympic gold medals.

## Removing Suryakumar Yadav as T20I captain at this stage may not be right, says MSK Prasad

NEW DELHI

Former India wicketkeeper and chief selector MSK Prasad on Thursday cautioned against removing Suryakumar Yadav as captain of the men's T20I side, saying such a move at this stage would not be the right one and that selectors should instead look to groom younger leaders from now onwards.

Despite a few half-centuries in the bilateral series against New Zealand earlier this year and a match-winning knock in the T20 World Cup opening game against the USA, consistency has eluded Suryakumar. After India won the T20 World Cup under his leadership, Suryakumar's form dipped further in IPL 2026, where he managed only 270 runs in 13 matches at a strike rate of 147.54, with just two fifties.

With India's selectors set to meet in Mumbai on Saturday for selecting squads for the two games against Ireland, to be played on June 26 and 28, followed by five T20Is in England from July 1 to 11, apart from picking India 'A' squad for the two red-ball games against Sri Lanka 'A', Suryakumar's future as the T20I captain will be a hot topic of discussion.

"See, are you sending your first team or are you sending your second level? That's the biggest concern. So, if they are sending the first team, I think overlooking Surya is not



the right thing to do because he just handed over one more Men's T20 World Cup to us.

"So, ideally, probably next 5-6 months or now you have to get ready with your next leaders, right? Axar Patel was your vice-captain till the T20 World Cup win. Ideally, if you look at it, you have to look forward to the younger leaders. So, if you can identify such leaders and make a deputy to Surya, it will be nice to see. Surya is a phenomenal player," Prasad told IANS in an exclusive conversation on Thursday.

Prasad admitted that Suryakumar has endured a lean patch but urged patience towards him. "I know that he has gone through a rough patch in the last 1-1.5 years. Of course, we have other players like Rajat Patidar coming up, and they also deserve their places. "So, what I would like to say is that, removing Surya

at this stage, I think, is not the right signal. Give him a couple of series, and if his lean patch continues, then you can have a deputy to whom you can hand over the captaincy baton."

On possible successors of Suryakumar like Shreyas Iyer, the ODI vice-captain, and Hardik Pandya, apart from Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, and Tilak Varma in the mix, Prasad said, "See, Hardik is one potential candidate. Then, Shreyas is another potential candidate, too. People like Ishan Kishan, Tilak Verma, and Sanju Samson are also in line.

"See, Sanju has led RR for quite some time. Ishan has led recently, and he showed glimpses of class in his captaincy. Tilak Verma is a potential guy. We think that Tilak Verma is the guy and the answer for the next few years for Indian cricket in T20 formats. "So, he is not a bad choice,

too. Rajat Patidar (who led RCB to back-to-back IPL titles) is also one of those. I don't know whether it's from a captaincy point of view, but he is definitely a guy who should be looked into. So, you have enough ammunition with you. But are you sending your first eleven or are you sending your, maybe, probably the second eleven?" Shreyas, the front-runner to succeed Suryakumar, comes with proven captaincy credentials - having led Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL title in 2024 and guiding Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings to the finals in 2020 and 2025, respectively.

Kishan captained Sunrisers Hyderabad in Pat Cummins' absence during IPL 2026 after earlier leading Jharkhand to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph. Varma, meanwhile, has been a regular leader for India 'A' in white-ball cricket and is set to captain them in the upcoming 50-over tri-series in Sri Lanka starting June 9. Samson has previously led Rajasthan Royals to the runners-up spot in IPL 2022 and was adjudged Player of the Tournament in India's T20 World Cup win. Pandya, who has captained India in Rohit Sharma's absence, also guided the Gujarat Titans to the IPL crown in 2022, though his leadership stint with the Mumbai Indians has not been that memorable.





## Goodbye filmmaker Pahlaj Nihalani

DR. BHUPENDRA VIKAL

Famous filmmaker and former chairman of the Central Board of Film Certification, i.e. Censor Board, Pahlaj Nihalani has passed away. There is mourning in the entire film industry. His body merged into the five elements.

Pahlaj was known for his strict attitude in the Censor Board.

Pahlaj was suffering from serious disease of liver cirrhosis for the last several years. Due to this disease, he has lost the battle of life and said goodbye to this world. As a film producer, Pahlaj Nihalani started his film journey with the 1980 film Hathkari.

After this he produced Aandhi, Toofan, Govinda Ki Aankhen, Shoal and Shab-

nam and actor Akshay Kumar's Andaaz movies. Apart from this, as Censor Board Chief, he had taken many such decisions, regarding which there was a lot of controversy. He had ordered 89 scenes to be cut from Shahid Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's cult film Uda Punjab. Apart from this, he had also banned Lipstick Under My Burkha, later the film could be released by removing the kiss scene.

\*Pahlaj Nihalani's films\*

The first movie 'Hathkadi' was released in 1982. After this, 'Andhi-Toofan' came in 1985. In 1986, he made 'Ilaam', with which actor Govinda debuted in Bollywood. A year later, Chunky Pandey was launched in Hindi cinema through 'Aag Hi Aag' in 1987, after which he gave many excellent films including 'Aankhen', 'Sho-

la Aur Shabnam', 'Andaz', 'Talaash', 'Rangela Raja' and 'Julie 2'. The special thing was that she had a long and successful partnership with actor Govinda. Nihalani is considered to have played an important role in supporting the early big hits of Govinda's career.

\*Also served as Chairman of CBFC\*

Apart from film production, Pahlaj Nihalani was also the Chairman of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) from 2015 to 2017. During his tenure, the decisions taken regarding many films attracted a lot of discussion. A major debate broke out between the film industry and the common people on issues like censorship, creative freedom and the role of the Censor Board in Indian cinema.



## Pooja tests her luck in Hindi this Friday

Pooja Hegde is once again making headlines as her Bollywood film "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai" hits theaters on June 5. Co-starring Varun Dhawan and Mrunal Thakur, the David Dhawan-directed entertainer has brought her back into the spotlight.

The film is particularly significant for Pooja. After a series of setbacks in both Telugu and Hindi cinema, she is hoping to regain momentum with a commercial entertainer backed by a reputed banner. The actress has been actively promoting the film and has emerged as one of the key faces of its publicity campaign.

Interestingly, the film's release comes at a time when Pooja is also strengthening her presence in South Indian cinema. She has several high-profile projects lined up, including Vijay's "Jana Nayagan", "Kanchana 4", and a new film with Dulquer Salmaan.

With a major Hindi release arriving this week and multiple South Indian films in the pipeline, Pooja Hegde appears to be entering a crucial phase of her career. The box-office performance of "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai" could play a key role in shaping her immediate future in Bollywood.

## Sibling Swap in 'Peddi'

Janhvi Kapoor has already acted in two Telugu films. Her first outing, "Devara", turned out to be a blockbuster, while her second film, "Peddi", hit theatres today. In a short span, she has gained considerable popularity among Telugu audiences.

Interestingly, it was her younger sister Khushi Kapoor who was initially considered for the role of Achiyamma in "Peddi". The makers reportedly felt that Khushi was too young to be paired opposite Ram Charan in a role that required a more mature screen presence. As a result, the team eventually finalized Janhvi Kapoor for the part. In a way, Khushi's Telugu debut was delayed because the opportunity ultimately went to her elder sister. Khushi Kapoor, the younger daughter of Sridevi and Boney Kapoor, has already made her acting debut in the Hindi film industry. However, she is yet to score a major success as an actress. While she enjoys a strong following on social media, particularly on Instagram, she is still waiting for a breakthrough role on the big screen. It remains to be seen which filmmaker will introduce Khushi Kapoor to Telugu cinema.



## Yash Must End Toxic Rumours

KGF star Yash's long delayed pan-India biggie "Toxic" is supposed to be one of the most awaited films of 2026. However, the buzz has slowly fizzled out as the film got postponed several times and also because of frequent rumours about the output. After the film got postponed from March 19, the makers have maintained absolute silence and didn't release any promotional material to keep the hype alive. This has created numerous doubts among trade circles and moviegoers. Adding to this negativity, the team pushed the release date indefinitely from June 4 and caused more disappointment. Now, a fresh rumour started making rounds on social media platforms. The rumor claimed that Yash was deeply upset with the current output of the film, leading to plans for a massive 100-day reshoot and pushing the release window all the way back to 2027. However, the team has quickly condemned these reports as wrong and baseless. Though the production team has denied these claims, the damage from these such hot rumors is often hard to reverse immediately and

might impact the buzz and market of the film. As there won't be any smoke without a spark of fire, audiences also feel that there might be some truth in these reports. The negative narratives on big-ticket films will surely have some effect on the theatrical revenues. So, the team should wake up from slumber and start making some sound to revive the buzz. To completely squash the negativity surrounding Toxic and reignite positive hype, Yash should come and out and do some noise. At least some teaser or a behind-the-scenes look, or a strong personal statement from the hero himself is exactly what is needed right now to clear the air, reassure the fans, and put the rumors to rest once and for all. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, Toxic stars Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria, and Rukmini Vasanth.



## Venky, Kalyan Ram fixes launch date

In what is easily one of the most exciting multi-starrer announcements of the year, Tollywood is gearing up for a massive cinematic collaboration. Star director Anil Ravipudi, fresh off a legendary streak of commercial blockbusters, has pulled off a massive casting coup by bringing together Victory Venkatesh and Nandamuri Kalyan Ram for the very first time.

The highly anticipated project has locked June 18 for its formal muhurtham and launch ceremony, with regular shooting scheduled to commence within the very same week.

Project Overview & Details  
The film is being designed as a massive commercial entertainer tailored perfectly for the holiday season. Given the director's immaculate track record during the holidays, the makers are eyeing a grand Sankranti 2027 theatrical release. In a brilliant, meta marketing move, Anil Ravipudi has tentatively titled the project "January 13 Vidudala" (Released on January 13), directly honoring their target release date.

## Can't wait to see what lies ahead: NTR to Prashanth Neel



NTR and director Prashanth Neel have teamed up for the first time for the highly anticipated film "Dragon", which is currently under production. The team recently unveiled a glimpse video that quickly went viral, further raising expectations for the project. Movie nostalgia content

Prashanth Neel, known for delivering blockbuster entertainers with larger-than-life storytelling, is celebrating his birthday today. Marking the occasion, NTR shared a heartfelt message on social media, delighting fans eagerly awaiting their collaboration.

Sharing a special note for the filmmaker, NTR wrote: "Happy birthday, Director Avare... May this year for you be as grand as the stories you tell. Can't wait to see what lies ahead for us, Prashanth." "Dragon", which also stars Rukmini Vasanth as the female lead, is slated for release in 2027.