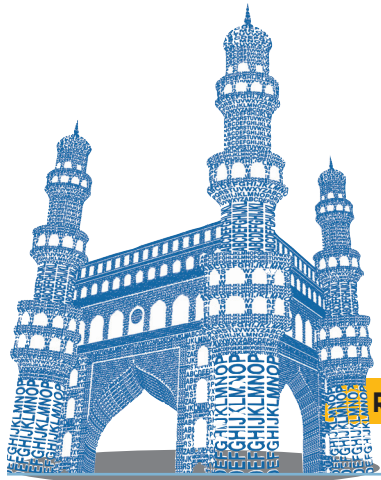




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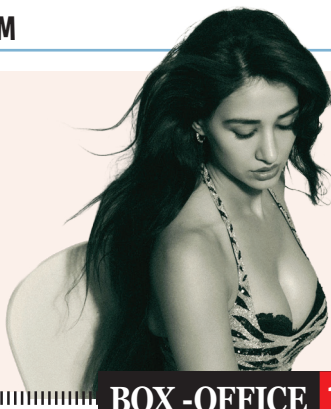


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Yoga Is a Path to World Peace & Healthy Ageing”: PM Modi

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Yoga a timeless gift for HOLISTIC WELL-BEING: GOVERNOR

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Emphasising that yoga is a timeless gift of India to humanity and a powerful instrument for holistic well-being, Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said the ancient discipline nurtures physical vitality, mental resilience and spiritual balance.

The Governor participated in the International Day of Yoga celebrations held at Lok Bhavan on Sunday. Senior officials, including special chief secretary to the Governor M. Dana Kishore, joint secretary Shashikiran Komandur, deputy secretary G. Pallavi, officers and staff of Lok Bhavan, took part in the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor observed that in an age marked by fast-paced lifestyles and mounting stress, yoga offers a pathway to inner peace, self-discipline and positive energy. Describing yoga as a shining symbol of India's eternal wisdom, he noted that it has today evolved into a global movement promoting health, harmony and human well-being.

Shiv Pratap Shukla lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi



for his pivotal role in securing worldwide recognition for the International Day of Yoga, which has inspired millions across nations to embrace a healthier way of life. “Yoga is not merely a physical exercise; it is a celebration of the profound connection between the body, mind and soul. It is India's ancient heritage that continues to illuminate the world with the message of health, balance and universal well-being,” the Governor said. Calling upon



citizens to make yoga an integral part of their daily routine, he urged people to move beyond observing it as an annual event and embrace it as a lifelong practice. Appreciating the efforts of The

Art of Living, the Governor said the organisation has been making remarkable contributions towards building a stress-free, violence-free society and fostering a culture of peace and well-being.

CONSTITUTIONAL RECKONING UNLEASHED BY BHARAT

ON DEGREES DEMANDS UNCOMPROMISING SCRUTINY OF ARTICLE ONE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY BOUNDARIES

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

The decision by a growing number of universities to print the word Bharat on degrees and official documents has sparked a debate that goes well beyond the walls of educational institutions. At one level, it appears to be an administrative choice. At another, it has become part of a larger national conversation about identity, history and the direction in which the Republic wishes to move.

Names matter in politics. They carry history, emotion and symbolism. That is why what might seem like a routine change in official terminology has generated a discussion that now touches constitutional law, governance, diplomacy and national self-perception.

The debate is not new. It has existed in different forms since the birth of the Republic. What is new is the intensity with which it has returned to the public square. The use of Bharat on university degrees is being viewed by some as a natural assertion of India's civilisational her-

itage. Others see it as part of a gradual attempt to redefine how the nation presents itself both domestically and internationally. The truth, as often happens in matters of public policy, lies somewhere between the competing narratives.

WHAT THE CONSTITUTION ACTUALLY SAYS

The Constitution is unambiguous on the matter. Article 1 declares that “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States.” Those seven words represent a carefully crafted compromise reached after extensive debate in the Constituent Assembly. The framers understood the significance of both names. Bharat carried the weight of history, culture and civilisational memory. India represented the political and diplomatic identity through which the newly independent nation was already recognised across the world. Rather than choosing one over the other, the Constitution embraced both. That constitutional position remains unchanged today.

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KTR SLAMS MUSI PROJECT AS DESTRUCTION FOR COMMISSIONS



HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) alleged that the Musi River project undertaken by the Congress government was causing large-scale destruction and displacement of poor and middle-class families. Addressing a party workers' meeting in Rajendranagar constituency on Sunday, KT Rama Rao said that even Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Tushar Gandhi, had opposed the demolition of homes in the name of the Musi project. Despite these objections, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was continuing with plans to displace thousands of families for commissions and financial gains,” he alleged.

Criticising the Chief Minister's pro-

posal to install a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, KT Rama Rao said Revanth Reddy “believes in Godse but speaks of Gandhi.” He added that if the Chief Minister genuinely respected Gandhi's ideals, he should refrain from demolishing people's homes.

The BRS working president alleged that even children facing displacement had pleaded with the government to spare their homes, offering their savings from piggy banks, but the administration remained unmoved.

He further accused the BJP of supporting the Congress government's actions related to the Musi project. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Revanth Reddy as Bade Bhai and Chote Bhai respectively, KTR alleged

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Meenakshi clarifies she won't accept Rajya Sabha seat from Telangana



HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Meenakshi Natarajan, the AICC in-charge for Telangana Congress affairs, clarified that she would not, under any circumstances, agree to be nominated for a Rajya Sabha seat from Telangana.

During a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, following the rejection of her Rajya Sabha nomination, Meenakshi Natarajan, accompanied by TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud and AICC Secretary Sachin Sawant, explained that as she hails from Madhya Pradesh, the seat should be allocated from her home state.

She further emphasised that no resignations would be necessary to accommodate her. Natarajan accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of colluding with election

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

TELANGANA BJP SEEK CM HELP IN GETTING APPOINTMENT WITH RAHUL GANDHI

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

In a counter attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy who sought help of Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy for getting appointments with union ministers and with Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnaves, BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao on Sunday written an open letter to him requesting an appointment with the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to submit a memorandum regarding the unfulfilled



promises and guarantees made to the people of Telangana.

In the letter, Rao said that the people of Telangana had

believed in the Congress party based on the personal assurances and guarantees given by Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi,

and Priyanka Gandhi during the 2023 Assembly elections.

He emphasized that despite the formation of the Congress government in Telangana, several key promises made to women, farmers, students, youth, the elderly, agricultural laborers, and poor families remain unfulfilled.

BJP state chief noted that women are still waiting for the expected financial assistance of Rs 2,500 per month, while farmers continue to wait for the Rs 15,000 per acre promised under Rythu Bharosa.

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CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL
TAMPER PROOF PACKING

3 TIMES BETTER

PM COMMISSIONS INDIGENOUS VESSEL TRIO

KOLKATA, JUNE 21

Underscoring oceans as the ultimate frontier for economic and geopolitical dominance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that a nation's global influence is directly tethered to its maritime muscle.

Speaking at the historic Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata, PM Modi commissioned three state-of-the-art, indigenously designed and built naval vessels into the Indian Navy: INS Dunagiri (an advanced stealth frigate), INS Sanshodhak (a large survey vessel), and INS Agray (an anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft).

"No nation can emerge as a major power without strong maritime capabilities," the Prime Minister told the gathering, noting that develop-

ment, security, and global prosperity are inextricably linked to the seas.

The Blue Frontier: Economics & Strategy

The Prime Minister emphasized that modern global infrastructure relies heavily on maritime routes, pointing out that the bulk of international trade travels by sea, while critical undersea cables carry the world's data networks.

Looking ahead, he noted that the scramble for critical minerals, deep-sea resources, and future energy security will heavily play out in the maritime domain. Consequently, a robust naval and maritime sector is no longer an option, but a strategic necessity for India.

Inside India's Defence Boom

Highlighting the country's rap-

id stride toward Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence, PM Modi shared key metrics tracking India's transformation from a top global importer to a manufacturing powerhouse:

Fleet Expansion: More than 40 indigenous warships and submarines have been inducted into the Indian Navy in recent years.

Pipeline Strength: 45 major naval platforms are currently under construction across domestic shipyards.

Production Surge: India's total defence production has skyrocketed from approximately ₹40,000 crore in 2014 to nearly ₹1.8 lakh crore.

MSMEs Steering the Growth Engine

The Tri-Commissioning ceremony also cast a spotlight on domestic

industrial integration. The Prime Minister revealed that over 200 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) directly contributed to the construction of the three new vessels, fostering widespread employment and economic activity.

Reflecting on the pre-2014 era, PM Modi recalled when heavy reliance on defence imports posed severe strategic vulnerabilities. He credited sustained policy reforms over the last decade for unlocking massive opportunities in indigenous design, manufacturing, and global exports.

"The time has come for India to enter the next phase of maritime development," Modi said, reiterating the government's commitment to new shipbuilding reforms aimed at scaling up domestic manufacturing to a global competitive edge.



MOUNTAINEER ANVITHA SCALES DENALI, NEARS SEVEN SUMMITS GLORY

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Telangana mountaineer Padamati Anvitha has successfully scaled Mount Denali (6,190 metres), the highest peak in North America, completing her sixth peak in the prestigious Seven Summits Challenge and moving closer to conquering the highest mountains on all seven continents. The climber from Bhongir reached the summit on June 19 during a self-supported expedition alongside Argentine mountaineer Renata. The two-member team completed the challenging climb without guides, porters or external logistical support. With Mount Denali now successfully climbed, Padamati Anvitha has completed six of the Seven Summits and continues her mission

towards achieving the ultimate milestone of scaling the highest peaks on all seven continents, further strengthening India's presence in the global mountaineering community.

Anvitha's mountaineering achievements include summits of Mount Everest (8,849 m), Mount Vinson, Mount Elbrus, Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Aconcagua. She is also recognized as the first Indian to reach the true summit of Mount Manaslu (8,163 m).

Associated with Transcend Academy of Rock Climbing, Anvitha mentors aspiring climbers and leads Everest expeditions. She dedicated the achievement to her family, mentors and supporters, saying that carrying the Indian flag atop Denali was a moment of immense pride.

Telangana's new sports university to shape future Olympians: Bhatti



HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

"Our government's primary objective is to identify hidden sporting talent in rural areas and provide them with the right training to showcase their abilities on the global stage. With this vision, the government will soon establish a state-of-the-art Sports University in Telangana with international standards, aiming to help our athletes win medals at the Olympic Games in the future," announced Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka.

The Deputy Chief Minister attended as the chief guest at the grand opening of the 'TG 20 Cricket League' mega tournament held at Uppal Stadium on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, he expressed confidence that the league would serve as a strong foundation for the development of sports in the state and for building a bright future for athletes.

"Earlier, cricket was largely limited to urban areas. But our government has changed that perception by identifying talent from every district for the first time. By selecting district-wise teams, we have provided a major platform for rural youth. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the people's government is giving top priority to sports and is committed to encouraging athletes," Bhatti Vikramarka stated.

He further revealed that Hyder-

abad will soon host a world-class Sports University equipped with top-notch infrastructure. Notably, the Uppal Stadium, where global football icon Lionel Messi once played, stands as a testament to the city's capability to host international-level sporting events. The government is building a robust sports ecosystem in Telangana to deliver Olympic-level training, he said.

The 'TG 20 Cricket' tournament, which will continue for 21 days, is set to create a festive atmosphere for sports enthusiasts across the state. The Deputy Chief Minister assured that the government would extend full support to ensure the grand success of the tournament.

Yoga Day celebrated across Telangana prisons



HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The Telangana Prisons & Correctional Services department on Sunday celebrated International Yoga Day-2026 with great enthusiasm across all prisons in the Telangana state under the leadership of Dr.Soumya Mishra, Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services. As part of the celebrations, yoga training programmes were organised for inmates in all prisons from June 10 onwards with the objective of promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, emotional balance, and healthy living among prisoners. The programmes were conducted with the support of various reputed organisations.

Dr.Soumya Mishra attended the celebrations held at Central Prison, Cherlapalli where a large number of inmates participated in a mass yoga session.

Addressing the gathering, she stated that yoga is a powerful tool for improving physical health, mental resilience, emotional stability, and self-discipline. She emphasised that regular yoga practice helps individuals develop positive thinking, inner peace, and self-control, which are essential for personal transformation and successful reintegration into society. The Director General further stated that the Telangana Prisons department is committed to the holistic reformation and rehabilitation of inmates through education, skill development, counselling, sports, cultural activities, and wellness programmes. She appreciated the enthusiastic participation of inmates and encouraged them to continue practicing yoga as part of their daily routine.

Meenakshi clarifies she won't accept Rajya Sabha seat from Telangana

FROM PAGE 1

officials, having realised that cross-voting in the Madhya Pradesh Rajya Sabha elections was not feasible. Meenakshi Natarajan questioned the denial of her opportunity when an independent candidate, Nathwani, supported by the BJP in Jharkhand, was granted a second chance despite lacking proper documentation.

She highlighted that Nathwani was given 24 hours to amend his nomination based on the 2023 rulebook, while she was denied a similar chance to correct her nomination under the 2026 rulebook. "My nomination was rejected due to a case with which I have no connection. I received a legal notice concerning a case filed by a private individual. I questioned how a legal notice could be categorised as a criminal case, noting that the nomination papers lack a specific field for 'legal notice', she said.

The AICC in-charge further elaborated that winning a Rajya Sabha seat from Madhya Pradesh required only 58 votes, a fact the BJP was well aware of, making it a guaranteed win for the Congress party. She alleged that the BJP's nomination was part of a conspiracy, and further accused them of fabricating a story that Telangana Congress leaders had informed Madhya Pradesh BJP leaders about her case. Meenakshi Natarajan asserted that her nomination's rejection was not solely due to a pending case but rather a result of the BJP and the Election Commission's alleged compromise. She said that this situation was indicative of the BJP's broader agenda for "One Nation, One Election."

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CONSTITUTIONAL RECKONING UNLEASHED.

FROM PAGE 1

As matters stand, there is nothing unlawful about universities choosing to use Bharat on degrees or official communications. The Constitution recognises the term and places it on equal footing with India. Institutions therefore operate well within the existing constitutional framework when they adopt either name. The larger question arises when the discussion moves beyond usage and enters the territory of exclusivity. If there is ever an attempt to remove India altogether and replace it exclusively with Bharat in the Constitution, that would require a constitutional amendment and all the political, legal and parliamentary scrutiny that such a step inevitably attracts.

THE CULTURAL ARGUMENT

Supporters of greater use of Bharat argue that the change reflects a deeper effort to reconcile with indigenous traditions

and historical consciousness. For many, Bharat is not merely a name. It represents a civilisational idea that predates the modern state and speaks to a cultural continuity extending across centuries.

There is a legitimacy to that sentiment. Independent nations routinely revisit symbols, narratives and terminology in order to better reflect their own historical experiences. The desire to emphasise indigenous identity is neither unusual nor inherently controversial. Many countries have undertaken similar exercises as part of their nation building journeys.

The challenge emerges when symbolism intersects with governance. A nation of more than a billion people functions through systems that require consistency and clarity. Every change in official nomenclature has implications that extend beyond sentiment. Government records, educational qualifications, inter-

national agreements, commercial documentation and diplomatic communications all operate within interconnected frameworks. That is why even a symbolic debate can carry practical consequences.

THE GLOBAL DIMENSION

India today is not merely a constitutional entity. It is also a globally recognised brand built over decades of diplomatic engagement, economic expansion and strategic influence. From international treaties to university admissions abroad, from trade agreements to global forums, the name India carries immediate recognition. Any significant shift in official usage therefore requires careful consideration of how such changes would be interpreted and implemented across international systems.

This does not mean that Bharat lacks legitimacy. It certainly does

not. The Constitution itself provides that legitimacy. However, transitions involving national identifiers require planning, coordination and clarity. Students seeking opportunities overseas, educational institutions evaluating qualifications and foreign agencies processing official documents may all require assurance that terminology changes do not affect legal validity. These are administrative challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles. Nevertheless, they deserve attention because public policy is ultimately judged not only by intention but also by execution.

BEYOND POLITICS AND POLARISATION

Unfortunately, debates of this nature often become trapped in political binaries. One side presents Bharat as an assertion of cultural confidence. The other portrays it as an unnecessary distraction from more pressing con-

cerns. Neither position fully captures the complexity of the issue.

The Constitution already accommodates both identities. The framers did not see India and Bharat as competing concepts. They viewed them as complementary expressions of the same nation. The wisdom of that approach lies in its inclusiveness. The challenge for contemporary policymakers is to preserve that balance rather than disturb it.

National identity cannot be reduced to a single word, just as patriotism cannot be measured through preference for one constitutional name over another. The strength of the Republic has always rested on its ability to absorb multiple histories, traditions and perspectives within a shared constitutional framework.

THE CONSTITUTION ALREADY HOLDS THE ANSWER

The debate over Bharat on university degrees is ultimately about more than nomenclature.

It is about how a modern nation understands itself while remaining faithful to its constitutional foundations. The Constitution does not compel a choice between India and Bharat. It recognises both and leaves room for both. Perhaps that is the lesson worth remembering.

At a time when public discourse is increasingly driven by absolutes, Article 1 offers a reminder that the founders of the Republic preferred accommodation over exclusion. They recognised that a nation as vast and diverse as ours could draw strength from more than one source of identity. The real challenge is not deciding whether we are India or Bharat. The real challenge is ensuring that in the pursuit of one, we do not diminish the other. For seven decades, the Republic has comfortably lived with both names. The question before us is whether we possess the same confidence today.

TELANGANA BJP SEEK CM HELP IN GETTING APPOINTMENT WITH RAHUL GANDHI

FROM PAGE 1

Tenant farmers, agricultural laborers, and poor families hoping for Indiramma houses have also faced nothing but disappointment, he said.

Highlighting the struggles of students and youth, Rao mentioned that the promised Rs 5 lakh assistance under the Vidya Bharosa scheme has not yet materialized. Students continue to struggle with fee reimbursement, and unemployed youth are

still waiting for the Rs 4,000 monthly unemployment allowance that Rahul Gandhi had repeatedly promised.

Even senior citizens are still waiting for their Rs 4,000 monthly pension and despite promises to increase financial assistance for single women and persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), it has not yet been implemented, he alleged and stated that College-going girls are still waiting for the promised free scooters, and

unemployed youth continue to wait for a job calendar and employment opportunities. Rao alleged in his letter that the Congress party has failed miserably in implementing its guarantees, leading to growing resentment and despair among various sections of society across Telangana.

BJP president urged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to arrange an appointment with Rahul Gandhi at the earliest so that the concerns and

grievances of the people of Telangana can be brought directly to his attention on the difficulties being faced by students, employees, youth, women, farmers, agricultural labourers, senior citizens, artists and other sections of society. Rao made it clear that if the Congress leadership fails to respond and grant the appointment, it would be proof of the Congress party's severe betrayal of Telangana and its people.

KTR SLAMS MUSI PROJECT AS DESTRUCTION..

FROM PAGE 1

that both leaders were working together to facilitate land acquisitions and demolitions along the Musi River.

"If Modi is sincere, why doesn't he stop the injustice being done to poor people and prevent the grabbing of their lands?" he asked. KT Rama Rao said local BJP leaders were making strong statements against the project while their own government was granting clearances for the demolitions. He named BJP leaders Eatala Rajender and G. Kishan Reddy in this context.

Questioning the government's priorities, KTR said that despite claiming a

lack of funds to fulfil election promises over the past two and a half years, the Congress government was prepared to spend ₹1.5 lakh crore on the Musi project. He alleged that the project was designed to generate commissions and accused Revanth Reddy of sending funds to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to secure his continuation in office.

KTR said the funds proposed for the Musi project should instead be used to implement the promises made by the Congress party. He described the Congress government's tenure as an utter flop and claimed that people across the state were waiting for political change.



Basavatarakam Hospital: A Beacon of Hope for Cancer Patients

The establishment of Basavatarakam Hospital made expensive cancer treatment accessible to the poor.

In 25 years, it has grown into one of India's leading comprehensive cancer hospitals with 650 beds.

Serves over 300,000 outpatients and 90,000 inpatients annually.

Balakrishna manages the hospital as a sacred mission of service.

Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital & Research Institute has been providing uninterrupted services for 25 years.

Silver Jubilee celebrations of Basavatarakam Hospital are being held in Hyderabad.

Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu will attend the Silver Jubilee

Hyderabad, June 21: Founded with the vision of making cancer treatment affordable and accessible to common people, the Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital & Research Institute has completed 25 years of dedicated service. The institution was established with the belief that the lives of cancer patients should not be cut short due to lack of treatment. It was named after Basavatarakam, with the goal of providing world-class cancer care at affordable costs on a non-profit basis. The initiative was launched in 1988 under the leadership of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao. With support from medical experts, scientists, Non-Resident Indians, and philanthropists, the foundation for the trust was laid. In 2000, the hospital was inaugurated with 100 beds by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Over the years, it expanded in phases and has now become one of India's leading comprehensive cancer treatment and research centers with a capacity of 650 beds.

A Hospital for the Poor

For the past 25 years, Basavatarakam Hospital has earned nationwide recognition for its compassionate and humanitarian healthcare



services. Thousands of patients from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and neighboring states seek treatment here. Today, the hospital serves more than 300,000 outpatients and around 90,000 inpatients every year. It has successfully performed over 8,000 cancer surgeries and 86 bone marrow transplants. More than 65% of its patients come from economically weaker sections of society. Because it provides world-class treatment at low cost, it has gained a reputation as a hospital for the poor. The hospital offers quality healthcare services

under government schemes such as Aarogyasri and Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY. It provides advanced cancer treatments through departments including Surgical Oncology, Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Radiology, Pathology, Nuclear Medicine, Medical Physics, and Research & Development. Around 250 doctors and healthcare professionals serve patients across these specialties.

Cancer Screening Services in Rural Areas

The hospital provides comprehensive treatment for cancers of the head and neck, breast, cervix, prostate, and various other organs. It also operates a specialized palliative care unit focused on pain management and improving the quality of life of cancer patients. In addition to treatment, the hospital conducts awareness programs and free medical camps in rural areas, promoting early detection and cancer prevention. Through a mobile cancer screening bus equipped with digital mammography, ultrasound, and digital X-ray facilities, medical services are taken directly to villages and remote tribal regions. These initiatives aim to detect cancer at an early stage and save lives.

Combining medical excellence with compas-

sion, humanity, and service, the Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital & Research Institute has become a model healthcare institution. Its 25-year journey demonstrates how philanthropy, medical expertise, community support, and public health programs can work together to fight cancer effectively.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations

The hospital is celebrating its Silver Jubilee to reaffirm its commitment to expanding healthcare services in the future. The hospital was founded by N.T. Rama Rao in fulfillment of Basavatarakam's final wish. Today, his successor and Nandamuri Balakrishna oversees the institution as its Chairman and Managing Trustee, treating its management as a sacred service. The Silver Jubilee celebrations will be held on Monday evening at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre in Hyderabad. The event, led by Balakrishna, will be attended by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, along with distinguished personalities from various fields, medical experts, donors, and guests associated with the hospital's services.

OU: Vice-Chancellor Inaugurates Modern Digital Studio at EMRC

UGC Announces ₹50 Lakh Grant for Building Renovation

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Professor Kumar Molugaram, Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University (OU), inaugurated the newly developed, state-of-the-art Digital Studio at the Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC), OU. He cut the ribbon alongside Professor Parikshat Singh Manhas, Director of the Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), and Dr. Jitendra Kumar Tripathi, Joint Secretary of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

On this occasion, they unveiled a book titled "Re-envisioning Higher Education in Digital Era... Towards Viksit Bharat 2047", which comprises selected research papers from a national conference organized by OU EMRC. Copies of the book were distributed to the selected research scholars. Additionally, posters detailing the 11 SWAYAM online courses being offered by CEC-EMRC OU for the July semester were released. The dignitaries also toured the facility, inspected various curriculum modules, and enquired about the pre-production, production, and post-production processes.

Addressing a gathering of MOOCs coordinators, faculty, researchers, and students at the new studio, OU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kumar Molugaram called upon the teaching com-



munity to seize the immense opportunities available in the digital education sector. He suggested utilizing the modern technology introduced by OU EMRC to create high-quality educational content for students. Emphasizing the importance of online education, he stated that the 11 newly launched online courses would be immensely beneficial to all undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students. He stressed the need to create widespread awareness about these courses among students and faculty alike.

Furthermore, he urged expert faculty from various disciplines to actively participate in developing MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) by securing projects from the CEC. He asserted that MOOCs would go a long way in overcoming the shortage of faculty in educational institutions and play a pivotal role in de-

veloping uniform, high-quality, and consistent education across the country. He noted that the book containing 45 research papers, edited by EMRC Director Raghupathi and Dr. K. Sriram, would be highly useful for both teachers and students. Commending OU EMRC for its excellent performance in recent times, he requested continued cooperation and support from the UGC and CEC.

Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas, Director of CEC, New Delhi, praised OU EMRC as one of the top-performing centers among the 20 EMRCs in the country. He emphasized that research in digital education is essential as part of the Outcome-Based Education system. He expressed pride in OU EMRC bringing out a comprehensive book with 45 research papers. Assuring that CEC never compromises on the quality of MOOCs, he promised that

priority would be given to OU EMRC in research projects and MOOCs development. He also announced that an international seminar would soon be organized through OU EMRC.

Dr. Jitendra Kumar Tripathi, Joint Secretary of UGC, appreciated the support extended to OU EMRC by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kumar and the governing body. Stating that funding agencies develop trust only when research centers demonstrate progress, he remarked that OU EMRC has lived up to that trust. He reminded that the UGC is always ready to fund universities and research centers, provided they adhere to regulations and submit comprehensive reports. He announced the sanction of a ₹50 lakh grant for the renovation of the 30-year-old OU EMRC building.

Earlier, EMRC Director P. Raghupathi presented the progress report and shared that the projects assigned by CEC-UGC were completed within the stipulated time. He expressed his gratitude to OU VC Prof. Kumar Molugaram, CEC Director Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas, and UGC Joint Secretary Dr. Jitendra Kumar Tripathi for their complete support.

The event was attended by Registrar Prof. Nareesh Reddy, OSD Prof. Jitendra Kumar Nayak, Dean of UGC Affairs Prof. B. Lavanya, and other faculty members.

Yoga and Well-Being Take Centre Stage at NITHM

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The event was graced by Prof. Venkat Ramana, Director, NITHM, and held under the leadership of Sri Alla Balaram Babu, President, TCEI, and Shri Ravi Kumar Bura, General Secretary, TCEI. The program was successfully organized by Mr. Mohammed Azmath Ali and Ms. Jigna Mehta, with valuable support from Dr. N. Yadagiri.

Participants benefited from an inspiring Yoga session conducted by Ms. Neha Shukla, along with Meditation and Breathwork training led by Mr. Vivek Depalle. The event was seamlessly hosted by Sai Sree Reddy, who served as the Master of Ceremonies.

The celebration emphasized



the importance of Yoga in fostering physical fitness, mental well-being, and inner peace, inspiring attendees to adopt a healthier and more balanced

lifestyle. Heartfelt gratitude to all dignitaries, partners, supporters, volunteers, and participants for making International

Yoga Day 2026 a memorable and grand success. Together, let us continue to promote wellness, unity, and the timeless values of Yoga.

AIMIM Launches SIR Voter Awareness Camp in Balanagar



MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, JUNE 21

AIMIM conducted a Special Voter Awareness and Verification Camp in Raju Colony, Balanagar, on Sunday as part of the statewide Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026 of electoral rolls. The event was led by AIMIM Kukatpally Incharge Anwar Sadat and coordinated locally by senior AIMIM leader Mahankali Shankar, with the aim of streamlining electoral rolls and ensuring accurate mapping to strengthen the integrity of the forthcoming elections.

The camp focused on verifying voting credentials and refining residential area mappings to ensure every eligible citizen is correctly registered. Local residents were encouraged to check their details and update their

residential mappings if needed, reflecting AIMIM's commitment to broad-based voter outreach and accurate voter information.

Anwar Sadat oversaw the initiative for the Kukatpally division, underscoring AIMIM's dedication to inclusive participation in the democratic process. Mahankali Shankar emphasized the importance of these ground-level exercises in protecting democratic rights and preventing the erroneous deletion of eligible voters' names from official rolls, highlighting the party's stance on safeguarding voter data integrity.

The day-long camp saw active participation from residents who sought to verify their eligibility and ensure proper mapping for future

electoral processes. Officials indicated that such camps are being conducted across the city as part of a broader effort to enhance accuracy in the voters' list ahead of elections, reflecting the broader statewide push under the SIR 2026 program to refine electoral rolls and reduce discrepancies.

Shankar reiterated that no eligible citizen should be left out of the democratic process, reinforcing AIMIM's focus on inclusive participation and transparent voter data. This initiative aligns with the statewide drive to strengthen the accuracy of voter information before the election phase, and citizens are encouraged to stay informed about ongoing revision drives and participate in verification activities as part of their civic duty.

"ARDHA NARISWARAM" FROM JUNE 22

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The Telangana Sangeet Natak Akademi will host a three-day national dance festival, "Ardhanariswaram", at Ravindra Bharathi from June 22 to 24 as part of the State government's 100 days of public governance celebrations. According a statement here on Sunday, Telangana Sangeet Natak Akademi president Dr. Alekhya Punjala said the festival, conceived around the theme of Ardhanariswaram, will bring together renowned senior and young artistes from across India. Performances will begin daily at 5 pm.

The festival will be inaugurated on June 22 by Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Tourism & Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao. The event will felicitate Telangana recipients of the recently announced Sangeet Natak Akademi awards: The recipients are - Voleti Ranganamani (Contribution to dance arts), Rajeshwari Sainath (Bharatanatyam), Durishetti Ramaiah (Folk - Kaddi) and D. Srinivas (Music - Veena)

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Concern Among 1.5 Million Gulf Workers Over the “SIR” Process

Congress Gulf Representatives Meet Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Decides to Personally Visit Gulf Countries

Hyderabad, June 21: Congress Party Gulf representatives held discussions on Sunday with Minister Ponnam Prabhakar regarding the protection of voting rights for Gulf workers and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). They discussed the measures that need to be taken to ensure that the names of Gulf workers and NRIs living abroad remain on the voters' list during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The discussions were held with Telangana's Minister for Transport and BC Welfare, Ponnam Prabhakar.

Telangana Gulf Congress representative Sutari Satyanarayana Patel and Telangana State NRI Advisory Committee Vice Chairman Manda Bheem Reddy met the minister at the MLA Camp Office in Husnabad on Sunday.

During the meeting, they emphasized the need to conduct large-scale awareness programs to help Gulf workers and NRIs from Telangana maintain their voter registration while residing abroad.

They specifically suggested organizing online Zoom meetings and using social



media platforms to educate people about voter registration and voter list revision procedures.

According to the representatives, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar responded positively to these proposals. They also invited him to visit Gulf countries to interact directly with expatriate Indians and Gulf workers from Telangana. The minister ex-

pressed his willingness to personally tour Gulf nations.

It was also noted that the contribution of overseas Telanganites to the development of Telangana is highly significant. Participants expressed that the government remains committed to addressing their concerns and safeguarding their democratic rights.

Self-realisation is a great way to success

Captain Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, personality development expert, writer, columnist



KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 21

Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy said that only by taking a step forward by self-realisation, shedding weaknesses and enhancing strengths can lead to success in individuals career. Addressing 500 cadets as a motivational speaker at the 10-day NCC Combined Annual Training Camp being held at the Jyotishmati Engineering College campus today, he advised them to adopt a regular disciplined daily routine to achieve better results in their desired goals. He urged them to develop general knowledge along with their academic studies and develop

an attractive personality along with their degree. He said that they should not be subjected to unnecessary pressure by comparing themselves with their peers and should continue to develop confidence in themselves. He said that the goals we choose should be specific and that they should work hard to stand at the top of this competitive world. After the program, Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy was honored with a memento by Camp Commandant Col Jayantha and Administrative Officer Col Krishna. More than 500 army personnel and cadets participated in the program.

Left-Wing Parties Gear Up for another Struggle to Secure Housing for the Poor

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Left parties have announced a state-wide agitation on the lines of the historic electricity movement to demand housing sites and houses for all destitute and homeless people. They said a massive rally with around 10,000 people would be held in Hanamkonda on June 27, demanding houses for the poor at Gundla Singaram and Gopalpur, where their huts were recently demolished. Addressing a press conference at Makhdoom Bhavan in Hyderabad, CPI State Secretary and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said the Left parties had decided to launch militant struggles to secure housing rights for the poor. He

announced district-level protests and Collectorate sieges on July 1, followed by a massive dharna at Indira Park in Hyderabad on July 6. The leaders said applications from eligible beneficiaries would be collected and submitted to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. They warned of intensified protests depending on the government's response.

Sambasiva Rao strongly condemned the midnight demolition of huts in Gundla Singaram and alleged that hundreds of residents were detained and forcibly removed by police and officials. He accused the authorities of acting inhumanely and demanded immediate rehabilitation of the displaced families at the same sites

SCR CELEBRATES YOGA DAY

Hyderabad, June 21 : South Central Railway (SCR) celebrated the 12th International Day of Yoga at Indoor Stadium, Railway Sports Complex, Secunderabad on Sunday Satya Prakash, Additional General Manager, SCR was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Siddharth Kati, Principal Chief Personnel Officer, other Principal Heads of Departments, Officials, Staff, Scouts & Guides, School Children and Yoga enthusiasts also took part in the program in large numbers under the supervision of Murari Mohan, renowned Yoga Teacher and State Coordinator for Art of Living Society, Hyderabad. The theme for the 12th International Yoga day is “Yoga for Healthy Ageing”. This theme highlights the importance of the ancient practice in promoting longevity, mobility, independence and holistic wellness as global populations grow older. It aligns closely with the World Health Organization goals for active living by using gentle movements, stretching, and breathing exercises to manage stress and improve physical resilience across all age groups.

One-Way 'Trial Run' held around KBR Park

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The Hyderabad Traffic Police on Sunday conducted a second one-way trial run around KBR Park in the Banjara Hills and Jubilee Hills areas as part of the Hyderabad City Innovative & Transformative Infrastructure (H-CITY) project. The City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar personally inspected the site during the trial run, which was organized in view of the ongoing steel flyover and underpass construction works. Accompanied by Traffic Joint CP Joel Davis DCP Kajal , Jubilee Hills Zone DCP Ramana Reddy and other officials, he visited key junctions—including the KBR Park main gate, Basavatarakam Hospital, Agrasen Junction, Film Nagar and the route via Road No. 45 up to Jubilee Hills Checkpost—to monitor vehicular movement.

Speaking on the occasion, V.C. Sajjanar stated that the trial run was conducted with an eye on the anticipated increase in vehicular traffic in the future. He emphasized that the primary objective is to find a permanent solution to traffic issues. He recalled that the first trial run had previously been conducted for two hours on April 5th (a Sunday). He stated that appropriate precautions have been taken to prevent the recurrence of issues observed previously. He noted that the current second one-way trial run is being conducted based on that experience.

The Commissioner of Police clarified that this trial run would continue only until 8 PM on Sunday, with vehicular movement returning to normal from Monday morning. He revealed that they were continuously monitoring any difficulties arising during the trial run.

The CP explained that approximately seven flyovers and seven underpasses were planned for the KBR Park vicinity. He acknowledged that while this new one-way system slightly increases travel distance, it ensures smooth travel without traffic jams. He noted that some



confusion arises when motorists suddenly change lanes. He urged them to strictly adhere to police advisories and signage.

He mentioned that measures were being taken to expedite pending civil works on the roads and that coordination was being maintained with hospitals along the route. He assured that adequate arrangements would be made to ensure the unhindered movement of ambulances.

The Traffic Joint CP Joel Davis stated that some difficulties were observed where vehicles changed lanes during the trial run. He added that appropriate precautions would be taken when implementing this system permanently. It was announced that a 150-meter 'interchange' area would be created between the Checkpost and KBR Park to facilitate easy lane changes for vehicles. He stated that a study involving experts is underway regarding the installation of pedestrian signals at the Checkpost and KBR Park to ensure safe road crossings. He explained that traffic patterns at these junctions are currently being continuously monitored using drones. He clarified that permanent changes would be implemented only after gathering comprehensive data. He urged the public and motorists to cooperate with the traffic police to ensure the city's progress and smooth traffic flow.

Cabinet Panel Sounds Alarm Over VB-G RAM G Act

Hyderabad, June 21 :

The Cabinet Sub-Committee constituted by the Telangana Government to examine the implications of the proposed Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, today favoured adopting a cautious and critical approach towards the Centre's proposed rural employment and livelihood legislation.

The committee, chaired by Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, held its first meeting at the State Secretariat and expressed serious concerns over several provisions of the proposed legislation, which members felt could adversely affect Telangana's interests and weaken protections available to vulnerable rural communities.

During the deliberations, the committee explored various options for formally conveying the State's dissent over what it described as significant omissions and commissions in the proposed framework that seeks to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with the VB-G RAM G Act from July 1.

Members observed that some provisions of the proposed legislation could dilute the role of State Governments in planning and implementing employment guarantee programmes while increasing financial liabilities on States. The committee noted that Telangana's rural poor could be placed at a disadvan-

- Weights legal options, voices dissent
- Fears dilution in State' implementation role
- Rural poor could lose livelihood protection
- Additional financial burden on state highlighted
- Amendments sought to protect workers' interests
- Mahatma Gandhi's name removal strongly opposed.. Committee to formally convey concerns to Centre



tage in accessing employment opportunities and livelihood support under the new framework. The members also reviewed concerns raised by several non-BJP ruled States and certain northeastern States regarding the additional fiscal burden that may arise from implementation of the proposed legislation. It was pointed out that some States, including Himachal Pradesh, have not yet accepted the new framework.

The committee is expected to recommend a series

of amendments aimed at safeguarding the interests of workers, self-help groups, rural households, small and marginal farmers, and other vulnerable sections. It is also likely to stress the need for States to retain adequate flexibility in designing and implementing programmes suited to local socio-economic conditions. The Telangana Government's response is expected to emphasize the principles of cooperative federalism, greater fiscal support from the Centre, and stronger safeguards for rural liveli-

KTR Expresses Deep Concern over Hyd Student's Disappearance in Finland

HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

BRS party Working President K. Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday expressed deep shock and concern regarding the missing case of Mutyamreddy Manideep Reddy, a B.Tech student from the Vanasthalipuram area of Hyderabad. The student has been missing for the past 45 days after travelling to Finland for higher studies. KTR personally met Manideep Reddy's parents Mutyamreddy and Marnatha to discuss the situation. He offered full reassurance and moral support on behalf of the BRS party to the parents, who are in deep distress over their son's disappearance.

KTR described the situation as extremely distressing while noting that Manideep

Reddy has not responded to any phone calls or messages since the 5th of the last month and added that there had been no information or response from the authorities there despite the passage of so much time. Speaking on this occasion, he said that When an ordinary family sends their child abroad for higher education with high hopes, the child's disappearance leaves the family in deep anguish. KTR noted that It was unfortunate that the aggrieved parents were forced to approach the High Court for justice because the local police failed to heed their complaint.

“We welcome the High Court's decision to issue notices to the Central Government, the Indian Embassy in Finland and the Telangana

Police regarding this matter.

KTR's Appeal to Central and State Governments

KTR appealed to the Union Ministry of External Affairs and demented that it must immediately intervene and have the Indian Embassy in Finland coordinate with local authorities to locate Manideep Reddy safely. He also demanded that the Telangana Police and the State Government treat this case as a matter of utmost priority, exert pressure through the Ministry of External Affairs and take steps to ensure he is found as quickly as possible. KTR assured the family of Muthyam Reddy that the BRS party would stand by them in every possible way and continue to fight until Manideep Reddy returns home safely.

“CM is running a fraudulent regime”

Hyderabad, June 21:

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Spokesperson and Telangana In-charge Priyanka Kakkar today lashed out at the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government in Telangana accusing it of acting in a dictatorial manner and depriving farmers of their livelihoods. She held a press conference at the Bashirbagh Press Club alongside the farmers affected by the 'Future City' project.

Speaking on the occasion, Priyanka Kakkar criticized

Revanth Reddy for running a "420 regime" (a regime characterized by fraud and deceit) in the state. She strongly condemned the forcible seizure of the lands from 'Future City' farmers in the name of development, describing it as a grave injustice.

"The Congress government is ruthlessly destroying nature and the environment in Ranga Reddy district. It must remember that nature itself will inevitably destroy this Revanth Reddy govern-

ment for the destruction it is wreaking upon the environment. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has adopted Hitler-like tendencies and is ruling the state like a dictator," Priyanka Kakkar warned. She affirmed that the Aam Aadmi Party would stand by the farmers and continue the fight until their lands are protected and justice is served to the affected individuals. Key state and district party leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party participated in this media conference.

RAINFORESTS FOR FOOD SECURITY

(On the occasion of “World Rainforest Day” on 22 June)

Rainforest's are lush green forests that have a continuous tree canopy. The entire forest is heavily dependent on moisture. Rainforests don't have any forest fires. Flora, fungi, epiphytes, lianas, and tress forming a closed canopy, are found in rainforests. World Rainforest Day is an annual event observed on 22 June aiming to educate people about the importance of rainforests - why they are important, need for their protection and preservation for future

generations, and diversity of life that lives in them. This day serves as a reminder to protect these vital ecosystems from threats like deforestation, illegal mining, and unsustainable logging.

World Rainforests Day-2026 Theme :

Founded in 2017, World Rainforest Day celebrates the importance of healthy, standing rainforests for climate, biodiversity, culture, and livelihoods - and convenes a global movement to protect and restore them.

The theme of World Rainforest Day-2026 is “The Forest Within You” that highlights the crucial role of rainforests in providing food security, nutrition, healthy soil, regulate climate, preserve biodiversity, and also provide livelihoods.

The theme encourages people to recognise that we are a part of our nature, and that every action taken to protect these critical ecosystems helps sustain our own wellbeing.

Importance of Rainforests:

A majority of living organisms - birds, animals, plants, mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, amphibians, and trees - are native to rainforests. Rainforest's are an important source of freshwater for humans. They also absorb carbon dioxide and protect the Earth from the effects of climate change. They are an important natural source directly or indirectly. Apart from these advantages, they provide us several ingredients used in everyday life and manufacturing are derived

from these forests. Timber, meat, animals products, plant derivatives, and tourism are also among the other benefits offered by rainforests.

The 10th anniversary of World Rainforest Day highlights how the rainforests are not just ecosystems, but also they are deeply rooted to our daily lives, culture, health and climate.

- PROF
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Randhawa Flags
Fake Punjab
Congress Chief
Letter
CHANDIGARH:

Congress MP Sukh-jinder Singh Randhawa wrote to the Punjab DGP on Sunday evening, seeking registration of an FIR regarding the circulation of a "forged" AICC letter on social media that "falsely" claimed his appointment as the Punjab Congress president.

In a post on X, the senior Punjab Congress leader said, "This is not merely an attempt to damage my reputation, but a deliberate effort to mislead the public and Congress workers. I have requested a thorough cyber investigation to identify all those involved and bring them to justice."

In his complaint to the director general of police, Randhawa said he was constrained to bring to his notice a "serious and deliberate act of forgery, fabrication, impersonation and dissemination of fake news" through social media platforms, apparently aimed at misleading the public, creating confusion among political workers and tarnishing his reputation.

Centre Moots Clean Cooking
Revolution for Women Empowerment

Aims to become a role model for the world

EESL, the nodal agency, is paving the way for successful clean cooking practices under the National Efficient Cooking Programme

EESL estimates NECP will play a pivotal role in addressing climate change

Experts say induction-based clean cooking will be a boon for women empowerment, environmental sustainability, economic development and improved living standards

AP-EESL partnership sets an exemplary model for clean cooking practices in India

EESL appreciates the AP Government's bold and progressive initiative to deploy clean cooking technologies in over 55,000 Anganwadi Centres

VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21:

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) is com-



mitted to accelerating the adoption of clean cooking solutions across the country and is geared up to aggressively expand this transformative initiative in mission mode, particularly in Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and other states, in alignment with the Government of India's vision of promoting induction-based clean cooking.

EESL appreciates the Andhra Pradesh Government's bold and progressive initiative to lead the country by adopting clean cooking solutions in more than 55,000 Anganwadi Centres on a saturation basis. This significant milestone towards promoting clean cooking is a visionary step by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and will also motivate the administrative machinery of Andhra Pradesh.

As a key implementation partner, EESL has played a pivotal role in translating the national clean cooking agenda into on-ground action. Through large-scale deployment, stakeholder engagement, consumer awareness and innovative financing mechanisms, EESL is helping make clean cooking accessible, affordable and sustainable for households across India. As the Government of India embarks on a mission to make clean cooking a nationwide movement, EESL, as the nodal implementation agency under the guidance of the Ministry of Power, reaffirms its commitment to driving this transition and supporting the country's journey towards a cleaner, healthier and energy-efficient future.

"With a proven implementation model and successful

deployments across multiple states, EESL is now poised to lead the next phase of India's clean cooking revolution, advancing the nation's energy transition and climate goals."

Induction-based clean cooking enhances the health and well-being of women and children by reducing exposure to harmful pollutants generated during conventional cooking processes. It supports environmental sustainability through lower emissions and improved air quality. The transition also delivers economic benefits by reducing household energy costs and promoting green growth.

The partnership between the Women Development and Child Welfare Department and Energy Efficiency Services Limited has empowered Anganwadi Centres with clean cooking technologies even before the ongoing West Asia conflict began affecting fuel supply chains in many countries, said Akhilesh Kumar Dixit, CEO, EESL.

During an exclusive presentation, A. Surya Kumari, Secretary, Women Development and Child Welfare Department, along with Director M. Venugopal Reddy, highlighted the key benefits of the programme, which include:

- Creation of cooler, cleaner

and safer working environments for Anganwadi workers.

- Induction-based cooking delivers nearly 35 per cent cost savings and is about 30 per cent more energy-efficient than conventional LPG-based cooking.
- Significant reduction in dependence on LPG cylinders.
- Substantial reduction in indoor air pollution.
- Prevention of nearly 28,327 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually.

Enhanced safety by eliminating open flames and reducing fire hazards. Under Phase-I, induction cooktops and utensil kits were distributed to 11,400 Anganwadi Centres. Under Phase-II, around 20,000 Anganwadi Centres have already received the equipment, and the entire programme covering all 55,746 centres is scheduled for completion by the end of this month.

The initiative marks another significant milestone in Andhra Pradesh's journey towards sustainable development and reinforces the State's resolve to contribute meaningfully to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of an energy-efficient, environmentally responsible and climate-resilient India.

Yoga for Healthy Ageing: Southern
Railway Observes 12th International
Day of Yoga across the Zone

CHENNAI, JUNE 21:

Southern Railway observed the 12th International Day of Yoga on 21st June 2026 (today) through a series of programmes organized across its jurisdiction.

In Chennai, the main Yoga session was held at the Railway Officers' Club, Nungambakkam. Shri Vipin Kumar, Additional General Manager, Southern Railway, inaugurated and presided over the event. Principal Heads of Departments, officers and staff of Southern Railway Headquarters participated in the session. The programme, organised by the Personnel Branch under the guidance of Shri A. Narayanan, Principal Chief Personnel Officer, attracted enthusiastic participation from all including officers and staff of Chennai Division, also took part in the event. Guided by experienced Yoga instructors, participants performed various asanas prescribed under the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) issued by the Ministry of Ayush.

The session included basic postures such as Tadasana, Vrikshasana, Bhadrasana and Vajrasana, which were practised with great enthusiasm and dedication. International Day of Yoga was also observed across all six divisions of Southern Railway, namely, Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Salem, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Similar programmes were conducted at the zone's major workshops, namely Perambur Carriage Works, Loco Works and Golden Rock Workshop. Officers and staff participated in Yoga sessions organized at divisional headquarters, workshops, and various field units. On this Yoga Day, Southern Railway reaffirmed its commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyle and holistic well-being among its employees and their families. Indian Railways observes the International Day of Yoga every year in line with the initiatives of the Ministry of Ayush, promoting the importance of yoga for physical well-being, mental wellness and a balanced lifestyle.

12th International Day
of Yoga

The theme for the 12th International Day of Yoga in 2026 is "Yoga for Healthy Ageing." The theme reflects the growing importance of yoga in supporting healthy and active ageing by improving physical mobility, mental well-being and overall quality of life. It also aligns with the World Health Organization's Decade of Healthy Ageing initiative.

This year, Yoga Day is being celebrated on a large scale across India and around the world, with thousands of events highlighting yoga as a simple yet effective practice for maintaining health and wellness across all age groups.

Verbatim passages, repetitions: DMK's
plagiarism charge against TVK's White Paper

The political slugfest over Tamil Nadu's finances has intensified, with the DMK accusing the TVK government of copying portions of its White Paper from a 2021 DMK report. The party has also questioned several headline fiscal claims made in the document, alleging that they are based on selective and misleading interpretations of official data.

The TVK government's White Paper on Tamil Nadu's finances under the previous MK Stalin administration is now facing plagiarism allegations. India Today has accessed the DMK's counter-report, which claims that the Vijay-led government's White Paper borrowed extensively from the DMK's own 2021 White Paper that had examined the finances of the then

AIADMK government. "Forensic comparison compares eight categories of textual and structural copying," the DMK report states. Earlier this week, the TVK government released a White Paper claiming that Tamil Nadu's overall financial liabilities had risen to an estimated Rs 13.18 lakh crore, with the state's outstanding direct debt nearly doubling to around Rs 10 lakh crore over the past five years. 'VERBATIM PASSAGES, UNATTRIBUTED DATA'

The DMK's rebuttal alleges that several sections of the TVK document contain verbatim passages, including sentence runs of up to 22 consecutive identical words without attribution. It further claims that portions dealing with Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and the water sector were lifted almost word-for-word from the 2021 White Paper. The

report also challenges several fiscal claims made by the TVK government. According to the DMK, the White Paper repeatedly relies on a limited set of figures and superlative descriptions that are not fully supported by the underlying data presented in official documents and charts. Among the claims flagged is the TVK government's assertion of a "highest-ever" revenue deficit. The DMK report argues that the figure was based on a provisional pre-audit projection rather than final audited accounts, potentially exaggerating the scale of the deficit. The DMK said it employed multiple methodologies to compare the two documents, including sentence-level verbatim matching, n-gram scanning of identical word sequences, near-paraphrase detection, and structural comparisons of tables, charts and section architecture.

Congress Jibes at Modi, Trump as
'Good Friends' Ruining India and World

Mallikarjun Kharge accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump of harming India and the wider world through their friendship. He said the relationship had hurt ordinary people, raised fuel costs and pushed India away from non-alignment.

Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, claiming that their close friendship is harming both India and global stability. Addressing a gathering, the Congress president said, "Prime Minister Modi is ruining the country, and Trump is ruining the entire world. If one is ruining the country, the other is ruining the world, yet both keep saying, 'My good friend, my good friend.'" Kharge alleged that the relationship



between Modi and Trump was negatively affecting ordinary people in India. "If both of you are such good friends, you are bringing a bad name to the country, and our people are suffering because of both of you. Had Trump not done this, oil prices would not have risen so much, and diesel and petrol prices would not have increased like this," he said.

The Congress chief also accused PM Modi of abandoning India's traditional foreign policy approach because of his ties with the US president. "PM Modi considers Trump

his friend, and because of that, he has abandoned our neutral policy, or what used to be our foreign policy. We were neutral. During the time of Nehruji, our policy of neutrality helped us. Everyone stood with us," Kharge said. He further claimed that India's policy of non-alignment had been discarded under the current government. "But this policy of non-alignment was discarded, and now Modi goes around every country saying, 'He is my friend, this one is my friend, that one is my friend.'" By trying to please everyone, he has ultimately landed us in trouble and put a noose around our necks," Kharge added. The remarks came as Kharge criticised both PM Modi and Trump, arguing that their friendship had damaged India's interests and contributed to difficulties faced by the country.



Karnataka BJP to hold meet
in Dharmasthala over cross-
voting issue during MLC polls

The Karnataka BJP will hold a Dharmasthala meeting where MLAs are to take an oath over alleged cross-voting in the MLC elections. The move follows anger among party workers and reflects the leadership's effort to test loyalty after the secret ballot.

The Karnataka BJP is set to hold a special party meeting at Dharmasthala within the next few days, sources said. The meeting is being held following allegations of cross-voting by some party legislators during the recent MLC elections. Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra said the party cadre was deeply upset over the alleged cross-voting and that there was widespread disappointment among workers. He said the meeting was being convened to clear doubts among party members and establish the truth behind the voting pattern. "Party workers are very upset with the cross-voting in the MLC elections. There is a lot of disappointment. To clear the minds of party workers, I have decided to call a party legislature meeting in Dharmasthala in the next four to five days," Vijayendra

said. The BJP chief said the legislators would be asked to take an oath before Lord Manjunatheshwara at the famous temple in Dharmasthala and disclose whether they had voted against the party's instructions. "Our MLAs have to take an oath in front of Lord Manjunatheshwara and speak out about what they have done in the MLC elections," he said. BJP Probing Claims Of Cross-Voting During MLC Polls The move comes after concerns within the party over possible cross-voting during the MLC polls, where voting is conducted through a confidential ballot. Vijayendra said the secrecy of the voting process had left the party with limited options to determine whether any legislators had violated the party line. "Since it was a confidential voting, I am left with no other choice. This is the only way left to find out the truth," he said. Sources said the BJP leadership is considering the oath-taking exercise as a symbolic attempt to establish the loyalty of its legislators. Some MLAs have reportedly come under suspicion, though those facing allegations have denied any involvement and maintained that they voted according to the party's direction.

BJP deliberately delaying SIT
probe into embezzlement of
Ram temple donations: Akhilesh

KANNAUJ (UP): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged that the BJP was deliberately delaying the SIT probe into the alleged embezzlement of funds at the Ram temple in Ayodhya to prevent the truth from coming out. Speaking to reporters during a one-day visit to Kanauj, Yadav said the investigation was being in-

tentionally prolonged. "The SIT probe is being delayed so that the truth does not come out," he said. In a post on X, Yadav also took a swipe at the ongoing investigation, alleging that the authorities were buying time to destroy evidence. "The SIT should ensure that even the investigation report is not stolen. Then they will again say, wait for 15 more days.

Punjab man
arrested in
Chhattisgarh
over 'links'
with Pakistan-
based ISI
operatives
JANJGIR-CHAMPA
(CHHATTISGARH): (JUN
21)

A 23-year-old man from Punjab has been arrested in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district for allegedly sharing sensitive information with Pakistan-based ISI operatives, a senior police official said on Sunday. The accused, identified as Sevak Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran district in Punjab, was arrested during a tenant verification drive carried out by police in Akaltara town, Janjgir-Champa Superintendent of Police Vijay Kumar Pandey said.

Singh was staying in a rented accommodation near Minimata Chowk when he came under suspicion during verification of tenants residing in the area, he said. It was not immediately clear what he was doing in the Chhattisgarh town.

All 6 rebel Sena UBT MPs to join
Shinde's Shiv Sena at 3 pm on TODAY

In a major blow to Uddhav Thackeray, all six rebel Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs are likely to merge with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena on Monday, giving the faction the crucial two-thirds strength needed to avoid disqualification under the anti-defection law.

The six MPs are expected to formally merge with the Shinde-led Shiv Sena, potentially giving the rebel bloc the required two-thirds strength needed to avoid disqualification under the anti-defection law. Amid the political turmoil triggered by "Operation Tiger", Shiv Sena (UBT) has called a meeting of all its MLAs and MLCs at 2.30 pm on Monday at the party office, Shivalay, in Nariman Point.

The meeting will take place on the first day of the Maharashtra Legislature's monsoon session and is being seen as an effort by Uddhav Thackeray to keep his flock together amid growing concerns over defections. Thackeray is expected to address all party legislators and outline the party's strategy in the wake of the rebellion by a section of its Lok Sabha MPs. The development comes after two of the dissident MPs,



Nagesh Patil Ashtikar and Omprakash Rajee Nimbalkar, publicly confirmed their decision to join the Shinde camp on Sunday.

The six MPs who skipped the Shiv Sena (UBT) parliamentary party meeting in Delhi on June 17 are Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Deshmukh, Sanjay Jadhav, Bhausaheb Wakchaure, Nagesh Patil-Ashtikar and Omprakash Rajee Nimbalkar. Shiv Sena (UBT) currently has nine Lok Sabha MPs, and the rebel group needs at least six members to meet the two-thirds threshold. Confirming his decision to switch sides, Hingoli MP Nagesh Patil Ashtikar said remarks made against him and other dissident MPs after June 18 changed their minds about remaining in the Uddhav Thackeray-led party.

"I, and some other MPs (of Sena-UBT), had not made



any decision until June 18. We had not gone anywhere. However, certain remarks were made against us since Thursday, which made us believe that there is no point in staying here (Sena-UBT)," Ashtikar said in a video posted on social media. Ashtikar clarified that he was not upset with Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray or party leader Sanjay Raut. However, his remarks appeared to refer to criticism directed at the dissident MPs in recent days. Coming forward publicly for the first time since rumours of "Operation Tiger" began circulating, Ashtikar confirmed that he had crossed over to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. He said he had not compromised on his ideology and had "just gone from one Shiv Sena to another." Dharashiv MP Omprakash Rajee Nimbalkar also confirmed his decision to

EDITORIAL

The Cost of Conflict:
The World Bank’s Stark
Warning on Global Growth

The World Bank’s newly released Global Economic Prospects report offers a sobering, mathematical indictment of modern geopolitical instability. According to the data, the prolonged conflict in West Asia and the volatile disruptions along key maritime choke points have dragged projected global economic growth down to just 2.5% for 2026. This represents the lowest rate of expansion since the absolute nadir of the COVID-19 pandemic, flashing an unmistakable warning light for central banks and finance ministries worldwide. While the immediate, tragic human cost of warfare commands our attention, the macroeconomic aftershocks are quietly eroding the financial security of millions who live thousands of miles from the frontlines.

With Brent crude oil averaging a stubborn \$94 a barrel—a 36% jump over last year’s baselines—the secondary effects are rippling through critical supply chains. High energy prices have directly triggered a surge in fertilizer costs, creating a dangerous inflationary pipeline that is actively driving up global food prices. The report exposes a deeply asymmetric crisis. While massive economies like the United States have demonstrated notable structural resilience, developing and low-income nations are bearing the brunt of this stagnation. For developing economies outside of major hubs like India and China, this downturn signals nearly a decade of zero progress in closing the per capita income gap with advanced nations. The \$50 billion to \$60 billion in emergency liquidity injected by international institutions acts merely as a temporary tourniquet. It prevents immediate insolvency but does nothing to treat the underlying disease.To break this cycle of economic vulnerability, emerging economies must collectively pivot. Relying on volatile, fossil-fuel-centric supply chains leaves state budgets entirely at the mercy of distant geopolitical flashpoints. National strategies must aggressively diversify domestic energy production, shorten vital supply lines, and establish robust regional trade agreements that act as buffers against global shocks.The World Bank’s data proves that isolation is a fiction. An inflation spike in a Western supermarket or a delayed container ship in Asia is inextricably linked to regional stability. True economic resilience can no longer be managed solely through monetary policy and interest rate hikes; it requires a global commitment to resolving the systemic geopolitical disruptions that threaten to make a decade of economic progress go completely cold.



LITERATURE



Like tattered clothes washed anew,
It cleanses the mind, so fresh and true.
Wiping sorrow’s deepest stain,
And easing hearts from toil and pain.

It thrills, it shines, it scolds at times,
Echoing forth in endless chimes.
A tale that leaps like a rushing stream,
A lion’s roar—a mighty dream.

It whispers secrets through ancient lore,
Echoing forth in endless chimes.
With dragons, stars, and ships that fly,
It paints new worlds across the sky.

A blooming flower at dawn’s embrace,
A peacock dancing with fearless grace.
Silver clouds that drift so high,
Brushing hope across the sky.

It walks with kings and weeps with slaves,
It dives through depths and dares the waves.
A wand, a sword, a rebel’s song—
It rights the world when things go wrong.

But why does it shine, so bold, so bright?
For truth, for good, for guiding light.
To wake mankind, to help them see,
The boundless beauty of life set free.



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



OPINION

UKD Amid the BJP-Congress
Battle in Uttarakhand

The political temperature in Uttarakhand has started rising as the state heads toward Assembly elections. With less than eight months left before the polls, every party has begun laying out its political strategy. While the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is determined to create history by retaining power, the Congress is making every effort to end its decade-long exile from government. Meanwhile, the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), which has traditionally championed regional identity politics, is also trying to reclaim its lost ground. In this 70-seat state, the contest is beginning to appear triangular, although the main battle still remains centered between the BJP and the Congress.A look at the results of the last Assembly election shows that in 2022, the BJP broke Uttarakhand’s tradition of alternating governments by returning to power for a second consecutive term. The party secured 44.33 percent of the vote and won 47 seats. Congress received 37.91 percent of the votes but managed to win only 19 seats. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and independent candidates won two seats each. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had contested the election aggressively, projecting Colonel Ajay Kothiyal as its chief ministerial face, but it secured only 3.3 percent of the vote and failed to open its account.

Interestingly, two prominent leaders lost from their own constituencies in that election. Former Congress Chief Minister Harish Rawat was defeated from Lalkuan, while then-Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami lost his traditional Khatima seat to Congress candidate Bhuvan Kapri. However, the BJP leadership continued to place its trust in Dhami and later got him elected through a by-election from Champawat, allowing him to continue as Chief Minister.To understand Uttarakhand politics, it is essential to understand the electoral dynamics of the Kumaon and Garhwal divisions. Garhwal has 41 Assembly seats, while Kumaon has 29. In the last election, the BJP dominated Garhwal, winning 29 seats, while Congress was reduced to just eight. The picture was different in Kumaon, where the BJP won 18 seats and Congress secured 11, indicating a much closer contest. This is why both parties are focusing heavily on these regions. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had recently planned rallies in both the Kumaon and Garhwal divisions. A large crowd gathered in Almora, but due to bad weather, he could not attend in person and instead ad-



ressed party workers through phone and virtual means. State Congress President Ganesh Godiyal has also been continuously touring the state and engaging directly with people.

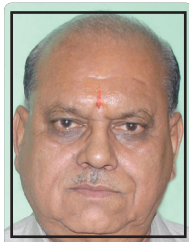
Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami is set to become the first BJP Chief Minister in Uttarakhand’s history to complete a full five-year term. To counter anti-incumbency, the BJP has begun working on a micro-level strategy. Between June 13 and June 16, the party launched a major campaign in which Lok Sabha MPs, Rajya Sabha members, and core group leaders were sent to the 23 constituencies that the party had lost in the previous election. These leaders even stayed overnight in those areas to better understand local organizational realities and the reasons behind the defeats.As far as election issues are concerned, the BJP is preparing to seek votes on the basis of infrastructure development, the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), and religious tourism, particularly the Char Dham Yatra and the Manaskhand Temple Garland Mission. The Kumbh Mela scheduled to be held in Haridwar in 2027 could also provide the party with a major opportunity to strengthen its administra-

tive image.

On the other hand, Congress does not lack issues, but internal factionalism remains its biggest challenge. State President Ganesh Godiyal has been working actively on the ground, yet even after seven months, the state executive committee has not been constituted. Recently, Congress’s Uttarakhand in-charge Kumari Selja visited the state for two days but returned to Delhi after completing her engagements in just one day, increasing concerns among local leaders regarding the party organization.Harish Rawat’s decision to go on a brief “silent break” some time ago had also triggered political speculation, although he later clarified that he would campaign with full strength to ensure Congress’s victory. According to Ganesh Godiyal, Congress will present both the achievements of its own governments and the failures of the current administration before the people.This time, the party is preparing to strongly raise issues such as unemployment, migration from the hills, paper leak scandals, the Ankita Bhandari murder case, the deteriorating condition of healthcare services, and the loss of life and property caused by wild animals.Meanwhile,

the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, which has roots in the statehood movement, is also working to strengthen itself. Party Central President Ashutosh Negi and Youth Wing President Ashish Negi have been continuously holding public meetings across districts. The party’s biggest issue remains the demand for a permanent capital in the hill region. According to the UKD, real development of the hills cannot take place unless the Chief Minister and legislators function from the hills themselves.

In addition, the UKD has been vocal about granting permanent resident status to people living in the state since 1950 and implementing a strict land law. The party also says that if it comes to power and any paper leak incident occurs, the Chief Minister should be held directly responsible and must resign. According to Ashutosh Negi, the party is currently working from a position of strength in around 30 to 35 constituencies. Political observers believe that the stronger the UKD becomes, the greater the damage it is likely to cause to Congress, since the BJP’s core voter base remains largely intact. Although there is some public dissatisfaction with the government, the opposition still lacks a leader who can match Pushkar Singh Dhami’s political stature. The contest in the Kumaon division is expected to be particularly close, and if Congress can overcome its internal divisions and distribute tickets effectively, it may gain an advantage. For now, the picture suggests that the BJP is relying on development and organizational strength to retain power, Congress is trying to stage a comeback by highlighting the failures of the government, and the UKD is attempting to bring its traditional issues back into the spotlight. The coming months are likely to bring even more interesting twists to Uttarakhand politics, making this election more intriguing than ever before.



AJAY KUMAR
Senior Journalist,
Lucknow (U.P.)

Beyond Towers: Why India’s Leap
into Satellite Connectivity Matters

“ From landlines to smartphones, every communications revolution has expanded humanity’s horizons. Satellite connectivity could mark the next leap. ”

India’s telecommunications sector, which spent the past decade expanding fibre networks and rolling out 4G and 5G services, is now looking beyond terrestrial infrastructure. Recent reports that Reliance Jio is planning a Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) constellation of more than 1,600 satellites for satellite broadband and Direct-to-Device (D2D) connectivity have brought space-based communications into the national conversation. More importantly, they raise a larger question: as several countries move towards integrating satellite networks into their digital ecosystems, how important are these technologies for India?

The answer lies not merely in technological ambition, but in the realities of geography, development and national resilience.

Understanding the Difference:

Satellite broadband and Direct-to-Device connectivity, though often mentioned together, are distinct technologies. Satellite broadband delivers internet services through satellites to dedicated user terminals installed at homes, institutions or remote facilities. Direct-to-Device technology goes a step further. It allows ordinary smartphones to communicate directly with satellites using globally evolving non-terrestrial network standards, effectively turning satellites into mobile towers in space.

Beyond Conventional Networks:

This marks a departure from conventional communications infrastructure. Existing mobile and broadband services depend on terrestrial assets such as towers, fibre-optic cables and base stations. These systems perform efficiently in densely populated regions, but extending them to mountainous areas, forests, islands and sparsely populated regions can be technically difficult and financially expensive.

Modern LEO constellations offer a different approach. Operating much closer to Earth than traditional geostationary satellites, they provide lower latency and faster communication, making satellite-based

internet more practical for everyday applications. This technological shift has encouraged governments and private companies across the world to invest heavily in space-based connectivity.

The Global Race for Space Connectivity

The United States currently leads this sector through companies such as Starlink, Project Kuiper, AST SpaceMobile and Globalstar. China is developing its own satellite constellations to strengthen strategic autonomy, while Europe is pursuing sovereign space-based communication systems to reduce dependence on external providers. Closer to home, Eutelsat OneWeb has already established a significant satellite presence. Although India appears to be entering the sector relatively late, that may not necessarily be a disadvantage. Falling launch costs, improvements in satellite manufacturing and the emergence of global standards for non-terrestrial networks have reduced many of the uncertainties that characterised the early years of the industry. This provides Indian players with an opportunity to build upon technologies that are increasingly becoming commercially viable.

A Developmental Necessity:

More importantly, satellite connectivity addresses a genuine developmental requirement. Despite impressive progress in digital infrastructure, connectivity gaps persist across parts of the Himalayas, the North-East, island territories and remote forest regions. Extending terrestrial networks to such areas often involves high costs and logistical challenges. Satellite networks can complement existing infrastructure and help bridge these gaps.

Their importance extends beyond everyday internet access. India’s vulnerability to cyclones, floods, landslides and earthquakes frequently exposes the fragility of terrestrial communication systems. During natural disasters, when conventional networks are disrupted, sat-

ellite-based communications can provide critical support for emergency response agencies, healthcare services and disaster management operations. Border areas, maritime zones and isolated communities could particularly benefit from such capabilities.

Expanding the Reach of Development:

The technology also carries broader developmental implications. Reliable connectivity can improve access to education, telemedicine, digital governance and financial services in underserved regions. For fishermen operating in deep seas, security personnel stationed in remote areas and communities located far from urban centres, satellite communications could provide a level of connectivity that has long remained difficult to achieve.

For service providers, satellite networks represent less a substitute than an additional layer of infrastructure. They can expand coverage, improve network resilience and open new markets. In this sense, the future is likely to involve closer integration between terrestrial and space-based systems rather than competition between the two.

Challenges Ahead:

However, significant challenges remain. Affordability remains a major concern. India’s digital success has been built largely on inexpensive mobile data. Satellite broadband equipment and services are currently far more expensive than conventional alternatives. Unless costs decline substantially, mass adoption will remain limited. Regulatory issues are equally important. Spectrum allocation, licensing frameworks and competition between satellite operators and traditional telecom companies are already subjects of debate. Questions relating to data localisation, cybersecurity and national security will also require careful attention as satellite networks become more deeply integrated into the communications ecosystem.

Technical limitations must also be recognised. Satellite systems are unlikely to replace terrestrial networks in densely populated urban areas where enormous volumes of data are transmitted every day. Instead, they are expected to function as complementary infrastructure, providing coverage where conventional networks face limitations.

Building a Resilient Digital Future:

India’s ambitions in this domain should therefore be viewed not as a race to replace existing systems, but as an effort to create a more resilient and inclusive communications architecture. Under initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, domestic manufacturing of satellite equipment, chipsets and related technologies could also strengthen India’s broader space ecosystem. The history of communications has been one of expanding horizons—from landlines to mobile phones, from voice calls to high-speed internet. Space-based connectivity may represent the next phase of that evolution. Its success, however, will depend not on the number of satellites launched, but on whether it can extend reliable and affordable digital access to communities that have remained on the margins of the connectivity revolution.

India’s digital future will continue to be built on towers and fibre. But increas-



KINJARAPU
AMARAVATHI
Member-PLUS NGO



Fostering Respect for Indian Culture

DR. BHUPENDRA VIKAL

36th convocation ceremony of Rani Durgavati University took place

Students should become medium of nation building and social service: Governor Shri Patel

Veerangana is a symbol of the glorious tradition of self-respect and sacrifice of Rani Durgavati: Chief Minister Dr. Yadav

Bhopal: President Smt. Draupadi Murmu said that educational institutions are not just centers for awarding degrees but are also major centers for development of innovation, research, scientific approach and creative thinking. It is also an important responsibility of universities to develop a sense of respect for Indian culture, traditions and languages among students. The overall development of the country is possible only with the balance of modernity and tradition. President Smt. Murmu was addressing the 36th convocation of Rani Durgavati University in Jabalpur on Sunday. On this occasion, President Smt. Murmu awarded gold medals and distributed degrees to 20 students who had won more than one gold medal in different streams. In the programme, 240 gold medals were distributed to 141 students of the university. Also, various degrees including PhD were awarded to 182 researchers. Her Excellency President Smt. Murmu also paid floral tributes to the statue of the brave queen Rani Durgavati located in the university campus. President

tradition and languages is an important responsibility of universities: President Smt. Draupadi Murmu



Smt. Murmu said that it is a matter of pride for Jabalpur University to be named after the heroic queen Durgavati. Rani Durgavati was an embodiment of bravery, courage, bravery and valor and will always be a source of inspiration for women power. Paying tribute to the memory of the great heroine, he said that the students and alumni associated with the university should come forward for the empowerment of the tribal society, deprived sections and especially the daughters. He said that the area where the university is located has a rich presence of tribal and forest dweller culture. In such a situation, the responsibility of the youth getting education from here should not be limited only to their career, but they should also reach out to their society and villages and guide the people there.

President Smt. Murmu said that the government is running many schemes for the upliftment of tribal and deprived sections. Many times people are not aware of these schemes and the process to avail their benefits. In such a situation, it is the duty of the educated youth, especially the young men and women coming from the tribal society, to go among their society and give guidance to the people. He said that the dream of Developed India@2047 will be realized only when the last man of the society and the left behind communities are also brought into the mainstream of development. He said that maintaining the identity, culture, tradition and identity of the tribal society

is as important as ensuring their participation in modern development. There is a need to link the skills, traditional knowledge and crafts of the tribal society with modern education, innovation and research. Universities and other educational institutions should make special efforts in this direction, so that the tribal knowledge tradition can be systematically studied and its benefits reach the wider society. President Smt. Murmu appreciated the efforts of the university like incorporating Indian knowledge tradition in the curriculum, encouraging innovation and obtaining patents through the Design Innovation Centre. He said that it is a matter of happiness that among the students who received gold medals in the convocation, the number of girls is more, which presents a positive picture of women empowerment and changing India. President Smt. Murmu said that today's India is the India of the youth and the country has great expectations from them. Central and state governments are continuously making efforts to provide opportunities to the youth as per their ab

"Rani Durgavati University will achieve new heights in the field of education, research and innovation: Chief Minister Dr. Yadav"

Chief Minister DrYadav said that the dignified presence of President Smt. Draupadi Murmu, who holds the highest constitutional post of the country, has made the 36th convocation of Rani Durgavati University more glorious. This occasion is a matter of pride and pride not only for the university but for the entire Madhya Pradesh.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Rani Durgavati University is not just an institute of higher education. It is a symbol of that glorious tradition of bravery, self-respect and sacrifice, which was established by the immortal warrior Queen Durgavati with her courage and indomitable bravery. He said that Rani Durgavati displayed her extraordinary bravery by fighting many battles against the huge army of Mughal Emperor Akbar and set an example of immortal inspiration for the coming generations by sacrificing her life to protect the freedom and honor of the motherland.

Chief Minister DrYadav expressed confidence that Rani Durgavati University will achieve new heights in the field of education, research and innovation. The talents emerging from here will contribute significantly to the development of the country and society. He said that today the students of the university are making the state proud at the national level with their talent and excellent performance. Expressing happiness, he said that many students earning more than one gold medal is a proof of quality education and educational excellence in the state. Particularly praising the achievements of the girl students, he said that the success of the daughters is a matter of pride not only for the family but also for the entire society and the state. Chief Minister DrYadav said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is establishing new dimensions of development and Madhya Pradesh is also making continuous progress in the field of education. He said that the gross enrollment rate of higher education in the state has reached 28.9 percent, higher than the national average. Efforts to bring the dropout rate in school education close to zero have been successful. The state government has taken important initiatives towards the establishment of three new government universities. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that the state government is committed to providing quality, technical and employment-oriented education to the youth. He said that being an agricultural state, special

encouragement is being given to agriculture and vocational education as well as innovation based studies under the Farmers Welfare Year in the state, so that the youth can become self-reliant through modern technology and play an effective role in nation building. The program started with the national anthem and lighting of the lamp. After this, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rajesh Kumar Verma welcomed the President, Governor, Chief Minister and Higher Education Minister by presenting memento. In the welcome address, Vice Chancellor DrReferring to the achievements of the university, Verma said that for the first time the university has received A+ grade from NAAC, which is a matter of pride for the institution. The special attraction was the joint photo ceremony of the gold medal holders and degree recipients with the President, Governor, Chief Minister and Higher Education Minister. The students described it as an unforgettable achievement of their lives. In the program, Higher Education, Technical Education and AYUSH Minister Shri Indir Singh Parmar, Rajya Sabha MP Smt. Sumitra Valmik, MP Shri Ashish Dubey, Mayor Shri Jagat Bahadur Singh, MLA Shri Ashok Rohani, DrAbhilash Pandey, Neeraj Singh, Santosh Barkade, Lakhman Ghanghoria, Akhilesh Jain, Divisional Commissioner Mr. Dhananjay Singh, Collector Mr. Raghavendra Singh, Superintendent of Police Mr. Sampat Upadhyay, administrative officers and a large number of students were present



International Day of Yoga Observed Across NFR Promoting Healthy Ageing and Wellness

MALIGAON, 21 JUNE, 2026

International Day of Yoga (IDY)-2026 was celebrated across Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) on 21 st June 2026, reaffirming the importance of yoga as a powerful tool for promoting health, fitness and a balanced lifestyle. Yoga practice sessions were organised at the NFR Headquarters, all divisions, workshops and other railway establishments to spread awareness about the benefits of yoga and encourage its adoption as a way of life. The theme for International Day of Yoga 2026, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing" highlights the vital role of yoga in promoting physical fitness, mental well-being and emotional resilience throughout life. It emphasizes yoga's ability to improve flexibility, strength and balance while encouraging a healthier, more active lifestyle. The theme also reflects a broader vision of healthy living, encouraging harmony between body, mind and nature and promoting comprehensive health and wellness. The celebration of IDY-2026 holds special significance as it marks the 12 th anniversary of this global movement, inspiring millions worldwide to adopt yoga for a healthier and more balanced lifestyle. Through its inclusive practices, yoga continues to promote preventive healthcare, improve quality of life and support healthy Ageing. At the NFR Headquarters, the International Day of Yoga programme was organised at the Railway Indoor Stadium, Maligaon. Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, Gen-

eral Manager, NFR, along with other senior railway officials, participated in the programme. Railway officers, staff and their family members enthusiastically performed various yoga asanas, demonstrating their commitment towards adopting healthy lifestyle practices. The International Day of Yoga was also celebrated by NFR (Construction) at the office of the General Manager (Construction) under the leadership of Shri Ashish Bansal, General Manager, NFR (Construction). Similar programmes were organised across all five divisions of NFR, witnessing enthusiastic participation from thousands of railway employees and their family members. The coordinated celebrations reflected NFR's continued emphasis on employee welfare, preventive healthcare and healthy living. Observed on 21 st June, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, International Day of Yoga symbolizes balance, wellness and mindful living. Celebrating Yoga Day on this date highlights the connection between physical health, mental well-being and nature, inspiring individuals to adopt healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. To further promote the message of 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing,' NFR utilised various social media platforms to raise awareness about the benefits of yoga among the public. Through digital outreach, NFR encouraged people to adopt yoga as a part of their daily routine for better health, active Ageing and a healthier lifestyle.

Mosque demolitions in Rajasthan must be stopped: Owaisi appeals to Amit Shah

AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday alleged that mosques, dargahs and other Muslim religious structures were being selectively targeted for demolition in Rajasthan's border districts and called upon Union Home Minister Amit Shah to intervene and halt the exercise.



In a post on social media platform X, Owaisi claimed that a series of demolitions had taken place in the districts of Bikaner, Phalodi, Jaisalmer and Barmer, affecting several Muslim places of worship. He described the actions as "discriminatory and targeted" and urged the Centre to take immediate steps to stop them.

Owaisi said he had spoken to AIMIM's Bikaner district president, Shafi Jameel Qasmi, who informed him that four mosques in Bikaner and nine mosques and dargahs across Phalodi, Jaisalmer and Barmer had already been demolished. He further alleged that notices had been issued to hundreds of other religious sites in the region.

'ONLY MUSLIM PLACES OF WORSHIP ARE TARGETED'

Among the structures facing

action, Owaisi said, is the approximately 250-year-old dargah of Hazrat Mahmood Shah Jilani located on the Ramgarh-Tanot Bypass Road in Jaisalmer. According to Owaisi, authorities have cited national security concerns as the basis for the demolitions. However, he questioned the justification, claiming that residents of the affected areas had no involvement in activities that could pose a threat to national security. "Only Muslim places of worship are being targeted," he alleged. The AIMIM chief also referred to allegations by authorities that some of the structures had been built on grazing land. He claimed that in cases where documents showed the structures were situated on private property, the grounds for action had reportedly shifted to the absence of necessary permissions or approvals.

Down's Syndromes

DR. KANDEPI RANI PRASAD

We learned in the previous article that mental disorders are common in children as well as in adults! Some disorders occur after the birth of children. Some disorders occur at birth. Some diseases arise in the process of formation of the fetus while it is still in the womb. While diseases that occur after the birth of children are caused by the environment and conditions, congenital diseases arise due to defects that occur during the fetal formation stage. Such congenital defects may not be reduced to a large extent. But children born without anyone's help need training for their parents. For this, there are well-trained child psychiatrists. There are also many paramedical staff such as personality development experts and speech therapists. With the help of all of them, awareness should be increased. Now let's learn about Down's syndrome among congenital diseases! We have learned that Down's syndrome is a congenital disease! It creates mental and physical challenges for children. The reason is that it is caused by having an extra chromosome. Normal people have 23 pairs of chromosomes in

their bodies. That is, they have 46 chromosomes. But people with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes.

This extra chromosome governs the growth of the child. Their growth does not occur as normal children grow. They have 'delayed milestones' such as not walking at the age they should be, not walking when they should be, and speaking very late.

Apart from physical problems, children with Down syndrome also have changes in their faces. Apart from the differences in the things they do, there are also changes in their bodies. The face is flat, almond-shaped eyes that are slanted. A nose that looks like it is bent, and a tongue that seems to be sticking out are seen in the face. The neck is also short. The ears are also small. They grow very short. The hands and feet also look small. A single line is formed in the palm of the hand. The muscles in the body are weak and the joints are loose. They also suffer from a disorder called 'obstructive sleep apnea'. There may also be hearing loss. Some people are likely to have congenital heart diseases. These patients have to face many problems. Society and members have to show kindness to them. Down

syndrome can be divided into three types. The physical characteristics of people with the three types of Down syndrome are almost the same. The first type is called 'trisomy 21'. Approximately 95 percent of children diagnosed with the syndrome have 'trisomy 21'. Each cell in their body has three different copies of chromosome 21. The second type is called translocation Down syndrome. This type is transmitted to very few people. Only 3% of people get this translocation Down syndrome. Chromosome 21 has an extra chromosome. Or another chromosome is added. That is why it is called translocation Down's syndrome. The third type is called mosaic Down's syndrome. In this, there are three different copies of chromosome 21. We have also seen this condition in trisomy 21. However, in this, the chromosomes in some cells only have two copies. This means that some cells have three copies of the chromosomes, and some cells have two copies of the chromosomes. That is, they are mixed together. 'Mosaic' means a mixed combination. Only 2 percent of people with Down's syndrome have this condition. Although there is no exact evidence of why Down's syndrome

occurs, some reasons have been identified. If women become pregnant after the age of 35, there is a chance of giving birth to a child with Down's syndrome. Many problems arise when women become pregnant at an older age. One of the many health problems they face is having children with Down's syndrome. However, we are also seeing babies born to younger women with these problems. There are tests to find out how the fetus is growing inside the womb during pregnancy. There are two types of tests that can be done during pregnancy to detect Down syndrome. A screening test tells you if the mother's womb is affected by Down syndrome. Diagnostic tests can detect Down syndrome in the baby.

An English doctor named 'John Langton' first identified this mental disability in the year 1862. That is why the disease is named "Down syndrome" after him. Extensive research was done on it in the year 1866. The National Institutes of Health, United States, held a meeting in 1975 to name this disability Down syndrome. Doctors believed that it was caused by an unidentified combination of genes.



Punjab woman's family opens fire on her in-laws over domestic dispute, 4 injured

Injured husband Sona Singh said he had a dispute with his wife Rani over some issue, after which she called her maternal family. He alleged that within a short time, 20-25 people, including her brothers, arrived and attacked his family, first assaulting them and then opening 5-6 rounds of fire.

whose condition is stated to be critical, was referred to Faridkot Medical College.

Police reached the spot after receiving information and have initiated an investigation into the matter.

Injured husband Sona Singh said he had a dispute with his wife Rani over some issue, after which she called her maternal family. He alleged that within a short time, 20-25 people, including her brothers, arrived and attacked his family, first assaulting them and then opening 5-6 rounds of fire. He said he sustained a bullet injury, while his sister-in-law, sister and father were also injured by pellets.

The attackers fled the spot after locals gathered and raised an alarm.

Sona Singh's sister Nirmla Kaur, who is four months pregnant, alleged that the attackers showed no regard for anyone and assaulted family members on arrival. She claimed she was kicked in the stomach and that there was also an attempt to shoot her.

Police officials said strict action will be taken against those found guilty and efforts are underway to arrest the accused.

Police Seek Bail Cancellation for Minor Accused's Father in Pune Porsche Case

PUNE: (JUN 21)

The police have approached a court seeking cancellation of the bail granted to Vishal Agarwal, father of the minor accused in the Pune Porsche crash case, alleging violation of conditions imposed by the Supreme Court while granting him relief. The application, filed before the Shivajinagar sessions court through Special Public Prosecutor Shishir Hire, will likely come up for hearing on June 23, weeks after a video allegedly showing Agarwal, celebrating his bail with family members, went viral on social media, triggering outrage.

Yoga Is a Path to World Peace and Healthy Ageing”: PM Modi

KOLKATA, JUNE 21:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday underscored the importance of yoga as a means to achieve personal well-being, healthy ageing, and global harmony while addressing the nation on the occasion of the 12th International Day of Yoga at Kolkata's Red Road.

Speaking before thousands of participants, the Prime Minister said yoga goes beyond physical exercise and serves as a powerful tool for cultivating inner peace, which in turn contributes to world peace. "The awareness

of what is right and wrong not only brings inner peace but also opens the path to global harmony. Yoga is not only important for personal well-being; it is essential for a better future for humanity," Modi said.

Referring to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of maintaining balance in work, diet, and sleep. He noted that modern lifestyles often disrupt this equilibrium, leading to various health challenges.

"Yoga teaches us the art of balanced living. When we learn to use our bodies cor-

rectly, good health becomes a habit," he remarked, urging citizens to incorporate yoga into their daily lives rather than limiting it to annual celebrations. This year's International Day of Yoga was observed under the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', focusing on active ageing, mental well-being, and improved quality of life. Modi said a healthy population strengthens the nation by making it more capable, confident, and resilient. Emphasising yoga's role across all age groups, the Prime Minister said, "Yoga is not restricted by age. It is an expression of the human

spirit." He also outlined ambitious fitness goals, stating that individuals should strive to be more flexible at 40 than they were at 20, more energetic at 50 than at 30, and better protected against lifestyle diseases at 70 than at 50. "When we talk about healthy ageing, our aim should be to ensure that age does not diminish human potential. Yoga can help us achieve that," he said.

Marking the occasion, which coincides with the summer solstice, Modi noted that June 21 has evolved into one of the world's largest community celebrations due

to the growing global acceptance of yoga. "Yoga brings people together. I extend my greetings to people across the world on this occasion," he said.

The Prime Minister also praised the residents of Kolkata for their commitment to cleanliness initiatives, commending their efforts in transforming the slogan 'Swachhata Se Swagat' into a people-driven movement.

"I congratulate the people of Kolkata for their dedication to cleanliness and civic responsibility, which has become an inspiration for the entire nation," Modi said.



Iran oil exports set to resume under deal

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration said on Sunday that Iran will once again be able to sell oil on international markets as part of the emerging diplomatic framework between Washington and Tehran, a move that could have significant implications for global energy prices and major oil-importing nations such as India.

Speaking on ABC's "This Week", Energy Secretary Chris Wright said Iran's return to energy markets would be one of the immediate outcomes of the ongoing negotiations, even as discussions continue over Tehran's nuclear programme.

"Oh, Iranians have been selling oil most of the last 47 years," Wright said. He noted that Iranian exports had fallen sharply during the first Trump administration but increased significantly during the Biden years. "That's all they're getting, is the ability to yet sell their oil again."

According to Wright, Iran is expected to return to export levels of more than 1.5 million barrels a day, roughly matching volumes seen before the latest conflict. He said the United States had demonstrated during the confrontation that it could stop Iranian oil exports entirely, giving Washington leverage in the negotiations.

"We proved to them for two months we could cease them from selling a drop of oil," Wright said. The administration also sought



to reassure consumers that energy markets were stabilising following weeks of uncertainty linked to fighting in the Gulf and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz.

Wright said oil and natural gas flows through the strategic waterway had already returned to normal levels.

"Flows of oil and natural gas through the Strait have already returned to normal," he said, adding that American production, increased output from Venezuela and cooperation among major energy producers would support further declines in energy prices.

The prospect of renewed Iranian oil exports has become one of the most debated elements of the emerging agreement.

Former Obama National Security Adviser Susan Rice argued that Tehran was receiving major economic benefits before agreeing to a comprehensive settlement.

"As the secretary just acknowledged, Iran, as of the signing of the agreement, so on Thursday, is now able to sell all of its oil and all of its oil products on the market unimpeded," Rice said. She also criticised the administration for allowing Iran to use the international banking system and gain access to frozen assets.

Rice called the arrangement a "jaw-dropping, horrific surrender" and said key concessions should have been tied to a final agreement rather than granted at the outset. The disagreement highlights

the broader debate in Washington over whether economic incentives should be used to encourage Iranian cooperation or withheld until Tehran accepts stricter limits on its nuclear and military programmes.

Israeli military chief says Lebanon ceasefire 'fragile'

Israel's military chief Eyal Zamir said on Sunday that the ceasefire declared in Lebanon the day before is "fragile," according to a statement from the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Speaking during a situation assessment with senior commanders of units operating in southern Lebanon, Zamir stated that the military must maintain a high level of readiness for the renewal of combat operations and the elimination

of threats, Xinhua news agency reported. He added that the Israeli military continues to fight, and that its goal remains to protect communities in northern Israel. "We are in the midst of a multi-front operation and continue to defend against Hezbollah," he added.

Zamir claimed that Hezbollah has suffered a severe and significant blow and is in a very "difficult position," noting that over the past two days, the Israeli military has neutralised a significant tier of mid-level command within several Hezbollah units.

Meanwhile, US Vice President JD Vance said on Sunday that negotiators had already made "great progress" in talks with Iran at a Swiss resort overlooking Lake Lucerne, expressing confidence that further advances could be achieved in the coming hours as senior delegations met to discuss Tehran's nuclear programme and wider regional security issues.

Before the talks began, Vance struck an optimistic tone.

"We've already made great progress over just the last few hours, and I expect that we'll make additional progress in the hours to come," Vance told reporters. Vance also addressed the situation in Lebanon, where renewed fighting has threatened broader diplomatic efforts. Asked whether he had a message for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding Israel's military operations in Lebanon,



Bangladesh measles outbreak claims three more lives, death toll rises to 680

DHAKA

Three more children died with measles-like symptoms in Bangladesh in 24 hours until 8 a.m. on Sunday, raising the country's confirmed and suspected measles-related fatalities to 680.

The latest fatalities were classified as suspected measles deaths, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said. With the latest fatalities, the number of suspected measles deaths in Bangladesh has reached 587, while the number of laboratory-confirmed measles fatalities remains unchanged at 93, United News of Bangladesh (UNB) reported.

As many as 1,001 new suspected measles cases were recorded in Bangladesh during the 24-hour period, raising the total number of suspected cases in the country to 92,790. Meanwhile, 62 new confirmed measles

cases were reported, taking the cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed cases to 11,011.

Since March 15, 76,859 patients with suspected measles have been admitted to hospitals in Bangladesh. Among those, 72,849 patients have recovered, according to DGHS data.

Reports suggest that as the number of measles and suspected measles cases in Bangladesh crossed the one lakh mark, infections continued to rise despite a vaccination drive a month ago covering 1.84 crore children. Health experts cited the possible gaps in vaccination coverage in certain areas, along with weak infection control and prevention measures, as contributing factors. They warned that the onset of dengue season could further endanger children already infected with measles, increasing the risk of severe complications.

African nations embrace Yoga with large gatherings celebrating International Yoga Day



NAIROBI

Over 2,500 participants from Kenya came together at the Oshwal Centre Grounds on Sunday to celebrate the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) in Nairobi under the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing'.

The event was attended by the Under Secretary General and Director General of the United Nations (UN) Office at Nairobi as the Chief Guest and brought together members of the diplomatic corps, officials of the Government of Kenya, the business community, the Indian diaspora and yoga enthusiasts from across Kenya.

"The celebrations featured captivating Rhythmic Yoga and Stick Yoga performances before participants joined in the Common Yoga Protocol, showcasing the myriad physical health benefits and mental well-being that yoga embodies,"

the High Commission of India in Nairobi wrote on X.

Ayurveda stalls at the venue also offered participants an opportunity to learn more about India's alternative system of medicine that complements the holistic approach to health and well-being.

"The large participation reflected the growing popularity of yoga in Kenya and the enduring bonds of friendship between India and Kenya," noted the High Commission.

In Tanzania, over 2500 yoga enthusiasts gathered in Dar es Salaam to celebrate the 12th IDY organised by the High Commission of India!

The grand celebration was graced by Chief Guest Steven Kirurwa, Deputy Minister of Minerals of Tanzania, along with Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Heads of International Organisations based in Dar es Salaam.

In Ethiopia, organised by the Embassy of India in Addis Ababa together with Ethiopian yoga instructors, the 12th International Day of Yoga brought together more than 300 participants, making it a vibrant and successful celebration.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, shared his thoughts on IDY on X.

"From its deep roots in ancient India, yoga has become truly universal, helping millions of people of all faiths and cultures find calm, build strength and live with purpose. It teaches us mindfulness, respect and care for ourselves, for our planet and for one another," Guterres wrote on X.

"On this Yoga Day, let's extend that care to the older members of our human family & build a world where every generation can lead a healthy life, Namaste!" he added.

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra: India ensures preparations for the pilgrims

LHASA

India's Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami on Sunday released a video message for the pilgrims of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra (KMY), highlighting the preparations that are being done for them, sharing parikrama experience and key travel tips.

The Ambassador and his colleagues from the embassy visited the Parikrama around Mount Kailash and all of the entry points for the official Yatra.

He also noted that it is a holy place for local people, and the pilgrims should expect to see a lot of people there as this is a once-in-12-year special year in the Chinese



and traditional Tibetan calendars. He noted that the team from the Embassy visited not only the entry points, but also the hotels where the pilgrims will stay each night, inspected the kitchens, the rooms

Vance reports progress in Iran talks

BURGENSTOCK

US Vice President JD Vance said Sunday that negotiators had already made "great progress" in talks with Iran at a Swiss resort overlooking Lake Lucerne, expressing confidence that further advances could be achieved in the coming hours as senior delegations met to discuss Tehran's nuclear programme and wider regional security issues.

Delegations from the United States and Iran began closed-door talks at the Burgenstock resort at 3:09 p.m. local time, according to a spokesperson for the Vice President. Representatives from Qatar and Pakistan also participated in the meeting as facilitators.

Before the talks began, Vance struck an optimistic tone.

"We've already made great progress over just the last few hours, and I expect that we'll make additional progress in the hours to come,"

Vance told reporters. Vance also addressed the situation in Lebanon, where renewed fighting has threatened broader diplomatic efforts.

Asked whether he had a message for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding Israel's military operations in Lebanon, the Vice President said negotiators had seen "great progress" in recent days.

"There, of course, are going to be sometimes disagreements about precisely how to get there, but I actually feel great about where we are in Lebanon. There's still some additional wood to chop, but we're going to keep on working," Vance said.

Responding to a question about allegations of genocide in Lebanon, Vance defended the role of the United States in seeking to end the conflict.

"I think that the President of the United States and the United States of America have done more to stop

the conflict in Lebanon than any government anywhere in the world over the last few months, and we're gonna keep on working towards it. As I think a lot of you appreciate, peace is never easy," he said.

Reporters were ushered out before the Iranian delegation formally entered. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf were later seen walking towards the meeting room.

The venue carried repeated "Lake Lucerne Summit" branding on backdrops surrounding the delegations. The discussions are expected to focus primarily on the Iranian nuclear issue, while also addressing regional security concerns, including efforts to preserve a ceasefire in Lebanon. The outcome of the talks is being closely watched across the Middle East and by international partners seeking to avoid a wider regional conflict.

Pakistani forces disappear nine civilians in Balochistan

QUETTA

At least nine people, including a 15-year-old tailor, two labourers and a university student, have been reported missing after being detained by Pakistani forces in separate incidents in several areas of Balochistan province, local media reported. Six of the latest cases have been reported in Balochistan's Panjgur district. According to local sources, Saadullah was forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces from a shop in Kohda Hakim Bazaar in Parom on June 15.

Three men - Aziz, Sadiq and Latif were taken from their homes in Parom on June 20, according to sources, The Balochistan Post reported. The sources further revealed that Zahid, a university student from Parom, was detained from the university premises in Panjgur city on June 10.

Nepal not seeking British mediation on border issue with India, says PM Balen Shah

KATHMANDU

Nepal's Prime Minister Balen Shah on Sunday clarified his previous statement regarding the possible involvement of the United Kingdom in resolving the Nepal-India border dispute, stating that Nepal is not seeking British mediation.

During his first-ever appearance to answer lawmakers' questions in the House of Representatives, the lower House of Parliament, on May 31, Prime Minister Shah said that Nepal had engaged not only with India and China but had also spoken with the British government, considering that historical records existed with the British government from the period of British rule in India.

"Our view is that England (the UK) should also take an interest, as the issue dates back to the period when the British ruled India," Shah had said. "Therefore, all these matters should be resolved through di-



alogue and diplomatic negotiations."

In addition, Shah had remarked that Nepal had also encroached on Indian territory despite its longstanding complaints about Indian encroachment. The statement drew criticism from opposition political parties, foreign policy experts, and border analysts.

On Sunday, Shah clarified his earlier remarks while addressing the inaugural session of the General Convention of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which began in the

southern Chitwan district.

"We have evidence regarding Kalapani and Lipulekh. What I meant was that if it is necessary to present records from the period when the British ruled the region, we are prepared to do so. We are not seeking British mediation," he said.

He added that Nepal intends to resolve border issues with its neighbours through direct, evidence-based dialogue.

"We will settle these matters ourselves through discussions with our

neighbours. We have the evidence," he said. "No one should have any doubts about my nationalism."

The border dispute has remained one of the key irritants in Nepal-India relations for decades.

Both countries maintain competing claims over the disputed areas of Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani. While the region is currently under Indian administration, Nepal has long claimed the territories as part of its sovereign land. Both sides have maintained that the unresolved border issues should be addressed through diplomatic dialogue and mutual understanding.

Responding to Shah's earlier remarks, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated that third parties have no role in resolving border disputes between India and Nepal, stressing that existing bilateral mechanisms remain the appropriate channel for addressing outstanding issues.

Violence against women is embedded in Pakistan's institutions: Report

ISLAMABAD

Violence against women in Pakistan is embedded in institutions, upheld by Jirgas tolerated by the state and reinforced with media narratives, as per a local media report. "The normalisation of abuse reflects hostility toward female autonomy. Punitive measures alone cannot dismantle this system...International obligations lose significance when justice is replaced by silence. Low conviction rates, state reluctance to confront Jirgas and media complicity sustain impunity, leaving women vulnerable and unprotected," the report by Pakistan Observer said. On June 5, young physician Mahnoor Narsir was attacked with acid by a staff member at Quetta's civil hospital, marking another act of gendered brutality. "This was not merely an assault; it was a grave act of



gender-based violence and workplace insecurity, emblematic of the perilous conditions women face in Pakistan," the report said.

TikTok influencer Sana Yousaf was shot dead in her Islamabad home in June 2025, hours after celebrating her 17th birthday.

Noor Mukadam was beheaded by her boyfriend in 2021 after rejecting his marriage proposal, an

incident that sparked outrage nationwide. "The events of January 2026 exposed judicial complicity in perpetuating this crisis. Pakistan's Supreme Court reduced a rape conviction to fornication, cutting a 20-year sentence to five years and reducing the fine, reinforcing systemic reluctance to confront gender-based violence," the report noted.



Tata Motors
secures orders
for over
3,400 electric
commercial
vehicles

MUMBAI:Commercial vehicle major Tata Motors on Sunday said it has secured orders for over 3,400 electric commercial vehicles (eCV) across freight, logistics and passenger mobility segments. The orders comprising around 2,000 small commercial vehicles and pick-ups, 900 trucks, and 500 buses, cut across a diverse range of applications from e-commerce, logistics, FMCG and FMCD distribution, and intra-city mobility to demanding sectors like cement, steel, mining, and tarmac operations, alongside inter- and intra-city passenger transport. This wide-ranging deployment reflects growing customer confidence in electric mobility solutions in real-world conditions and signals a decisive shift from pilot programmes to scaled, operational integration of EVs across use cases, Tata Motors said.

Farmers seek
compensation
after maize fields
yield empty cobs

MATHURA:Farmers are seeking compensation from the government, stating that even though the maize crop looks lush and green, the cobs have not developed any corn kernels. Acting on the farmers' complaints, the Directorate of Agriculture has constituted an inquiry committee led by Vinod Kumar Yadav, the Joint Director of Agriculture for the Agra Division. The committee comprises District Agriculture Officer Avesh Kumar Singh, Yogesh Kumar Sharma (in-charge of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra), and a representative from the seed manufacturing company Hill India, officials said on Sunday.

South Africa eyes stronger economic relations with India as US ties sour

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

South Africa is looking at strengthening economic ties with India amid the rough patch that Pretoria has hit in its relations with the US, according to an article in the country's media.

"Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen's planned visit to India this month to deepen trade and agricultural ties comes as South Africa faces uncertainty over whether the US will extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which grants preferential trade access to eligible sub-Saharan African countries, beyond December 2026," the article in South Africa's The Citizen newspaper said. The Donald Trump administra-



tion, which has used tariffs and trade preferences as instruments of foreign policy, has threatened to withdraw South Africa's AGOA benefits in retaliation over allegations of a "genocide" against white South Africans – claims which Pretoria has dismissed as unfounded.

Against this backdrop, India presents an attractive alternative market for SA agricultural exports, the article pointed out.

With its vast market, India could help absorb some of the losses SA would face should the Agoa benefits be withdrawn. Steenhuisen's

visit is focused primarily on diversifying export markets, the article states.

The minister will be looking to increase South Africa's share of India's market for citrus – the country's largest agricultural export category – as well as for subtropical fruits such as avocados and products like maize. AGOA currently provides duty-free access for citrus, avocados, grapes, raisins and other agricultural products.

It is, therefore, imperative that South Africa secures alternative export destinations in India and elsewhere should access to the US market become more restricted. Steenhuisen's visit builds on recent trade protocols that have opened the Indian market to SA avocados and

maize, while reflecting the broader expansion of trade relations between Pretoria and New Delhi, driven by counter-seasonal demand and growing strategic cooperation, the article observed.

The visit comes amid burgeoning bilateral agricultural trade between the two countries. SA citrus exports to India have surged 85 per cent, accompanied by growing exports of other fresh fruit. India, in turn, has found a ready market in SA for products such as rice and spices. There have also been important breakthroughs in addressing regulatory barriers that have constrained SA exports, including India's approval of in-transit cold treatment for SA citrus, the article added.



India's space economy
projected to reach \$40-45
billion over next decade

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

India's space economy is projected to grow five-fold from the current \$8 billion to \$40-45 billion over the next decade, driven by policy reforms, rising private sector participation and growing commercialisation of space technologies, an official fact-sheet said on Sunday. The fact-sheet highlighted that India currently accounts for about 2-3 per cent of the global space economy, with the country's share targeted to rise to 8 per cent by 2030. The rapid growth is being supported by a series of structural reforms undertaken in recent years, including the opening up of the space sector to private players, the establishment of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPaCE), and the creation of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) to commercialise technologies developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). According to the government, India has witnessed a sharp rise in private participation in the space sector. From having just one registered space startup in 2014, the country now has more than 400 space startups as of February 2026. In addition, investment in Indian space startups has crossed \$500 million, with nearly \$150 million attracted in 2025 alone.

The government has introduced several measures to encourage investment and innovation, including liberalised foreign direct investment norms, a Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund, a Rs 500 crore technology adoption fund and startup support schemes.

Moreover, commercial activity in the sector has gathered momentum. NSIL's revenues rose from Rs 321.77 crore in FY22 to Rs 3,246.09 crore in FY25, reflecting growing demand for Indian space technologies and services. The government has highlighted India's expanding global footprint in space, noting that the country has launched 399 foreign satellites since 2014 and signed more than 300 space cooperation agreements with 61 countries and five multilateral organisations. India's space ambitions are being backed by a robust pipeline of missions, including the Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme, the Bharatiya Antariksh Station, the Venus Orbiter Mission and future lunar exploration projects.

India's space programme is evolving from a scientific endeavour into a major engine of economic growth, innovation and technological self-reliance, while strengthening the country's position among the world's leading spacefaring nations, according to the factsheet.

India, US to hold trade talks this week to finalise interim pact: Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

India and the United States will hold ministerial-level trade talks this week as both countries seek to finalise the framework for the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) ahead of a key tariff deadline next month, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer is scheduled to arrive here for a two-day visit, during which he will hold discussions with Goyal.

The minister told reporters, "For the US trade deal talks, tomorrow my counterpart is coming to Delhi."



However, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal had recently said that the discussions between the two ministers are expected to focus on giving final touches to the framework agreement while also advancing talks on the broader bilateral trade pact.

Earlier this month, Goyal had said that India and the

US were moving towards closing all the open issues in the interim trade agreement and expressed confidence that the first phase of the BTA could be concluded by the middle of next month. The upcoming talks assume significance as the 10 per cent temporary tariff imposed by the US on all its

trading partners is scheduled to expire on July 24.

The temporary tariff, announced by the US administration in February, is levied over and above the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) duty rates. Once the 150-day period ends, Washington is expected to put in place a revised tariff regime. The meeting comes after chief negotiator-level discussions between the two countries were held in the national capital from June 2 to June 4 to advance negotiations on the proposed pact.

Moreover, the negotiations are taking place amid ongoing investigations by the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) under

Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 against several countries, including India, on issues related to excess industrial capacity and labour practices in global supply chains.

In June, the USTR proposed imposing additional tariffs on imports from several countries, including India, over concerns related to forced labour in supply chains. The proposal is currently under consultation and has not been finalised.

The ministerial engagement this week is expected to provide fresh momentum to trade negotiations and help both sides move closer to concluding the first tranche of the proposed agreement.

CCPA fines Storia, English Oven Rs 1 lakh each for misleading '100 pc' claims

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed penalties of Rs 1 lakh each on Storia Foods and Beverages Pvt Ltd and Mrs. Bectors Food Specialities Limited (English Oven) for misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices related to the use of '100 per cent' claims on food products, according to an official statement released on Sunday.

The consumer watchdog has directed both companies to immediately discontinue

the disputed claims from their product packaging, websites and digital platforms, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said. The action was taken under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and the Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022. In a statement, the government said the expression '100 per cent' is a precise and absolute numerical claim that cannot be used loosely, approximately or merely as a marketing slogan.

According to the authority, any such claim must accurately reflect the actual composition of a product and should be interpreted in its plain and literal sense by an ordinary consumer. The CCPA took suo motu cognisance of advertisements by Storia Foods relating to products marketed as '100 per cent Tender Coconut Water' and '100 per cent Juice' variants, including pomegranate, mixed fruit, mango and guava chilli flavours. The products were advertised through the company's website, product packaging and leading e-commerce platforms. The watchdog found that Storia's '100 per cent Tender Coconut Water' was prepared using coconut water concentrate reconstituted with water, while the product label also disclosed



the presence of preservative INS 202. The authority held that an ordinary consumer would reasonably understand the claim to mean the product consisted entirely of natural tender coconut water. Similarly, the CCPA observed that several juice products marketed as '100 per cent Juice' contained water, fruit concentrates and other ingredients, making the claims misleading regarding the products' actual composition. In a separate case, the authority examined English Oven advertisements carrying claims such as '100 per cent Atta Bread' and '100 per cent Whole Wheat Bread' across print, digital and social media platforms. During the proceedings, the company admitted that the products contained 87 per cent whole wheat

flour.

The CCPA held that a product containing 87 per cent whole wheat flour could not be advertised as '100 per cent Atta' or '100 per cent Whole Wheat'. In addition, the authority noted that the simultaneous use of claims such as '100 per cent Whole Wheat Bread' and 'Zero Maida' created a misleading impression that the bread consisted entirely of whole wheat flour and contained no other ingredients. Rejecting the company's defence that the claim merely referred to wheat being the

sole grain source, the CCPA said advertisements must be assessed from the perspective of a reasonable consumer and that post-facto technical explanations cannot override the impression created by marketing claims. The government reiterated that all claims relating to composition, quality, nutrition or health benefits must be truthful, verifiable and non-deceptive, adding that it will continue to take strict action against misleading advertisements that compromise consumers' right to informed choice.

Strong growth
prospects amid
challenges: JPL
DRHP outlines
digital industry
landscape

NEW DELHI:India's digital connectivity sector continues to demonstrate strong growth prospects but faces a range of challenges, including evolving regulatory frameworks, changing technology, intensifying competition and macro-economic cues, according to industry overview outlined in Jio Platforms' draft prospectus that cites Analysys Mason report. The section takes note of "a heightened competition" with global technology firms in digital services, and underscores the need for the company to stay ahead through continuous innovation and differentiated offerings that deliver greater value to consumers. "While India's digital connectivity sector continues to exhibit strong growth potential, it also faces a range of structural, regulatory, and operational challenges that could affect its long-term sustainability and profitability," as per the industry overview, which also cites Analysys Mason report.

Coal Transportation in Singareni is
Highly Secure Every Tonne of Coal

SINGARENI BHAVAN, JUNE 21, 2026:

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has clarified that there is absolutely no truth in the reports appearing in certain media organizations alleging that Singareni coal has been stolen or has gone missing. The company stated that all processes related to coal production, stock maintenance, transportation, and sales are being carried out with complete transparency under the supervision of advanced technological systems. SCCL also explained the robust coal transportation, security, and monitoring mechanisms currently in place across the organization.

Senior officials of the Operations Department stated that:

"From the moment coal is produced in the mines until it reaches the end consumer, every stage is digitally recorded and monitored. Approximately 85% of the coal is transported through railways, while the remaining 15% is supplied through road transport. Coal allocations are made through an integrated SAP-based system. Details such as consumer, mine,

Closely Monitored Transparent Transportation System with Advanced Technology
Clarification by Singareni Management



Senior officials of the Coal Transportation Department stated that:

"Loading and dispatch details of every railway wagon are also digitally recorded. CCTV surveillance, RFID systems, check-posts, flying squads, and security personnel maintain round-the-clock monitoring at mines, Coal Handling Plants (CHPs), weighbridges, railway sidings, stockyards, and entry-exit points." They added that surprise inspections and special security patrols are being conducted on a continuous basis. The Singareni management emphasized that coal production and transportation are being carried out under a multi-layered security framework comprising RFID, GPS, CCTV surveillance, Coal Net, electronic weighbridges, Singareni Security personnel, flying squads, hologram challans, and task force monitoring systems. Therefore, allegations that coal has been stolen or has gone missing are completely baseless and far removed from the facts, the management stated.

quantity, and supply schedule are digitally recorded in advance. Information pertaining to every tonne of coal is continuously monitored through Coal Net, SAP, and other online systems."

Senior officials of the Planning Department explained that:

"Every vehicle transporting coal by road is weighed at electronic weighbridges. Vehicle movements are monitored in real time through Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)-based boom barriers, GPS/GPRS tracking systems, and geo-fencing technology." They further noted that any deviation from designated routes is immediately detected and monitored through the system.

BRICS nations agree on deeper
ties to boost MSME ecosystem

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The BRICS nations agreed to deepen cooperation, drive innovation, and build a stronger, more sustainable, and future-ready MSME ecosystem at the meeting hosted by India at Agra over the weekend, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. The inaugural session of the BRICS MSME Forum marked a significant step in strengthening collaboration among BRICS nations and fostering a resilient, innovative MSME ecosystem, the statement said. The event brought together policymakers, senior government officials, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and stakeholders from BRICS member and partner countries, including Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa, the UAE, Belarus, Cuba, Malaysia, Uganda, and India. The programme commenced with the inauguration of an exhibition showcasing the diversity and excellence of MSMEs across sectors. The Third SME Working Group Meeting deliberated on the theme 'Building



MSME Ecosystem – Sustainable Roots to Global Routes,' with member countries sharing their experiences and policy interventions aimed at strengthening MSME ecosystems. Two parallel sessions were held, the first was the deliberation by private sector stakeholders of BRICS member countries, while the second was the 3rd SME working group meeting. During the event, Union Minister for MSMEs Jitan Ram Manjhi highlighted the critical role of MSMEs as engines of economic growth, innovation and employment across BRICS nations and the Global South. He emphasised the need for stronger BRICS cooperation in areas such as affordable finance, technology adoption,

digital transformation, market access, skilling and sustainability. The minister underlined India's commitment to building a resilient and inclusive MSME ecosystem and called for collaborative efforts to strengthen innovation, global value chains and sustainable development across BRICS economies. In the keynote address at the Inaugural BRICS MSME Forum, MSME Secretary Bharat Khara highlighted the pivotal role of MSMEs in fostering economic resilience, innovation and inclusive development across BRICS nations. He emphasised the need to move beyond dialogue towards actionable cooperation in critical areas such as access to finance, technology adoption, digitalisation, sustain-

ability and integration into global value chains. He also showcased India's digital public infrastructure as a transformative tool for empowering small businesses and called for deeper BRICS collaboration to build a stronger, more innovative, sustainable and globally competitive MSME ecosystem. On the occasion, delegates also reiterated the vital role of MSMEs as engines of economic growth, employment generation, innovation and inclusive development. They emphasised the need for enhanced cooperation among BRICS nations to promote resilient supply chains, foster digital transformation and facilitate knowledge sharing for the benefit of MSMEs worldwide, the statement added.





Increasingly, the answer appears to be no

Across cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Delhi and Mumbai, homeschooling is emerging as a viable educational alternative. Once considered a niche practice followed by a handful of unconventional families, homeschooling is now attracting parents concerned about academic pressure, mental health, excessive homework, bullying, rigid curricula, and the lack of personalized learning. The growth of homeschooling reflects a broader shift in educational thinking. Rather than measuring success solely through examination scores, many parents are seeking learning environments that nurture creativity, emotional well-being, curiosity, and individual talents. At the heart of this movement is the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), which has become the primary bridge between alternative learning and formal certification in India.

The Rise of Homeschooling

Homeschooling in India has witnessed a steady increase over the past decade, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic exposed both the possibilities and limitations of conventional schooling. Data from the National Institute of Open Schooling shows a consistent rise in enrolments for secondary and senior secondary certifications. Education experts attribute part of this growth to families opting for homeschooling and flexible learning pathways. Registrations for NIOS examinations increased significantly between 2017 and 2019, reflecting growing interest in alternatives to mainstream schooling. Parents cite a variety of reasons for choosing homeschooling. Some have children involved in sports, music, arts, or entrepreneurship who require flexible schedules. Others are concerned about academic stress and competition. Still others believe that children learn better when education is tailored to their interests and pace. Unlike traditional schools, homeschooling allows families to customize curricula, integrate experiential learning, spend more time outdoors, and encourage independent thinking. Learning can happen through books, online courses, museums, travel, community projects, and practical experiences rather than solely through textbooks and examinations. Technology has further accelerated this trend. Online learning platforms, digital libraries, virtual classrooms,

and global educational resources have made it easier than ever for parents to access quality content from anywhere.

NIOS: The Backbone of India's Homeschooling Ecosystem

One of the biggest challenges facing homeschooling families has historically been certification. Parents often worried whether homeschooled children would be eligible for higher education, competitive examinations, or employment opportunities. This is where the National Institute of Open Schooling has played a transformative role. Established by the Government of India in 1989, NIOS is today the world's largest open schooling system. It provides recognized secondary and senior secondary certifications equivalent to other education boards and serves learners who pursue education outside conventional school settings. The flexibility offered by NIOS aligns naturally with homeschooling. Students can choose subjects, study at their own pace, appear for examinations when ready, and even reattempt subjects if required. Importantly, NIOS certifications are recognized for university admissions and major competitive examinations, including engineering, medical, law, and civil services entrance tests. Many homeschooling families use NIOS as their formal academic framework while retaining complete freedom over how learning takes place at home. Educational experts believe NIOS has helped legitimize homeschooling in India by providing an officially recognized pathway that combines flexibility with academic credibility.

The Homework Burden

One of the most common complaints among parents is the sheer volume of homework assigned to children. For many students, a typical day begins before sunrise and ends late in the evening after school, tuition classes, assignments, projects, and test preparation. Leisure, family interaction, outdoor play, and creative exploration often become secondary. Education researchers have repeatedly questioned whether excessive homework actually improves learning outcomes, particularly among younger children. Critics argue that heavy homework loads create stress without necessarily enhancing understanding. Instead of encouraging curiosity, they may turn learning into a mechanical exercise focused on completing tasks and preparing for examina-

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Why Homeschooling is Gaining Ground in India

For generations, education in India has followed a familiar pattern: children in uniforms, crowded classrooms, fixed timetables, homework-filled evenings, examinations, and a relentless race for marks. Schooling has traditionally been viewed as

the primary pathway to academic success and social mobility. Yet a growing number of Indian parents are beginning to ask a fundamental question: Is traditional schooling the only way children can learn?

The Mental Health Question

Perhaps the strongest factor driving interest in homeschooling is growing concern over children's mental health. India's education system is often characterized by intense academic competition, long school hours, coaching classes, frequent testing, and high parental expectations. While these structures have produced academic achievers, they have also generated significant psychological pressure. Research conducted by scholars associated with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) indicates that mental health challenges among school-going children and adolescents are becoming an increasingly important public health concern. Anxiety, stress, depression, behavioural issues, and emotional difficulties have been reported across different age groups.

Mental health professionals frequently point to examination stress, academic overload, social pressures, and fear of failure as contributing factors. The issue became even more visible after the pandemic, when counsellors reported increased levels of anxiety, emotional distress, and academic burnout among students. India's mental health support systems have also seen growing demand. Programmes such as Tele-MANAS have received thousands of calls from students seeking help for educational stress, emotional difficulties, and psychological concerns. Many parents exploring homeschooling argue that the conventional schooling model often leaves little room for emotional development or mental well-being. They contend that children are frequently judged by marks rather than abilities, and that excessive academic pressure can undermine confidence and curiosity.



tions. Many homeschooling families intentionally adopt a different approach. Learning is often integrated into daily life. Mathematics may be taught through budgeting and shopping. Science may involve gardening, experiments, or nature walks. History may be explored through travel, documentaries, and literature. Without the pressure of daily homework, children often have more time for reading, sports, music, hobbies, and social engagement. Supporters believe this allows children to develop intrinsic motivation rather than studying merely to avoid punishment or secure marks.

Does Homeschooling Improve Mental Health?

This question remains complex. While there is growing anecdotal evidence that many homeschooled children experience reduced academic stress and greater autonomy, researchers caution against broad generalizations. The mental health outcomes of

homeschooling depend heavily on family environment, parental involvement, social opportunities, and the child's personality. Many homeschooling parents report improvements in confidence, emotional stability, and self-directed learning. Children who struggled with bullying, anxiety, learning differences, or rigid classroom structures often thrive in personalized environments. However, homeschooling is not automatically superior to traditional schooling. A poorly planned homeschooling programme can result in isolation, inconsistent learning, or inadequate social interaction. Experts emphasize that homeschooling requires significant commitment, planning, and engagement from parents. The key lesson may not be that one model is universally better than the other, but that children have diverse needs and may flourish in different educational environments.

The Socialization Debate

One of the most persistent criticisms of homeschooling concerns socialization. Traditional schools provide daily interaction with peers, teachers, and wider communities. Critics worry that homeschooled children may miss opportunities to develop teamwork, communication skills, and friendships. Homeschooling families counter that socialization is not limited to classrooms. Many participate in learning cooperatives, sports clubs, music groups, community service projects, hobby clubs, and neighbourhood activities. In fact, some parents argue that homeschooled children interact with people of different age groups more frequently than conventionally schooled children. The debate remains ongoing, but educational researchers increasingly recognize that meaningful social development can occur through multiple pathways.

Challenges Facing Homeschooling Families

Despite its growing popularity, homeschooling in India faces several challenges. First, there is limited awareness. Many parents are unfamiliar with legal frameworks, certification options, and educational resources. Second, homeschooling demands considerable parental involvement. Not every family has the time, resources, or confidence to take on such responsibilities. Third, access to peer groups and support networks varies significantly across regions. There are also concerns about quality assurance. While many homeschooling families provide rich learn-

ing experiences, others may struggle to maintain academic consistency. Even NIOS, despite its importance, faces operational challenges. Questions relating to student support, awareness, examination systems, and learner engagement continue to be discussed by educators and policymakers. These challenges suggest that homeschooling is not a universal solution but one educational option within a broader ecosystem.

The Future of Learning in India

The growing popularity of homeschooling reflects a deeper transformation taking place in education. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, skill development, and learner-centric approaches. These ideas align closely with many homeschooling principles. Technology is also reshaping educational possibilities. Artificial intelligence, adaptive learning systems, virtual classrooms, and online communities are making personalized education increasingly accessible. As society changes, the rigid distinction between schooling and learning may gradually blur. The future may not belong exclusively to traditional schools or homeschooling. Instead, hybrid models could emerge that combine the social benefits of schools with the flexibility and personalization of home-based learning.

Beyond Marks and Examinations

Ultimately, the homeschooling movement raises important questions about the purpose of education itself. Should education primarily produce examination scores, or should it help children become confident, curious, emotionally healthy, and capable individuals? As concerns about student stress, mental health, academic pressure, and excessive homework continue to grow, more families are exploring alternatives that place the child—not the syllabus—at the centre of learning. The rise of homeschooling in India is not merely an educational trend. It is part of a broader conversation about childhood, well-being, and the kind of society we hope to build. Whether children learn in classrooms, at kitchen tables, in libraries, online communities, or under the shade of a tree, the ultimate goal remains the same: helping them discover their potential and prepare for meaningful lives. In that sense, homeschooling is less about learning at home and more about reimagining what learning itself can be.





SPORTS

Manipur CM highlights role of sports in fostering unity, promoting friendship



IMPHAL: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Sunday said that sports have always served as a powerful medium for promoting friendship, unity and social harmony, noting that sporting events bring people together beyond barriers of region, community and culture. Addressing the closing function of the 13th Chief Minister Trophy Kang Tournament, the Chief Minister said that since the inception of the Olympic Games, athletes from different countries have come together, interacted with one another and built lasting friendships, thereby strengthening bonds among nations through sports.

He observed that state-level sporting events in India similarly provide opportunities for people from diverse communities to come together, fostering integration, mutual understanding and a spirit of brotherhood. Manipur, he said, has consistently exemplified this spirit of unity through its rich sporting culture and achievements.

‘Everyone has shown real character’: Skipper Tilak Varma hails India A’s resilience after tri-series triumph

DAMBULLA

India A captain Tilak Varma credited his team’s resilience and collective character after they defeated Sri Lanka A by 66 runs to lift the tri-series title at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium on Sunday.

Powered by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi’s explosive 94 off just 29 deliveries and backed by disciplined bowling, the Indian side capped their campaign with a commanding victory, prompting the skipper to reflect on how the side responded to setbacks and executed its plans throughout the tournament.

“Everyone has shown the real character in this tournament, especially when we lost against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka back-to-back games. And from there, winning with a large margin and showing that attitude on the field was tremendous,” Tilak said post match. The triumph completed a remarkable turnaround for the Men in Blue, who had entered the knockout stage after recovering from successive defeats earlier in the competition. In the final, they posted a daunting 377/9 before restricting the hosts to 311, with the bowlers producing timely breakthroughs despite a few resistance partnerships from Sri Lan-

‘People don’t know I’ve played 50 overs a lot’: Sooryavanshi

DAMBULLA

India’s teen prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi said his match-winning innings in the tri-series final against Sri Lanka A on Sunday was the product of sticking to his plans rather than responding to outside expectations, as the 15-year-old also used the occasion to remind critics that his game extends well beyond the T20 format.

Speaking after being named Player of the Match in India’s title-winning victory, Sooryavanshi reflected on his preparation, his handling of the spotlight, and the lessons from a successful campaign. The young opener blasted 94 off just 29 balls, hitting

Kapp hits career-best 81* as South Africa hand India their first defeat

MANCHESTER

Veteran all-rounder Marizanne Kapp produced one of the finest knocks in Women’s T20 World Cup history, smashing an unbeaten 81 off 45 balls to seal South Africa’s six-wicket win over India in a Group A thriller at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Chasing 159 in front of 11,712 fans, South Africa were floundering by making just 25 runs in the powerplay before Marizanne’s brilliance flipped the contest. Even as N Sree Charani took three scalps, including off a double-wicket maiden over, Marizanne unleashed her powerful shots through square of the wicket and downtown to hit seven fours and four sixes, while sharing a 97-run stand with Tazmin Brits (40), including adding 66 runs from overs 10-15.

After Chloe Tryon’s thick edge brought the winning runs, Marizanne, twice reprieved by Radha Yadav, dropped to her haunches in relief as South Africa handed India their first defeat of the tournament. Earlier, Harmanpreet Kaur marked her 200th T20I appearance, the first by any cricketer.

But Marizanne and Shabnim picked two wickets each as a disciplined South Africa bowling line-up kept India to 158/7. The 33-run stand between Harmanpreet and Deepti was India’s best partnership, thus underlining how sharp South Africa’s attack remained relentless. By the time the game ended, Marizanne proved once again why she remains one of the premier all-rounders in women’s cricket.

India’s innings began with Shafali Verma clipping Marizanne off her pads for four, before driving Shabnim Ismail through cover. Smriti Mandhana joined in, driving Marizanne on the up and pulling her for consecutive boundaries. After flicking Marizanne wide of mid-on, Smriti went for an ambitious scoop, but missed the length, and saw her



stumps rattled, with the all-rounder celebrating in an animated manner.

Chloe Tryon’s introduction brought runs Shafali danced down to thrash through cover, swept powerfully, and launched a 74-metre six in a 17-run over. But Shabnim’s hostile bumper snared her glove - the 122.5 kmph delivery took a feather edge and Shafali was out for 31.

Yastika Bhatia struck fine boundaries before being trapped lbw by Ayabonga Khaka for 15. Jemimah Rodrigues followed - closing her bat face too late and falling to Nadine de Klerk’s diving caught-and-bowled for 12.

Harmanpreet and Deepti steadied India’s innings with a 33-run stand, before Shabnim bowled Harmanpreet for 24.

Though Deepti and Richa Ghosh hit three boundaries in seven balls, India’s tempo never lifted. Deepti, assured with the sweep, was undone by Nonkululeko Mlaba’s slower floater and miscued to short fine leg for 29. Richa, struggling for rhythm, was removed by Marizanne’s slower

ball - top-edging a sweep to short fine. Debutant Prema Rawat and Arundhati Reddy added a couple of runs before India closed their innings two runs short of 160.

South Africa’s chase began cautiously against Shafali’s off-spin. Though India kept things tight, Laura Wolvaardt cracked a drive past point off Nandni Sharma for four, before she pulled Arundhati Reddy for six and thumped Shafali for another boundary.

But Charani’s left-arm spin helped India claw back - she lured Laura into a lofted drive and took a return catch. After a dot ball, Charani took out Annerie Dercksen, who swiped across the line to be bowled for a duck, as the spinner’s double-wicket maiden over left South Africa reeling at 25/2.

Tazmin tried to rebuild with Marizanne and the former stepped up by reverse-sweeping Deepti for four. Marizanne struggled initially, mistiming drives and sweeps, but gradually found her rhythm. Prema’s leg-spin was taken on by Marizanne

- a carve over cover for four was followed by top-edge on a sweep palmed over by Nandni for six.

The partnership grew in confidence - Nandni was scooped over fine leg for four by Marizanne, while Deepti was lofted over long-on by Brits, who also survived an lbw review thanks to an under-edge.

After Marizanne was put down by substitute fielder Radha at long-on off Charani’s bowling, she showed her full flow - lofting and sweeping her for boundaries, before sweeping Arundhati on consecutive deliveries to bring up her fifty in 34 balls and crunching a full toss from Deepti through cover for four.

Though Tazmin pulled straight to deep square leg off Shafali, Marizanne dispatched her down the ground for four and earned a reprieve again from Radha shelling a sitter at long-on. Though Charani castled Nadine after being hammered over extra cover for four, Chloe cutting through cover for four meant South Africa inched closer to complete the chase.



Unfortunately we weren’t able to take couple of chances, says Harmanpreet

MANCHESTER

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur rued missed opportunities in the field after her side suffered a six-wicket defeat to South Africa in the 2026 Women’s T20 World Cup, saying it was unfortunate that they weren’t able to take a couple of chances, but stressed on the need to stay positive with two league stage matches still to play.

In their defence of 158/7, India didn’t have the best fielding performance - Tazmin Brits was dropped on 18 while Marizanne crucially was given reprieves twice on 25 and 65 by substitute fielder Radha Yadav. The duo toyed well with India’s field placements and hit boundaries at will, with Marizanne staying unbeaten on 81 to give South Africa a memorable win and hand India their first defeat in the competition.

“I think we got a couple of chances in between, but unfortunately we weren’t able to take those chances. But I still think we have two matches to go, and this is the time to stay positive and think about those matches. I think we always talk about how we have to take opportunities at this level, but unfortunately we

were not lucky enough today.

“But I think still we have another two games, and now this is the time to think about those games. Next match (against Bangladesh in Manchester on Thursday), I think we still have two, three more days, and we will sit and rethink what we have to do, and accordingly we will pick the eleven,” said Harmanpreet at the conclusion of the game.

She praised the efforts of young spinners Sree Charani and Shafali Verma, who were amongst the wicket-takers for India. “I think Shree Charani and Shafali bowled really well. They were creating challenges, but unfortunately other bowlers didn’t support them,” noted Harmanpreet.

Harmanpreet acknowledged the importance of Marizanne hitting a match-winning 81 not out. “She was brilliant today. She took the game away from us, but again I think she gave us two crucial chances, but unfortunately we didn’t take that. But I think at this level when you miss those chances, nobody’s going to, you know, give you anything easily. And I think those were the crucial moments and they took the game away from us.”

Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson return for England’s series deciding Test

LONDON

Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson have been recalled to the England squad for the series-deciding Test against New Zealand at Trent Bridge, starting on Thursday, after being stood down from the recently concluded second game following a breach of team protocols.

The announcement came little more than an hour after England, fielding a depleted line-up, were beaten by 253 runs by New Zealand at The Oval. Stokes and Atkinson had earlier been withdrawn from their respective county championship duties for Durham and Surrey, thus clearing the way for their selection after being stood down following a nightclub incident on June 8, after England secured a 115-run victory at Lord’s.

APL to provide platform for emerging cricketers: CM Sarma

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said that the newly launched Assam Premier League (APL) would serve as a major platform for emerging cricketers from the state to showcase their talent and open pathways to higher levels of the game, including the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the national team.

Launching the logo of the Assam Premier League, along with the logos of participating franchises and the league trophy at the ACA Stadium complex in Barsapara here, CM Sarma described the tournament as a significant milestone in Assam’s sporting journey and a major step towards strengthening the state’s cricketing ecosystem.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister said that organising a state-level franchise-based tournament on the lines of the IPL was a challenging task and congratulated the Assam Cricket Association (ACA)



for successfully taking the initiative.

He also thanked franchise owners for their support in turning the league into a reality. Sarma said the tournament would provide talented young cricketers from different parts of Assam with an opportunity to perform before a wider audience and gain recognition for their abilities.

“The Assam Premier League will create a platform for emerging players to demonstrate their skills. Many talented cricketers remain undiscovered due to a lack of exposure, and this league will help identify and nurture such talent,” he said.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that standout performers

in the tournament could eventually earn opportunities in the IPL and even represent India at the international level. Highlighting the state government’s efforts to strengthen sports infrastructure, Chief Minister Sarma said that while Assam has witnessed rapid development of stadiums and training facilities in recent years, equal emphasis must be placed on nurturing sporting talent.

He noted that the success of the league could usher in a new era for cricket in Assam and contribute significantly to the development of the sport across the state.

The inaugural edition of the APL will feature eight franchise teams - Guwahati Royals, Jorhat Stallions, Tezpur Titans, Dibrugarh Warriors, Nagaon Rangers, Barpeta Braves, Charaideo Sunrisers and Barak Legends. According to organisers, 160 players have been selected from a pool of 400 registered cricketers for the tournament.

FIFA WC: Yamal inspires Spain as Oyarzabal double sinks Saudi Arabia

ATLANTA

Lamine Yamal starred on his return to the starting lineup as Spain rediscovered their attacking rhythm with a commanding 4-0 victory over Saudi Arabia in their Group H FIFA World Cup 2026 clash on Sunday, while Mikel Oyarzabal answered his critics with a clinical brace.

After a frustrating 0-0 draw with Cape Verde in their opener, Spain were transformed in Atlanta with Yamal, the 18-year-old creating the chances and Oyarzabal providing the finish, and Spain were home and dry within the first 45 minutes thanks to goals from Real Sociedad striker Mikel Oyarzabal and a Marc Cucurella own goal, which rounded off an impressive performance and booked their place in the next round.

In the starting line up against Saudi Arabia was the youngest player in the history of the World Cup - 16-year-old Lamine Yamal, who plays his club football with Barcelona. It was Yamal who gave Spain the spark they needed. His first involvement on the field of play earned a massive cheer from the crowd as he dribbled past his marker with the minimum of effort, before crossing the ball into a dangerous area, forcing Saudi Arabia into a clearance.

The opening goal came in the 10th



minute. The inviting cross that from the ever-lively left-back Dani Olmo fell at the feet of the onrushing Yamal who slid in to score his first goal of the tournament.

The goal did much to calm the nerves for Luis de la Fuente’s side who quickly started to dominate, taking full advantage of the space in behind the Saudi defence. A corner in the 30th minute was the next goal. It was a scramble inside the box when Aymeric Laporte’s downward header from Dani Olmo’s corner fell at Oyarzabal’s feet, and the front man bundled the ball home for his

and Spain’s second.

Three minutes later Spain produced an unbelievable goal as a beautiful looping pass over the top of the Saudi backline found Marc Cucurella, who, without touching the ground, played it across the six-yard box for Olmo to head the ball to his compatriot inside the six-yard box, who volleyed home for 3-0 - an incredible goal and a great one for the World Cup as a whole, considering how bad it was when he had failed to even touch the ball until the 30-minute mark of the group opener against Cape Verde.

RPL: Mumbai Dreamers edge out hosts Hyderabad Heroes

HYDERABAD

The sixth day of the Rugby Premier League Season 2 witnessed Mumbai Dreamers edge out hosts Hyderabad Heroes 12-10 to continue their unbeaten run of five matches, the longest in the league while Bengaluru Bravehearts secured a straightforward win over the Chennai Bulls at the Ganti Mohana Chandra Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Gachibowli, Hyderabad on Sunday. Bengaluru Bravehearts secure 33-12 win against Chennai Bulls vs (men).

Bengaluru Bravehearts made a bright start as Jonas Mikalcius opened the scoring on the left wing. Chennai Bulls responded in first-quarter stoppage time through Santiago Alvarez before Marcus Kershaw gave them the lead. With his immense pace, Ryan Apps levelled the contest in the third quarter, and sustained pressure allowed Ganesh Majhi to put Bengaluru back in front. Apps added his second try early in the final quarter, while Devendra Padir crossed over late as the Bravehearts controlled possession to seal the victory.

Mumbai Dreamers edge Hyderabad Heroes 12-10 (men)

The top-of-the-table clash be-



gan at a high tempo, with Mumbai Dreamers and Hyderabad Heroes matching each other’s intensity before Diego Ardao gave the Heroes the lead late in the first quarter. Guillaume Bouche responded in a tightly contested second period to level the scores for the Dreamers. Strong defence from Mumbai kept the game finely balanced through the third quarter. Ardao struck again early in the final period to restore Hyderabad’s advantage, but a late try from Lucas Mignot in extra time helped the Dreamers snatch victory and preserve their unbeaten run. Later in the day, women’s franchises Chennai Bulls are set to take on the Mumbai Dreamers while Kolkata Banga Tigers will face the Delhi Redz. And men’s teams, Delhi Redz will clash with Kolkata Banga Tigers the last match of the day



Sujeeth Meets Pawan for OG 2

The much-anticipated sequel to the blockbuster film OG has officially taken a step forward. Production house Pawan Kalyan Creative Works confirmed on Sunday that discussions regarding the expansion of the OG universe have commenced, raising excitement among fans eagerly awaiting the next chapter.

Director Sujeeth recently returned from London, where he was scouting locations for his proposed project Bloody Romeo starring Nani. Shortly after his return, the filmmaker met actor and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to discuss plans for OG 2.

Sharing a photograph from the meeting on social media, the production banner stated, "As promised by Pawan Kalyan, #OGUniverse discussions have begun with Sujeeth at Creative Works." Adding to the growing buzz, music director S. Thaman also hinted that work on the sequel is underway, further fueling anticipation around the

project. Released last year, OG featured Pawan Kalyan in the role of a powerful don and went on to become one of the biggest commercial successes of his career. The film concluded with a strong indication of a sequel, leaving fans eager to see how the story would continue.

While the makers have not yet announced a shooting schedule or official launch date, the latest developments suggest that OG 2 is steadily moving from the planning stage into active development.



Rayalaseema Backdrop Confirmed

The highly anticipated multi-starrer featuring veteran actor Venkatesh Dagubati and Nandamuri Kalyan Ram, under the direction of successful filmmaker Anil Ravipudi, is set to commence regular shooting from June 22 in Hyderabad. Following a grand pooja ceremony held earlier this week, the makers officially announced the start of production through a specially crafted promotional video.

Staying true to his trademark style, director Anil Ravipudi infused the announcement with humor and entertainment.

The video opens with Ravipudi humorously recalling how fans have often appreciated his innovative promotional campaigns and even honored him with a ceremonial sword and traditional turban. In a light-hearted sequence, Venkatesh playfully uses the sword to make a symbolic cut on the director's thumb before applying a Veera Tilakam.

Actor Kalyan Ram, leading ladies Keerthy Suresh and Krithi Shetty, and music director G. V. Prakash Kumar also participate in the ritual, symbolically marking the beginning

of the film's journey. More significantly, the promotional video confirms that the story is set against the backdrop of Rayalaseema. While the region serves as the narrative setting, the makers clarified that the film will be a complete commercial entertainer, blending Anil Ravipudi's signature humor with mass-appeal elements.

Tentatively titled #VenkyAnil5 and #NKRAR2, the project is being produced by Sahu Garapati under the Shine Screens banner. The film is presented by Suresh Productions, Smt. Archana, and Zee Studios. The makers are targeting a grand theatrical release during the Sankranti 2027 festive season.



Glam and Goals for Disha

When it comes to blending glamour with star power, Disha Patani rarely misses a beat. The Bollywood beauty has once again set social media buzzing with her latest fashion-forward appearance, proving why she remains one of the industry's most talked-about style icons. Disha turned heads in a dazzling silver-and-black zebra-print halter corset teamed with a chic black satin mini-skirt. With her effortlessly tousled hair, radiant confidence, and signature poise, the actress looked every bit the fashion queen. The look struck the perfect balance between bold and elegant, instantly becoming a fan favorite online. Over the years, Disha has carved a niche for herself not only as a glamorous trendsetter but also as a performer willing to experiment with diverse roles. Whether it's red-carpet appearances, fitness inspiration, or blockbuster films, she continues to keep audiences engaged. The actress has also been making impressive strides on the professional front. Following her appearance in the action-packed Yodha, Disha won praise for her role as Roxie in the sci-fi spectacle Kalki 2898 AD. She further expanded her horizons by stepping into Tamil cinema with the ambitious fantasy drama Kanguva. And that's not all. Disha's upcoming lineup promises plenty of excitement, with projects such as Welcome to the Jungle, O'Romeo, and Awarapan 2 already generating buzz among movie lovers. With beauty, talent, and an ever-evolving sense of style working in her favor, Disha Patani continues to shine brightly, effortlessly balancing fashion, fitness, and films while remaining one of the most influential young stars in Indian entertainment.



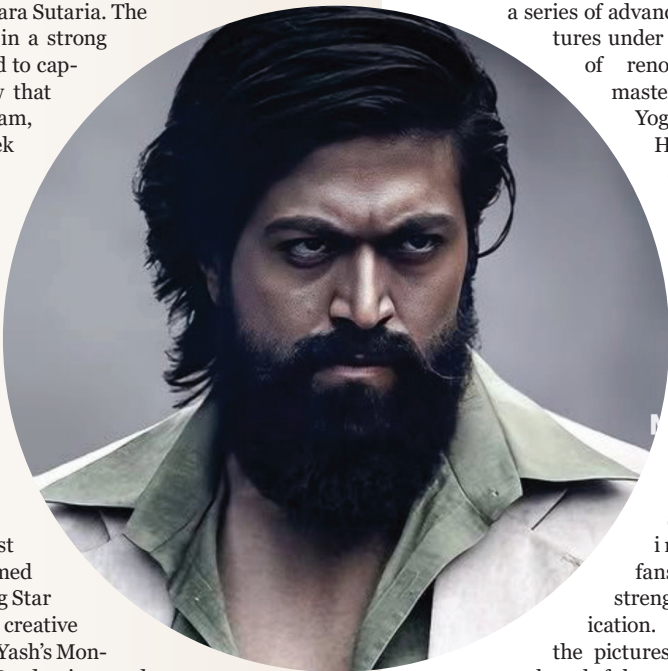
'MY FATHER IS MY GOD'



Hollywood heartthrob Allu Arjun said that his father, filmmaker Allu Aravind, is his living God. In an emotional Father's Day post on Sunday, he shared that for him, his dad is the God he can touch, hear, and speak to. Dropping a video compilation of some precious moments with his father, AA wrote on his official Instagram handle, "My father is my God. He is the only God I can see, hear, speak to, touch & the one who has given me almost everything in life. Happy Father's Day to my dad and to every sweet dad in the world (sic)." Allu Arjun himself is a father of two kids - son Allu Ayaan and daughter Allu Arha. Coming to his professional lineup, Allu Arjun will be seen leading the eagerly-awaited "Raaka". AA has joined forces with renowned filmmaker Atlee for his next. The project further marks Allu Arjun's primary on-screen collaboration with Bollywood beauty Deepika Padukone. The official announcement of the drama was made on AA's 44th birthday on April 8th. The makers shared that the drama, initially named "#AA22xA6" has been christened "Raaka".

Toxic on August 26

The makers of the upcoming film 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups' starring Kannada superstar Yash have locked its release date. This comes after weeks of speculation around its release date and reports of the film being shelved. The film is now set to bow in cinemas on August 26, 2026. On Sunday, the makers announced the new release date for the film with a striking new poster featuring Yash's dual avatars, Raya and Ticket, offering audiences a fresh glimpse into the film's dark, immersive and layered world. Far removed from a conventional celebration of fatherhood, the poster hints at a relationship steeped in tension, power and emotional complexity. The film also stars Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Rukmini Vasanth and Tara Sutaria. The release strategically positions the film in a strong festive corridor in 2026, and is expected to capitalise on an extended holiday window that encompasses Varamahalakshmi, Onam, Eid and Raksha Bandhan. The mid-week release allows the film to maximise its opening run across the festive period, benefiting from heightened audience engagement in both domestic and international markets. The film was originally set to release in cinemas on March 19, 2026, and clash with the Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge'. However, its release was pushed to June 4. Later, the makers further pushed its release date as they reportedly wanted a larger global rollout and were working on international distribution partnerships/ The film marks the first collaboration between highly acclaimed filmmaker Geetu Mohandas and Rocking Star Yash, bringing together two powerful creative forces, backed by KVN Productions and Yash's Monster Mind Creations. Produced by KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups' is set for a worldwide theatrical release on August 26, 2026 in Kannada, Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam.



RAKUL CELEBRATES' MIND-BODY HARMONY'

Actress Rakul Preet Singh marked International Yoga Day with an inspiring celebration of wellness, flexibility, and inner peace. Known for her disciplined fitness regime, the actress embraced the occasion by performing a series of advanced yoga postures under the guidance of renowned yogic master and Akshar Yoga founder, Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar. Looking calm, focused, and effortlessly graceful, Rakul shared glimpses of her yoga session on social media, impressing fans with her strength and dedication. Alongside the pictures, she posted a thoughtful message: "Every stretch is a step toward strength, every breath is a step toward peace. Happy International Yoga Day."

For Rakul, yoga is much more than a fitness routine. The actress revealed that the ancient practice has played a vital role in her wellness journey, helping her achieve not only physical fitness but also mental clarity and emotional balance. "Yoga has been an integral part of my wellness journey for many years. It has helped me cultivate inner strength, mindfulness, and overall well-being. In today's fast-paced world, yoga allows us to reconnect with ourselves and live in harmony with our body and mind," she shared. Rakul also applauded Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar and the Akshar Yoga team for organizing a large-scale community yoga event aimed at promoting India's rich yogic heritage. Calling the initiative inspiring, she praised the dedication and teamwork behind bringing thousands of people together to celebrate yoga as a way of life. While the actress continues to inspire fitness enthusiasts, she is equally focused on her flourishing film career. On the work front, Rakul is reportedly set to portray the powerful character of Surpanakha in filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari's ambitious mythological epic Ramayana, which stars Ranbir Kapoor and Yash in key roles. Whether it's fitness, mindfulness, or cinema, Rakul Preet Singh continues to balance it all with confidence and grace, proving that wellness is truly a lifestyle.

