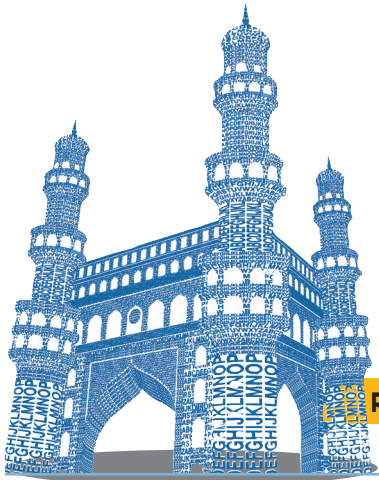




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Green India: No EV Monopoly

OPINION

06

Sreeleela's A Trial by Fire?

BOX-OFFICE

12



Varanasi: Boats remain anchored along the banks of the Ganga River as dark monsoon clouds hover over a ghat in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday

Four persons die in road rage

HYDERABAD,
JULY 5:

A severe road accident occurred on early Sunday morning on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad National Highway near Peddakaparthi village in Chityala Mandal of Nalgonda district. Four people died, and one person sustained serious injuries in the incident. According to local people and the police, five people were travelling by car from Chennai to Hyderabad. When they reached the outskirts of Peddakaparthi, a speeding bus belonging to Odisha-based Arshiya Private Travels rammed into their car from behind. The impact was so severe that the car was completely mangled, resulting in the instant death of four occupants.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM SEEKS FAST-TRACK CLEARANCES FOR METRO PHASE-II

Revanth urges faster takeover of Metro Phase-I

HYDERABAD, JULY 6:

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has written to the Union government seeking early approval for the Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-II expansion and urging it to expedite the process of transferring Metro Phase-I to the Telangana government.

In separate letters addressed to Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar and Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, the Chief Minister requested their personal intervention to speed up the implementation of decisions taken jointly by the Centre and the State regarding the Hyderabad Metro Rail project.

Revanth Reddy recalled the key decisions taken during the high-level meetings held with the Union Ministers on June 23 and 24, 2026. He noted that, as agreed during those meetings, the Centre's

- ❖ Calls for immediate appointment of SBI CAPS.
- ❖ Delay stalling Phase-II approvals, funding.
- ❖ Warns of rising costs if project is delayed.
- ❖ Seeks Union Ministers' intervention to fast-track Metro expansion.

nodal agency, SBI CAPS, was to be entrusted with carrying out a comprehensive study covering the valuation of Hyderabad Metro Phase-I assets, refinancing of high-interest loans, and the mobilisation of long-term financial resources required for the implementation of Metro Phase-II.

The Chief Minister pointed out that the study by SBI CAPS is crucial for determining the financial framework for both the takeover of Metro Phase-I



"Early implementation of the Centre-State decisions is essential for the smooth takeover of Phase-I and timely execution of Phase-II."

by the State government and the execution of the Phase-II expansion project. However, he expressed concern that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has not yet finalised the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the study and has also delayed the formal appointment of SBI CAPS to

undertake the assignment.

According to the Chief Minister, the delay in finalising the ToR and appointing SBI CAPS has resulted in uncertainty and operational challenges in the management of Hyderabad Metro Phase-I. He further stated that it has

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Money Politics Is a Disease for Democracy

Nellore: Former Vice President Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu advised that those entering public life should learn the value of hard work and remain committed to the ideology they believe in.

A book titled Venkaiah Nayakudu, written by senior journalist Maa Sharma, chronicling Venkaiah Naidu's 50-year political and public life journey, was introduced at a function held on Sunday at the VPR Convention Centre in Nellore.

Speaking on the occasion, Venkaiah Naidu said:

"Young people must enter politics. However, those aspir-

Value-based politics must return

❖ **Hardworking people should enter public life**

❖ **Leaders must remain committed to the ideology they believe in**

❖ **Divisions based on caste are harmful to democracy**

❖ **Former Vice President Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu**

❖ **Book launch event for "Venkaiah Nayakudu" held in Nellore**

ing to join politics should stay committed to the principles they believe in. They should maintain discipline and practice dignified politics. Today, some people are trying to divide society in the name of caste, religion, community, language, or region. Even minor issues are unnecessarily being given a caste angle, dragging respected individuals into controversies. This is not good for democracy. Leaders should

be elected based on their character, competence, conduct, and other qualities. Only then will the prestige of the state and the nation grow."

He further stated:

"Leaders should conduct themselves with dignity on every platform. Regardless of political affiliation, we are opponents—not enemies. I have always followed this principle. When I retired as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

KTR Demands Swift Action on Kannepalli Pumps



HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao demanded that the Congress government immediately operate the Kannepalli Pump House to lift Godavari waters, warning that Telangana faces an impending severe water crisis.

Pointing to the combined impact of El Niño, deficient rainfall, and alleged state inaction, Rama Rao cautioned that delaying operations would plunge the state into a massive agricultural and drinking water crunch. He urged the state adminis-

tration to bypass political narratives and prioritise filling the reservoirs to protect the interest of farmers.

Addressing the media after inspecting the Kannepalli Pump House in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Sunday, KT Rama Rao said 26 out of Telangana's 33 districts are already facing drought-like conditions, while lakhs of cusecs of Godavari water continue to flow wastefully into the sea because the government has failed to utilise the existing Kaleshwaram infrastructure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Kaleshwaram barrages in precarious state, can't lift water now: Uttam

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy strongly criticised the BRS leaders, alleging that the previous BRS government prioritised political advantages over essential engineering standards. He asserted that the Kaleshwaram barrages are in a precarious state and need extensive rehabilitation to ensure safe operation.

Addressing a media conference at the State Secretariat on Sunday, he alleged that the BRS leadership was deliberately spreading misinformation by claiming that the Kannepalli pump house at Medigadda (Lakshmi Barrage) could simply be switched on to lift water through the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages.

Rejecting those claims outright, the Minister repeatedly declared that the pumps cannot be operated as the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

HYDRAA actions selective, shielding MIM interests: Kishan

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy claimed that the Congress government, headed by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, is prepared to jeopardize the livelihoods of everyday citizens in its pursuit of commissions from land and real estate transactions, all while doing everything possible to safeguard the Majlis party.

In a tweet on Sunday, the Union Minister said the HYDRAA has become a symbol of the selective governance, swift and ruthless against the common man, but silent and indecisive when allegations concern the Barrister Fatima Owaisi Educational Campus, reported to be located in the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zone of Salkam Cheruvu.

"Despite numerous com-



ments from the Telangana High Court regarding delays and lack of action, as well as requests for records from various departments, including HYDRAA and the Education department, the Congress government has not demonstrated the same level of urgency in addressing these issues as it does when dealing with the general public," he stated.

Kishan Reddy further stated that the Congress

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Alka Lamba slams BJP Govt at the centre

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The National President of the Mahila Congress Alka Lamba has launched a scathing attack on the BJP government at the Centre. She termed the Modi administration as "anti-women" and lashed out at the party for neglecting women's safety and the future of the youth across the country. She spoke at a press conference held on Sunday at Gandhi Bhavan, the Congress party's headquarters in Hyderabad. During the event, she announced an action plan for a nationwide agitation against the Central government's anti-people policies.

Alka Lamba stated that the Mahila Congress had conducted extensive meetings across 19 districts of Telangana over the past three months. She noted that women were delighted with the decisions the Chief Minister was taking regarding women's em-

powerment and expressed satisfaction with the welfare schemes being implemented by the state government for women. She highlighted that a record number of over 116,000 women leaders had registered as members in the state. She added that a special two-day training program would be organized for them in September.

Alka Lamba demanded the immediate implementation of the 'Nari Shakti Vandan' (33% Women's Reservation) Bill introduced by the Centre without any further delay. Furthermore, she urged that specific provisions be made for the OBC women within the women's reservation framework. She announced that the Mahila Congress would organize a massive protest against the Central government in Delhi on July 25 to press for these demands. Alka Lamba lashed out at Defence

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

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

3 TIMES BETTER

CM Chandrababu to Return to Amaravati Tomorrow After Week-long Tour

Busy schedule across four districts with consecutive development programs.. Foundation stones laid for projects by Hero, Adidas, JSW, and other leading companies
Over 30 development projects launched during three-day Kuppam tour.. CM to travel directly from Kuppam to Velagapudi Secretariat on Monday morning
Review meetings on RTGS and the three Economic Regions scheduled

KUPPAM, JULY 5:

After an intensive week-long tour across various districts, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will return to Amaravati on Monday. He is scheduled to hold several official meetings, including a review of the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS). During the past week, the Chief Minister remained continuously engaged in development initiatives across Nellore, Tirupati, Kadapa, and Chittoor districts. His tour included inaugurations, foundation stone ceremonies, MoU signings, welfare programs, and interactions with farmers and the public. Welfare Program in Nellore Beginning his tour on July 1, the Chief Minister traveled directly from Amara-

vati to Punnapuvaaripalem in Gudur constituency, Nellore district, where he participated in the Pedala Sevalo (Service to the Poor) program. He visited the SC Colony in the village and personally distributed NTR Bharosa widow pension to Padmamma and a disability pension to Tulashamma. Addressing the gathering, he said the coalition government has so far distributed ₹68,598 crore in pensions. He expressed confidence that Nellore would emerge as one of India's leading districts in development and wealth creation. He also announced plans for a Mega Furniture Park in the district and assured completion of the Veligonda Project to provide irrigation water.

Foundation Stone for

Hero Motors Facility

After completing the Nellore program, the Chief Minister traveled to Madanapalle in Satyavedu constituency, Tirupati district. Along with Hero Motors Executive Chairman Pawan Munjal, he laid the foundation stone for the company's Global Parts Center 2.0. Hero Motors also partnered with the state's P4 initiative through the Swarna Andhra Foundation.

The Chief Minister also launched the "Heroes of Tomorrow" scholarship program, established by Hero founder Dr. Brijmohan Lall Munjal.

Launch of VBG Gram Yojana

On July 2, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan jointly launched the VBG Gram Yojana at Railway Koduru in Tirupati district, marking the nationwide rollout of the flagship Central Government scheme. The leaders inaugurated three projects worth ₹4.55 lakh in Mukkavaripalli village:

- Rainwater harvesting pond
- Magic Drain
- Plantation drive

They also distributed VBG Gram Yojana job cards to beneficiaries.

The scheme will be implemented with ₹7,700 crore from the Central Government and ₹4,000 crore from the State Government.

Planning Department Workshop

Later that evening, the Chief Minister attended a state-level workshop titled



"Economic Intelligence for Governance" in Tirupati as part of the Swarna Andhra 2047 vision. He emphasized that data-driven governance, technology, and efficient administration are essential to building Andhra Pradesh into a strong economy.

The workshop was attended by several eminent personalities, including:

- Saurabh Garg, Secretary to the Government of India
- Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran
- NITI Aayog member Balasubramanyam Prof. K. V. Raju
- Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council SW Rayalaseema Steel Plant Works Begin

On July 3, the Chief Minister launched construction works for the JSW Rayalaseema Steel Plant at Sunnapuralapalle in Jammalamadugu constituency, Kadapa district.

He was joined by JSW Chairman and Managing Director Sajjan Jindal and Union Minister Srinivasa Varma. He also inaugurated the associated JSW Neo Energy Solar Captive Power Project.

The steel plant will be built

in two phases with an investment of ₹16,350 crore and an annual production capacity of 2 million tonnes.

Together, the steel plant and solar project are expected to generate 2,700 jobs.

The renewable energy project will have a capacity of 3,850 MW through solar and wind power.

JSW is investing a total of ₹20,350 crore in these projects.

The Chief Minister also virtually inaugurated the JSW Industrial Park in Vizianagaram district, spread across 1,166 acres, with an investment of ₹531 crore.

Successful Three-Day Kuppam Tour

From Kadapa, the Chief Minister proceeded directly to Kuppam for a three-day visit.

At the Swarna Kuppam – Investors' Summit held at Pogurupalle in Gudupalle mandal, he launched and signed MoUs for 30 projects worth ₹9,322 crore.

These projects are expected to create:

39,535 direct jobs
47,539 indirect jobs
The investments range from an Adidas footwear manufacturing unit to an aircraft training aircraft manu-

facturing project.

He also inaugurated:

- ABIS Proteins chicken processing unit
 - APIIC MSME Park with 167 industrial plots
 - The Chief Minister dedicated solar rooftop systems worth ₹28 crore installed on 7,489 SC/ST households.
- He also inaugurated five RESCO substations and launched a ₹559 crore rooftop solar project covering over 46,000 BC and OC households.

Foundation Stone for Model Bus Station

On the second day of his Kuppam visit, Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art Model Bus Station and Depot, to be built at a cost of ₹118 crore. The facility is expected to become one of the most modern bus stations in Andhra Pradesh. He also resolved the long-pending Kangundi land issue, reclassifying land from "Forest Poramboke" to "Assessed Waste Dry", benefiting farming families.

A total of 322 eligible beneficiaries received DKT land ownership pattas covering 460.19 acres.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated CT Scan and Dilysis Centres at the Kuppam Area Hospital, inspected the newly developed Panchatava-themed walking track, planted saplings, and inaugurated the Swarna Kuppam–Swachh Kuppam Welcome Arch. Interaction with Farmers and P4 Beneficiaries On the final day of his tour, the Chief Minister met poultry farmers, progressive farmers, and beneficiaries of the

P4 program. He inaugurated and inspected an environment-controlled poultry farm and interacted with poultry farmers about the profitability of modern poultry sheds. He also held discussions with progressive farmers, who expressed satisfaction with the progress made in agriculture and allied sectors during the coalition government's two years in office.

In his presence, the Kuppam Area Development Authority signed agreements with:

ITC Limited, to improve market opportunities for local farmers. Vishalakshi Innovations Sustainable Value Chain, to promote modern agricultural practices. The Chief Minister also met P4 mentors and Bangaru Kutumbam (Golden Families) beneficiaries. He expressed hope that these families would become economically self-reliant and announced that responsibility for supporting 9,000 Golden Families in Kuppam has been entrusted to Adani Group, TVS, and Mega companies under the P4 initiative.

Monday's Schedule

The Chief Minister will stay overnight in Kuppam on Sunday. On Monday at 11:00 a.m., he will travel directly to the Velagapudi Secretariat in Amaravati.

His official schedule includes:

Morning: Review meeting on the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS). Afternoon: Review meeting on the development strategy for the Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, and Tirupati Economic Regions with senior officials.

One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses

(On the occasion of "World Zoonoses Day" on 06 July)

The word 'Zoonoses' comes from two Greek words, 'Zoon' meaning animal, and 'noses' meaning disease. So, a zoonotic disease is an illness that can spread between animals and humans. They can transmit from animals to people, and sometimes from people back to animals. Most of them come from animals that have backbones, such as dogs, cows, birds, or bats. According to WHO, more than 61% of human pathogens originate from zoonotic. In 2020, COVID-19 disease was recognised as the disease was the third leading cause of death worldwide, and in 2021, it ranked second, losing all most 13 million lives in this period. According to a study, at least 70% of developing infectious diseases have animal origin only.

One World, One Health :

On 06 July 1885, a scientist named Louis Pasteur gave first rabies vaccine to a boy bitten by a sick dog. To commemorate this significant discovery of vaccine to combat animal borne diseases, "World Zoonoses Day" is organised on 06 July annually to bring awareness about zoonotic disease, and methods to prevent them. The zoonotic diseases are caused by microbes like

bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. These diseases are spread when we catch or near to the animals like chickens, rats, frogs, lizards, or insects. COVID-19 is one example of zoonotic disease transmitted from bats. This day also shows us how things such as vaccines, cleanliness, and learning more about animals can help us stay safe and healthy. The theme of World Zoonoses Day-2026 is "One World, One Health", calls for global collaboration to prevent future pandemic through awareness, science, and public health action.

The illness may manifest as small, transient ailments or as serious, irreversible disorders. World Zoonoses Day is important to every one of us because it brings to light the various diseases that animals can cause and the ways we can prevent. The common examples for zoonotic diseases include Rabies, Birds flu, Swine flu, Ebola, COVID-19, Plague, and Brucellosis. These diseases can spread through direct contact, food, water, or the environment. Only awareness is crucial to preventing outbreaks. Awareness, action, and prevention are the best vaccines we have against zoonotic threats.



Sharp Drop in Assembly Voters in Barkot Municipality

1,190 Shift Electoral Registration, Only 2,197 Voters Remain

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand : A significant change has emerged in the electoral rolls of Barkot Municipality during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the Assembly electoral rolls. According to official data, out of 3,387 registered voters across the municipality's five polling booths, 1,190 voters have shifted their names from the Barkot municipal voter list to the electoral rolls of their native villages. As a result, only 2,197 voters will now be eligible to vote in the upcoming Assembly elections from Barkot Municipality.

Interestingly, while the number of voters in municipal elections exceeds 10,000, the electorate for the Assembly election within the municipal area has dropped to just 2,197, sparking discussions among local residents over the sharp difference in voter figures.

Tehsildar Renu Saini said that the change was recorded after a large number of voters applied to transfer their names to their permanent place of residence during the Special Intensive Revision campaign. She further informed that eligible citizens whose names are still missing from the electoral roll can apply for inclusion until July 7. Applications are being accepted at the Tehsil Office and Barkot Municipal Office, where officials are available to assist applicants. The administration has appealed to all eligible citizens to verify their names in the electoral roll and ensure timely registration so that no eligible voter is deprived of exercising their democratic right in the forthcoming Assembly elections.

The review process was carried out in the presence of Tehsildar Renu Saini, Executive Officer Umesh Suyal, Assistant Registrar Kanungo Santosh Chaudhary, IT Assistant Praveen Rana, and Booth Level Officers Prakash Chauhan, Deependra Kunwar, Jagdev Chauhan, Krishna Rana, Mamta Tamta, Krishna Nautiyal, and Sarita Tamta.

Tamil Nadu tragedy shows distress migration from Odisha CM's home district: Congress

BHUBANESWAR: (JUL 5)

The opposition Congress in Odisha on Sunday urged the BJP government to create employment opportunities in mineral-rich Keonjhar, alleging that poverty continues to force tribals from Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's home district to seek work outside the state.

The demand came a day after a Congress delegation led by the party's state president Bhakta Charan

Das visited villages in Keonjhar's Telkoi block, from where seven of the 14 Odias killed in the June 21 ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing unit in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district hailed. Das, accompanied by former state Congress presidents Niranjan Patnaik and Jaydev Jena and Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam, said the visit exposed the "extreme misery" prevailing in the tribal-dominated region.

AAP Claims Rivals Unite Against Bhagwant Mann

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab on Sunday accused the Congress, BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal of acting together to target Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, claiming the opposition parties had no answer to the state government's performance. Addressing a press conference in Chandigarh, AAP Punjab media in-charge Baltej Pannu alleged that the three parties had become

"Teams A, B and C", with the sole objective of attacking the Mann government. He described the Congress as "directionless" and claimed it was preoccupied with internal power struggles.

Pannu also claimed that the Congress and the BJP were working in coordination in Punjab. Taking a swipe at the BJP, he said it had become an extension of the Congress in the state as many of its

present leaders were former members of the grand old party, while the BJP's original leadership had been sidelined. Referring to senior Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa's recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi, Pannu said the political significance of the deliberations was evident despite Randhawa's explanation. Highlighting the AAP government's

work, Pannu claimed that canal water had reached tail-end villages for the first time in decades and around 90 per cent of households in the state were receiving zero electricity bills under the scheme providing 600 units of free power.

He said farmers were also getting uninterrupted daytime electricity and canal water. He further claimed that more than 34 lakh women had started receiving the

financial assistance promised by the AAP government, and said the remaining eligible beneficiaries would get the benefit from August 1. He accused the Congress of depending entirely on its high command for decisions, while noting that the opposition party had earlier criticised the AAP by saying it was controlled from New Delhi. Pannu said the opposition should explain its own functioning be-

fore targeting the ruling party. He claimed that the Congress, BJP and SAD had no vision or roadmap for Punjab's development and were unable to accept the work done by the AAP government. He also said previous governments in Punjab had failed to provide benefits such as free electricity, canal water for farmers, financial assistance for women and cashless healthcare of up to Rs 10 lakh.



Environmental protection is everyone's responsibility : Udart Chairman Umar Alisha

BY DR.SUNEELKUMAR YANDRA,

Hyderabad, July 05 : Environmental protection is everyone's responsibility, said Udart Chairman Dr. Umar Alisha. On Sunday, members of the Hyderabad branch of Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust (Udart) planted 200 saplings at the Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Aadhyathmika Peetham Ashram in Ghattupalli. Trust Chairman Dr. Umar Alisha participated in the program as the chief guest and planted saplings, the trust members said. He, who participated as the chief guest on the occasion,

said that everyone should take the responsibility of planting one to three saplings in their lifetime and take care of them. He said that good oxygen is available through them. He said that the increasing use of vehicles in today's modern society is damaging the environment due to the effect of pollution. He informed that the environment can be protected by planting saplings. Members of the Hyderabad branch of the Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust and members of the Hyderabad Ashram of the Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Aadhyathmika Peetham participated in this program.

Abhijeet Gupta stays sole leader at Pune GM chess tournament

PUNE: (Jul 5) Top seed Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta strengthened his grip on the Pune International Grandmaster Round Robin Chess Tournament with a clinical victory over Be-

larus' Aleksey Alexandrov in the sixth round here on Sunday. The Indian GM remained the sole leader with five points from six rounds after four of the five matches ended decisively.

Shivpuri Strengthens India's Defence Power: CM

DR.BHUPENDRA VIKAL

Shivpuri : Now Shivpuri will be recognized not only for tourism and natural beauty, but also as the new center of defense power of the country. On Sunday, Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia laid the foundation stone of Adani Defense and Aerospace Tay's state-of-the-art manufacturing unit to be built at a cost of Rs 2500 crore in Pali village amid Vedic chanting. With this, Shivpuri registered its strong presence on the defense manufacturing map of the country. This mega project, which will provide direct and indirect employment to about 10 thousand, will produce state-of-the-art ammunition, mission-ready missiles, hi-tech weapons and modern defense equipment. This unit of defense sector will not only give new impetus to the industrial development of Madhya Pradesh, but will also strengthen the Self-reliant India campaign. On this occasion, Adani Group directors Karan Adani, Jeet Adani, public representatives, senior officials and a large number of citizens were present. Adani Group Director Jeet Adani said that this Shivpuri factory is not just an industrial



project but a determination to strengthen India's defense capability. He said that the group is investing Rs 1.10 lakh crore in Madhya Pradesh and a target has been set to provide 1 lakh 20 thousand jobs in the state by 2030. He said that Chief Minister DrWith the leadership of Mohan Yadav and the support of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Madhya Pradesh is becoming the fastest growing industrial state of the country.

Shivpuri's defense factory will become a strong foundation for the industrial future of the state, Chief Minister DrMohan Yadav said that the defense factory of Shivpuri will become a strong foundation for the industrial future of the state. Madhya Pradesh is becoming a leading center of investment, industry and defense production. Provid-

ing employment to youth and better environment to industries is the top priority of the government. Madhya Pradesh will give new strength to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India and self-reliant India resolution. There will be no shortage of funds and schemes for the development of Shivpuri.

Chief Minister made 8 big announcements

Accepting all the major demands of Union Minister Scindia from the stage, the Chief Minister made 8 major development announcements including a road worth Rs 120 crore, super specialty facilities in the medical college, cardiology and CT scan, a statue of Lord Shiva more than 108 feet high, a new tehsil. During the address, he said smilingly that today Maharaj applied a little more butter on the bread. The

entire pandal erupted in applause at this comment.

If there is a war, weapons will go from Shivpuri: Jyotiraditya Scindia

Union Minister Scindia said that today a new chapter in the history of Shivpuri is being written. When there is a war to protect the country, then the weapons made in Shivpuri will reach the borders. The missiles and ammunition manufactured here will destroy the enemy's plans. This project will bring new employment and industry opportunities for thousands of youth. Shivpuri will now become an important center of the country's defense manufacturing network. Before laying the foundation stone, the Chief Minister, Union Ministers, Karan Adani and Jeet Adani visited the exhibition of hi-tech weapons, missiles and defense systems. Experts gave technical information about the defense products manufactured in the proposed plant. The project was inaugurated with Vedic chanting, Bhoomi Pujan and lighting of the lamp. In the program, MLA Devendra Jain raised the demand for expansion of health services in the district, on which the Chief Minister assured of a positive decision.



EDITORIAL

Food Safety Needs
Relentless Enforcement,
Not Periodic Crackdowns

Food safety is not merely a regulatory concern; it is a fundamental public health responsibility. Yet, food adulteration continues to pose a serious threat across India, compromising the health of millions and eroding consumer confidence. Recent enforcement drives by food safety authorities have uncovered numerous violations, including the sale of substandard products, unhygienic food preparation, expired goods, and misleading labelling. While such crackdowns are welcome, they also reinforce an important reality: the fight against food adulteration cannot rely on periodic inspections alone. It must become a continuous, nationwide mission. India has witnessed remarkable growth in its food processing and retail sectors. However, this expansion has also increased the complexity of food supply chains, making effective monitoring more challenging. Unscrupulous businesses often exploit regulatory gaps, placing profits above public health. Adulterated milk, edible oils, spices, sweets, and packaged foods continue to surface in inspections across states, exposing consumers to harmful chemicals, contaminants, and unsafe ingredients.

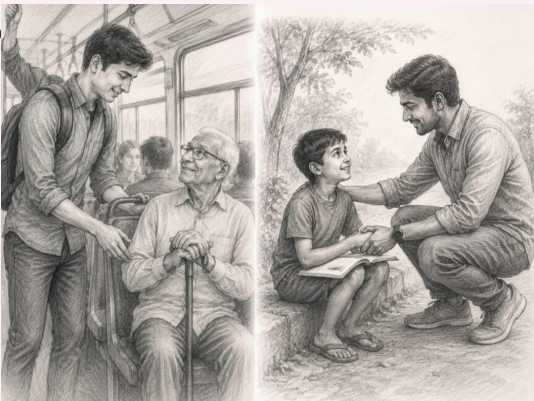
The consequences extend far beyond individual illness. Contaminated food can cause food poisoning, digestive disorders, organ damage, and long-term health complications. Children, senior citizens, and people with weakened immunity are especially vulnerable. The resulting healthcare costs place an additional burden on families and the public health system.

India already has a comprehensive legal framework through the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) setting quality standards and regulations. The challenge lies in ensuring consistent implementation. Enforcement often intensifies after a public outcry or a major incident, only to lose momentum with time. Such episodic action allows repeat offenders to return to unsafe practices once scrutiny diminishes.

A stronger and more sustainable approach is needed. Routine inspections, surprise checks, scientific sampling, and timely laboratory testing should become integral to everyday governance rather than special campaigns. Food safety departments require adequate manpower, modern testing facilities, and continuous training to detect increasingly sophisticated forms of adulteration. Equally important is the speedy disposal of cases so that violators face timely penalties. Technology can significantly improve enforcement. Digital tracking systems, QR code-based product traceability, and data-driven risk assessment can help authorities monitor supply chains more effectively. Consumer-friendly mobile platforms can also enable citizens to report suspected violations, making food safety a shared responsibility between regulators and the public.

Businesses must recognise that compliance is not merely a legal obligation but a moral one. Maintaining hygiene, ensuring quality control, and following prescribed standards protect both consumers and a company's reputation. At the same time, governments should encourage voluntary compliance by recognising businesses that consistently maintain high food safety standards. Consumer awareness is equally vital. People should be encouraged to check expiry dates, verify licences, avoid suspiciously cheap products, and report unhygienic practices. Public education campaigns can help create informed consumers who demand higher standards from food businesses. As India aspires to become a global leader in food processing and exports, maintaining world-class food safety standards is essential. Safe food strengthens public health, supports economic growth, and enhances the country's international reputation. The fight against food adulteration is not a one-time campaign but a continuous responsibility. Sustained enforcement, stronger institutions, modern technology, responsible businesses, and vigilant consumers together can ensure that every citizen receives what should never be in doubt—safe and wholesome food.

“HOW MANY?”



How many hearts, when beauty's near,
See not desire, but something clear?
A sister's grace, a soul so bright
Not fleeting form, but inner light.

How many, in the morning crowd,
Will rise for elders, strong and proud?
A simple seat, a noble deed
Yet kindness now feels rare, indeed.

We turn the pages, day by day,
But how much thought do minds convey?
We speak of green, of skies once blue,
Yet wound the earth with all we do.

How many wed with love and grace,
With blessings warm, in sacred space?
Not bound by fear, but family cheer
A bond of trust, both proud and clear.

A boy next door, with dreams so wide
But who will walk with him, beside?
Not every eye will choose to see,
Or lend a hand to help him be.

How many serve with hearts so pure,
No praise, no pay, yet still endure?
They fight the dark, they soothe the pain,
And ask for nothing, not even gain.

When sirens scream and lights flash red,
How many step aside, instead?
They clear the way, no questions why
So life may live, not fade or die.

How many live by truth alone,
And see the world as flesh and bone?
Who feel each soul, both near and far,
And shine within like morning star?

Oh world, don't count just gold or name,
But those who play a kinder game.
For in each act, both small and deep,
A nation's truest soul shall sleep.



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



OPINION

On the 125th Birth Anniversary (6 July 2026)

Zoonotic Diseases: The Invisible Threat
That Continues to Challenge Global Health

A zoonotic disease is an infectious disease that is naturally transmitted between vertebrate animals and humans.

Simply put, these are diseases that spread from animals to humans and, in some cases, from humans back to animals. They are caused by pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and prions, and can spread through direct contact with infected animals, contaminated food or water, insect vectors, animal products or environmental exposure. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), zoonoses are diseases naturally transmitted between animals and humans. They may originate from domestic animals such as cattle, pigs, poultry, dogs and cats, as well as wild animals including bats, rodents, monkeys and birds. Some of the world's most significant infectious diseases—including COVID-19, Rabies, Nipah virus disease, Avian Influenza (Bird Flu), Swine Flu (H1N1), Ebola, Anthrax, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis, Japanese Encephalitis and Mpox—are zoonotic in nature. According to the WHO and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 60% of all known infectious diseases affecting humans are zoonotic, while about 75% of newly emerging infectious diseases originate from animals, making zoonotic diseases one of the greatest threats to global public health.

Why Are They Dangerous?

Zoonotic diseases are particularly dangerous because they often emerge unexpectedly, spread rapidly and can cause severe illness or death in populations with little or no pre-existing immunity. Environmental degradation, deforestation, climate change, illegal wildlife trade, intensive livestock farming and increasing human encroachment into wildlife habitats create ideal conditions for pathogens to jump from animals to humans. Once efficient human-to-human transmission begins, localized outbreaks can quickly escalate into epidemics or global pandemics, as witnessed during COVID-19. According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), nearly five new infectious diseases emerge every year, and about three of them originate from animals. Scientists further estimate that mammals and birds harbor more than 1.7 million undiscovered viruses, of which 540,000–850,000 could potentially infect humans. Moreover, several zoonotic diseases have exceptionally high fatality

“Humanity's greatest health threat may not be lurking in hospitals or laboratories—it may already exist in the animals that share our planet. As human activities increasingly disturb nature, zoonotic diseases are emerging as one of the most serious public health, economic and environmental challenges of our time.”

rates—Rabies is almost 100% fatal once symptoms appear, Nipah virus has a fatality rate of 40–75%, and Ebola outbreaks have recorded mortality rates of up to 90%. These characteristics make zoonotic diseases one of the most unpredictable and dangerous biological threats facing humanity.

Impact on Human Health:

Zoonotic diseases have a profound impact on human health, ranging from mild infections to life-threatening illnesses and long-term disabilities. They can affect multiple organ systems, causing respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 and Avian Influenza, neurological disorders such as Rabies and Nipah virus infection, liver and kidney damage, cardiovascular complications and severe gastrointestinal illnesses. Some zoonotic diseases result in permanent disability, while others cause prolonged health complications even after recovery. They significantly increase hospitalization and mortality rates, place enormous pressure on healthcare systems and disproportionately affect children, older adults, pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals. In addition to physical illness, major outbreaks also contribute to anxiety, depression and psychological stress, making zoonotic diseases one of the most significant threats to global health.

Social and Economic Impact:

The impact of zoonotic diseases extends far beyond healthcare, affecting every sector of society and the economy. Large outbreaks disrupt education, employment, agriculture, tourism, trade and food security, leading to widespread social instability and economic losses. Governments are forced to spend billions of dollars on disease surveillance, healthcare infrastructure, vaccination programmes and emergency response, diverting valuable resources from development activities. Livestock diseases reduce agricultural productivity, necessitate the mass culling of animals and severely affect farmers' livelihoods, while travel restrictions and

supply chain disruptions weaken businesses and international trade. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the equivalent loss of 255 million full-time jobs worldwide in 2020, while the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported a 74% decline in international tourist arrivals during the same year. The pandemic also caused an estimated global economic loss exceeding US\$12 trillion, demonstrating that zoonotic diseases are not merely health emergencies but also major social, economic and national security challenges.

Prevention and Challenges:

Zoonotic diseases can be prevented through a comprehensive One Health approach that integrates human, animal and environmental health. Key preventive measures include strengthening disease surveillance, vaccinating domestic animals, improving veterinary services and farm biosecurity, regulating wildlife trade, ensuring food safety, conserving biodiversity, promoting good hygiene, controlling disease vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks, and increasing public awareness about safe animal handling and early disease reporting. However, effective prevention remains challenging due to rapid deforestation, climate change, expanding human encroachment into wildlife habitats, illegal wildlife trade, intensive livestock farming, weak veterinary and public health infrastructure, inadequate surveillance systems, antimicrobial resistance, limited funding, poor inter-sectoral coordination and the rapid movement of people and goods through globalization. Addressing these challenges requires sustained political commitment, scientific investment and strong international cooperation.

Lessons for India:

Several countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Singapore and the United Kingdom, have demonstrated that zoonotic diseases can be effectively controlled through strong

surveillance systems, strict biosecurity measures and the One Health approach. Their success is driven by integrated disease surveillance, advanced laboratory networks, efficient veterinary services, wildlife monitoring, rapid outbreak detection, strict border quarantine, regulation of wildlife trade and close coordination among health, agriculture and environmental agencies. India cannot replicate these models entirely because of its vast population, biodiversity and resource constraints; however, it can successfully adapt many of their best practices by strengthening disease surveillance, improving veterinary infrastructure, expanding genomic monitoring, enforcing wildlife protection laws, promoting farm biosecurity, investing in public awareness and enhancing coordination between human and animal health sectors. Such measures would significantly improve India's preparedness against future zoonotic outbreaks.

Zoonotic diseases are no longer isolated public health concerns but an increasingly complex global challenge with profound implications for human health, economic stability and sustainable development. As human activities continue to disturb ecological balance, the risk of future zoonotic outbreaks will only increase. Preventing the next pandemic requires more than stronger hospitals—it demands healthier ecosystems, better disease surveillance, stronger veterinary and public health systems, scientific innovation and the full implementation of the One Health approach. The COVID-19 pandemic proved that the cost of prevention is far lower than the cost of response. The next pandemic is not a question of if, but when. The actions governments take today will determine whether the world prevents the next zoonotic crisis—or merely responds to it after it is too late.



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Green India: No EV Monopoly

LET USERS PICK BEST TECH

Delhi's proposed EV-only policy is driven by noble intentions, but risks are becoming a classic case of policy out-running reality. Cleaner air is an imperative. Yet mandating a single technology while sidelining viable alternatives is neither economically prudent nor environmentally comprehensive.

The policy effectively picks battery electric vehicles as the sole winner, ignoring India's strengths in efficient internal combustion engines (ICE), hybrids, CNG, biofuels and other low-emission technologies. Governments should regulate emissions, not dictate technologies. Innovation thrives on competition, not monopoly. Battery import costs may surpass that of crude oil if EV imposed.

Vehicle technologies are evolving rapidly, with manufacturers investing in a range of solutions, including hybrids, cleaner internal combustion engines, biofuels, hydrogen and battery EVs. Yet the Delhi policy appears to have summarily dismissed these alternatives in favour of a single technology. Critics may question whether such an approach reflects an undue influence of interests that favour battery EVs over competing technologies.

When governments become overly aligned with one industry or technology, the risk of policy misjudgement and unintended consequences inevitably increases. Affordability remains the biggest hurdle. Electric vehicles are still beyond the reach of millions of middle-class households, small businesses, taxi operators and delivery workers.

Battery replacement costs, uncertain resale values and dependence on imported lithium, cobalt and battery cells add to the financial burden. An EV-only policy risks replacing one form of dependence—imported crude oil—with another: imported battery technology and critical minerals. Infrastructure is nowhere near ready.

While EVs eliminate tailpipe emissions, battery production is resource-intensive, and India still lacks a comprehensive system for recycling and safely disposing of millions of end-of-life batteries. It could become tomorrow's electronic waste challenge.

Equally worrying is the premature abandonment of modern ICE technology. Today's petrol and hybrid engines are cleaner, more fuel-efficient and supported by an extensive refuelling network. For vast sections of India, they remain the most practical and affordable mobility option. Eliminating them through regulation rather than market choice risks imposing unnecessary costs on consumers and businesses.

Encourage EVs to compete without incentives, and simultaneously promote hybrids, cleaner ICE engines, CNG and hydrogen. Let cleaner technologies compete on merit.

Delhi needs cleaner air. But it also needs policies grounded in affordability and technological realism. An EV-only mandate may appear 'visionary' today, but if implemented without adequate preparation, it could become an expensive policy mistake.

The emerging consensus is that the policy is premature, one-sided, economically costly and insufficiently technology-neutral—concerns voiced by mainstream newspapers, industry participants, legal analysts and transport experts alike. Import dependence could be heavy and there could be severe environmental concerns over recycling and disposal. If not tackled well, it could be a situation of from the frying pan to the fire. Leave it to consumers.

From Business Standard and Mint to The Times of India, PTI and the India Business Law Journal, criticism has been remarkably consistent: Delhi's EV-only policy is well-intentioned but premature, citing inadequate charging infrastructure, weak grid readiness, affordability concerns, exclusion of hybrids, legal challenges and the absence of a technology-neutral transition.

Current military operations still depend overwhelmingly on liquid fuels, and battery-electric vehicles cannot yet replace conventional vehicles across the full spectrum of military logistics and combat roles.

For many middle-class families, small businesses, delivery workers and auto-rickshaw drivers, the upfront cost of switching to an EV is simply unaffordable.

An abrupt transition could therefore place a disproportionate burden on those least able to bear it.

Bicycles Decongest, Save Forex

For decongesting major cities, India needs to create multiple safe 10-km bicycle circuits for short-distance travel. It would decongest, save forex and would be environment-friendly at the least cost.

EV import bill would be killing. India spent \$134.7 billion on crude imports (2025-26) while current EVs comprise just 4 percent of vehicles (\$3.9 billion). However, if EV sales hit 20 percent, battery and material imports could surge to \$17.6 billion with additional hidden costs. If it is 100 percent the cost may substantially go up. Meanwhile, the solar sector drains \$7 billion in forex annually, with \$3.9 billion going to China alone. India also brings in smaller volumes from Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore.

The EV policy could also affect employment. Thousands of workers depend on businesses linked to conventional vehicles, including mobile vending shops, repair workshops, spare-parts suppliers, fuel stations and small transport operators. Unless adequate retraining and transition support are provided, many livelihoods could be disrupted. If coal continues to supply a large share of electricity, the net emissions benefit may be smaller than expected.

Forced Vehicle Suicides will punish businesses with higher costs. Delivery companies, taxi operators and small transport firms may be forced to replace vehicle fleets before the end of their economic life, increasing debt and reducing profitability—second shock after mass scrapping. Consumers, in turn, may face higher transport and delivery costs. A more balanced approach would be market-driven adoptions for a smoother and more sustainable transition than blanket restrictions.

Dumps Engineering Strength

An EV-only policy risks prematurely abandoning India's engineering strength in internal combustion engines (ICE). Modern petrol and hybrid engines are clean, fuel-efficient, affordable, and sup-

ported by extensive infrastructure, making them the most practical choice for millions of middle-class families, farmers, and businesses.

Instead of regulating ICE out of existence and increasing mobility costs, policymakers should foster competition among all clean technologies—including hybrids, flex-fuels, CNG, hydrogen, and EVs. The goal must be lower emissions, not forcing a single technological winner.

Delhi's EV-Only Policy:
A One-Sided Bet?

Delhi's proposed EV-only policy raises a fundamental question: Is the government backing one technology at the expense of all others? Public policy should not prescribe a single winner. An EV-only approach risks creating a new dependence on imported minerals, battery cells and critical components—draining expensive forex. India remains heavily reliant on imports for lithium, cobalt and advanced battery technology, exposing consumers and manufacturers to global supply-chain disruptions and price volatility. Today's clean transport solution could become tomorrow's electronic waste problem and the overall environmental gains become less clear.

Most importantly, an EV-only policy risks excluding alternative technologies and future low-emission innovations. Technological progress is rarely linear. A stronger and more accurate argument is that ICE vehicles are: more affordable to buy, more practical for many users, supported by an extensive refuelling network, quicker to refuel, and better suited to current Indian conditions. The goal should be clean mobility—not an exclusive commitment to one technology.



SHIVAJI SARKAR





Inter-Village Thang-Ta Demo Draws 320+ Children

IMPHAL WEST, 5 JULY 2026:

A Children's Inter-Village Thang-Ta Demonstration was held on Saturday at Salam Kangjeibung Lampak, Imphal West, bringing together over 320 young Thang-Ta practitioners from different villages across the state. Organised by Wide Angle and supported by Azim Premji Foundation, the event provided a platform for children to showcase their skills, discipline, and dedication to Manipur's traditional martial arts.

The program was graced by S. Rajen Singh, Hon'ble MLA, Lamshang Assembly Constituency; Dr. H. Premkumar Singh, President, World Thang-Ta Federation of India; and Kh. Bhaktakumar Meitei, 10-time Mr. India and Pride of the Nation Awardee. Montu Ahanthem, Secretary of Wide Angle and Ex-Member, Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights, also attended as a distinguished guest. Delivering the keynote address, Montu Ahanthem said the primary objective of the event was to foster communal harmony and encourage children through constructive physical activities. He

added that the demonstration also aimed to preserve Manipur's indigenous cultural heritage and provide psychosocial support to children as the state is currently facing armed conflict. The young participants presented impressive demonstrations of various Thang-Ta techniques, reflecting discipline, physical fitness, concentration, and cultural values. On the occasion, Thang-Ta Ojas A. Kadamba Meitei, H. Nimaichan, and Th. Bonbown Meitei of Kanglei Thang-Ta, Sindam, were felicitated with G mementos by the dignitaries. Wide Angle Thang-Ta instructors Phamdum Bishorjit Meetei and Barun Moirangthem were also honoured. Research scholars from the National Sports University, supported by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), distributed Cheibi and Chunggoi sets to the in-charges of the two Wide Angle Thang-Ta centres where they are currently conducting field research. The demonstration concluded with an appeal to the young practitioners to continue their training with dedication and to carry forward the legacy of Thang-Ta for future generations.

Centre Committed to Employees' Welfare: Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI: (JUL 5)

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said the Centre remains committed to a consultative and responsive approach in addressing issues concerning government employees and pensioners.

He said every genuine representation receives due consideration through the appropriate

ministries/departments and that suggestions aimed at improving governance, simplifying procedures and enhancing administrative efficiency are always welcome.

Singh's assertion came during a meeting he had with a 19-member delegation, representing Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and affiliated employees' organisations from across the country.

Rural Empowerment, Global Impact

(On the occasion of "World Rural Development Day" on 06 July)

The UN general assembly held in 2024 officially designated July 06 as "World Rural Development Day" to raise global awareness about the vital role of rural development and transformation in eliminating rural poverty and hunger, while advancing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This day will also emphasise the strategic investments in essential infrastructure and services within rural regions are fundamental to reducing poverty and hunger, fostering productive employment and entrepreneurship, as we,, as expanding digital financial access for both rural communities and institutions. It encourages governments, civil society, international organisations, and academic institutions worldwide to engage in the annual observance by organising impactful activities, facilitating policy dialogue, and launching grassroots initiatives that advance rural development.

Rural Empowerment, Global Impact :

The the,E of the World Rural Development Day-2026 is "Rural Employment, Global Impact" underscores the role of investments in rural communities to address the pressing problems such as poverty, hunger, food insecurity, and achieving sustainable development goals. It is time for addressing advancements in AI and digital technology can be made accessible to rural and agricultural communities, promoting initiatives like self-help groups (SHGs) to empower rural women economically, and also emphasising investments in rural health, finance, housing, and connectivity. In India, the "Father of Rural Development" typically points to "Mahatma Gandhi" for his vision of Gram Swaraj, or "Surendra Kumar Dey" for operationalising the world's first massive "Community Development Programs".

Cooperative Movement in India:

India's rural development schemes are targeted government initiatives designed to

HOMELAND

CM Nayab Bats for Systemic Change, Drug-Free Society

CHANDIGARH, JULY 5

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that society must collectively resolve to build a drug-free and educated community while pursuing systemic reform and nation-building. Only then can meaningful contributions be made towards creating a society rooted in service, respect and values. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini was addressing a ceremony dedicated to the 39th Dikshant and Seva Samman of Piyush Muni Maharaj in Jalandhar. The Jain Sabha honoured the Chief Minister by presenting him with a shawl, turban and a memento. The Chief Minister said that saints guide society through a life of service and dedication and illuminate the lives of others through the light of knowledge. Their thoughts and teachings are devoted to the service of humanity. He said that people should strive to become individuals of character, values



and human sensitivity rather than merely seeking wealth. He said that there is no religion greater than service, no worship greater than compassion, and no faith greater than humanity. Social organizations are shaping the future of society by spreading awareness against drug abuse, promoting girls' education, helping poor families and strengthening family values. Saints have shown the path of truth, non-violence, discipline, service and dedication, and people must draw inspiration from their lives.

Political Ambitions Have

Pushed Back the Vision of a Rangla Punjab

The Chief Minister said that political ambitions have pushed the vision of a vibrant Punjab backwards. He stated that Punjab is burdened with a debt of over ₹4 lakh crore and that the average debt per person has crossed ₹1.25 lakh.

He said that the soil of Punjab carries the wisdom of the Gurus, the sacrifices of martyrs, the hard work of farmers and the fragrance of brotherhood. The relationship between Punjab and Haryana is not merely one of geographical boundaries but one of

shared hearts and emotions.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the Aam Aadmi Party had made tall promises of eliminating drug abuse, but Punjab today is grappling with drug addiction and gangster culture. He added that the BJP government in Haryana has provided positive opportunities to youth through employment generation, skill development initiatives and sports policies. The Chief Minister said that Punjab and Haryana are neighbouring states. Punjab is known as the land of farmers, yet its farmers continue to face repeated concerns and uncertainty regarding crop procurement, payments and mandi operations.

He further said that Punjab's youth are facing serious concerns. During the April-June quarter of the financial year 2025-26, Punjab's unemployment rate stood at 8.8 percent. In contrast, Haryana is providing opportunities to its youth, while Punjab is witnessing only hollow promises.

UP Boosts EV Adoption With Tariff Cut

Uttar Pradesh has announced a 20 per cent discount on public EV charging between 9 am and 4 pm. The move is aimed at boosting EV adoption while increasing the use of solar power. Work on thermal power projects was progressing, while the efficiency of existing ther-

mal power plants had improved significantly. The Uttar Pradesh government has announced a 20 per cent tariff discount for electric vehicle (EV) charging during designated solar hours in a bid to promote green mobility and maximise the use of affordable solar energy across

the state. The concession will be available for public EV charging infrastructure between 9 am and 4 pm, when solar power generation is at its peak. The initiative is aimed at encouraging EV adoption while making greater use of clean energy, the state government said. Addressing a

press conference, Uttar Pradesh Energy Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma said the move would reduce charging costs for EV users, promote sustainable transportation and contribute to environmental conservation by increasing the consumption of renewable energy.

Transferred but Still in Office

UPCL Executive Engineer Yet to Relinquish Charge a Week After Transfer Order
Officer has not joined new posting at Narayanbagar; discussions over alleged efforts to stall transfer revive focus on earlier controversies

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Barkot, Uttarkashi : Questions are being raised over the implementation of transfer orders in the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) after Executive Engineer (XEN) Dharm Singh of the Barkot Electricity Distribution Division reportedly continued to hold charge even a week after his transfer to Narayanbagar.

According to departmental sources, the officer has not yet assumed charge at his new posting. Instead, discussions within the department suggest that efforts are being made to have the transfer order stayed. While there has been no official confirmation of such attempts, the delay in



handing over charge has triggered debate among employees and local residents.

The continued presence of the officer at his previous post despite a formal transfer order has raised concerns over administrative discipline and compliance with departmental directives. Social organisation Jai Ho Group has stated that failure to enforce transfer orders on time could affect the

credibility of both the state administration and the corporation.

Dharm Singh has previously been at the centre of several controversies. Allegations related to arbitrary transfer and posting decisions, irregularities in power line shifting, and the establishment of a solar power project in his wife's name have surfaced in the past. Complaints regarding these issues have been raised on several occasions. However, the officer's response to these allegations has not been publicly available. Administrative experts note that if an officer wishes to challenge a transfer order, there is a prescribed administrative procedure. Unless the competent authority modifies, stays, or

cancels the order, the officer is expected to comply with it. Continuing to serve at the previous posting despite the order is generally considered inconsistent with service discipline. The matter has now drawn attention to UPCL's handling of its own administrative orders. Observers say that if the situation is not clarified promptly, it may raise further questions about transparency and the enforcement of transfer policies within the corporation. Responding to the issue, Superintending Engineer Yudhveer Singh Tomar said the transfer order should have been complied with. He added that the matter would be brought to the notice of senior authorities for appropriate action.



RPF of NFR Recovers Contraband

Valuables Worth Over Rs. 43 Lakh Rescues 17Persons in Six-Day Security Drive

MALIGAON, 5 JULY, 2026

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) continued its intensive drive against crime and unlawful activities across its jurisdiction from 25th to 30th June, 2026. During the period, RPF personnel conducted a series of successful operations at various railway stations and aboard trains, resulting in the recovery of narcotic substances, illicit liquor, stolen property, illegal railway tickets and cash, besides apprehending offenders, rescuing vulnerable passengers and protecting railway assets. These sustained efforts reflect N.F. Railway's unwavering commitment to ensuring a safe, secure and passenger friendly railway network.

During the six-day period, RPF personnel carried out 36 successful operations, leading to the recovery of 83.984 kg of Ganja valued at approximately Rs. 41.99 lakh, 343 bottles and one can of illicit liquor/beer worth over Rs. 39 thousand, 07 mobile phones valued at over Rs. 1.12 lakh, 02 nos. illegal railway tickets worth over Rs. 7 thousand and cash exceeding Rs. 35 thousand. The total value of the recoveries exceeded Rs. 43.92 lakh. RPF personnel also apprehended 17 offenders, including persons involved in narcotics trafficking, ticket touting, theft, stone pelting and other offences under the Railway Act and other applicable laws. The operations also underscored

RPF's humanitarian commitment. During the reporting period, RPF rescued 17 persons, comprising 15 minors (boys and girls) and 02 vulnerable adults, who were safely handed over to the respective Child Welfare Committees, Childline, One Stop Centres, NGOs or guardians after following due procedures. In addition, RPF personnel promptly rendered medical assistance to an injured passenger at Dalkhola Railway Station, ensuring timely treatment and safe transfer to a health-care facility. As part of its efforts to safeguard railway property, RPF in close coordination with the civil administration, RPSE, GRP and local police, successfully carried out an anti-encroachment drive at Safrai Railway Station. During the operation, 61 unauthorised structures were removed, resulting in the clearance of approximately 5,600 square metres of railway land. The eviction drive was completed peacefully without any untoward incident. The Railway Protection Force of NFR remains committed to strengthening passenger safety and security through intelligence-based operations, close coordination with law enforcement agencies and prompt assistance to passengers. Members of the public are encouraged to report any suspicious activity through Rail Madad, the Railway Helpline 139 or the nearest RPF personnel to help ensure a safe and secure railway environment for all.



We're proud hindus, not fools: Uddhav Thackeray targets BJP over Ayodhya theft row

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday launched the party's Ram Raksha agitation in Mumbai over the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, accusing the BJP of misusing Hindutva and claiming that those "looting Hindus are in power". Addressing supporters outside the Hanuman temple in Dadar after reciting the Hanuman Stotra and Hanuman Chalisa, Thackeray demanded an impartial investigation into the alleged financial irregularities linked to donations made at the Ayodhya temple. "If anyone loots a temple by misusing Hindutva, then Hindus will not spare them," he said, adding that an impartial probe was necessary. "A robber cannot be asked to investigate his own robbery," Thackeray remarked, asserting that the matter should be investigated independently. Wearing a saffron kurta, the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader repeatedly sought to distinguish his party's brand of Hindutva from that of the BJP.

"We are proud Hindus, but not fools. We are fierce, innocent and nation-loving Hindus, but not fools," he said. Claiming that the BJP had come to power in the name of Lord Ram, Thackeray alleged that the party had betrayed the trust of devotees. Invoking the legacy of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray, he said Balasaheb had given confidence to

Hindus during difficult times, including after the Mumbai serial bomb blasts.

'WE ARE HANUMAN SENA'

Referring to the split in the Shiv Sena and the loss of the party's traditional election symbol, Thackeray said, "They may have taken away our symbol, but we are Hanuman Sena." Drawing from the Ramayana, he added that Hanuman's army had burned Lanka, describing it as a symbol of courage and resistance. Thackeray also appealed to Hindus to "wake up", claiming that Lord Ram belongs to all Hindus and alleging that the community needed to be "freed from the BJP". Talking about the slogan, "Ayodhya toh jhanki hai, Kashi, Mathura abhi baaki hain", he said he was concerned about "what would happen in Kashi and Mathura" if allegations of financial wrongdoing were not addressed. The Ram Raksha agitation comes against the backdrop of an ongoing investigation into the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ayodhya Ram Temple. The alleged irregularities surfaced in June, following which a Special Investigation Team was constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government. An FIR was registered on June 25, and eight people associated with the temple's donation collection and counting process have since been arrested. The investigation is continuing.



ICICI Pru Life seeks investor status for Prudential after Bharti Life deal

NEW DELHI: (JUL 5)

UK-based Prudential Corporation Holdings Ltd, one of the promoters of ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, will seek regulatory approval for its classification from promoter to investor in the insurance venture with ICICI Bank.

ICICI Bank has entered into a Letter of Undertaking on July 4, with Prudential Corporation Holdings Ltd (Prudential) (Undertaking) pertaining to non-exercise of certain rights by Prudential relating to subsidiary ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company, subject to approval of the company's board and/or other statutory/regulatory approvals, ICICI Bank said in a regulatory filing.

The decision with regard to re-classification came in view of Prudential signing definitive agreements on May 17 with Bharti Life Ventures, 360 ONE group and Bharti Life Insurance, pursuant to which Prudential has agreed to acquire a 75 per cent stake in Bharti Life, subject to receipt of applicable regulatory approvals and the satisfaction of certain conditions.

Nykaa expects nearly 30 pc net revenue growth in Q1 on strong fashion sales

NEW DELHI: (JUL 5)

FSN E-Commerce Ventures, the owner of the Nykaa brand, on Sunday projected a consolidated net revenue growth of nearly 30 per cent for the first quarter of FY2026-27, to be led by a sharp acceleration in its fashion business. According to a regulatory filing, the company expects its consolidated Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) and Net Sales Value (NSV) to grow in the "early thirties" on a year-on-year basis for the quarter ended June 30, 2026. "Nykaa's Fashion vertical has started FY2027 on a notably stronger footing, with NSV growth expected to be in mid-fifties, marking a sharp acceleration from previous quarters. The Fashion business continues to see improvement in GMV to NSV funnel, supported by reduction in leakages," the company said.

PM Shares Semiconductor Employees' Success Story

AHMEDABAD: (JUL 5)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday shared a video of the interaction he had with young employees working at CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Gujarat's Sanand, which he inaugurated a day earlier. The video, shared on the PM's X account, showed employees from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Bihar speaking about their personal and professional journeys after Modi asked whether their work had brought happiness and changed their lives. Shivani Vikey, from Madhya Pradesh, said she was the first girl from her village to work outside the state. "I am the first daughter of my village to work outside the state. The villagers are impressed that I am self-dependent now," she said during the interaction.



MONEY MATTERS

Maersk places fresh order for 1,000 India-made shipping containers

The announcement came as Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, unveiled the first export-import (EXIM) shipping container manufactured in India for the company at the Maersk-CONCOR Inland Container Depot in UP's Dadri.



Global shipping giant Maersk has placed an order for 1,000 India-manufactured shipping containers, the government said. The development was announced as Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, unveiled the first

export-import (EXIM) shipping container manufactured in India for the company at the Maersk-CONCOR Inland Container Depot in Uttar Pradesh's Dadri on Friday, July 3. "Marking a strong vote of confidence in India's emerging container manufacturing ecosystem, Maersk

also placed an order for 1,000 additional India-manufactured shipping containers with DCM Shriram Group during the event," the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said in an official release. It asserted that the bulk order marks the beginning of a long-term

commercial partnership that is expected to strengthen India's position in the global maritime value chain. The development builds on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with Robert Maersk Uggla, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of AP Moller-Maersk, in February 2025, the ministry noted. During the meeting, he had encouraged the company to support the development of world-class container manufacturing in India, it added. "Within just sixteen months, that vision has culminated in the successful rollout of the country's first internationally procured, India-manufactured EXIM shipping container, demonstrating

the Government's ability to translate strategic intent into timely execution," the ministry stated. Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Sonowal said that India is rapidly emerging as a trusted global manufacturing and maritime powerhouse under the leadership of PM Modi. "The unveiling of the first India-manufactured EXIM shipping container for a leading global shipping line is a defining milestone in our journey towards Atmanirbhar Bharat. It reflects the growing confidence of global industry in India's manufacturing capabilities and our commitment to building world-class maritime infrastructure," he said.

OPEC+ set to consider modest oil output hike for August amid easing supply concerns

NEW DELHI, JULY 5

OPEC+ is expected to consider another modest increase in oil production quotas for August as the alliance continues unwinding earlier supply cuts, with delegates indicating that seven key producers have reached a preliminary agreement ahead of a virtual meeting on Sunday.

According to delegates, the proposed increase would raise the combined production target of seven major producers, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, by 188,000 barrels per day if approved during the video conference. The move is in line with the group's strategy to gradually reverse



production curbs introduced in 2023 to support oil prices. If implemented, the latest increase would bring the cumulative quota additions since the policy reversal began to around 940,000 barrels per

day, equivalent to nearly 1 per cent of global oil demand.

While previous production increases remained largely on paper due to disruptions caused by the conflict in the region and the closure of the

Strait of Hormuz, the recent interim peace agreement between the United States and Iran has enabled major Gulf producers to restore exports and output. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have already brought oil exports close to pre-conflict levels, according to tanker-tracking data, aided by improved shipping access through the Strait of Hormuz following the easing of tensions. The return of additional supplies has contributed to a surplus in key Asian markets, reversing the sharp rise in oil prices witnessed during the conflict and increasing the possibility of intensified competition among OPEC producers for

market share.

The production decision also comes at a time when OPEC+ is facing internal challenges. Iraq, one of the organisation's founding members, recently indicated that it could eventually consider leaving the group if it is not granted a higher production quota. The United Arab Emirates had previously exited the alliance in May following similar concerns over production limits. If approved, the August increase would represent the penultimate phase of restoring two layers of production cuts implemented in 2023, with one final increase expected in September to complete the process.

Govt withdraws emergency natural gas supply curbs as Strait of Hormuz LNG shipments resume

NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The Centre has withdrawn most provisions of the emergency natural gas supply regulation order introduced during the West Asia conflict, citing the resumption of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments through the Strait of Hormuz following a ceasefire and an improvement in the regional supply situation.

In an official notification, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas amended the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026, removing key operational provisions that had empowered the government to regulate the allocation of domestical-



ly produced natural gas and imported LNG according to a priority customer list.

The ministry said the situation in West Asia has improved significantly, with a ceasefire in place, negotiations underway and maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz resuming. The resto-

ration of shipping through the strategic waterway has eased concerns over fuel and gas supplies to India.

The emergency gas supply regulations were introduced under the Essential Commodities Act after the conflict in West Asia disrupted LNG shipments through the Strait

of Hormuz. The disruption followed military hostilities involving the United States, Israel and Iran, prompting some LNG suppliers to invoke force majeure and divert cargoes, raising concerns over India's gas availability.

The gas supply restrictions formed part of three emergency measures taken by the government to safeguard domestic energy supplies. The other two measures—directing refiners to maximise LPG production by diverting feedstock from petrochemical units and restricting diesel sales to bulk consumers—had already been withdrawn after the supply situation normalised.

India remains heavily de-

pendent on imports to meet its energy demand, importing around 88 per cent of its crude oil requirement and nearly half of its natural gas consumption. Around 40-45 per cent of the country's crude oil imports and nearly 65 per cent of LNG supplies originate from West Asia, making the Strait of Hormuz a critical route for India's energy security.

While India was able to diversify crude oil purchases by sourcing supplies from other producers during the disruption, natural gas imports remained particularly vulnerable because most LNG cargoes from Qatar transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

Centre releases Rs 25,863 crore to states under VB-G-RAM-G scheme

NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday released the first instalment of Rs 25,863 crore to the states for the implementation of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G-RAM-G) scheme. The instalment, which forms part of the "mother sanction" of the scheme, was released at a video conference with Rural Development Ministers of all states and Union Territories held to review the VB-G-RAM-G scheme. Addressing the meeting, Chouhan said that the first instalment was aimed at ensuring that states have adequate funds so that wages can be paid within 15 days. He urged all state governments to release their matching share on time so that there is no delay in wage

payments.

The government has resolved to implement VB-G-RAM-G across the country without any disruption from July 1, he said, adding that he was happy to note that the scheme has been successfully rolled out across the country and that the transition from MGNREGA to VB-G-RAM-G has been smooth and seamless. So far, no technical or operational issues have been reported. The minister said that work has started in a large number of Gram Panchayats during the first week and employment has been provided to lakhs of rural workers. He specially appreciated Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Rajasthan for generating a large number of employment opportunities on the very first day. He urged Odisha and West Bengal to start work in the remaining Gram Panchayats at the earli-



est and requested Jharkhand to notify the scheme and make the necessary budgetary provisions. States where RBI accounts or other formalities are still pending were also asked to complete them in a time-bound manner. He pointed out that the Government's objective is to ensure dignified employment, timely wage payments and the creation of durable rural assets for rural workers. Chouhan

said that while MGNREGA took nearly three years to be implemented across the country, VB-G-RAM-G has been rolled out nationwide in a single day. He described this as a major achievement made possible by the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the cooperation of the states, and the country's administrative capacity. He said that wage rates under VB-G-RAM-G have been increased by around 10 per cent on average and no state in the country will now have a wage rate below Rs 300 per day. He said this reflects the government's commitment to strengthening the income and social security of rural workers. The minister made it clear that there will be no shortage of funds for the effective implementation of VB-G-RAM-G. The first instalment has been released based on the demand

received from the states. He said Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats should select development works according to local needs to ensure inclusive and participatory rural development. Emphasising transparency and accountability, the Minister said that face authentication, geo-tagging, and other technological measures must be implemented in full. He said there is no place for any irregularity or fraud in the scheme and that the government is committed to ensuring transparency, credibility and the creation of quality assets. He further informed that the Ministry has deployed Area Officers, led by officers of the rank of Joint Secretary, to provide continuous support to the states. These officers will maintain regular coordination with the states and ensure quick resolution of implementation-related issues.



Lower Crude Prices Boost RBI Policy Room

NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Falling global crude oil prices are giving the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and several other Asian central banks greater flexibility to focus on supporting economic growth, as lower energy costs ease inflationary pressures and improve external balances, according to Standard Chartered's Weekly Market View report. The bank said the decline in oil prices is providing "disinflationary relief" across much of Asia, reducing the urgency for policymakers to keep interest rates elevated. However, it added that the benefits are likely to vary across economies depending on their reliance on energy imports and the underlying drivers of inflation.

According to the report, most Asian economies are net importers of energy, making them direct beneficiaries of lower crude prices.

Cheaper oil reduces imported inflation, eases pressure on current account balances, and improves the overall macroeconomic outlook. For major energy-importing countries such as India, Thailand and the Philippines, this creates additional space for central banks to prioritise economic growth over inflation control. Despite the broader positive outlook, Standard Chartered said monetary

policy across Asia is unlikely to move in a uniform direction. It noted that countries such as South Korea and Singapore continue to face demand-driven inflation linked to strong investment in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure. As a result, their central banks may need to keep interest rates higher for longer, even as economies like India gain greater room for policy easing.

The report also said that lower energy prices are supportive of regional financial markets, particularly risk assets and local-currency bonds, as declining inflation expectations improve investor sentiment.

At the same time, Standard Chartered warned that weather-related risks could threaten this favourable outlook. The bank estimates a 63 per cent probability of a "Super El Nino" developing in the fourth quarter of 2026. Such a weather event could disrupt agricultural production through extreme heat and drought while also increasing electricity demand for cooling, potentially driving energy prices higher and reigniting inflationary pressures across the region.

According to the report, the evolving trajectory of oil prices and weather conditions will remain key factors shaping the policy decisions of Asian central banks in the months ahead.

Jeet Adani Commits ₹2,500 Cr to Shivpuri

AHMEDABAD, JULY 5

The Adani Group on Sunday announced that it will invest Rs 2,500 crore over the next three years to establish an integrated missile manufacturing ecosystem in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh.

The facility, described as South Asia's largest private-sector missile ecosystem, will bring the entire value chain -- from raw materials to mission-ready missile systems -- under one roof. Speaking at the foundation stone-laying ceremony, Adani Enterprises Director Jeet Adani said the project marks a historic milestone for India's private defence manufacturing sector and will significantly enhance the country's self-reliance in strategic defence capabilities. "We have gathered here today for a landmark occasion-laying the foundation of South Asia's largest private-sector missile ecosystem. This facility will bring raw materials and mission-ready missiles under one roof, a historic first outside the public sector," he said. According to Jeet Adani, the Shivpuri complex will manufacture medium-to-long-range missile systems while also establishing facilities for composite propellant production and TNT and explosive-grade materials, reducing India's dependence on defence imports. He said the project will generate around 5,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities and support the growth of more than



50 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through a specialised defence supply chain. Highlighting the company's broader investments in Madhya Pradesh, Jeet Adani said the defence project is part of the Adani Group's Rs 1.10 lakh crore investment commitment announced at the Global Investors Summit in Bhopal. The investments span hydro pumped storage, cement, mining, smart meters and thermal energy and are expected to create 1.2 lakh jobs in the state by 2030. He added that the group has already invested over Rs 4,000 crore in its Ametha and Kymor plants in Katni district. Adani Power currently supplies 1,200 MW of electricity to Madhya Pradesh, with another 5,600 MW under development. The company has also commissioned wind energy projects in Lahori, Dhar, Ratlam and Ujjain, while preparations are underway to establish a cement plant in Ujjain. Jeet Adani also noted that the group recently laid the foundation stone for its Rs 1,060 crore cement unit in Guna, describing it as the largest investment in the district's history.

Gold Seen Firm Ahead of Fed, Inflation Data

NEW DELHI: (Jul 5) Gold prices are expected to remain firm next week as investors track key economic data from the US and other major economies for further clues on the Federal Reserve's interest rate trajectory. Traders will closely watch US services

PMI, trade data and weekly jobless claims, along with inflation figures from the Eurozone, China, Japan and Germany. Any fresh geopolitical developments or movement in crude oil prices could increase volatility in precious metals, they added.



From Fields to Future Tech

Why Digital Skills Are Becoming Essential for Agriculture Graduates

India's agricultural education system is undergoing a major transformation as technology reshapes the way farming is practiced, managed and analysed. Agriculture is no longer limited to traditional knowledge of crops, soil and weather. Today, data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), drones, satellite imaging, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and climate intelligence are becoming integral to modern farming. This shift is creating new career opportunities while also redefining the skills expected from agriculture

graduates. Employers increasingly seek professionals who combine strong agricultural knowledge with digital expertise, enabling them to make data-driven decisions that improve productivity, sustainability and profitability. Recognising these changing industry needs, agricultural universities across India are redesigning curricula, introducing technology-focused courses and collaborating with research institutions and industry partners to prepare students for the next generation of agricultural careers.

Agriculture Enters the Digital Era

India has long relied on agriculture as one of the country's largest employment sectors. However, rapid technological advancements are changing the nature of agricultural work.

Today's farms increasingly use satellite imagery to monitor crop health, drones to assess field conditions, IoT-based sensors to track soil moisture, AI tools to predict pest outbreaks and digital platforms to optimise irrigation, fertiliser use and supply chains.

As these technologies become mainstream, graduates entering the agricultural workforce require much more than conventional agronomic knowledge. They must be

comfortable working with digital tools, interpreting large datasets and applying analytics to improve farming outcomes.

This growing demand has led educational institutions to integrate data science, AI, precision agriculture and digital technologies into agricultural education.

Universities Embrace Technology-Driven Agriculture

Several leading institutions have already taken significant steps toward modernising agricultural education.

Among them, IIT Mandi has introduced a BTech programme in Agricultural Engineering with Data Analytics, combining engineering principles with modern digital technologies.

PROJECT: AUTONOMOUS CROP MONITORING

Why Data Skills Matter More Than Ever

Experts believe digital literacy has become a basic requirement rather than a specialised skill.

According to RC Agrawal, former Deputy Director General (Agricultural Education), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), agriculture has evolved beyond its traditional foundations.

Modern agriculture increasingly depends on sensors, satellites, software platforms and predictive analytics.

He points to the World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs Report 2025", which projects that nearly 39 percent of today's workplace skills may become obsolete by 2030.

Within agriculture, employers ranging from agri-tech startups and food processing companies to government agencies and research institutions now seek graduates capable of collecting, analysing and interpreting data for smarter farming decisions.

A graduate who understands soil sensor data, analyses satellite imagery or predicts pest outbreaks using historical weather information possesses a significant advantage in today's job market.

According to Agrawal, data literacy should now be viewed as a core competency for every agricultural graduate.

Better Employability Through Interdisciplinary Learning

Ranjeet Kumar Jha, Assistant Professor at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (SCENE), IIT Mandi, believes that combining agriculture with analytics substantially improves career opportunities.

Students trained in both agriculture and data science can pursue careers across multiple sectors, including:

- Precision agriculture
- Farm mechanisation
- Agri-input industries
- Agri-fintech
- Remote sensing
- Climate-smart agriculture
- Agricultural consulting
- Smart irrigation systems
- Digital farming platforms

Rather than being limited to traditional agricultural roles, these graduates become eligible for a much wider range of technology-driven positions.

Emerging Courses Shaping Future Careers

Agricultural universities are gradually introducing specialised programmes that reflect changing industry requirements.

Among the most relevant subjects gaining popularity are:

- Precision Agriculture
- Agricultural Data Science

Progress Is Promising—but Uneven

Although agricultural education is evolving rapidly, the pace of change differs considerably across institutions. A 2025 PwC-FICCI study conducted at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, highlights this challenge.

The study found that:

- More than 85 percent of students felt unprepared to use digital agricultural tools professionally.
- Around 61 to 74 percent rated their digital capabilities as only basic. These findings suggest that despite curriculum reforms, significant skill gaps continue to exist among students.

At the same time, several national initiatives have begun addressing these shortcomings.

NAHEP Driving Digital Transformation

The National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) has played a major role in modernising agricultural education.

Its contributions include:

- Establishing augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) laboratories in agricultural universities.
- Introducing more than 600 new academic courses.
- Supporting over 120 agri-startups.

These initiatives are helping institutions modernise teaching methods while exposing students to advanced technologies.

Faculty Training Remains the Biggest Challenge

While curriculum reforms receive considerable attention, experts believe faculty readiness remains the most significant obstacle.

Many university professors received their education before the emergence of AI, data analytics and digital agriculture. Consequently, they often require extensive retraining before effectively teaching these modern subjects. Although organisations such as ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), Hyderabad, and NAHEP have launched faculty development programmes, experts argue that much larger efforts are needed.

Suggested measures include:

- Mandatory AI literacy programmes for agricultural faculty.
- Industry sabbaticals allowing faculty to work with agri-tech companies.
- Visiting faculty appointments from industry.
- Joint academic-industry teaching positions.
- International faculty exchange programmes.

Such initiatives would ensure that educators remain aligned with rapidly evolving industry practices.

Infrastructure Gaps Slow Progress

Digital agriculture requires significant investments in modern infrastructure.

Many agricultural universities, especially state institutions, struggle to establish:

- IoT laboratories
- Drone training facilities
- Remote sensing centres
- AI laboratories
- Precision farming demonstration plots
- High-performance computing systems
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Remote Sensing
- Artificial Intelligence
- Machine Learning
- Drone Technology
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Climate Analytics
- Digital Agriculture
- Agribusiness Analytics
- Agricultural Robotics
- Carbon Farming
- Blockchain-based Traceability Systems

According to Prof V. Geethalakshmi, former Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, these emerging disciplines support smarter decision-making, efficient resource utilisation, climate resilience and transparent agricultural supply chains. Graduates trained in these areas are expected to enjoy stronger employability across both public and private sectors.

Bridging the Industry-Academia Gap

Another major challenge lies in synchronising academic curricula with industry requirements.

Technology evolves much faster than university curriculum revision cycles.

Many universities revise programmes only once every three to five years, whereas digital technologies change continuously.

As a result, graduates may enter the workforce with outdated knowledge.

Experts emphasise stronger collaboration between universities, agri-tech startups, technology companies and government agencies to ensure courses remain industry relevant.

Regular internships, live industry projects and collaborative research programmes can significantly improve student preparedness.

Addressing the Rural Digital Divide

Agricultural universities also face the challenge of varying student backgrounds.

Many students come from rural and semi-urban regions where exposure to digital technologies remains limited.

Before learning advanced AI or analytics, many require foundational digital literacy training.

Without addressing this digital divide, technology-focused education risks excluding a significant portion of future agricultural professionals.

Institutions are therefore increasingly incorporating basic digital skills into undergraduate programmes before introducing advanced analytical tools.

Regulatory Complexity Slows Reform

Agricultural education in India is governed by multiple authorities, including:

- State governments
- ICAR
- Agricultural universities
- Various regulatory bodies

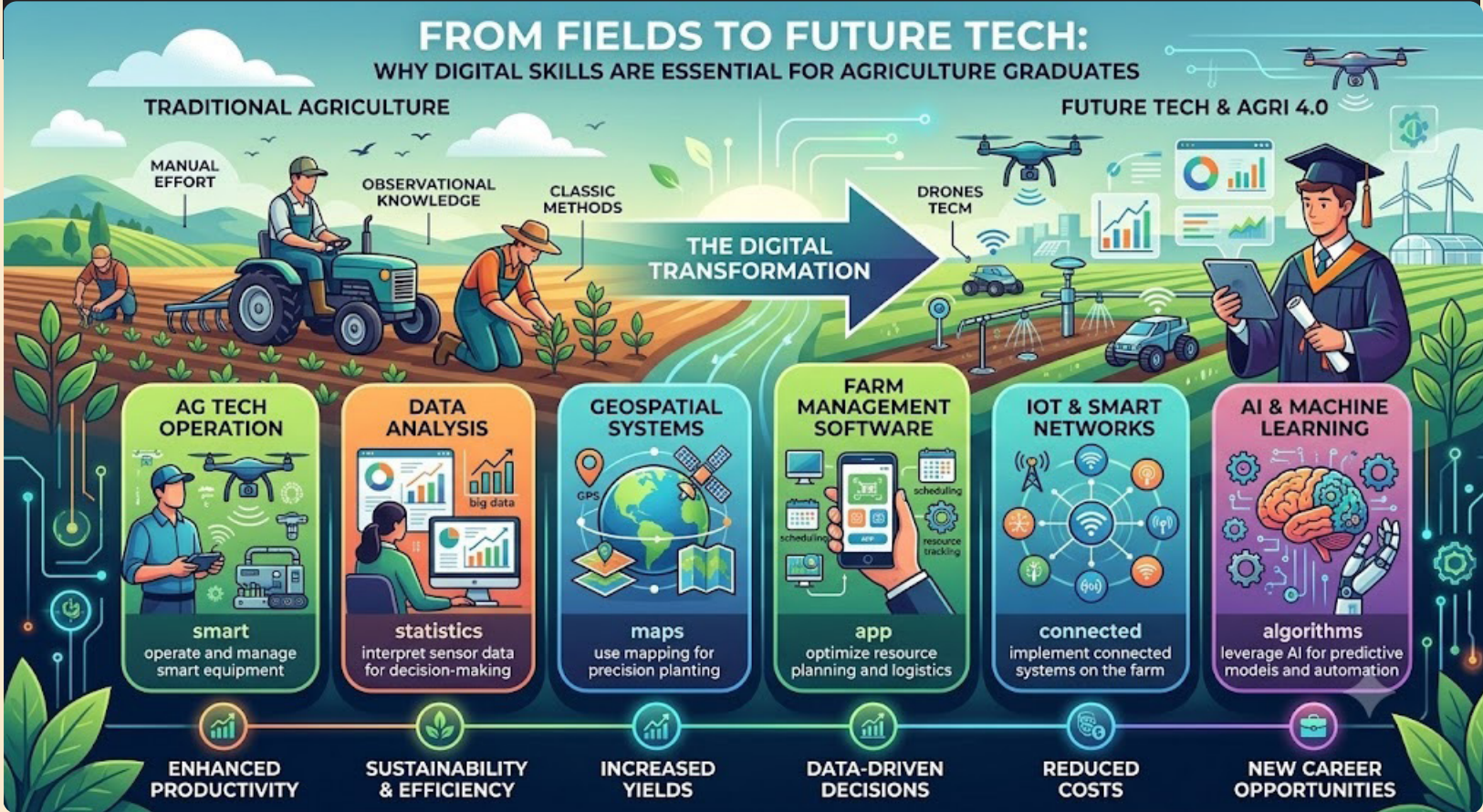
With nearly 78 agricultural universities operating under different administrative systems, implementing uniform reforms becomes difficult.

Curriculum updates, faculty recruitment, infrastructure approvals and technology adoption often proceed at different speeds across states.

Experts believe greater coordination among regulators will help accelerate nationwide educational reform.

Balancing Technology with Core Agricultural Sciences

Despite the growing emphasis on AI and analytics, experts unanimously agree that traditional agricultural knowledge remains indispensable.



Priyanka Mohan’s Regal Look Steals The Show

Priyanka Mohan, who was last seen in the Telugu blockbuster **OG**, continues to keep her fans engaged with a steady lineup of upcoming projects across languages. The actress has built a strong presence in Tamil and Telugu cinema over the past year with a mix of interesting roles. In her latest pictures, Priyanka looks elegant in a gold organza saree adorned with delicate sunburst embroidery, paired with a matching sleeveless blouse. She completes the look with a statement choker, jhumka earrings and soft open curls, exuding understated royal charm. On the work front, Priyanka has appeared in the movie ‘Made in Korea’ in Tamil, Korean and English, along with Kavin’s untitled next film and the Kannada project 666 Operation Dream Theater. She also has Manjanaththi lined up for a 2027 release.

Tamil Political Heat Touches NTR’s God Of War!

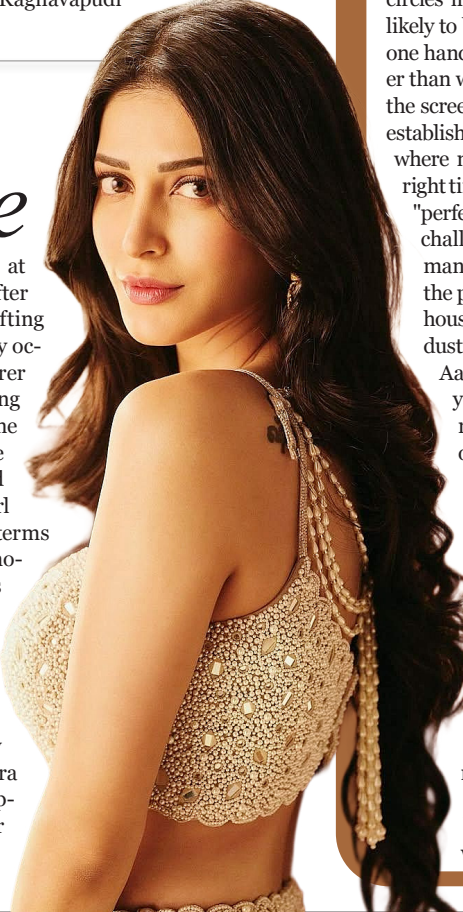


Junior NTR is collaborating with Trivikram for one of the most ambitious projects which happens to be based on the Hindu God, Lord Karthikeya. This project (God of war) was announced last week, and it has already made a lot of headlines. The statement from the makers where they said Murugan was born in the north, and is devoted to the South has not gone well with the Tamil population. They are expressing their opinion that Murugan was born in the Tamil land, and he completely belongs to them. Now we have arrived at a point where the political atmosphere in Tamil Nadu has also started to focus on this topic. Related statement was made from Seeman who happened to be a Tamil actor himself back in the day and is currently active in Tamil Nadu politics.The film crew’s post confirming that “NTR-Trivikram, film centered on Tamil God Muruga, the conceptualization portrays ‘Tamil God’ Murugan as born in the northern plains is shocking. Under the guise of artistic creation, they are attempting to construct historical distortions, he stated. This gives the implication that this Tamil Nadu politician is not pleased with this announcement from the makers where they portrayed Murugan as the God from the north. He has now communicated that he and his party will see to it that this film does not release in Telugu or Tamil versions in Tamil Nadu. This is an early political heat that is building around this film, and there is still long way to go for the production and the actual landing of the film. Many things can change in this period as the unit will have the time and platforms to clarify further. For now, these controversies will only go to fuel the hype on the film which will help its visibility.

Shruti Crowns Sridevi Her Favourite

Actress Shruti Haasan revealed that late legendary star Sridevi is her all-time favourite Tamil actress. Shruti recently conducted an ‘Ask Me Anything’ session with her Instagram family, and one of the users shared the question, “Favourite actress in Tamil all time”. In response, Shruti uploaded a picture of Sridevi on the Stories section of her Instagram handle. Sridevi made her first appearance on screen as a child artist in the 1967 Tamil film ‘Kandhan Karunai’ at the age of four. After that, she played the lead role as a child in M. A. Thirumugam’s 1969 mythological Tamil film ‘Thunaiavan’. In 1976, Sridevi made her debut as an adult actor in the Tamil film ‘Moon-dru Mudichu’. After stepping into Bollywood with ‘Solva Sawan’, Sridevi delivered some memorable hits in the form of ‘Himmatwala (1983)’, ‘Tohfa (1984)’, ‘Karma (1986)’, ‘Mr. India (1987)’, ‘Waqt Ki Awaz (1988)’, ‘Chandni (1989)’, ‘Sadma (1983)’, ‘Nagina (1986)’, ‘Chaal-Baaz (1989)’, ‘Lamhe (1991)’, ‘Khuda Gawah (1992)’, ‘Gumrah (1993)’, ‘Laadla (1994)’, and ‘Judaai (1997)’ to name just a few. Unfortunately,

Sridevi suddenly passed away at the age of 54 in 2018 in Dubai after an accidental drowning. Now, shifting our focus to Shruti, she is presently occupied with Dulquer Salmaan starrer ‘Aakasam Lo Oka Tara’. According to the sources, Shruti has joined the team for the latest schedule of the forthcoming drama. She is believed to be playing a contemporary girl who wants to live life on her own terms in her next. Refreshing your memory, the makers unveiled Shruti’s look in the movie on the occasion of her birthday in January this year.The production banner, Geetha Arts, dropped the poster on social media, along with the caption, “A trailblazer in every sense.... Team #AakasamLoOkaTara wishes @shrutihaasan a very Happy Birthday. And Meet a character that stands her ground and owns her space.”



Akhil Turns Emotional at Lenin Event



Actor Akhil Akkineni made an emotional return to the spotlight on Sunday, July 5, as the pre-release event of his much-awaited film Lenin was held with grandeur at Nehru Municipal Grounds in Tirupati. After nearly two-and-a-half years away from the screen, Akhil expressed deep gratitude and emotion while addressing his fans. He apologized for the long gap, saying, “There has been a gap. I’m sorry to everyone. The pain of not being able to communicate with you has stayed in my heart. Please accept me as one of your own and take me home with you. Only then will I be truly happy.” The event saw a massive turnout of fans from across Chittoor district, turning the grounds into a sea of supporters. Police made elaborate security arrangements to ensure the event passed off smoothly. The sight of father and son — King Nagarjuna and Akhil — on the same stage sent the crowd into a frenzy. Directed by Murali Kishore Abburu, Lenin is a rural Rayalaseema-based romantic action entertainer. Bhagyashree Borase stars opposite Akhil, with music composed by Thaman

S. The film’s teaser, trailer, and latest song ‘Jaya Mangalam’ have received positive responses. It is scheduled for a grand worldwide release on July 10. Speaking at the event, Akhil revealed that the story deeply resonated with his personal journey. He credited director Murali Kishore Abburu for crafting a narrative that mirrored his own pain and growth. He also showered praise on the cast and crew, particularly highlighting Thaman’s soulful music, Bhagyashree’s performance, and the support of senior actors like Brahmanandam, Shivaji, and Sunil. He thanked producer Nagavamsi and his father Nagarjuna for their unwavering backing. Nagarjuna, who attended as the chief guest, expressed full confidence in the film. He admitted he was initially doubtful about Akhil playing a rustic character but was blown away after watching the movie. “You won’t see Akhil on screen — you will only see Lenin. He has completely immersed himself in the role,” Nagarjuna said. He described the film as a “Mahabharata unfolding in Seema” and praised the powerful love story at its core. The veteran actor also shared a personal connection to the story, noting that it is set in Sri Ramapuram, his father Akkineni Nageswara Rao’s native village. He lauded Bhagyashree’s character Bharati as the “heartbeat” of the film and appreciated producer Nagavamsi’s strong belief in the project. Concluding on a high note, Nagarjuna declared, “On July 10, our man is coming and he is going to rock it,” invoking the blessings of Lord Venkateswara

Naga Vamsi Hypes ‘Fauzi’

Prabhas’ “Fauzi” is already one of the most awaited Telugu films, and producer Naga Vamsi has now added more excitement with his latest comments. The film is directed by Hanu Raghavapudi and is being produced by Mythri Movie Makers on a massive scale. Speaking about the film, Naga Vamsi revealed in Gulte interview that he recently watched some footage from “Fauzi”. He said he was completely impressed by what he saw and believes the film will be much bigger than people are expecting. “I don’t know what people are expecting from this film, but it’s going to be at the next level,” he said. His

comments have quickly gone viral among Prabhas fans, who are already waiting eagerly for the film. While the shooting is still in progress, the latest praise has only increased expectations. “Fauzi” is said to be a period war drama with a strong love story at its core. The combination of Prabhas and Hanu Raghavapudi has already created huge curiosity, as the director is known for emotional storytelling and visually rich films. Although the makers are yet to announce the release date, the film continues to generate strong buzz. With Naga Vamsi calling the footage “next level,” fans now believe “Fauzi” could be one of the biggest cinematic experiences from Prabhas in the coming years.

Sreeleela’s Bollywood Debut: A Trial by Fire?

Sreeleela’s Bollywood journey is taking unexpected turns even before it officially begins. For any actress, making a Hindi film debut opposite an established star in a high-profile project is usually considered the ideal launchpad. However, the young actress seems to be heading down a different path, with circumstances reshaping what was initially expected to be her grand entry into Bollywood.When Sreeleela announced her move to Hindi cinema, industry buzz suggested that her debut would come alongside Kartik Aaryan in director Anurag Basu’s much-awaited romantic drama. The project appeared to be the perfect vehicle for her introduction to the Hindi audience. But repeated production delays have changed the equation, and now reports from Bollywood circles indicate that Diler, starring Ibrahim Ali Khan, is likely to become Sreeleela’s first Hindi release instead. On one hand, the development could work in her favor. Rather than waiting indefinitely for a delayed production to hit the screens, making an earlier debut allows the actress to establish her presence in Bollywood sooner. In an industry where momentum is crucial, reaching audiences at the right time can often be more valuable than waiting for the “perfect” launch. Yet, the shift also brings a fresh set of challenges. An actor’s debut is rarely judged on performance alone. The lead hero’s market value, the scale of the production, promotional buzz, and the production house behind the film all contribute to shaping the industry’s first impression of a newcomer. While Kartik Aaryan has faced mixed box-office results in recent years, he remains one of Bollywood’s most recognizable young stars. Launching alongside an actor of his stature naturally offers greater visibility and commercial assurance. In contrast, Ibrahim Ali Khan is still in the early stages of establishing himself as a theatrical star. That inevitably raises questions about whether Sreeleela’s first Hindi film will generate the same level of excitement and audience attention that a bigger commercial project might have delivered. However, viewing the situation purely as a risk would be an oversimplification. Bollywood has evolved considerably in recent years. Audiences today appear to value compelling stories, strong direction, and quality filmmaking over mere star power. Several films led by relatively new faces have succeeded purely because of their content, while many star-driven projects have struggled

despite massive pre-release hype. The industry is increasingly proving that the script often matters more than the surname on the poster. Seen from that perspective, Sreeleela’s changing debut may not necessarily be a setback. Instead, it could reflect a more practical approach—prioritizing the right opportunity over simply waiting for the biggest launch. Such developments are hardly unusual in Bollywood. Production delays, release postponements, scheduling conflicts, and shifting market dynamics have altered debut plans for numerous actors over the years. As a result, producers today are less inclined to depend on a single project and are increasingly preparing backup plans to ensure promising talent doesn’t lose valuable time waiting on uncertain schedules. Sreeleela’s journey appears to mirror this changing industry mindset. Her situation highlights that making a Bollywood debut is no longer just about entering the industry—it is equally about entering at the right time, with the right project. Ultimately, whichever film introduces her to Hindi audiences, Sreeleela’s long-term success will depend not on the title of her debut but on her performances, script choices, and ability to connect with viewers. The first film may open the door, but sustaining a career in Bollywood requires consistent talent and smart decisions. For now, the unexpected twists surrounding her debut serve as a reminder that behind every glamorous launch lies a series of strategic choices, uncertainties, and calculated risks. Whether Diler or another film eventually becomes her first Bollywood release, all eyes will be on Sreeleela as she prepares to take one of the most significant steps of her career.



State-Level Handicrafts Fair from July 16 to Boost Bonalu Artisans

More stalls for traditional crafts; Minister Ponnamp urges public to support rural artisans

HYDERABAD

A State-Level Handicrafts Exhibition and Sales Fair will be held from July 16 at the HMDA Grounds beside the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue in Hyderabad to mark the Ashada Bonalu festival, State Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar announced on Sunday.

The exhibition is being organised by the Rural Development Department and the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) to bring together traditional handcrafted products required for Bonalu under one roof while providing direct market access to artisans from across Telangana.

Addressing the media, the Minister said Bonalu is not merely a religious festival but a celebration of Telangana's cultural heritage, traditional arts and crafts. The exhibition, he said, aims to preserve these age-old traditions while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural artisan communities.



Artisans from various traditional occupational communities—including potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, Vishwabrahmins, Padmashali weavers, goldsmiths, stone sculptors, basket makers, leather craftsmen and several others—will display and sell their products directly to the public.

The fair will showcase a wide range of Bonalu-related and traditional handcrafted items, including clay Bonam pots, earthen lamps, bamboo baskets, trays and sieves, brass and copper vessels, kalashams, ceremonial pots, temple bells, puja materials, bamboo decorative articles, flower garlands and torans, decorative fabrics for

Bonam pots, bangles, bead ornaments, whips and ankle bells used by Pothuraju performers, traditional musical instruments such as dappu drums and dhols, wooden prayer platforms, miniature mandaps and several other handicrafts.

Ponnamp Prabhakar said the Bonalu season provides employment to thousands of artisans, including potters, bamboo craftsmen, metal workers, carpenters, drum makers, flower vendors and textile artisans. Organising the exhibition, he said, would improve their incomes while helping preserve Telangana's rich artistic traditions.

The Minister said more stalls have been arranged this



year compared to the previous edition to accommodate a larger number of artisan communities. He recalled that potters, bamboo craftsmen, carpenters, toddy-tapper workers, bead artisans, bronze craftsmen and weavers had recorded encouraging sales during earlier exhibitions, prompting the government to expand participation this year.

He said the State Government is committed to protecting traditional crafts and strengthening artisan livelihoods by creating better market opportunities, enhancing incomes and encouraging younger generations to continue hereditary occupations.

Appealing to the lakhs of devotees expected to visit Hyderabad during Bonalu, the Minister urged them to purchase clay Bonam pots and other traditional handcrafted products from the exhibition. Every handmade product purchased, he said, directly supports an artisan's family and contributes to preserving Telangana's cultural heritage.

He also announced that State Ministers, MLAs and other public representatives would visit the exhibition to encourage artisans and appealed to people from across Telangana to make the fair a grand success by supporting traditional handicrafts.



Let's Adopt Plastic-Free Green Lifestyle

Karimnagar Mayor Kolagani Srinivas

KARIMNAGAR

Karimnagar Mayor Kolagani Srinivas said that the plastic monster is not only threatening the survival of the world population but also of billions of other species, and every citizen should adopt a plastic-free lifestyle to drive away the plastic menace. Unveiling a wall poster, prepared by the Satavahana

Lions Club, at the Mayor's Camp Office today, the Mayor praised the Satavahana club's initiative and said that the city's drainage canals are full of plastic waste and the corporation staff has to work hard to remove it.

He warned that everyone should adopt a sustainable green lifestyle, otherwise there is a risk of fatal diseases like cancer. He said that the corporation will organize awareness programs for a plastic-free society and

asked the city's citizens to actively participate in these programs. On this occasion, the club members felicitated the city Mayor Srinivas. Satavahana Lions Club leaders Lion: Capt: Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, Vice Presidents Lion: Dr. Vadluri Srinivas, Secretary Lion: Narla Venugopal, Treasurer Lion: CA Mukund Praveen Kumar, Lion: Pachunuri Surender, Lion: Edavelli Ravinder Reddy and others participated in this meeting.

Double Trouble: Three Scooters Run on One Registration Number in Hyderabad Scam

HYDERABAD

Three individuals were arrested in Hyderabad by the City Commissioner's Task Force (Charminar) for duplicating a single vehicle registration number across multiple two-wheelers in a bid to dodge law enforcement and debt recovery actions. The arrests followed a routine interception of a scooter bearing the registration number TS09 FE 4997, which prompted a deeper verification of engine and chassis numbers against official vehicle records and revealed inconsistencies that pointed to an elaborate misrepresentation of identity.

Investigations identified the suspects as Nakoti Mallikar-

jun, 28, a lighting business operator from Parsigutta; Bheem Ajay Reddy, 29, a local businessman; and Koppula Dhanraj, 30, a collection agent from Sanjeevapuram. Officials said Mallikarjun had allegedly affixed a duplicate number plate from his own registered Honda Activa onto another unregistered financed scooter, and then circulated the same registration across three separate scooters, including one seized during the operation.

The probe further established that the unregistered financed scooter was originally owned by a person named Sai Ram, and the plate was used as part of a debt-related scheme to avoid repayment of an outstanding loan of Rs

36,000 to IndusInd Bank. Mallikarjun allegedly supplied the number plate to Dhanraj, enabling him to operate an additional scooter under the same registration, thereby complicating enforcement efforts and evading traffic challans.

Hyderabad police officials emphasized that the case involves deliberate misrepresentation of vehicle identity to mislead authorities and financial institutions. The three scooters linked to the single registration number TS09 FE 4997 were recovered, and the investigation is being expanded to determine the full extent of the network and potential recoveries or further charges under relevant motor vehicle and fraud provisions.

Minister Sridhar Babu to inaugurate 'CIRO Pharma' cancer drug plant

SIDDIPET

Telangana, which shines at the top as India's pharma capital, is set to become home to yet another major pharmaceutical facility. The state-of-the-art manufacturing plant built by CIRO Pharma, a producer

of cancer medicines, at Biotech Park-3 in Karakapatta, Siddipet district, will be inaugurated on Monday. IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu will formally inaugurate the CIRO plant. The facility will manufacture medicines and soft gels in com-



pliance with the standards of several global pharmaceutical regulatory bodies. Health Minister Damodar Rajanar-simha and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy will also take part in the inaugural ceremony. The cancer drugs manufactured here will

be exported primarily to the United States, Europe, Latin America and the Gulf countries. The plant currently employs 275 personnel, and once full-scale production operations commence, the number of employees and scientists is expected to double.

CS Sanjay Jaju Reviews Food Safety Measures

HYDERABAD

As per instructions of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy, the Chief Secretary Shri Sanjay Jaju directed officials to take stringent measures to safeguard public health. He emphasized the strict enforcement of food safety regulations across the State and instructed officials to conduct continuous inspections with special focus on adulterated food products.

The Chief Secretary chaired a review meeting with senior officials on Saturday at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Drug Control and Food Safety departments should work in close coordination to ensure effective implementation of food safety standards and regular inspections to maintain food quality, thereby ensuring the availability of safe



and quality food to the public.

CS instructed officials to prepare suitable proposals within a week to bring the two existing departments onto a common platform for better coordination and efficiency. He noted that such integration would enable the departments to discharge their responsibilities more effectively. He also directed officials to study the best practices being followed

in other States and prepare an appropriate implementation plan for the state. The meeting also reviewed the cases registered so far in the State, their progress, staffing, and other related issues. The meeting was attended by Hon'ble CM's Advisor, Ex-Officio Special CS K.Ramakrishna Rao, Director General of Police C.V. Anand, CMO Principal Secretaries Sheshadri, N. Sridhar, GAD

Principal Secretary Ahmed Nadeem, Additional Director General (Intelligence) Vijay Kumar, Principal Secretary, Health Department Christina Z. Chongthu, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan, Health Commissioner Sangeetha, Drug Controller General Avinash Mohanty, and other senior officials. Issued by the Special Commissioner, Information & Public Relations Department.

Heartfelt News: Shambhipur Raju MLC Injured in Road Accident Near Bhuvanagiri; Stable, Under Care



HYDERABAD

A sense of relief and concern washed over the region today as Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC Shambhipur Raju was involved in a road accident near Bhuvanagiri while en route to Warangal. The collision, which occurred when another car rammed into the vehicle carry-

ing the MLC, left him with injuries but, according to attending doctors, in a stable condition.

Local residents, along with security personnel, acted with commendable composure, swiftly rushing Shambhipur Raju to a nearby hospital where he is currently receiving medical care. Hospital officials report that his vital signs are

stable and that he is under careful observation as he begins the road to recovery.

The accident also caused minor damage to the MLC's vehicle, a detail that underscores the suddenness of the incident. Law enforcement authorities have registered a case and launched an investigation to determine the circumstanc-

es surrounding the collision, including any factors that may have contributed to the crash.

In the wake of the incident, BRS leaders and party workers have expressed their deep concern for Shambhipur Raju's health. Messages of support and prayers have been pouring in from colleagues, supporters, and well-wishers who are hoping for a swift and steady recovery.

As the community holds its breath for news of his recovery, this episode serves as a poignant reminder of the unpredictable moments that can alter the course of a day. The priority remains clear: the well-being of Shambhipur Raju, and the continued dedication of those who work to serve the people of Telangana.

Updates will be shared as more information becomes available. In the meantime, families, friends, and supporters are urged to keep him in their thoughts and prayers, hoping for strength, comfort, and a speedy return to good health.

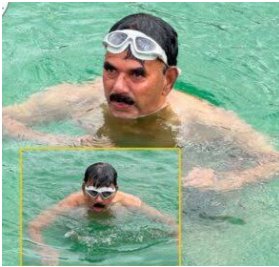
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SHORT
TAKES

Jupally swims for an hour, urges all to prioritise fitness



HYDERABAD: Echoing the timeless adage 'Health is the greatest wealth', Minister for Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao showcased his passion for fitness on Sunday morning. The Minister spent an hour swimming in a well located at his agricultural farm on the outskirts of Kollapur town in Nagarkurnool district. Speaking on the occasion, Jupally Krishna Rao emphasised that good health is a far greater investment than any material wealth a person can acquire. He urged everyone, regardless of age, to integrate physical exercise into their daily routines. "Engaging in at least an hour of physical activity every day whether it is yoga, meditation, walking, jogging, running, or swimming, significantly improves overall health," Jupally said. He further highlighted that exercise is not just about physical fitness; it also plays a crucial role in relieving stress and boosting mental well-being. The Minister asserted that building a healthy society is only possible when everyone, from the youth to the elderly, prioritises fitness.

Satish Kumar, Chairman and CEO, Railway Board



- **Inspects Railway Manufacturing Unit, Kazipet & Charlapalli Terminal**
- **CRB & CEO also inspected Jangaon Amrit Station and IRISSET & Centre of Excellence**
- **He held a detailed performance review meeting with officials at Rail Nilayam**

HYDERABAD

Satish Kumar, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Railway Board conducted detailed inspection of Railway Manufacturing Unit (RMU), Kazipet, Charlapalli Rail terminal, Jangaon Amrit station and IRISSET today i.e., 05th July, 2026. He was accompanied by Shri Sanjay

Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway; Dr. R. Gopalakrishnan, Divisional Railway Manager, Secunderabad Division and other senior Railway officials through the inspection. Shri Satish Kumar commenced the inspection from Kazipet Railway station, wherein he reviewed the on-going Amrit Station works and also inspected amenities available at the station. Shri Satish Kumar visited Railway Manufacturing Unit at Kazipet which is being constructed at a cost of Rs. 597.68 Crore. The RMU is aimed to manufacture and maintain variety of modern rolling stock and next-gen Railway coaches. The Chairman, Railway Board reviewed the progress of on-going construction works at the RMU. RVNL officials explained the topography of the Manufacturing Unit by depicting the miniature

model available at the site office. A detailed power point presentation was also given by the concerned officials about the functionalities of each unit and the progress of the works. Further, he inspected the main shed, bogie shop, paint shop, wheel shop and testing shop. During the course of inspection, he interacted with the media personnel and elaborated on the progress of works at RMU and its benefits. Further, Chairman & CEO conducted a rear window inspection from Kazipet to Charlapalli, enroute he also inspected Jangaon Railway station and reviewed the passenger amenities, circulating area and the on-going redevelopment works. At Charlapalli station, Shri Satish Kumar inspected the tracks, points & crossings, yard and other passenger amenities available at the new rail terminal. He also interacted with the

trackmen and gang-men at Charlapalli terminal and discussed about their duties. In addition, Shri Satish Kumar visited Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering & Telecommunications & Centre of Excellence (COE), wherein he interacted with the officials involved in the implementation of KAVACH, the indigenously designed Anti-Collision system. Further, the concerned officials elaborated the deployment status of KAVACH across Indian Railways through a power-point presentation. Later, CRB & CEO visited Rail Nilayam, SCR Headquarters and held a detailed performance review meeting with General Manager, SCR and other senior Railway officials. A power point presentation was given by the officials on the general performance of the zone.



Poet Dr. Peruka Raju Honoured with the NTR Memorial Poetry Award-2026

HYDERABAD

With the objective of promoting and preserving the Telugu language, Vishwa Sahiti Kalavedika, a national literary, cultural, and social service organization that brings together poets from across the globe, successfully organized the "Sahiti Tarakan" National Poetry Competition on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the legendary actor, statesman, and former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR). The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from poets across India and abroad, who paid tribute to NTR through their literary creations. The entries reflected the extraordinary personality of NTR as a pioneering actor, a visionary leader, a champion of the poor, and an enduring symbol of Telugu pride and self-respect. Among the distinguished participants, the poem penned by Dr. Peruka Raju, a renowned national poet, author, and multilingual scholar, stood out for its depth of thought, literary excellence, and artistic expression. In recognition of its outstanding merit, he was selected to receive the prestigious "NTR Memorial Poetry Award-2026." The award was presented at a special ceremony held today

at DKW Government Women's Degree College, Nellore. The honour, comprising the NTR Memorial Poetry Award, a cash prize, a memento, a citation, and a ceremonial shawl, was presented by eminent Ghazal singer Dr. Ghazal Srinivas, Mrs. K. Ramavathi, President of Vishwa Sahiti Kalavedika, Mrs. Maheshwari, Vannam Brahmaiah, Kotamreddy, the local MLA, and other members of the organizing committee. Dr. Peruka Raju has earned widespread recognition as a poet, author, and multilingual scholar, with admirers not only across India but also overseas. He is presently serving as a Junior Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army, where he continues to balance his professional responsibilities with his passion for literature. He is also the founder of My Gift Yuva Organisation, through which he actively engages in social service initiatives and inspires young people. The conferment of the NTR Memorial Poetry Award-2026 upon Dr. Peruka Raju has been widely appreciated by literary personalities, poets, artists, social activists, literature enthusiasts, and members of the military fraternity, who have extended their heartfelt congratulations on this remarkable achievement.

Undertake 'Special Intensive Revision' (SIR) in a Prestigious Manner – Ensure No Eligible Vote is Missed

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka directs Congress cadre of Secunderabad Parliamentary Constituency

HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister instructed Congress party cadre to undertake the 'Special Intensive Revision' (SIR) of voter lists in a highly meticulous and prestigious manner, ensuring that no eligible voter is left out. He also emphasized the need to take the six guarantees and welfare-development programs being implemented by the Congress government to every household. The Deputy Chief Minister attended a key meeting held at Praja Bhavan with Congress leaders of the Secunderabad Parliamentary constituency, along with Hyderabad In-charge Minister and Minority Welfare Minister . Rajya Sabha Member was also present. Addressing the gathering, Bhatti Vikramarka said, "In view of the upcoming elections, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process must be carried out with utmost seriousness. Division-level leaders must continuously monitor the voter list in coordination with BLAs to ensure there are no unmapped names, technical errors, surname changes, or spelling mistakes. No eligible voter



should be excluded under any circumstances." He called upon party workers to convert the positive perception among people regarding government welfare schemes into a strong vote base. The Deputy Chief Minister directed party cadre to widely publicize the six guarantees and welfare schemes being implemented by the state government, along with urban development works worth ₹40,000 crore, by reaching every household. He highlighted key schemes such as free bus travel for women, 200 units of free electricity, distribution of 6 kg of fine rice per person, and health assistance up to ₹10 lakh under Aarogya, explaining that these initiatives are providing significant financial relief to people. He also asked leaders to inform citizens about the massive infrastructure projects underway in Hyderabad, includ-

ing roads and flyovers. The government has cleared fee reimbursement dues and decided to directly deposit funds into students' bank accounts. Additionally, he announced the introduction of the Indiramma Life Insurance Scheme for 1.15 crore families, stating that these initiatives are instilling confidence and security among the people. Bhatti Vikramarka reiterated that after the formation of the people's government under the Indiramma Rajyam in Telangana, the fear-driven atmosphere of the past decade has been replaced with freedom and dignified governance. "The Congress government ensures a democratic environment where there is no fear of phone tapping and people can speak freely. It is the responsibility of party workers to strongly take this message and welfare initiatives to the people," he said.

Online Gambling Addiction Leads to Kidnapping, Robbery and Attempt to Murder

Karimnagar Police Crack Sensational Case Using Technical Evidence

KARIMNAGAR

A 21-year-old youth, allegedly driven by mounting debts after losing over ₹4 lakh in online gambling, kidnapped a woman labourer, robbed her of her gold and silver ornaments, and attempted to murder her by throwing her into a farm well. Karimnagar Police Commissioner Ghaus Alam disclosed the details while addressing the media on Saturday. According to Police Commissioner Ghaus Alam, the victim, Gangadhara Lakshmi (55), went missing from the labour adda near Tower Circle on July 1. During the investigation, police found that she had been kidnapped, robbed and attacked. The accused was identified as Dhamma Dinesh Reddy (21), a second-year degree student from Gollapalli village. Police said the accused had become addicted to online gam-



bling platforms, including DIUWIN, Jio Lottery and colour trading games, and had accumulated heavy debts through loan apps. In an attempt to clear his debts, he planned the crime after conducting reconnaissance at several locations. The accused allegedly lured the victim on a Rapido bike to the outskirts of Nustulapur near Thimmapur, assaulted her, robbed about five grams of gold ornaments and 20 grams of silver anklets, and pushed her into an agricultural well.

However, the victim survived by holding onto another rope inside the well and was rescued by local farmers the following morning. Using CCTV footage, mobile phone analysis and other technical evidence, police arrested the accused near Amaraveerula Stupam in Karimnagar. The stolen ornaments, cash, mobile phones and the motorcycle used in the crime were recovered. Police Commissioner Ghaus Alam cautioned the public against online gambling and il-

legal betting apps, warning that such addictions could lead to serious financial distress and violent crimes. He also advised daily wage labourers to avoid accompanying strangers and to inform their family members or co-workers before leaving for work. The Police Commissioner appreciated ACP Venkataswamy, Inspectors K. Ramachander Rao and Tirumal, SI Suman and the investigating team for solving the case swiftly using technical evidence.

Conduct Statewide Baseline Test for Classes 2-5: Educationist Appeals to Govt

Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy proposes 'Baseline Telangana' initiative to identify learning gaps early

HYDERABAD

Eminent educationist and environmentalist Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy has urged the Telangana Government to introduce a statewide Baseline Test for all students studying in Classes 2 to 5 at the beginning of every academic year to assess foundational learning levels and improve educational outcomes. Dr. Gopal Reddy, National Advisor of the Telangana Recognised School Managements Association (TRSMA) and Chairman of the Lotus Lap Group of Schools, appealed to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and the School Education Department to implement the initiative uniformly across all Government, Private, Gurukul, Residential, Aided, Unaided,

Minority and other recognised schools in the State. He said the proposed Baseline Test would help identify learning gaps in the early years of schooling, enabling teachers to provide timely academic support through structured remedial programmes. According to him, many students are promoted to higher classes despite lacking basic competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, language proficiency, comprehension and logical thinking. He noted that several national and international learning assessments have consistently highlighted deficiencies in foundational learning among schoolchildren. Dr. Gopal Reddy observed that classroom teaching generally follows the prescribed syllabus without first assessing students' actual learning levels. A scientifically designed Baseline Test at the start of the academic year, he said, would allow teachers to understand each child's academic preparedness

before beginning classroom instruction. He proposed that the assessment should evaluate students in key foundational areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, language skills, comprehension, logical thinking and problem-solving skills.



The assessment results, he said, should be used to prepare Individual Learning Profiles for every student, enabling teachers to design personalised learning plans. Students requiring additional support could then receive structured remedial instruction, while advanced learners could benefit

from enrichment programmes. Dr. Gopal Reddy said the Baseline Test would serve as a valuable academic tool for teachers, parents, school heads and education administrators by providing a clear picture of each child's learning status. It would also strengthen continuous assessment, improve classroom planning and promote data-driven teaching practices throughout the academic year. "Every child learns differently and progresses at a different pace. The first responsibility of the education system is to understand where a child stands academically before expecting grade-level outcomes. A Baseline Test is not merely an examination—it is the foundation for meaningful teaching and successful learning," he said. Referring to international best practices, Dr. Gopal Reddy said many developed education systems conduct diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the academic year to identify students' learning needs and

personalise instruction. Telangana, he added, has an opportunity to emerge as a national leader in competency-based school education by adopting a similar model. He proposed launching a special statewide initiative titled "Baseline Telangana – Strong Foundations for Every Child", under which a common Baseline Test would be conducted for all Classes 2 to 5 students using uniform academic standards. Among his key recommendations were conducting the Baseline Test during the first month of every academic year, preparing Individual Learning Profiles for every student, designing remedial and enrichment programmes based on assessment outcomes, sharing detailed learning reports with parents, training teachers in competency-based instruction, establishing common academic benchmarks across all schools, and conducting quarterly progress assessments to monitor improvement.

Ensuring No Voter Left Behind: AIMIM's Intensive SIR Outreach in Balanagar

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

AIMIM has intensified its voter awareness drive in Balanagar, with leader Mahankali Shiva Shankar spearheading a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) campaign this Sunday. The event took place at Baptist Church and Christ Church, aiming to streamline the SIR process for residents and ensure that no genuine voter is left behind in the electoral rolls. Shiva Shankar emphasized that the initiative is launched under the directives of AIMIM President and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, with guidance from Kukatpally Constituency Incharge Anwar Sadat. Trained volunteers have been conducting door-to-door outreach to assist eligible voters in completing the SIR formalities, underscoring a focused, ground-level effort. Volun-



teers are actively helping residents fill out application forms, verify voter details, and complete the necessary procedures. Special attention is being given to senior citizens, women, and others who may require additional support, reflecting a commitment to inclusive participation in the electoral process. The campaign seeks to raise awareness about the SIR process and to ensure the comprehensive inclusion of eligible voters in the rolls. By

providing direct assistance and simplifying the steps, organizers aim to minimize the risk of eligible voters being left out and to strengthen democratic participation in the region. Anchoring the outreach at two community venues—Baptist Church and Christ Church in Balanagar—the initiative underscores accessible, community-centered engagement designed to reach a broad cross-section of residents and foster trust in the process.

Measles outbreak in Bangladesh claims seven more lives; death toll rises to 738

DHAKA

Seven more children died from measles-like symptoms in Bangladesh in the past 24 hours until 8 a.m. on Sunday, raising the fatalities from confirmed and suspected measles in the country in 2026 to 738, local media reported.

The latest fatalities have been classified as suspected measles fatalities, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). With the latest fatalities, the total number of suspected measles cases in Bangladesh has increased to 645, while the number of laboratory-confirmed measles deaths stood at 93, United News of Bangladesh reported. During the same period, 925 new suspected measles cases were reported in Bangladesh, raising the number of suspected cases nationwide to 105,618.

As many as 106 new confirmed measles cases were reported in Bangladesh, raising the total number of laboratory-confirmed cases to 12,632, the United News of Bangladesh reported.

Since March 15, a total of 88,844



patients with suspected measles have been admitted to hospital in Bangladesh. Among them, 85,122 people have recovered, according to the DGHS data.

Reports suggest that as the num-

ber of measles and suspected measles cases crossed the one lakh mark, infections continued to rise despite a vaccination drive covering 1.84 crore children in May.

In June, 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.

Public health expert Mushtuq Husain said that measles cases are failing to decline for two main reasons: vaccination coverage not reaching the 95 per cent threshold in all areas and inadequate adherence to infection prevention and control measures in hospitals and communities, Bangladesh's leading newspaper The Daily Star reported.

He said that isolation and quarantine had largely been ignored despite being important components of outbreak management. He said that the vaccination campaign target was largely set online from offices due to time constraints, resulting in inaccurate planning, The Daily Star reported.

"As a result, many children may have remained unvaccinated," Husain said as he emphasised the importance of launching a vaccination campaign targeting all children aged below five years and a revised house-to-house microplanning approach to reduce measles cases.

Lokayan 2026: INS Sudarshini reaches New York port, Tricolour flies high over Hudson river

NEW DELHI

In a momentous occasion for Indian Navy and nation's maritime traditions, the naval training ship INS Sudarshini sailed into New York Port on Sunday. INS Sudarshini, standing tall as the proud symbol of India's maritime legacy, is currently on a historic 10-month maritime voyage. Its arrival in New York waters came as part of the vessel's transoceanic expedition 'Lokayan 2026', reflecting Indian Navy's commitment to strengthening maritime cooperation, building international goodwill and deepening engagement with partner navies.

During the grand 'Parade of Sail' held on the historic Hudson river in New York, the INS Sudarshini proudly displayed the Tricolour, showcasing India's rich maritime heritage and centuries-old seafaring traditions. As the beautiful ship sailed past New York's iconic skyline, it appeared not merely as a naval vessel but as a living symbol of India's millennia-old maritime traditions, adventurous voyages, and global connections. Adorned with Indian Tricolour, INS Sudarshini reminded the world that India's bond with the seas extends back to ancient civilisations and historic trade routes.

Throughout its transoceanic journey, INS Sudarshini is visiting ports in several countries. "This 10-month-

long trans-oceanic voyage reflects the Indian Navy's vision of viewing the seas not just through the lens of security, but also as a medium for friendship, cooperation, and cultural exchange. The expedition aims to strengthen maritime ties with various nations, foster naval cooperation, and showcase India's maritime heritage on the global stage," a press statement said.

During this voyage, the Indian contingent is establishing significant dialogues with various navies and maritime organisations. INS Sudarshini's arrival in New York is also linked to special occasion. The United States is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its Independence this year, marked by grand events such as the 'United States International Naval Review 250' and 'Sail Forth 250'. Naval and training vessels from across the globe are participating in these celebrations. Prior to arrival in New York, INS Sudarshini successfully participated in the 'Sail 250' events held in Norfolk and Baltimore.

During these events, the ship showcased India's maritime traditions, naval training systems, and cultural heritage to the international community. The vessel is currently stationed in Brooklyn, where thousands of spectators and maritime experts are viewing it up close; the ship's traditional structure and majestic appearance have become a major attraction for the public.

46 suspects detained in Ankara security operation ahead of NATO Summit

ANKARA

Turkish police detained 46 suspects in the capital Ankara as part of a security operation ahead of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Summit scheduled for July 7-8, according to Turkish media on Sunday.

Turkish media outlet Haberturk reported that the operation was coordinated by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, with the participation of the Ankara Police Department's public security branch and other police units.

Officers deployed around the clock at designated locations, Xinhua news agency reported.

Turkish authorities said that all necessary judicial, administrative, and security measures had been put in place to ensure public order and security before and during the summit, with inspections and security operations to continue.

The NATO heads of state and government summit, scheduled for July 7-8, will bring together leaders from the alliance's 32 member states, along with thousands of delegates, security personnel, journalists and support



According to the report, the suspects were identified through technical and physical surveillance. They were accused of posting images featuring firearms on social media, had extensive criminal records, and were allegedly involved in various firearms-related incidents.

Police conducted simultaneous raids at multiple addresses across the city and seized evidence related to alleged criminal activities. The suspects remain in custody while legal procedures continue, the report said.

It added that the operation forms part of broader security measures across Ankara ahead of the NATO Summit. Police have intensified inspections and expanded security perimeters around summit venues, with of-

staff, making it one of the largest international events ever hosted by Ankara.

Authorities have announced extraordinary security arrangements extending beyond the two-day summit itself. A total of 70,000 security personnel will be deployed during the summit, according to semi-official Anadolu Agency.

The Ankara governor's office has banned all meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins, rallies and similar activities from June 28 until July 10. Public events, including concerts, festivals and large gatherings, have also been restricted, while extensive traffic controls are expected around summit venues, hotels hosting delegations and key transportation routes.

‘Pakistan’s energy crisis is rooted in policy failures’

NEW DELHI

In a world driven by technology, energy plays a dominant role, and most countries have evolved special mechanisms to ensure affordable and sustainable resources, but Pakistan is facing an energy crisis due to policy failures, according to an article in the Pakistani media.

Pakistan was earlier an energy surplus nation due to the discovery of large Sui gas reserves in Balochistan province, but around 2002, shortages started to appear due to misuse and mismanagement and the gift of nature was consumed much ahead of its time, according to an article in the Karachi-based Business Recorder. No serious work was carried out on other deposits and alternative fuel options. Coal

that had fuelled the entire industrial revolution in the West was totally ignored, states the article by Dr Farid A Malik, an ex-Chairman Pakistan Science Foundation

In the USA, after the oil embargo of the seventies, the then President Jimmy Carter promised his nation that the country would never face a fuel crisis again. A Department of Energy was created that started research on all possible energy options. Currently, shale gas is being used as an affordable source of energy. India has recently announced a massive programme based on gasification of their coal deposits, the article further states.

"Meanwhile, industries in Pakistan have become non-competitive due to high fuel costs.

EAM Jaishankar interacts with Indian representatives in Qatar, underlines importance of community welfare



DOHA

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Sunday interacted with representatives of the Indian community and underlined the importance of community welfare.

"A good interaction with representatives of the Indian community in Qatar this evening. Underlined the importance of community welfare in our engagement with the region. Their commitment and contributions to Qatari society in these difficult times are indeed laudable and appreciated widely. Value their experience and suggestions for advancing India-Qatar partnership," EAM Jaishankar wrote on X.

Earlier in the day, EAM Jaishankar

met Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani here to discuss various facets of bilateral cooperation and explore new opportunities to deepen the Strategic Partnership between the two nations.

"A pleasure to meet Qatar PM and FM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Doha today. Thanked him for ensuring the safety and well-being of the Indian community. Reviewed various facets of our bilateral cooperation, especially energy, trade, investments, connectivity, security and people-to-people ties. Explored new opportunities for deepening our Strategic Partnership. Appreciate his sharing of assessments on the West Asia conflict and its impact," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

Emergencies in France and Spain continue as fires rage on

ROME

The fire emergency in the France-Spain border region continued on Sunday, as in the Eastern Pyrenees, the vast blaze that broke out in the Trevillach area regained strength, fueled by wind and heat, devastating approximately 1,500 hectares of vegetation, reports said.

Over 700 firefighters are engaged in extinguishing operations, while dozens of people have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, in Catalonia, the large fire on the Costa Brava, which destroyed over 2,200 hectares, has been stabilised, but authorities warn that the risk remains high due to the new heatwave, Italian news agency Adnkronos reported.

The fire in Trevillach, which broke out on Saturday night in a difficult-to-access area near Mount Canigou, in the Eastern Pyrenees, has "regained strength," the Eastern Pyrenees' Prefect Pierre Regnault de la Mothe, said, noting that "it is a fire front of about 18 kilometres, which requires the deployment of significant ground and air resources" and emphasising that "the fire has regained vigor on its right and left flanks".

Overall, 700 firefighters are engaged in the operations, supported by 200 vehicles and nine aircraft. The Prefect added that about 80 people in the area have been evacuated and that residents of several villages have been asked to self-isolate.

Conditions are becoming more difficult with the increase in the tramontane wind and the intense heat being felt. "The fire is



intensifying; we will have to continue fighting," declared Colonel Stephane Clerc. The fire, whose intensity had temporarily decreased, "has regained vigour under the effect of the tramontana wind," the prefecture emphasised.

The fire that broke out on Friday near the Costa Brava tourist resort, in northeastern Spain, and burned over two thousand hectares, was stabilised on Sunday morning. Firefighters announced this, predicting a "complicated day", especially due to the new heatwave affecting Spain. According to the latest data provided by forest rangers, 2,200 hectares have gone up in smoke, and almost 97 per cent of the affected area is within the protected natural area of Gavarrès. "Firefighters expect a difficult

day due to high temperatures and the numerous smoke columns around the fire's perimeter," the Catalan firefighters said in a statement. "The fire has a very discontinuous perimeter, with several islands of unburned vegetation within the affected area, which generates numerous smoke plumes and requires detailed monitoring of the entire perimeter to prevent any re-ignitions," they said.

"We worked tirelessly all night to consolidate the perimeter of the La Bisbal d'Empordà wildfire, which is now under control," they added.

The fire broke out on Friday morning near Girona, about twenty kilometres from the Mediterranean coast. "If the situation continues to improve," firefighters said, lockdowns in about ten mu-

nicipalities could be lifted, and residents could return to their homes. According to authorities, the fire was likely caused by "negligence." According to Spanish media, it could be a construction worker who used an angle grinder in a prohibited area. On Saturday evening, the President of Catalonia, Salvador Illa, confirmed the arrest of one person but declined to provide further details.

At the forefront of the fight against climate change in Europe, Spain experienced "the worst fires in its recent history" last summer, as Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez recalled in May. Last year, 393,000 hectares were devastated by flames in Spain, according to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS).

Italian Defence Minister expresses optimism ahead of NATO summit in Ankara

ROME

Italy's Defence Minister Guido Crosetto on Sunday expressed optimism regarding the upcoming North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Summit in Ankara.

"Ankara (Summit) has been built so that everything works, commitments will be respected and each country presents itself having done its part," Crosetto said, via video, at the 'Pantelleria Mediterraneo d'Autori', emphasising that he sees no critical issues compared to the previous summit. "Then we will see what (US President Donald) Trump will do; it will

be a very short summit," he added.

On transatlantic relations, Crosetto reiterated that "real relations with the US are excellent, like those a year ago, or 5 years ago", noting that dialogue with Washington takes place steadily at an institutional level. "Trump has his way of doing politics, of pressing allies," he said, adding "it's his way of acting so that allies react," Italian news agency Adnkronos reported.

On the topic of defence, Crosetto ruled out conflicts with social spending. "I have never thought that defence spending should be an alternative to healthcare.

‘TTP is Pakistani problem, created by its own wars, policies, and deals’

ISLAMABAD

The core of the dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is a problem of Islamabad, which was created by Pakistan's own wars, policies, deals, betrayals and ideological infrastructure, according to a report.

According to Pakistan, the TTP operates from the territory of Afghanistan with the protection or at least toleration of the Afghan Taliban, while Kabul denies this and calls the TTP Pakistan's internal problem.

"The TTP is indeed a Pakistani problem, created by Pakistan's own wars, policies, deals, betrayals and ideological infrastructure. But it is also true that the Afghan Taliban's victory gave the TTP oxygen, space, prestige, and morale. A movement that had survived in fragments suddenly saw its ideological cousins conquer Kabul. The message to every militant along the frontier was simple: patience works, jihad pays, the Americans leave, and states can be defeated," the Stringer Asia report said.

It said that the dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not over TTP and its sanctuaries across the Durand Line but the collapse of Pakistan's strategic fantasy where Pakistan could outsource instability, manufacture Jihad and install ideological clients in Kabul.

"Pakistan is now asking the Afghan Taliban to do what Pakistan itself never did sincerely: dismantle a jihadist asset because it destabilises a neighbouring state. The irony is almost perfect. For decades, Islamabad asked the world to distinguish between useful and dangerous militants, between those who served Pakistani interests and those who attacked Pakistan. Now it faces a regime in Kabul that makes similar distinctions," the report noted. According to the report, Pakistan's bombing of Afghanistan gives the Taliban a gift: nationalism, which can be a useful resource for the Taliban given their current situation in Kabul.



Wimbledon

Pegula rallies past Jovic to reach second quarter-final



LONDON: Fourth seed Jessica Pegula recovered from a set down to defeat fellow American Iva Jovic 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 on Sunday, reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals for the second time in her career and completing a clean sweep over the teenager across all three surfaces this season. Pegula, who also made it to the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, has reached her second Grand Slam quarter-final of 2026. She will face either seventh seed Coco Gauff or 11th seed Belinda Bencic for a spot in the semi-finals. This victory completed an impressive series for Pegula against Jovic this year. Before her win on Sunday, she had already beaten the rising American 6-4, 6-2 at the Dubai.

TG20 Season 1

Real Madrid sign Denzel Dumfries on four-year deal from Inter Milan



MADRID: Real Madrid have completed the signing of Netherlands player Denzel Dumfries from Inter Milan, with the experienced right-back putting pen to paper on a four-year contract that will keep him at the Spanish giants until June 30, 2030. The La Liga club confirmed on Sunday that an agreement had been reached with Inter for the permanent transfer of the 30-year-old defender, who joins the squad after the activation of his release clause. The Dutch player arrives after a highly successful five-year spell with Inter, where he established himself as one of the club's key players following his move from PSV Eindhoven in 2021.

Mooney stars as Australia crush England to lift record-extending seventh title

LONDON

Australia underlined their dominance in women's cricket once again as opener Beth Mooney and youngster Phoebe Litchfield shared a match-winning 100-run partnership to guide the six-time champions to a commanding seven-wicket victory over England in the final of the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 at Lord's Cricket Ground on Sunday. Chasing 151, Australia reached the target in just 17.1 overs to lift a record-extending seventh Women's T20 World Cup title. The triumph added to Australia's previous title-winning campaigns in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020 and 2023, giving them two separate hat-tricks of consecutive championships and further strengthening their position as the most successful team in the history of the tournament. Chasing a competitive target of 151, Australia began cautiously, managing only six runs in the opening over with just one boundary. Opener Georgia Voll then looked to change the momentum in the second over, striking a couple of boundaries before Lauren Bell struck back on the fifth ball of the over. Voll was clean bowled after scoring nine off six deliveries, giving England an early breakthrough. Phoebe Litchfield walked in at No. 3 and immediately looked comfortable at the crease, hitting a boundary off the very first ball she faced. At the other end, Beth Mooney settled quickly before launching the counterattack. She found the boundary once in the third over and followed it up with three fours in the fourth over to put England's bowlers under pressure. Litchfield matched her senior partner's intent by smashing a four and a six in the fifth over as Australia quickly shifted the momentum in their favour. Although Linsey Smith bowled an economical sixth over, Australia still raced to 62/1 at the end



of the powerplay. The scoring rate did not slow after the fielding restrictions. Mooney and Litchfield continued to rotate the strike smartly while ensuring at least one boundary came almost every over. Their positive approach steadily took Australia closer to another world title. The 10th over proved particularly costly for England as Lauren Bell conceded 11 runs, allowing Australia to move to 98/1 at the halfway mark of the chase with the target firmly within reach. Mooney brought up her half-century with a single in the 13th over, registering

her ninth score of fifty or more in Women's T20 World Cup history to equal Nat Sciver-Brunt's record. England finally ended the century partnership on the last ball of the 13th over when Charlie Dean clean bowled Litchfield. The young batter narrowly missed out on a deserved half-century, departing for 48 after striking four fours and two sixes. Their 100-run stand became the second-highest partnership in the history of a Women's T20 World Cup final, behind the partnership between Hayley Matthews and Stafanie Taylor in the 2016 final in Kolkata. Despite losing her partner, Mooney en-

sured there would be no late twist. She struck three boundaries in the following over as Australia's victory became a mere formality, with only 22 runs required from the final six overs. Ellyse Perry, after a quiet start, joined the party by hitting a boundary in the 15th over as Australia closed in on the target. England managed one final breakthrough when Sophie Ecclestone trapped Mooney leg before wicket after a successful review. Mooney's outstanding knock of 64 from 49 balls included 10 boundaries and had already taken the game away from the hosts. Perry then received a reprieve in the next over when Ecclestone was unable to complete a difficult catch cleanly. The experienced all-rounder remained unbeaten on 13 as Australia crossed the finish line with 17 balls to spare to seal another memorable World Cup triumph. Earlier, England recovered well after a difficult start to post 150/4, thanks to an unbeaten 58 from captain Nat Sciver-Brunt and an equally important unbeaten 44 from Freya Kemp. After being asked to bat first, England lost Amy Jones and Danni Wyatt-Hodge inside the powerplay before Alice Capsey briefly counterattacked with 23 from 20 balls. Australia continued to strike at regular intervals, with Heather Knight also falling cheaply. Sciver-Brunt then anchored the innings with a composed knock, rotating the strike effectively before accelerating in the closing overs. Kemp provided the perfect support, adding quick runs during the death overs as the unbeaten pair lifted England to what appeared to be a competitive total. Sciver-Brunt's 58 not out from 53 balls, featuring five boundaries, also made her the first England player to score a half-century in both the semifinal and the final of a Women's T20 World Cup. Kemp remained unbeaten on 44 from 28 deliveries, hitting four fours and a six. For Australia, Kim Garth, Lucy Hamilton, Annabel Sutherland and captain Sophie Molineux claimed one wicket each before their batters completed a clinical chase to crown Australia Women's T20 World Cup champions for a record seventh time. Brief Scores: England 150/4 in 20 overs (Nat Sciver-Brunt 58*, Freya Kemp 44*, Alice Capsey 23; Lucy Hamilton 1-19, Kim Garth 1-20) lost to Australia in 153/5 in 17.1 overs (Beth Mooney 64, Phoebe Litchfield 48; Sophie Ecclestone 1-24, Charlotte Dean 1-28) by 7 wickets.

Mbappe penalty sends France past Paraguay into FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-finals

PHILADELPHIA

Kylian Mbappe's second-half penalty proved the difference as France edged past a resolute Paraguay 1-0 in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 16, sealing their place in the quarter-finals with a hard-fought victory in Philadelphia. Didier Deschamps' side were made to work for every opportunity by a disciplined Paraguayan defence that frustrated the two-time world champions for long spells. France eventually found the breakthrough in the 70th minute, with Mbappe calmly converting from the penalty spot after Desire Doue was brought down inside the area. The result extends France's winning run to five matches at this year's tournament and sets up a quarter-final clash with Morocco in Boston. The opening half was a cagey affair with clear-cut opportunities at a premium. Paraguay executed their defensive game plan effectively, deny-

ing France space in the final third and ensuring neither goalkeeper was seriously tested before the interval. Neither side managed a shot on target in the opening 45 minutes, marking only the third FIFA World Cup knock-out match since 1966 to reach half-time without a single effort on target, following the 1990 final between Germany and Argentina and the 2006 quarter-final between Brazil and France. France dominated possession but struggled to break down Paraguay's compact defensive structure, generating just 0.15 expected goals (xG) before the break, while Paraguay created little going forward with an xG of 0.05. The contest opened up after the restart as France increased the tempo in search of a breakthrough. Their persistence was rewarded in the 70th minute when Doue was fouled inside the penalty area, allowing Mbappe to step up and confidently dispatch the spot-kick beyond goalkeeper Orlando Gill. The goal was Mbappe's

Women's T20 WC: 'I'm grateful we made it this far,' says Mooney

LONDON

Beth Mooney credited Australia's positive approach in the powerplay and the support from Phoebe Litchfield and Georgia Voll after her match-winning knock guided the team to a record-extending seventh Women's T20 World Cup title with a seven-wicket victory over England at Lord's on Sunday. Mooney was named both the Player of the Match and Player of the Tournament after finishing as the competition's leading run-scorer with 259 runs. In the final, the experienced opener struck a composed 64 off 49 balls, hitting 10 fours, as Australia comfortably chased down England's target of 151 in 17.1 overs. Reflecting on Australia's latest World Cup triumph, Mooney said the team was grateful simply to have reached the final after falling short in the previous two ICC tournaments. "Just happy to be here. I think it's been pretty well documented we haven't quite made it this far in the last two ICC events. I just woke up this morning pretty grateful we made it this far," she said. Mooney also made important contributions behind the stumps, including the stumping of England opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge. She acknowl-



edged the role of Australia's coaching staff in helping her regain confidence with the gloves during the tournament. "I warmed up into the tournament. At the start I was a bit rusty, but I got some great support from our coaching staff with Dan Kiley, Shell, the boys and Sean McLeod. I've had plenty of help along the way. I can't take too much credit. It's been really nice to have some consistency with the gloves and to play a role in the field as well," she said. Speaking about standing up to the stumps for the bowlers, Mooney said it was a tactical decision taken together with the bowling group. "It's obviously a conversation that happens between me and the bowlers. I'm more than happy to do what they tell me to. It's their plans and their job to execute, and thankfully they back me to clean up anything that goes a bit awry. We were umming and aching about that review off Dan, but we got there in the end," she added. Mooney also explained the batting approach that helped Australia dominate the chase. After Georgia Voll's quick start, Phoebe Litchfield's aggressive innings of 48 from 33 balls ensured Australia stayed ahead of the required rate before the pair added a decisive 100-run partnership. "It was really important to settle the innings in the powerplay in a big game. Voll got us off to a really good start, hit the ball really well and then had an unfortunate dismissal. Phoebe came out and nailed it from ball one. I just kept going and tried to make sure we got ahead of the game as early as possible," she said.

Wimbledon: Djokovic breaks Federer's wins record with gritty victory over Safiullin

LONDON

Novak Djokovic added another remarkable chapter to his glittering career on Sunday, overcoming a determined challenge from qualifier Roman Safiullin to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals and become the most successful men's singles player in the tournament's history. The seven-time champion defeated Safiullin 7-6(6), 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in a thrilling fourth-round match on Centre Court that lasted three hours and 26 minutes. This victory marked Djokovic's 106th singles win at the All England Club. It also surpassed Roger Federer's record of 105 Wimbledon men's singles victories, with only Martina Navratilova (120) having won more singles matches at the Championships. This win sent Djokovic to his ninth consecutive Wimbledon quarter-final and the 17th of his impressive career. "Another hard-fought win," Djokovic said after the match. "Roman started very well, very aggressively. I didn't feel so comfortable from the back of the court. I knew staying in the rallies with him would be a challenge. He's a very solid player... He should be proud of his performance today." Safiullin came to Wimbledon without a tour-level win in 2026 after returning from an injury that ended his



2025 season following the US Open. He showed little sign of rust. The former World No. 36 matched Djokovic from the baseline and took a 5-2 lead in the opening set. He even had two set points before Djokovic made one of his classic comebacks. Djokovic erased those chances and won the tie-break after Safiullin failed to convert two more opportunities at 6-6. A costly drop-shot attempt went wide, giving Djokovic the crucial edge. The second set remained tightly contested until Djokovic finally broke

the deadlock in a marathon 10-minute game at 3-2, converting his fourth break point with a blend of strong defense and precise shot-making. "I don't feel inferior from the back of the court against too many players," Djokovic admitted. "Today was one of those days when I didn't want to stay in the rally too long, so I mixed things up. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't. In the end, the accuracy and precision of my first serve got me out of trouble." Safiullin would not go down easily, even after taking a medical timeout for a hip issue at 3-2 in the third set. The Russian won three of the next four games to force a fourth set and briefly raised hopes for an upset. However, Djokovic responded by upping his intensity and attacking with more purpose to regain control. Determined not to repeat his recent collapse after losing a two-set lead to Joao Fonseca at Roland Garros just five weeks earlier, the 24-time Grand Slam champion closed out the match to keep his title quest alive.

Women's T20 WC: 'Nat and Kempy showed how to bat on this wicket,' says Capsey

LONDON

England batter Alice Capsey believes her side's total of 150/4 is a brilliant score in the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 final against Australia at Lord's, crediting captain Nat Sciver-Brunt and Freya Kemp for showing exactly how to bat on a challenging surface. England recovered well after early setbacks to post 150/4 in their 20 overs, thanks to an unbeaten 58 off 53 balls from Sciver-Brunt and a quickfire 44 not out off 28 deliveries from Kemp. The pair stitched together an unbeaten stand to guide the hosts to what Capsey felt was a highly competitive total under the pressure of a World Cup final. "I think that score of 150 is brilliant. The way Nat and Kempy went about their business there



at the end was outstanding. And I think it showed how to play on that pitch. To do that under the high pressure of the final was great," Capsey said after England completed their innings. Capsey herself contributed 23 off 20 balls after England had slipped to 39/2 in the powerplay. She struck two fours and a six before being clean bowled by Australia captain Sophie Molineux while attempting a reverse sweep. The right-hander also ex-

pressed confidence in England's bowling attack, saying disciplined bowling would be the key to defending the total. "I think when you bowl good lines and lengths, it was pretty tricky. The bowlers all have their plans and already had their plans for their match-ups. We look forward to watching our bowlers go out there and do their thing today," she said. Capsey also spoke about the atmosphere at a packed Lord's for the title clash, describing it as a special occasion while insisting England's focus remained on completing the job. "It's amazing. Just trying to take it all in, I guess. Half of the job is done now, and we're just looking forward to getting out there as a group and putting on hopefully a show for that second half."

