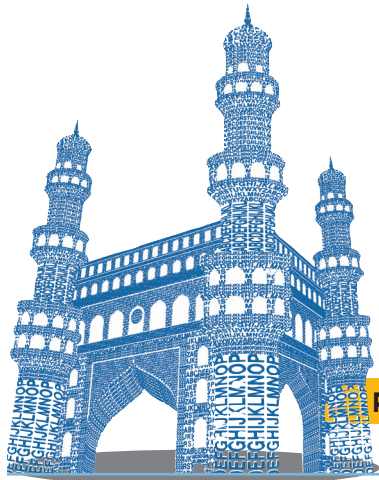




HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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Beyond 5G: A Consumer-First Telecom Revolution

OPINION 06

Rukmini Still Awaits Main Heroine Tag

BOX-OFFICE 12



EC Extends SIR Exercise to August 3



HYDERABAD, JULY 15

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday announced a key revision to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Telangana, extending the ongoing door-to-door verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) until August 3.

The Commission has also released a revised schedule for the electoral roll revision process. As per the updated timeline, the draft electoral rolls will be officially published across the State on August 10.

Following the publication of the draft rolls, the ECI will provide a one-month window for citizens to submit applications for inclusion of their names in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



CM SEEKS BIGGER AMAZON FOOTPRINT

Hyderabad, July 15 (NSS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy invited one of the world's largest tech companies, Amazon, to further expand its operations and invest Rs one Lakh Crore by 2034 in the Telangana State. Participating in the ground breaking ceremony of the Amazon's Data Center, the Chief Minister asserted that such a big company's new establishment will accelerate investments and also witness an exponential growth in a short time in the prestigious Bharat Future City.

The expansion of Amazon will also pave the way for other companies and industries to set up operations in the Future city. The Chief Minister highlighted that the government had in December 2025 organised 'Telangana

Rising Global Summit', an event attended by 3,000 corporate representatives from major companies across 108 countries at Future City last year. The goal of Telangana Rising-2047 is to transform Telangana into one trillion economy by 2034 and three trillion economy by 2047, he said.

Stating that job creation is also crucial to achieving the investment goals, Revanth Reddy said the government is ready to provide all necessary infrastructure, facilities and clearances for setting up industries.

"We are conducting comprehensive monthly reviews on all aspects related to industrial establishment. Similarly, a special

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Revanth Unveils Infrastructure-Led Growth Vision

Revanth vows world-class infrastructure for investors

Industries, irrigation and employment top Telangana's growth agenda

CM stresses green mobility to combat climate change

02

Union Cabinet Clears ₹2.19 Lakh Crore MEGAPROJECTS

Major Boost for Semicon 2.0 & Mobile Manufacturing

New Delhi, July 15: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved seven major proposals with a combined investment of ₹2.19 lakh crore, giving a significant push to semiconductor manufacturing, mobile phone production, infrastructure development, railway expansion and domestic urea production.

Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw said the decisions reflect the Centre's focus on strengthening manufacturing, modernising infrastructure and enhancing self-reliance.

The Cabinet's biggest approval was for Semicon 2.0, which received an allocation of ₹1,27,500 crore to accelerate the



development of India's semiconductor ecosystem and strengthen the country's electronics manufacturing capabilities.

In another major decision, the Cabinet approved the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with an outlay of ₹62,500 crore, aimed at boosting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Mudragada Laid to Rest at Home

KIRLAMPUDI JULY 15

Veteran Kapu leader and former minister Mudragada Padmanabham Reddy was laid to rest at his residence in Kirlampudi village of Kakinada district on Wednesday, with his family fulfilling his final wish of being buried instead of cremated.

The 73-year-old leader, who passed away after a prolonged illness at a private hospital in Hyderabad on Tues-

day, was buried under a mango tree within the premises of his residence. Defying the traditional customs of the Kapu community, he was interred wearing his regular attire along with his personal belongings, in accordance with wishes he had shared with close associates. He is survived by two sons and a daughter.

Thousands of supporters, admirers and political leaders from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

HMRL Plans More Coaches for Metro

Hyderabad, July 15: Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) Additional Managing Director B. Ajith Reddy has directed officials to prepare a comprehensive plan to enhance passenger services and accelerate Metro development across the city. During a review meeting here on

Wednesday, Ajith Reddy assessed operations along the 69-km Phase-1 Metro network, focusing on passenger amenities, last-mile connectivity, station cleanliness, safety, parking, and crowd management.

He instructed officials to initiate discussions with manufacturers for

the early procurement of additional Metro coaches to improve passenger comfort and reduce congestion.

The Additional MD also stressed expanding last-mile connectivity by coordinating with TSRTC and the Transport department, while calling for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Govt to Modernise Schools

MINISTER SRIDHAR BABU HYDERABAD, JULY 15



Minister for IT and Industries D. Sridhar Babu said the Telangana government is committed to developing government schools on a par with corporate educational institutions in the state. Speaking after inaugurating the Foundation for Democratic Reforms (FDR) Science Centre at the ZP Girls' High School in Alwal, Medchal-Malkajgiri district on Wednesday, Sridhar Babu said that the government was according priority to the education and healthcare sectors while promoting scientific temper and creativity among students.

He said the State was creating an ecosystem to encourage innovation and support young people in converting ideas

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

AP ATTRACTS Rs.4,100 CR INVESTMENT AT BHARAT TEX 2026

New Delhi, July 15: Andhra Pradesh made a strong impression at Bharat Tex 2026, the third edition of India's premier global textile trade fair, to be held from July 14-17 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, showcasing its handloom heritage, textile manufacturing strength and investment opportunities while securing investment commitments worth Rs.4,100 crore.

The Andhra Pradesh Pavilion, set

up by the Department of Handlooms & Textiles at Bharat Mandapam, featured handloom products, apparel, GI-tagged goods and One District One Product (ODOP) items. Textile parks, garment manufacturers, APCO and other industry participants showcased the state's capabilities.

A major highlight was the signing of an MoU for a sustainable textile recycling

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

PM MODI PREVENTED NUCLEAR ATTACK ON UKRAINE IN 2022 ?

Poland minister makes BIG claims about Putin's plans, Indian PM's role

NEW DELHI, JULY 15

Making an explosive claim, Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Teofil Bartoszewski on Tuesday said that Russian President Vladimir Putin was about to use tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine at the end of 2022. Giving credit to the Indian Prime Minister for stopping such a fateful event, he said that it was PM Narendra Modi who played a key role in stopping Putin. Calling him a "very well-known world statesman", he said that Putin actually pays attention to what Prime Minister Modi tells him.

The Polish leader also exuded confidence that PM Modi can exert influence to end the Russia-Ukraine war. Speaking to news agency (ANI,") I mentioned the role

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



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CM Unveils Infrastructure-Led Growth Vision

HYDERABAD, JULY 15

Highlighting that the "Telangana Rising is unstoppable", Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said the state government is improving the infrastructure to woo more investments to the state.

Addressing after inaugurating the EV Cell Manufacturing facility of Amara Raja company at Amara Raja Giga Corridor at Divitipally in Mahabubnagar district on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that the government was carrying forward the policies introduced by previous regimes -Chandrababu Naidu (1994-2004), Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (2004-2014), and also the government served from 2014 to December 2023.

"We are adopting the best practices and the policies from the previous governments as the government does not want to suffer from policy paralysis. Our government has introduced various policies mainly to promote industry, tourism, and health as part of the "Telangana Rising 2047" initiative. Since the Infrastructure is crucial for establishing industries in Telangana, the government is moving forward by formulating transparent policies," Revanth Reddy said.

Announcing that the State government was holding talks



with the neighbouring state, Revanth Reddy said that they would soon share good news with the people of Mahabubnagar district. "Talks are already in progress towards securing an allocation of 90 TMC of water for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and also the allocation of 30 TMC of water for the Dindi project. We will create a favourable environment for industries and generate employment opportunities in the district," he said.

The Chief Minister stressed that the farmers, who gave their land to the Amara Raja company, should be provided jobs in the new EV cell manufacturing unit.

He praised the Amara Raja

company for taking inspiration from China, Japan, Germany, and Korea and stated that it is a proud moment that Amara Raja is competing with China in the EV sector. "A total of 700 employees are working at the Amara Raja unit in Divitipalli, and 400 of them are women, which stands as a testament to women's empowerment," he said.

Expressing serious concern over increasing pollution and the threat of climate change, Revanth Reddy said the rainfall is scarce due to the El Niño effect, causing difficulties for farmers.

"Significant climatic changes have occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic. There is

a need to reduce pollution and electric vehicles are essential for pollution control," he said.

As a son of Palamuru, the Chief Minister declared that he would transform Mahabubnagar into a model district.

"Mahabubnagar, once a drought-prone district, has now risen to the level where it can adopt other districts. II-ITs, Engineering colleges, ATC centres, and 'Young India Integrated Schools' were already established in the district. The main objective of the ATCs and polytechnic colleges is to create blue-collar jobs. The pending Kalwakurthy, Bhima, RDS, and Nettempadu projects are also being completed," Revanth Reddy said.

Festival of Faith Starts Today

HYDERABAD, JULY 15

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended his greetings to all devotees in the twin cities.

The Chief Minister said that Bonalu, which symbolizes the lifestyle and social harmony of the people of Hyderabad, is

not just a festival but a grand spiritual and cultural celebration of the region.

He stated that the state government has completed all arrangements to celebrate the Bonalu festivities in a grand manner under the supervision of the Endowments Department from today (July

16). The celebrations will be held in more than 3,000 temples located within the Greater Hyderabad limits across the districts of Hyderabad, Rangareddy, and Medchal-Malkajgiri.

Revanth Reddy noted that the Bonalu celebrations in the twin cities of Hyderabad and

Secunderabad are a shining example of Telangana's Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, reflecting communal harmony and the state's secular spirit. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also recalled that the state government has allocated ₹20 crore for the conduct of this year's Bonalu celebrations.

Warangal Airport Revival Is a Reality Because of Modi's Commitment: NRR

HYDERABAD, JULY 15

BJP Telangana State President N. Ramchander Rao on Wednesday said the revival of Mamnoon Airport in Warangal has become possible solely because of the unwavering commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the sustained efforts of the Central Government.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP State Office in Nampally, Ramchander Rao described Mamnoon Airport as one of India's oldest airports, established during the pre-Independence era and once among the largest airfields in the region. Despite its historical significance, he said, the airport remained non-operational for several decades due to policy and regulatory hurdles.

He pointed out that the biggest obstacle was the 150-km exclusivity restriction under



Clause 5.2 of the Hyderabad International Airport Concession Agreement. According to him, the Modi Government secured a one-time No Objection Certificate (NOC), removing this restriction and paving the way for the airport's development and operationalisation.

Ramchander Rao said the Centre has transformed the country's aviation sector through the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, making air travel affordable while expanding regional air connectivity across India. He noted that in September 2021,

then Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had written to the Telangana Chief Minister seeking intervention to expedite aviation infrastructure projects, with Warangal Airport receiving special emphasis.

Drawing a parallel with the Centre's decision to allocate the Tadicherla-II Coal Block directly to SCCL, he said the Union Government has consistently extended support for Telangana's development, including the revival of Mamnoon Airport.

Criticising the Congress, Ramchander Rao said the

erstwhile UPA Government had announced plans in 2011 to develop 13 airports, including Warangal, but failed to operationalise them despite conducting feasibility studies. He claimed that after Narendra Modi assumed office, seven of those proposed airports became operational.

Questioning the Congress for claiming credit, he asked why the UPA Government failed to remove the obstacles to the Warangal Airport project during its tenure.

He appealed to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to expedite land acquisition and avoid political disputes, stating that the Central Government is fully prepared to extend all necessary support. Once the required land is handed over, he said, the airport project can move forward swiftly and fulfil the long-standing aspirations of the people of Warangal.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

Union Cabinet Clears ₹2.19 Lakh Crore..

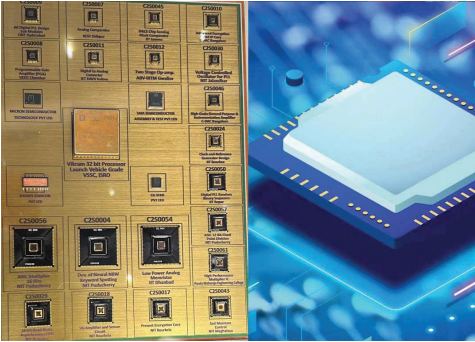
FROM PAGE 1

domestic production, attracting fresh investments and expanding India's position as a global manufacturing hub for mobile devices.

To enhance connectivity in Varanasi, the Cabinet cleared two major elevated corridor projects. A six/four-lane elevated corridor along the River Varuna was approved at a cost of ₹10,998 crore, while a six-lane elevated corridor along the River Ganga received approval with an investment of ₹14,448 crore.

The Cabinet also approved the National Investment Policy for Urea-2026, a strategic initiative intended to make India self-reliant in urea production by encouraging investments in the fertiliser sector. The policy approval does not involve any direct financial allocation.

In the railway sector, the government sanctioned two infrastructure projects to improve freight movement and network capacity. These include the doubling of the Paradeep-Haridaspur railway line at a cost of ₹2,542 crore and the construc-



tion of a fourth railway line between Dangoaposi and Rajkharsawan with an investment of ₹1,365 crore.

Addressing reporters, Vaishnav said the Cabinet's decisions cover infrastructure development in Varanasi, expansion of the semiconductor and mobile manufacturing sectors, and measures to strengthen domestic fertiliser production.

The approved projects are expected to generate employment, enhance industrial competitiveness, improve transport infrastructure and support the government's vision of making India a global manufacturing powerhouse

CM SEEKS BIGGER AMAZON FOOTPRINT

FROM PAGE 1

monthly meeting on Amazon's investments in the state will also be held," Revanth Reddy said.

As part of promoting Hyderabad as a pollution free city, the Chief Minister said the government has prepared plans to convert 3 lakh RTC buses into electric buses. "Steps are also being taken to transform the city's 2 lakh diesel-run auto-rickshaws into electric vehicles through retrofitting and also waiving registration taxes for electric vehicles despite annual revenue loss of ₹1,500 crore. We are taking proactive measures to ensure that the pollution-related problems seen in other cities across the country do not recur in Hyderabad," Revanth Reddy said.

"Hyderabad has become a global role model, featuring the Outer Ring Road, IT and pharma companies, and an international airport. With 1.34 crore people living within the Outer Ring Road area, our aim is to create job opportunities while also transforming the city into a pollution-free zone. There is a need to relocate

industries within the city, as well as to rejuvenate the Musi River and expand the Metro rail network," Revanth Reddy said.

As part of promoting Hyderabad as a pollution free city, the Chief Minister said the government has prepared plans to convert 3 lakh RTC buses into electric buses. "Steps are also being taken to transform the city's 2 lakh diesel-run auto-rickshaws into electric vehicles through retrofitting and also waiving registration taxes for electric vehicles despite annual revenue loss of ₹1,500 crore. We are taking proactive measures to ensure that the pollution-related problems seen in other cities across the country do not recur in Hyderabad," Revanth Reddy said.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the farmers for cooperating in acquiring their lands for the development of Regional Ring Road and radial roads.

"The officials have been ordered to resolve minor issues and provide adequate compensation to the farmers. The government has the responsibility of honouring the farmers who contributed to development by giving their lands," he said.

The Chief Minister also suggested that IT and Industry Minister Sridhar Babu and former MLA K. Laxma Reddy hold discussions with the protesting farmers and ensure creating job opportunities for the families of farmers who lost their lands along with fair compensation.

Mudragada Laid to Rest at Home

FROM PAGE 1

across party lines gathered at Kirlampudi to pay their last respects. Former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy attended the funeral, carried the bier along with family members and supporters, and remained with the family during the final rites.

The family declined the State honours announced earlier in the day by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Explaining the decision, senior YSRCP leader Jakkampudi Raja alleged that the family did not wish to accept honours from a government under which, he claimed, Mudragada had faced harassment between 2014 and 2019. He said the veteran leader had "never pursued power" and accused

the government of offering honours only as a political gesture.

Despite the family's decision, Tourism and Culture Minister Kandula Durgesh and Labour Minister Vasamsetty Subhash paid floral tributes on behalf of the State government.

Tension Over Daughter's Visit
Emotional scenes unfolded at the residence when Mudragada's daughter, B. Kranthi, arrived to pay her last respects. Family members and close supporters prevented her from approaching the mortal remains, saying they were honouring the late leader's expressed wish that she should not touch his body.

Police intervened and brief-

ly escorted her to have a final glimpse before asking her to leave as tensions escalated.

The strained relationship between father and daughter dates back to the 2024 Assembly elections. While Mudragada joined the YSR Congress Party and campaigned against Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan in Pithapuram, Kranthi openly supported the Jana Sena chief. During the campaign, Mudragada had publicly declared that he would never see his daughter's face again.

A Lifetime Dedicated to the Kapu Cause
Mudragada Padmanabham was one of Andhra Pradesh's most prominent Kapu leaders and spearheaded the State's longest agitation demanding

Backward Class status for the Kapu community.

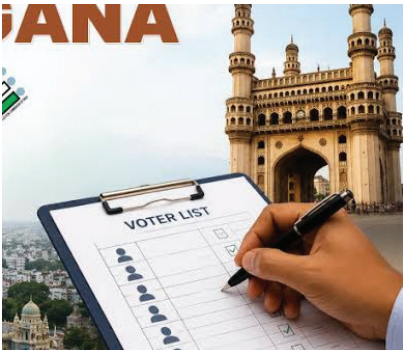
He entered politics following the death of his father, former MLA Veera Raghava Rao, and was elected three consecutive times from Prathipadu on the Telugu Desam Party ticket in 1983, 1985 and 1989. He later served as a minister in the N.T. Rama Rao Cabinet and subsequently associated with the BJP and the Congress before winning the Kakinada Lok Sabha seat in 1999.

His agitation reached its peak during the Kapu Garjana movement in January 2016, when violence erupted at Tuni and the Ratnachal Express was set ablaze by protesters. He eventually withdrew from the movement in 2020.

FROM PAGE 1

electoral rolls as well as claims and objections regarding corrections or modifications. The period for filing claims and objections will remain open from August 10 to September 9.

Officials have been directed to issue notices and complete the disposal of all claims and objections between August 10 and October 8. After the completion of this process, the final electoral rolls will be published on October 12.



The extension comes amid concerns raised by political parties over the pace of the SIR exercise in Telangana. A Congress delegation led by Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar met Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudharshan Reddy, alleging that the voter revision process was progressing slowly across the State. Meanwhile, the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) also brought to the notice of the State Election authorities that enumeration forms had not yet reached voters in several areas. The State authorities subsequently conveyed these concerns to the Election Commission of India. Under the original schedule, the SIR exercise in Telangana was to conclude on July 24. Acting on representations made by political parties, the Election Commission has now extended the deadline for the door-to-door survey and submission process until August 3.

AP ATTRACTS Rs.4,100 CR INVESTMENT AT BHARAT TEX 2026

FROM PAGE 1

unit in Visakhapatnam with a proposed investment of upto Rs.4,000 crore. Another Rs.100-crore MoU was signed for a garment manufacturing unit expected to create around 3,000 direct and indirect jobs. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) also expressed interest in partnering with the state to conduct export awareness and capacity-building programmes for textile MSMEs.

Senior officials, including Commissioner G Rekha Rani, inaugurated the pavilion. AP Handicrafts Development Corporation

Chairman Pasupuleti Hari Prasad and Raja Sabha MP V Vijayendra Prasad visited the pavilion, highlighting Andhra Pradesh's potential to attract investments and expand global markets for its handloom sector.

The state highlighted its position as India's 2nd largest silk producer, 6th in cotton, and 7th in jute, supported by over 15,000 textile MSMEs, 140-plus large textile units, and textile exports worth nearly US\$ 444 million. The participation is expected to boost Andhra Pradesh's investment prospects, exports and global collaborations in the textile and apparel sector.

WPM MODI PREVENTED NUCLEAR ATTACK ON UKRAINE IN 2022 ?

FROM PAGE 1

Prime Minister Modi played in stopping Putin from using tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine the end of 2022. But it's true, Prime Minister Modi is one of the few people who actually can exert some pressure and influence on President Putin, and that is clearly something India could do to stop this conflict," he said.

He added, "President Putin actually pays attention to what Prime Minister Modi tells him."

Explaining India's role, he said, "Everybody is against escalation, not only India with Prime Minister Modi but also China's

Xi Jinping. It's important, especially when it comes from countries that are not seen as hostile to Russia. India's role here is crucial," he said. The statement by the Polish minister came after Putin praised India as a "great country" and defended New Delhi's independent foreign policy. The Russian president also slammed th United States for attempting to pressure India over its cooperation with Russia, saying such moves are "detrimental" to bilateral and international relations. In an address to the media at the St Petersburg Economic Forum, Putin said, "We are glad that India is developing its relations with all the countries. It's a great

country. It's only natural it (India) develops its economy in accordance with its interest with those countries that it deems necessary. On India's economic growth under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Putin said, "India is one of the leading economies of the world that shows the highest rates of economic growth."

This is not something that comes out of the blue. This is a result of the hard work that the government has been doing under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi." He further highlighted that New Delhi and Moscow enjoy a special privileged strategic partnership.

HMRL Plans More Coaches for Metro

FROM PAGE 1

the maintenance and expansion of skywalks linking Metro stations with nearby railway stations and public spaces.

Ajith Reddy directed the officials to develop station-specific improvement plans, beginning with pilot projects at select stations before extending them across the network. He also announced plans to conduct field inspections of Metro stations to review operations and maintenance firsthand.

The meeting also reviewed proposals for the Public Rapid Transit System

(PRTS) in major IT hubs, including Hitech City, Raidurg, Gachibowli, Financial District and Kondapur, along with passenger safety measures implemented by the Metro Rail Security Department.

The review meeting was attended by Joint Managing Director Shivendra Pratap, Chief Electrical Engineer D.V.S. Raju, Chief Signaling & Technical Engineer Swapan Kumar Das, Chief Project Manager B. Anand Mohan, General Manager M. Vishnuvardhan Reddy, Chief Engineer Y. Saipareddy, General Manager (Security) Srinath Reddy and other senior officials.

Govt to Modernise..

FROM PAGE 1

into products with societal applications. Institutions such as T-Hub, T-Works and WE-Hub were providing support to innovators, he added. Emphasising the growing importance of innovation and skills, the Minister urged students to develop a scientific outlook by questioning, exploring and seeking solutions to real-life problems. Sridhar Babu appealed to the Foundation for Democratic Reforms to establish similar science centres in government schools across the State and assured it of the government's support for the initiative.

Members of Parliament Eatala Rajender and Vijayendra Prasad, FDR General Secretary Jayaprakash Narayan and others attended the programme.

People's government accords top priority to strengthening govt schools



- **Government schools should play a constructive role in rebuilding Telangana**
- **CM Revanth Reddy says he became CM by studying in government institution**
- **The CM announces he take the responsibility of the future of the students who excel in sports**
- **Young India kits will be distributed to 27.50 lakh by August 15 this year**
- **CM Revanth Reddy inaugurated Girls high school building and interacted with students at Kothakota in Wanaparthy district**

KOTHAKOTA

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy stated that the People's Government accorded top priority to strengthening the Government schools in the state. The Chief minister emphasized that the government educational institutions should play a constructive role in rebuilding the Telangana state.

Interacting with the students after inaugurating the girls high school building today, the CM said that the worrying factor is the student enrollment in government schools declined due to a lack of basic infrastructure. The previous government neglected the schools. Unless we strengthen government schools, the problem will remain unresolved even after 100 years, CM Revanth Reddy said that the teachers' promotions and transfers were completed first and then developed infrastructure in the schools. "Telangana currently ranks 18th in the country in the education sector. It is



our collective responsibility to elevate Telangana to the top two positions in the country in education", the CM asserted.

The Chief minister highlighted that education alone determines our future and brings light into our lives. It also enhances our self-respect and fills our parents' eyes with happiness. Soon after assuming power, the state

government appointed senior officials to the education department. "I firmly believe that the future of Telangana lies within its classrooms and it is the reason he kept the education portfolio with him", CM Revanth Reddy said, alleging that the previous government failed to honour the aspirations and sacrifices of the martyrs who fought for and secured Telangana. The Con-

gress government is carrying forward the martyrs' vision and striving for the reconstruction of Telangana. The government was spending Rs 1.08 lakh per student annually.

The CM listed out the initiatives to equip students and the youth with technical skills. The ITI colleges were upgraded and strengthened them into ATCs. These institutions are creating excellent opportunities for blue-collar jobs in Germany and Japan. The government also aims to complete the distribution of 'Young India Kits' to 27, 50,000 students by this Independence Day.

CM Revanth Reddy recalled that he studied in the government educational institutions and rose to become the Chief Minister. The Chief minister assured that he will take care of the future of the students who excel in sports alongside their studies. The Chief minister called upon the teachers to bring out the hidden talents in the students from the grassroots.



BRICS Labour Ministers adopt Hyd Declaration, launch BRICS Connect

HYDERABAD

BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers on Wednesday adopted the Hyderabad Declaration and launched "BRICS CONNECT", a new platform aimed at strengthening cooperation on labour reforms, social security, skills development and digital employment under India's BRICS Chairship 2026.

Addressing the ministerial meeting, Union Labour and Employment Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said India's presidency was guided by the theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", with a people-centric approach inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Highlighting India's labour reforms, Mandaviya said the country had consolidated 29 labour laws into four Labour Codes and expanded social protection through the e-Shram portal, which now covers over 317 million unorganised workers. He also noted that India hosts more than 2,100 Global Capability Centres employing 2.35 million professionals.

The meeting adopted a joint declaration focusing on four priority areas - expanding social security, increasing wom-

en's workforce participation, enhancing skills and employability, and leveraging digital technologies for all workers, including gig and platform workers. A major outcome was the launch of BRICS CONNECT, an India-led initiative to facilitate technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and capacity building among BRICS nations on labour market intelligence, future skills, digital employment services and social security reforms. In his video message to the gathering, Director General, International Labour Organisation (ILO) Gilbert F. Houngbo commended India's leadership for placing labour and employment at the heart of the BRICS agenda. The Director General extended his appreciation for India's robust social security ecosystem, which has seen rapid expansion in the past decade.

Delegates from BRICS member countries shared best practices on labour market reforms, digitalisation, AI, women's employment and social protection, while representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Social Security Association (ISSA) and UN Resident Coordinator's Office participated in the discussions.



Centre assures financial support for SC welfare schools, hostels in Telangana

HYDERABAD

The Union government will extend all possible support for the holistic development of Scheduled Caste (SC) students in Telangana, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said. He responded positively to the Telangana government's request for the immediate release of ₹150 crore from the pending Central assistance and agreed to convene a special review meeting next month to examine the State's proposal seeking a ₹300-crore special financial package for the comprehensive modernisation of Scheduled Caste welfare schools and hostels.

The assurance was conveyed during a meeting with Telangana Minister for Social Welfare, Scheduled Castes Development, Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens and Transgender Persons Adluri Lakshman Kumar, who called on the Union Minister at Tourism Plaza in Hyderabad on Wednesday and submitted a comprehensive memorandum.

The memorandum sought enhanced Central financial assistance for strengthening educational standards, expanding infrastructure in Scheduled Caste welfare institutions and ensuring effective implementation of centrally sponsored schemes across Telangana.

Speaking on the occasion, Adluri Lakshman Kumar said the Telangana government, under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, has placed social justice at the heart of governance and is implementing transformative welfare initiatives aimed at the socio-economic empowerment of Scheduled Castes.

Highlighting the State's initiatives, the Minister informed the Union Minister that Telangana has enhanced diet charges by 40 per cent, increased cosmetic charges by 212 per cent after a gap of 16 years, released substantial funds for hostel maintenance, expanded educational support under Pre-Matric and Post-Matric schemes and strengthened access to quality and technology-enabled education for disadvantaged students.

The Minister pointed out that lakhs of Scheduled Caste students are currently benefiting from the State's welfare educational institutions. However, he noted that substantial funds due to Telangana under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes remain pending,

placing an additional financial burden on the State in implementing welfare programmes. He urged the Union government to release the pending assistance at the earliest.

Adluri Lakshman Kumar also drew the Union Minister's attention to the urgent need for infrastructure upgradation in Scheduled Caste welfare schools and hostels across the State.

He explained that several institutions require repairs to existing buildings, construction of additional classrooms, expansion of hostel accommodation, dining halls, modern kitchens, hygienic sanitation facilities, safe drinking water systems, compound walls, electrification, digital classrooms, computer laboratories and smart learning infrastructure.

To address these critical infrastructure requirements, the Minister requested the Union government to sanction a special financial package of ₹300 crore for the comprehensive modernisation of Scheduled Caste welfare schools and hostels in Telangana. He stated that the proposed assistance would significantly enhance the quality of educational infrastructure, improve residential facilities and create a safer and more modern learning environment for students.

The Minister further appealed for continued Central support to Telangana's initiatives in Scheduled Caste education, skill development, employment generation, residential welfare and social empowerment, stating that stronger financial partnership between the Centre and the State would ensure more effective implementation of welfare programmes. Responding to the memorandum, Union Minister Ramdas Athawale assured that the Government of India stands firmly with Telangana in its efforts towards the educational and socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes.

He agreed, in principle, to facilitate the immediate release of ₹150 crore from the pending Central funds and stated that the proposal for the ₹300-crore special package would be taken up for a detailed review with senior officials during a special meeting scheduled for next month. The Union Minister also assured that the Centre would continue to extend full support for the welfare, educational advancement and empowerment of Scheduled Castes in Telangana.

Telangana Rising is unstoppable

- **Improving infrastructure to woo more investments**
- **Talks are in progress with the neighbouring state. Good news for the Mahabubnagar district soon**
- **Discussions in progress to get 90 TMC of water for the Palamuru Rangareddy lift project and 30 TMC of water to the Dindi project**
- **CM praises Amara Raja company for competing with China in EV technology**
- **CM Revanth Reddy inaugurated Cell Manufacturing facility of Amara Raja company at Amara Raja Giga Corridor, Divitipalli in Mahabubnagar district today**

MAHBUBNAGAR

Highlighting that the "Telangana Rising is unstoppable", Honourable Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy has said that the state government was improving the infrastructure to woo more investments to

the state. Addressing after inaugurating the EV Cell Manufacturing facility of Amara Raja company at Amara Raja Giga Corridor today, the Chief Minister said that the government was carrying forward the policies introduced by previous regimes - Chandrababu Naidu (1994-2004), Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (2004-2014), and also the government served from 2014 to December 2023. "We are adopting the best practices and the policies from the previous governments as the government does not want to suffer from policy paralysis. Our government has introduced various policies mainly to promote industry, tourism, and health as part of the 'Telangana Rising 2047' initiative." Since the Infrastructure is crucial for establishing industries in Telangana, the government was moving forward by formulating transparent policies.

The CM noted that Telangana was contributing 5 per cent to the national GDP, which is not at a satisfactory levels. Our goal is to increase Telangana's share of the national GDP to 10 per cent and transform Telangana into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2034 and 3 Trillion-dollar US dollar economy by 2047.

Announcing that the State government was holding talks



with the neighbouring state, CM Revanth Reddy said we will soon share good news with the people of Mahabubnagar district. Talks were already in progress towards securing an allocation of 90 TMC of water for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and also the allocation of 30 TMC of wa-

ter for the Dindi project. "We will create a favorable environment for industries and generate employment opportunities in the district".

The Chief Minister stressed that the farmers who gave their land to the Amara Raja company should be provided jobs in the new EV cell manu-

facturing unit. The CM praised the Amara Raja company for taking inspiration from China, Japan, Germany, and Korea. It is a proud moment that Amara Raja is competing with China in the EV sector. 700 employees are working at the Amara Raja unit in Divitipalli, and 400 of them are women, which stands as a testament to women's empowerment.

Expressing serious concern over increasing pollution and the threat of climate change, CM Revanth Reddy, rainfall is scarce due to the El Niño effect, causing difficulties for farmers. Significant climatic changes have occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to reduce pollution and electric vehicles are essential for pollution control.

As a son of Palamuru, the Chief Minister declared that he would transform Mahabubnagar into a model district. Mahabubnagar, once a drought-prone district, has now risen to the level where it can adopt other districts. IIITs, Engineering colleges, ATC centres, and 'Young India Integrated Schools' were already established in the district. The main objective of the ATCs and polytechnic colleges is to create blue-collar jobs. The pending Kalvakurthy, Bhima, RDS, and Nettempadu projects were also being completed

Skilled Youth are the Bright Future of Young India - Lion Captain Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, retired principal, columnist, personality development expert on World Youth Skills Day

KARIMNAGAR

Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, retired principal and personality development expert, said that India has the largest pool of young human resources and that if every youth has higher education as well as skills, there will be a bright future. Speaking at a special program organized by Satavahana Lions Club and Lead India National Club jointly for first-year students at Wageshwari Women's Degree College today on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day, he advised every student to make proper etiquette and make adequate efforts to excel in higher education. He advised



that while excelling in studies, they should develop technical or lab skills. In the same vein, they asked them to develop the personal skills necessary for an attractive personality. He said

that youth without skills have no future in today's modern AI-digital society. He said that if education is accompanied by technical skills and an attractive personality, they are sure



to reach a high position. He said that degrees without skills are useless. College Chairman BV Gopal Reddy, Principal Venkat Reddy, Satavahana Lions Club President Secretary

Treasurer Lion M Mahender, Lion N Venugopal, Lion M Praveen Kumar, Senior Lion P Surender and others along with 150 first year students participated.

Experiential Learning is the Foundation for Developing World-Class Skills

HYDERABAD, JULY 15:

To succeed in the rapidly changing world of the future, students need much more than the ability to memorize textbook content. They must develop the capacity to understand real-life challenges, think critically, innovate, and create meaningful solutions. Experiential Learning is the true direction of modern education, said Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, eminent educationist, environmentalist, and Chairman of the Lotus Lap Group of Schools.

Speaking on the importance of transforming education, Dr. Gopal Reddy emphasized that in an era driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, automation, and digital technologies, academic excellence alone is no longer sufficient. Students must develop essential 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, leadership, resilience, problem-solving, and innovation. Experiential learning, he said, provides the most effective pathway to nurture these skills.

Dr. Gopal Reddy ex-

The Future of Education Lies Not in Memorizing Textbooks but in Identifying Problems and Creating Solutions
Every Student Should Complete a Project that Creates Value for the Community

Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, Eminent Educationist, Environmentalist, and Chairman, Lotus Lap Group of Schools



plained that experiential learning is built around long-term, meaningful projects in which students work on a problem over several weeks or months rather than completing short-term classroom assignments. Throughout this journey, students investigate a real issue, gather evidence, design prototypes, test their ideas, receive feedback from teachers, experts, parents, and community members, identify shortcomings, and continuously improve their solutions. This iterative process naturally develops perseverance, resilience, confidence, analytical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

He further stated that projects should be rooted in students' own lives and communities rather than focusing on distant or abstract topics such as the Amazon River, ancient Roman history, or unrelated geographical themes. Instead, students should engage with issues that directly affect their surroundings, including water conservation, waste management, rainwater

harvesting, biodiversity, environmental protection, road safety, school cleanliness, plastic reduction, conservation of local lakes, public health, nutrition, preservation of local arts and culture, and community development. Education becomes truly meaningful when students learn to understand and improve the world around them.

Dr. Gopal Reddy stressed that project selection should not be dictated solely by teachers or the curriculum. Students should have the freedom and agency to choose projects based on their interests, curiosity, aspirations, and the needs of their communities. When children are empowered to make meaningful choices, they become more engaged,

responsible, confident, and capable of independent learning and leadership.

He also called for a fundamental shift in assessment practices. According to him, authentic assessment is not about awarding marks or grades after a project is completed. Instead, teachers should engage students in meaningful conversations, providing constructive feedback using clear competency-based rubrics. Such assessment should highlight students' strengths, identify areas for improvement, and guide them toward continuous growth. "Feedback should inspire learning, not merely judge performance," he remarked.

Dr. Gopal Reddy emphasized that every student project should serve a genuine purpose and create value for society. Projects should be designed in a way that allows local communities, village panchayats, municipalities, government departments, non-governmental organizations, or citizens to benefit from students' work. When students realize that their ideas can positively impact socie-

ty, they develop a stronger sense of social responsibility, civic consciousness, empathy, and service. He envisioned every school becoming a "Living Laboratory", where learning extends far beyond the four walls of the classroom. Nature, villages, cities, industries, farms, science centers, museums, lakes, forests, historical sites, and public institutions should all become learning spaces. Students retain knowledge more deeply when they experience concepts in real-life situations rather than simply reading about them in textbooks. Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Dr. Gopal Reddy noted that the policy strongly advocates experiential learning, competency-based education, multidisciplinary learning, project-based instruction, local knowledge systems, environmental awareness, and critical thinking. He urged every educational institution in India to embrace these principles to prepare students for the demands of the 21st century and position the country as a global knowledge leader.

Dr. Gopal Reddy further stated that the Lotus Lap Group of Schools has already integrated experiential learning into its educational philosophy through environmental education, STEM initiatives, robotics, mathematics laboratories, reading enhancement programs, leadership development, community service activities, innovation projects, and inquiry-based learning. The institution is committed to expanding these initiatives so that every student completes at least one meaningful project that addresses a real societal challenge and contributes positively to the community.

Concluding his address, Dr. Gopal Reddy said:

"Education should prepare children not merely to pass examinations but to understand life, solve real problems, and contribute meaningfully to society. Knowledge gained through experience remains with a learner for a lifetime and becomes the strongest foundation for building a progressive, innovative, and compassionate nation."



DURAND CUP TROPHY TOUR RECEIVES GRAND WELCOME IN IMPHAL

IMPHAL, 15 JULY 2026

Imphal welcomed the Trophy Tour of the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup on Wednesday as the tournament's three historic trophies arrived in the State ahead of the upcoming competition. The event, held at the City Convention Centre, brought together Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, senior government officials, security personnel, representatives of participating clubs, and members of the football fraternity on stage during the rendition of the National Song, Vande Mataram. Dignitaries present included Major General Gaurav Sharma, SC, SM, Inspector General, Assam Rifles (South); Shri Mukesh Singh, IPS, Director General of Police, Manipur; Lieutenant General Gambhir Singh, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, Chief of Staff, Headquarters; Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur; Shri Kuldip Singh, IPS (Retd.), Security Adviser, Government of Manipur; and Major General Shubhankar Basu, SM, VSM,

General Officer Commanding, Red Shield Division. Speaking at the programme, Governor Bhalla said the return of the Durand Cup to Khuman Lampak Main Stadium represented more than a sporting occasion. He described it as an opportunity to foster optimism, strengthen social bonds, and showcase Manipur's resilience. Chief Minister Khemchand Singh emphasised that football remains deeply embedded in the State's culture and identity, and hosting Durand Cup matches in Imphal would create opportunities for aspiring footballers. The programme also felicitated renowned sportspersons from Manipur including Kunjarani Devi, Sarita Devi, Bombayla Devi, and Oinam Bembem Devi. Earlier in the day, the Durand Cup, President's Cup, and Simla Trophy were flagged off from Sendra, overlooking Loktak Lake, by Home, Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Govindas Konthoujam. Accompanied by the Thangjing Riders, the trophies travelled through Moirang, Bishnupur, Tiddim Ground, Kangla Fort, and Manipur University before reaching Imphal.

Cracking the UPSC is difficult. Becoming an IPS officer is even harder

New Delhi: The question is back in the spotlight after 2025 batch Odisha cadre IPS officer C.A. Ramdas resigned while undergoing Phase I training at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) in Hyderabad. He had not even taken up his first field posting. His resignation comes just days after Jagmohan Meena, a 2013 batch Odisha cadre IPS officer and former DCP of Bhubaneswar, also stepped down from the service. Together, their exits have drawn attention to a larger trend. In the past few months, eight IPS officers have resigned. Seven of them are below the age of 40. Interestingly, many have chosen completely different career paths. Sidharth Kaushal, a 2012 batch Andhra Pradesh cadre IPS officer, reportedly joined Reliance

Industries. Lokeshwar Singh, a 2014 batch Uttarakhand cadre IPS officer, is understood to have taken up a United Nations linked assignment. Former 2013 batch Madhya Pradesh cadre IPS officer Abhishek Tiwari is now pursuing entrepreneurship after serving in important cybercrime investigations. The resignations of Kanya Mishra and Nurul Hoda also attracted public attention. The resignations have also come at a time when the Indian Police Service is already facing a shortage of officers. Earlier this year, the government informed Parliament that more than 500 IPS posts are vacant, affecting not only state police forces but also agencies like the CBI, IB and other central organizations. There is no official common reason behind these resignations.

Kerala panel flags gaps in high-speed rail proposal, halts land acquisition

The Kerala government's expert panel has termed the proposed high-speed rail project prepared by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) incomplete, recommending against land acquisition or demarcation until detailed viability, feasibility, social and environmental impact studies are carried out.



The Kerala government's expert committee has found the high-speed rail proposal prepared by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to be incomplete and recommended that the project should not proceed in its present form, State Minister VD Satheesan said on Wednesday. The panel, which submitted its report earlier in the day, has advised the government against initiating land demarcation or acquisition until key studies are completed. Addressing reporters after a Cabinet meeting, Satheesan said the proposal, prepared by DMRC under the guidance of E Sreedharan, lacks critical components, including social and environmental impact assessments, viability and

feasibility studies, and a sustainable economic model. He said the proposal focuses solely on passenger transport and does not account for freight movement, raising concerns about the project's financial viability. "Without a logistics component, we will face difficulties in repaying the loans taken for the project. The government will therefore have to study the logistics aspect as well," Satheesan said. According to the minister, the panel also noted that the proposal does not address land availability, integration with other modes of transport such as the metro and inland waterways, or projected passenger demand. It has recommended that a detailed project report (DPR) should be prepared only after comprehensive

viability and feasibility assessments are carried out. "The government will have to examine various aspects, including the project's social and environmental impact and logistics movement, before calling for a DPR. There will be no land acquisition or demarcation before the DPR is prepared," he said. Satheesan added that the committee cautioned against repeating the mistakes made during the previous Left government's SilverLine project, where land acquisition was initiated before completing essential studies. The minister said the government would carefully examine the panel's recommendations before deciding the future course of action on the proposed high-speed rail corridor.

AP government committed to keeping power tariffs unchanged, says Gottipati Ravi Kumar

AMARAVATI:

Andhra Pradesh Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar on Wednesday said the State government remained committed to its assurance of not increasing electricity tariffs for five years, while highlighting the coalition government's decision to implement a "true-down" mechanism, which he described as a first of its kind. Addressing the media, the Minister said the State was witnessing a daily power consumption of around 280 million units due to fluctuating weather conditions. Despite the increased demand and weather-related disruptions, the government had ensured uninterrupted electricity supply by taking advance measures, he said. Mr. Ravi Kumar said strong winds had caused temporary interruptions to power lines in some places, but electricity department personnel were restoring supply without delay. He added that issues were being resolved in coordination with local public representatives and district officials to minimise inconvenience to consumers. The Minister alleged that the power sector had been weakened during the previous YSR Congress

Party government's tenure and said the coalition government, under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, had stabilised the system within a short period. He said the government was strengthening the transmission network by augmenting AP Transco's infrastructure and expediting the construction of new substations and transformers across the State. Referring to the State's industrial growth, Mr. Ravi Kumar said the government was expanding electricity infrastructure to meet the requirements of upcoming industries. He added that power sector projects worth around Rs.6,000 crore were under various stages of execution and that the required substations would be completed within the stipulated timelines. The Minister also said the government had not increased electricity tariffs during the past two years and had entered its third year without a tariff revision. He reiterated that the government intended to adhere to its commitment of keeping power tariffs unchanged for five years while continuing measures aimed at improving the financial and operational efficiency of the power sector.

Interpretation of sexual offences should not be limited only to physical act: NCW chief

NEW DELHI: (JUL 15)

National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Vijaya Raghavkar on Wednesday said the interpretation of sexual offences by courts should not be confined to the physical act alone, asserting that equal importance must be given to the survivor's dignity, consent, and the fear she experienced. Raghavkar's remarks came after a Patna High Court judgment which, according to media reports, held that attempting to remove a woman's salwar and pressing her chest did not amount to an attempt to rape. "While interpreting sexual offences, the focus should not be limited only to the physical act. Equal importance must also be given to the survivor's dignity, her consent, the fear she experienced, and the psychological trauma caused by the incident," Raghavkar said.

Karnataka to consult stakeholders before apartment law: DK Shivakumar

Shivakumar on Wednesday said the proposed Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2026, would be finalised only after extensive consultations with stakeholders, while assuring apartment owners of stronger legal protection for their property rights.

Shivakumar said the government was committed to protecting the interests of homebuyers and would also address long-pending issues related to developers, property documents and apartment governance. Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday assured apartment owners that the government would enact a comprehensive law to safeguard their ownership rights, saying the proposed Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2026 would be finalised only after extensive consultations with all stakeholders.

Addressing representatives of apartment associations in

Bengaluru, Shivakumar said the government was committed to protecting the interests of homebuyers and would also address long-pending issues related to developers, property documents and apartment governance. "We are very firm. When property is being given to you, you should have the right. You are the owners," the chief minister said, stressing that apartment owners must receive full legal protection over their properties. He said the government had invited suggestions from apartment associations, developers, legal experts and political parties and would incorporate constructive feedback before placing the Bill before the Cabinet and subsequently the Legislature. "We have time before the Assembly session. The Bill will first go to the Cabinet and then be introduced in the Legislature. I do not want to bulldoze a Bill through the Assembly. I want to discuss it with all stakeholders and incorporate good suggestions wherever possible," Shivakumar said.

Noting that many people



invest their life's savings in purchasing a home, he said, "Your hard-earned property deserves full legal protection. There should be no misuse."

The chief minister also said developers who had failed to hand over original property documents to buyers would be called for discussions, warning against the practice of withholding records after mortgaging properties with banks. Shivakumar said the proposed 'Bhumi Guarantee', which he described as the government's sixth guarantee, would ensure property owners receive Khata certificates

without having to pay bribes. He added that nearly 40 lakh properties had already been digitised and 26 lakh Khata certificates issued. He also urged apartment associations to maintain sewage treatment plants properly and work with the government to address civic issues. Highlighting Bengaluru's rapid growth, he said the city's population had nearly doubled to around 1.4 crore since his earlier tenure as Urban Development Minister, while vehicle numbers had surged to nearly 1.35 crore, placing enormous pressure on existing infrastructure.

According to Shivakumar, infrastructure projects worth nearly Rs 1.5 lakh crore are currently underway across departments in Bengaluru, with around Rs 4,000 crore sanctioned for road upgrades and pothole repairs. He reiterated the government's vision of promoting planned high-rise development over unplanned layouts, adding that Bengaluru continues to remain more affordable than cities such as Mumbai. Earlier, Bengaluru Development

Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the consultation had been organised primarily to gather public feedback on the proposed legislation. He said the draft Bill's key provisions would be uploaded online, allowing stakeholders to submit suggestions through a dedicated email address before it is finalised. Byre Gowda also addressed concerns over the new solid waste management rules requiring eligible apartment complexes to engage registered waste-processing agencies. He said the norms stem from Supreme Court directions and Central Pollution Control Board regulations, adding that the government had only fixed a maximum ceiling of Rs 12 for waste collection charges and was willing to empanel more agencies to encourage competition and prevent monopolies.

The consultation focused on strengthening legal protections for apartment owners while addressing concerns over property documentation, civic services and waste management before the proposed legislation is introduced.

Climate Tested India's Engineering Ambition

Mumbai, July 15: The Mumbai-Pune Expressway's Missing Link landslide exposed a critical challenge confronting India's infrastructure revolution: projects designed using historical climate assumptions are increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather. Although the tunnel remained structurally sound, unprecedented rainfall triggered a massive rockfall outside the protected zone, highlighting the need for climate-resilient engineering rather than conventional design standards. Similar failures across India's highways indicate a system-

ic issue driven by changing rainfall patterns, inadequate geotechnical assessment and fragile slope management. Beyond engineering, repeated disruptions impose heavy economic costs through repairs, logistics delays and declining public confidence. India's future infrastructure strategy must therefore integrate climate-risk modelling, advanced geological investigations, intelligent monitoring systems and nature-based stabilisation. In the age of climate change, resilience has become the true benchmark of engineering excellence.

EDITORIAL

India's Semiconductor Push:
Can Semicon 2.0 Make India a
Global Chip Hub?

India's approval of Semicon 2.0, with an outlay of ₹1.27 lakh crore, marks a decisive step towards becoming a global semiconductor manufacturing hub. At a time when semiconductors power smartphones, electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, defence systems, healthcare equipment and industrial automation, building domestic chip-making capacity is no longer merely an economic aspiration. It has become a strategic necessity for national security, technological leadership and long-term economic resilience.

The global semiconductor shortage during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the dangers of excessive dependence on a few manufacturing centres. Supply disruptions affected automobile production, consumer electronics and several other industries across the world. The crisis highlighted the urgent need for diversified and resilient supply chains. For India, which imports most of its semiconductor requirements, Semicon 2.0 offers an opportunity to reduce external dependence while strengthening its position in the global technology landscape.

The programme seeks to promote investments in semiconductor fabrication, chip packaging, testing, design and research. Rather than focusing only on manufacturing plants, it aims to create an integrated ecosystem that supports every stage of chip development. Government incentives, policy support and a rapidly expanding electronics market have already attracted interest from global technology companies as well as domestic investors looking to participate in this emerging sector.

India enters this race with significant strengths. It possesses one of the world's largest pools of engineering talent and has earned global recognition in semiconductor design and software development. Many leading chip companies operate research and development centres in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Noida. Combined with a vast domestic market and growing demand for electronics, these advantages provide a solid foundation for future growth. Yet the challenges are equally formidable. Semiconductor fabrication plants require investments worth billions of dollars, uninterrupted electricity, ultra-pure water, sophisticated equipment and highly skilled professionals. Building this infrastructure demands sustained commitment from governments and industry alike. India must also compete with established manufacturing leaders that have spent decades developing expertise, supply chains and advanced technologies.

Technology acquisition presents another challenge. The most advanced semiconductor manufacturing processes remain concentrated among a handful of global companies. India should therefore strengthen international partnerships while simultaneously investing in research, innovation and indigenous capabilities. Universities, research institutions and industry must collaborate to develop specialised skills, encourage innovation and create valuable intellectual property.

Environmental sustainability must also remain a priority. Semiconductor manufacturing consumes substantial quantities of water and energy. Future facilities should adopt renewable energy sources, efficient recycling systems and environmentally responsible production methods to balance industrial growth with ecological responsibility. The success of Semicon 2.0 will ultimately depend on consistent policy implementation, efficient infrastructure, ease of doing business and continuous investment in talent. Financial incentives alone cannot create a globally competitive semiconductor industry. If pursued with determination and long-term vision, Semicon 2.0 can transform India into a trusted global chip producer, generate high-quality employment, strengthen economic resilience and secure the nation's technological future for generations ahead.

ECHOES OF NELLORE: WHERE MEMORY BECOMES
POETRY AND A CITY BECOMES ETERNITY

A Review of Echoes of Nellore

Poet: Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna
Publisher: Authors Press

There are books that describe places, and there are books that preserve the soul of a place for generations. Echoes of Nellore unquestionably belongs to the latter. More than a collection of fifty poems, it is a lyrical archive of memory, history, culture, spirituality, education, philanthropy, and human experience. Through these poems, Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna transforms Nellore from a geographical location into an enduring cultural landscape whose heartbeat resonates through every page.

Composed over fifty consecutive days—from 14 May to 1 July 2025—as the poet marked fifty years of his literary journey, this volume is both a creative milestone and a deeply personal offering of gratitude. It is a son's tribute to the soil that nurtured his imagination and shaped his literary consciousness. Every poem reflects the intimate bond between a poet and his birthplace, reminding readers that the deepest poetry often springs from the deepest sense of belonging.

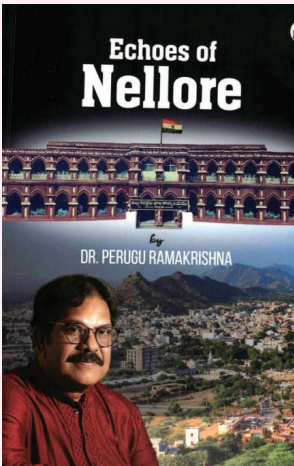
The distinguishing strength of Echoes of Nellore lies in its remarkable comprehensiveness. Rather than presenting nostalgic reminiscence alone, Dr. Ramakrishna constructs a multidimensional portrait of Nellore. Temples, educational institutions, hospitals, industries, sports complexes, philanthropists, public servants, marketplaces, rivers, traditions, and ordinary citizens all find their rightful place within this poetic panorama. The collection thus becomes a literary map of an entire civilization.

One of the book's finest achievements is its seamless fusion of history and emotion. Poems such as "Ode to Nellore" portray a city where tradition and modernity coexist harmoniously. The poet's vision extends beyond physical landscapes into emotional geography, making every breeze, every street, and every landmark resonate with memory, affection, and identity.

The spiritual heart of the city finds profound expression in "At the Feet of Ranganatha." Here, devotion is portrayed not merely as ritual but as a timeless force sustaining generations. The temple emerges as both a sacred monument and an enduring symbol of cultural continuity.

Education forms another powerful current throughout the volume. Through poems dedicated to Vikrama Simhapuri University, Dodla Kousalyamma Government College for Women, and Venkatagiri Rajas College, Dr. Ramakrishna celebrates institutions that have transformed countless lives through knowledge and opportunity. His tribute to women's education is especially moving, portraying classrooms not merely as centres of learning but as spaces where dignity, confidence, and dreams take flight.

The collection also chronicles Nellore's industrial and civic evolution with remarkable sensitivity. Factories become symbols of aspiration and honest labour; hospitals embody compassion and hope; the police force represents courage and public service; and the Sports Complex emerges as a cradle where



determination matures into excellence. In the poet's hands, institutions cease to be mere buildings and become enduring symbols of collective memory.

Equally inspiring are the poems devoted to philanthropy and selfless public service. By honouring individuals whose lives were dedicated to society, the poet reminds us that the true greatness of a city resides not in its monuments but in the generosity, integrity, and humanity of its people.

Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna's poetic language is graceful without ornamentation, accessible without sacrificing literary dignity. His imagery arises naturally from lived experience, while his metaphors remain firmly rooted in cultural authenticity. He possesses the rare ability to elevate everyday realities into enduring poetic symbols without distancing them from ordinary readers.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of Echoes of Nellore is its documentary value. These poems preserve institutions, personalities, traditions, landscapes, and memories that future generations might otherwise encounter only in fading archives. Consequently, the collection functions simultaneously as poetry, cultural history, civic remembrance, and emotional autobiography. It convincingly demonstrates that regional literature, when enriched by artistic conviction and human depth, naturally attains universal significance.

A balanced literary observation may be made that a few poems lean more toward commemorative documentation than lyrical abstraction. Yet this is not a limitation; rather, it reflects the poet's deliberate artistic vision. His purpose extends beyond aesthetic delight to the preservation of cultural memory, and within that larger objective the collection succeeds with admirable consistency.

After five decades of distinguished literary service, Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna once again reaffirms his enduring commitment to literature rooted in humanity, heritage, and cultural consciousness. His poetry remains deeply connected to Telugu sensibility while speaking eloquently to universal values of gratitude, identity, belonging, and collective remembrance.

Ultimately, Echoes of Nellore affirms that every town possesses an epic waiting to be written and every landscape carries stories worthy of poetry. By transforming memory into literature, geography into emotion, and civic history into lyrical expression, Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna has created far more than a regional poetry collection. He has created a literary monument dedicated to a city and its people.

In preserving the soul of Nellore through poetry, Dr. Perugu Ramakrishna has accomplished something that only genuine literature can achieve—he has transformed a hometown into a timeless human experience. Echoes of Nellore is not merely a collection of poems it is a literary monument to memory, identity, and belonging, destined to remain an enduring contribution to contemporary Indian poetry.

...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...
National Poet & Literary Critic
7810032847



OPINION

INTERLINKING OF RIVERS IN ANDHRA PRADESH: OPTIMUM
UTILIZATION IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

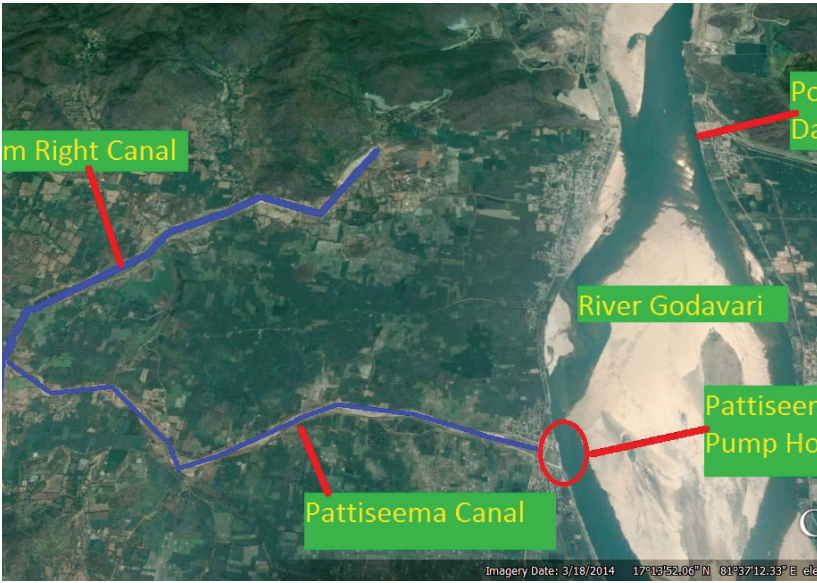
Recently, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu, stated that the interlinking of rivers in the state is one of his dreams. However, this is not a new concept. Numerous proposals and plans on this subject have emerged in the past as well. But the primary question currently remains whether this river linking is practically feasible or not.

River interlinking is the process of connecting rivers through canals, reservoirs, or pipelines to transfer water from water-surplus regions to water-scarce regions. Its main objective is to distribute water resources equitably across different regions. Through this method, irrigation water can be provided to drought-prone areas, thereby boosting agricultural productivity. Additionally, improving the supply of drinking water to the growing urban and rural populations is also one of its key purposes. It also helps reduce flood damages by diverting excess water from flood-prone river basins. Furthermore, the interlinking of rivers contributes to hydro-power generation, inland water transport, and regional development.

Countries like the United States, Australia, Spain, India, China, and South Africa are among those that have undertaken this type of river interlinking. Among the many benefits of river interlinking, the expansion of irrigation, improvement of drinking water supply, flood control, and hydropower generation are the most significant. For instance, China transfers billions of cubic meters of water every year to its water-scarce northern regions, benefiting major cities like Beijing. In Spain, water transfer is aiding agricultural development in the arid lands of the southeastern regions. However, river interlinking is an extremely expensive process. For example, the cost of China's water diversion project exceeds 60 billion US dollars. Due to such massive projects, many families are forced to leave their residential areas, requiring thousands of people to be rehabilitated. Furthermore, environmental and habitat loss, changes in river ecosystems, fish migration routes, and the health of wetlands are also adversely affected by water transfer.

Interlinking of Rivers in India

Due to India's extensive river system and the seasonal variations in water availability, the interlinking of rivers is considered technically feasible. India has proposed to connect the water-surplus Himalayan rivers with the water-scarce peninsular rivers. A prime example within this plan is the Ken-Betwa River linking project. This project aims to transfer approximate-



ly 1,000 million cubic meters (MCM) of water every year from Madhya Pradesh to Uttar Pradesh. Another important proposal is the Godavari-Krishna-Cauvery River interlinking system, which is intended to meet the water needs of the southern Indian states. Theoretically, this river linking plan has the potential to provide irrigation to over 35–40 million hectares of land. It would also help mitigate the impact of droughts in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Furthermore, the problem of floods can be reduced to some extent by diverting the excess water that flows during the monsoon season in states like Assam and Bihar. It is estimated that building a full-scale nationwide river interlinking network would cost over ₹10–12 lakh crores.

Interlinking of Rivers in
Andhra Pradesh

The interlinking of rivers in Andhra Pradesh is closely tied to the vision of Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu to improve water security and irrigation facilities in the state. The Godavari-Krishna River link, particularly the transfer of water through the Polavaram-Vijayawada system, is considered the primary opportunity for river interlinking in the state. Through the already operational Patisseema Lift Irrigation Scheme, water is being transferred from the Godavari River to the Krishna Delta. This has proven that the interlinking of rivers is technically feasible. By further expanding this system, there is a possibility to provide water even to drought-prone Rayalaseema regions like Anantapur and Kurnool. The main benefit of these projects is ensuring a continuous supply of irrigation water for agriculture. This will increase crop yields and provide a signifi-

cant boost to the development of the state's agricultural sector. Additionally, drinking water security can also be improved for cities such as Amaravati, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam. Through increased crop productivity and the development of allied industries, the state has the potential to achieve thousands of crores of rupees in economic benefits every year.

The implementation of these projects requires massive expenditure. According to policy discussions, for instance, the estimated cost of the Polavaram-Banakacharla interlinking project is expected to be around ₹58,000 crores to ₹80,000 crores. It is estimated that an investment of approximately ₹70,000 crores would be required to implement the full-scale plans, including the Godavari-Krishna-Penna rivers interlinking. It is estimated that over ₹14,000 crores have already been spent on rehabilitation and resettlement programs. Providing proper rehabilitation to the affected families stands out as a crucial social issue. On the other hand, there is a possibility of disputes arising with the states of Telangana, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh over the utilization of Godavari waters. These could lead to legal delays under the purview of the Interstate River Water Disputes Act. He also proposed utilizing Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models to mobilize the funds required for these mega projects. It was envisioned that this would accelerate project implementation and reduce the financial burden.

To develop a comprehensive, large-scale river interlinking system across the state, the cost is likely to reach around ₹1–2 lakh crores. Of this, the cost of the Polavaram project alone has reached approximately ₹55,000 crores. Additionally, these projects also bring some negative impacts.

Furthermore, rainfall patterns are shifting due to the impact of climate change. Consequently, estimates of "surplus water" may not remain accurate. Therefore, while the interlinking of rivers in Andhra Pradesh is highly feasible and has already been implemented to some extent, phased investments, comprehensive planning, and environmental protection measures are absolutely essential to achieve long-term success.

Measures for River

Interlinking in Andhra Pradesh

For the successful implementation of river interlinking projects in Andhra Pradesh, several effective measures need to be adopted. Building upon the already successful lift irrigation schemes, implementing large-scale projects in a phased manner can mitigate financial and technical risks. It is essential to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for each project and undertake special measures for the conservation of forest areas and biodiversity. Furthermore, using existing canal systems instead of constructing new ones can significantly minimize the need for land acquisition and reduce construction costs. To mobilize the required funds for the projects, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models and the cooperation of the Central Government's national irrigation schemes should be widely utilized. To minimize interstate water disputes, River Management Boards should be established, and mutually agreeable water-sharing pacts must be secured. Additionally, continuous scientific monitoring of climate change, water availability, and river inflows must be conducted. Implementing water management plans adapted to these changing weather conditions will ensure the stability and long-term benefits of the projects. Through scientific planning, phased implementation, environmental conservation, and coordination among states, the prospects for the long-term success of these projects will be greatly enhanced.



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BEYOND 5G: WHY INDIA'S TELECOM
REVOLUTION MUST PUT CONSUMERS FIRST



quire affordable voice connectivity. Markets function best when consumers can choose what they actually need—not when they are compelled to purchase services they rarely use.

The rollout of 5G presents another challenge. Operators have understandably promoted its enormous potential, and India has made impressive progress in deployment. Yet users frequently report inconsistent experiences depending on geography. Such variations are expected during network expansion. What consumers deserve, however, is greater transparency about actual coverage, expected speeds and network performance instead of expectations shaped largely by advertising.

Questions surrounding mobile data usage also continue to surface. In many instances, rapid data depletion can be explained by background applications, cloud synchronisation or automatic software updates. Even so, telecom providers can significantly improve public confidence by offering clearer and more transparent usage analytics that allow subscribers to understand precisely where their data is being consumed.

Customer support has emerged as another area requiring urgent attention. Artificial intelligence-powered chatbots and automated voice systems undoubtedly improve operational efficiency. But efficiency should not come at the cost of accessibil-

ity. When consumers face billing disputes, network failures or unresolved technical problems, they should have a reasonable opportunity to speak to a trained human representative. Technology should strengthen customer service—not become a barrier to it.

Importantly, these concerns are not merely anecdotal. The regulatory framework itself acknowledges the need for stronger consumer protection. TRAI's latest complaint redressal reforms propose financial disincentives of up to ₹50 lakh per quarter for telecom operators that improperly handle consumer complaints and appeals, reflecting growing regulatory concern over grievance resolution and service accountability.

Official figures also indicate the scale of the challenge. According to TRAI's Annual Report, 58,680 telecom-related complaints were received during the reporting period ending March 2025. While many complaints are resolved through operators' grievance mechanisms, the numbers underline that consumer dissatisfaction cannot simply be dismissed as isolated incidents.

International experience offers valuable lessons. Australia's independent Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman received 57,592 complaints during 2024–25, nearly half relating to mobile services. More importantly, complaint trends are publicly analysed, allowing regulators, operators and consumers alike to identify recurring problems and improve service quality. Transparency itself becomes a regulatory tool.

India need not replicate every international model, but it can certainly adopt their underlying principles. TRAI should move beyond tariff regulation and place greater emphasis on meas-

urable service quality. Periodic publication of operator-wise performance indicators—including call setup time, call drops, network availability and complaint resolution rates—would encourage competition based on quality rather than pricing alone. Voice-only plans should remain easily available for subscribers who do not require bundled digital services. Recorded promotional announcements should never delay emergency communications. Consumers should also have a guaranteed pathway to human customer support when automated systems fail to resolve legitimate grievances.

Telecom companies, for their part, must recognise that public trust has become their most valuable asset. Attractive advertisements cannot substitute for dependable connectivity. Sophisticated artificial intelligence cannot replace responsive customer care. Long-term competitiveness will depend not merely on technological leadership but on the willingness to treat consumers as partners rather than passive subscribers.

India's digital future will undoubtedly be built on faster networks and smarter technologies. But a truly mature telecom ecosystem will be judged by something far simpler: whether it listens to the people who sustain it. In the end, spectrum may power the network—but consumer trust powers the industry.



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CM pays tributes to Dr. K.L. Rao on his 124th birth anniversary

AMARAVATI

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said the Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Project has transformed the fortune of farmers in Krishna Delta by ensuring timely irrigation facility. He revealed that 450 TMC of Godavari floodwaters have been diverted to the Krishna River through Pattiseema since 2015. Constructed at a cost of Rs 1,300 crore, the project has not only stabilised the Krishna Delta but has also contributed significantly to wealth creation across the state. The Chief Minister offered Jala Harathi to the Godavari waters at the sacred confluence of the Krishna and Godavari rivers near Ibrahimpatnam in NTR district today. Dressed in traditional attire, he performed puja offering flowers to the river waters. Later, on the occasion of the 124th birth anniversary of eminent engineer Dr. K.L. Rao, the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to his portrait. Later addressing a public meeting the Chief Minister said the government is organising statewide programmes to inspire future generations of engineers with the legacy of Dr. K.L. Rao. The Chief Minister said Pattiseema has enabled Godavari waters to reach the Krishna River, making the Krishna Delta green and prosperous. The Telugu Desam Party government completed the project within a year and safeguarded the Krishna Delta. With 80 TMC of water, we stabilized irrigation for 13 lakh acres in the delta despite of criticism from some people. Today, farmers in Krishna delta are reaping rich harvests because of Pattiseema. "By diverting Godavari water through the Polavaram

Pattiseema project brings prosperity to Krishna Delta: CM
River interlinking from Vamsadhara to Penna is the government's long-term goal: CM
CM offers Jala harathi to Godavari waters at the sacred Krishna-Godavari confluence near Ibrahimpatnam

Right Main Canal, we are conserving Krishna waters in Srisailem reservoir and supplying them to Rayalaseema. The coalition government's goal is to provide irrigation to every cultivable acre in the state," the Chief Minister said. The Chief Minister said the government spent Rs 68,000 crore on irrigation sector between 2014 and 2019, and another Rs 24,000 crore in the last two years since 2024. "The previous rulers remained indifferent even after the Annamayya Dam breach. They failed to respond when the gates of Gundlakamma and Pulichintala were damaged. Not a single rupee was allocated for repairs; they did not even carry out basic maintenance. "We have installed new gates at the Tungabhadra Dam. Yesterday, we also launched works worth Rs 152 crore to replace the gates at the Dowleswaram Barrage. The Chief Minister said neglecting projects including Polavaram is a betrayal of both the nation and the state. Those who abandoned these projects have betrayed the farming community. Even today, as we build Amaravati into a world-class capital city, some people are trying to obstruct development by provoking farmers and attempting to block the construction of the Seed Access Road," he said. The Chief Minister reiterated his vision of interlinking rivers across Andhra Pradesh from Vamsadhara to Penna. "Just as the Golden Quadrilateral transformed India's road network, a nationwide river-linking pro-

gramme can transform the country's future. If water flowing into the sea is effectively utilized for irrigation, drinking water and industrial needs, it will generate enormous wealth. "We will complete 36 priority irrigation projects over the next three years with an investment of Rs 35,000 crore. Highlighting the legacy of Dr. K.L. Rao, the Chief Minister said the legendary engineer played a pivotal role in the construction of major irrigation projects such as Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar, Hirakud and Kosi dams. He also served as an international water expert for the United Nations in countries such as Egypt and Sudan. Born in Vijayawada, Dr. K.L. Rao served as a Member of Parliament and later as a Union Minister under three Prime Ministers. His pioneering contributions to irrigation engineering and hydropower development earned him national recognition. The Chief Minister said irrigation visionaries like Sir Arthur Cotton's successors in Andhra Pradesh, Dr. K.L. Rao, Shivaramakrishnayya and N.T. Rama Rao have been a constant source of inspiration in shaping the state's irrigation sector. He added that the government is enhancing groundwater resources through the Jaladhara programme and taking sustained measures to prevent Rayalaseema from turning into a desert. Ministers Nimmala Ramanaidu, Anagani Satya Prasad, Satya Kumar Yadav, MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad participated.

Rath Yatra Reflects India's Cultural Unity: Tripura CM

AGARTALA, JULY 15

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday said that Lord Jagannath's Rath Yatra is a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage, social harmony and the spirit of "unity in diversity", urging people to carry the festival's message of equality, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence into their daily lives. Inaugurating the nine-day traditional Rath Yatra festival at the historic Jagannath Bari in Melaghar under Sepahijala district, the Chief Minister described the festival as a universal celebration that brings people of all faiths together and strengthens communal harmony. The festival has been jointly organised by the Sepahijala District Administration, the Information and Cultural Affairs Department and the Melaghar Municipal Council. Addressing a large gathering, Saha said the annual chariot festival signifies Lord Jagannath stepping out of the temple to bless devotees, conveying the timeless message that people from all religions and communities should live together in peace and harmony. "The Rath Yatra is not merely a religious festival but a celebration of India's cultural ethos, social unity and communal harmony. It encourages cultural exchange and reinforces the bonds of brotherhood among people," he said. Highlighting the festival's national and global significance, the Chief Minister said the Rath Yatra in Puri is the country's most celebrated chariot festival, while similar grand celebrations are held at Mahesh and Mayapur in West Bengal. He added that through ISKCON, the festival has now become a global event, showcasing



India's spiritual and cultural traditions across the world. Saha stressed the importance of preserving India's civilisational heritage and urged the younger generation to remain rooted in the country's rich cultural traditions while embracing modernity. Referring to the Brahma Purana, Padma Purana and Skanda Purana, he said the significance of Rath Yatra has been documented in ancient Hindu scriptures. The Chief Minister also highlighted the Centre's initiatives for preserving and developing religious heritage sites across the country. He cited projects such as the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Mahakal Lok in Ujjain, the Somnath Temple, the Char Dham pilgrimage centres, the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor and the Buddhist Circuit. He said the Tripura government has also been actively promoting religious tourism and conserving heritage sites, including the redevelopment of the Tripura Sundari Temple under the PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive) scheme and ongoing restoration works at Chaturdasha Devata Bari and Kasbeswari Temple. Describing the Melaghar Rath Yatra as one of the most prominent celebrations

in the Northeast, Saha said the nine-day fair not only preserves centuries-old traditions but also provides a significant boost to the local economy by generating livelihood opportunities for traders, artisans and small businesses. Higher Education Minister Kishore Barman said the Rath Yatra reflects Tripura's history, culture, emotions and social unity, noting that people from all communities have participated in the festival for generations. The Melaghar Rath Yatra traces its origins to the erstwhile princely state of Tripura. The present Jagannath Temple was established by Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya in 1905. Following the Partition of India, the deity and the temple tradition were shifted to Melaghar, where the festival has continued uninterrupted. Today, the Melaghar Rath Yatra is regarded as one of the oldest and largest chariot festivals in Northeast India. Its towering 58-foot wooden chariot, among the tallest in the country, attracts thousands of devotees and visitors every year from across the Northeast as well as neighbouring Bangladesh, making it one of Tripura's most significant religious and cultural events.

Responsible AI for a Human-First Future

(On the occasion of "Artificial Intelligence Appreciation Day" on 16 July)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machine, enabling them to learn, reason, and make decisions. AI is not just a technological advancement, it is the cornerstone of the future of fintech and beyond. Over the past few decades, AI has transitioned from rudimentary systems to powerful tools capable of language translation, facial recognition, autonomous driving, medical diagnostics, and much more. To recognise the extraordinary advancements in AI and the role it plays in modern society, "Artificial Intelligence Appreciation Day" is observed annually on 16 July. Created in 2021 by A.I. Heart LLC, Artificial Intelligence Appreciation Day is a global recognition of AI's positive contributions to mankind. This year's theme focuses on "Responsible AI for a Human-First Future" using intelligent technology to empower ethical development, transparency and to empower human rather than replace them.

Benefits of AI in Everyday Life:

AI has already had a significant impact in areas such as healthcare (in diagnosis, treatment, robotic surgery etc), transport (traffic management, autonomous vehicles), education (learning platforms, tutors), customer services (chat bots, virtual agents), and environment (climate modelling, energy

management, entertainment (films, videos), banking, telecommunications, automobiles, IT industry, and conservation efforts). This day is also used to consider AI's ethical implications, issues such as algorithmic bias, job displacement, data privacy, and accountability in decision-making demand continued attention. **AI Technologies in India:** In India, AI is no longer a new technology or concept, but a part of India's digital progress as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. However, many Indian organisations still struggle to integrate AI models with business data. These challenges delay the realisation of AI's full potential, preventing businesses from maximising data value, driving revenue, and optimising costs. The lack of accessible AI-driven tools for data analysis hinders the extraction of valuable insights. AI Appreciation Day can be observed in many ways such as learning something new, hosting a discussion, showcasing AI projects, thanking AI researchers, and support ethical AI initiatives. As we celebrate AI's achievements, it's essential to nurture curiosity, creativity, and responsibility around its development. Let's express our gratitude for AI's achievements, and also for the collaborative human effort behind it - and the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.



Redeveloped Railway Stations of NFR Under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

Brings New Prospects for Development to Local Communities

MALIGAON, 15 JULY, 2026:

The redevelopment of Majbat railway station in Assam, Jalpaiguri Road & Haldibari railway stations in West Bengal under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has ushered in a new era of convenience, pride and development for the people living in and around these regions. Residents, passengers, traders and daily commuters have expressed immense happiness over the transformation of their respective stations, which have long served as important lifelines for the surrounding areas. The modernized stations stand as symbols of progress, reflecting the Government of India's commitment to strengthening railway infrastructure while preserving the unique cultural identity of each locality. Prior to redevelopment, passengers at these stations often faced immense challenges due to limited waiting facilities, inadequate passenger amenities, poor circulation spaces and insufficient infrastructure to cater to the growing number of railway users. With the completion of the redevelopment works, these challenges have been effectively addressed through upgraded station buildings, spacious waiting halls, improved platforms, enhanced circulating areas, modern toilets, better illumination, advanced passenger infor-

mation systems, Divyangjan-friendly facilities, landscaped surroundings and other passenger-centric amenities. The transformed stations are now providing a safer, more comfortable and seamless travel experience, greatly improving the daily lives of thousands of passengers and local residents. The redeveloped stations are also expected to serve as catalysts for regional growth by encouraging tourism, supporting local businesses and creating new economic opportunities in the surrounding areas. Improved station infrastructure is enhancing the overall image of these towns, attracting greater public activity and promoting indigenous products through various initiatives. Expressing their happiness over the transformation, Mr. Vishal Dasand Mrs. Jolly Dey, residents of Majbat, said that the station has undergone a remarkable change, providing modern amenities and a much more comfortable environment for passengers. The overwhelming appreciation from local communities reflects the positive impact of these transformative projects, reaffirming NFR's commitment to building modern, inclusive and future-ready railway stations that not only improve passenger convenience but also contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the regions they serve.

National urea investment policy approved

India will become self-reliant in the agricultural sector

S. N. VERMA

New Delhi : India's urea production Taking a major step towards making the agriculture sector self-reliant, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs today approved the National Urea Investment Policy-2026 on the proposal of the Department of Fertilisers. The policy is aimed at attracting fresh investment to set up a new gas-based urea production unit in India. Earlier, the investment policy framed in 2012 ended in October 2019. Under the 2012 investment policy, six new urea units were set up in the country. Four of these were set up by joint ventures of public sector undertakings and two by private organisations. At present, there are 33 urea production units operational in India with a total production capacity of 269.42 lakh metric tonnes. Despite this, there is a gap between the country's total urea demand and the domestic production capacity, which is currently met through imports. With the Department of Fertilisers already receiving several proposals for new plants, this investment policy will

create the necessary framework to increase indigenous production and reduce dependence on imports.

In order to make the investment environment more attractive and sustainable, the new policy has made several significant improvements compared to the 2012 framework. For better transparency, the policy clearly differentiates the fixed costs and variable costs of plants. The assured returns have a secure scope of return on equity, with a minimum limit of 12 per cent and a maximum of 16 per cent. To hedge against foreign exchange risk to protect the investment from currency fluctuations, the fixed cost will be converted into Indian rupees based on the prevailing exchange rates after a period of four years. These strategic reforms are estimated to save more than ₹250 crore from each new plant set up under this policy compared to the old 2012 policy. From now on, all new urea plants in the country will be established under the rules of this policy, which will bring India very close to complete self-sufficiency in the fertiliser sector.

Cop killed in hit-and-run at Delhi's Singhu border; vehicle identified

NEW DELHI: (Jul 15) A traffic head constable was killed after being hit by a speeding car while on duty at the Singhu border in outernorth Delhi on Wednesday evening, with police identifying the offending vehicle and launching a man-hunt for its driver, an official said. The incident took place

at around 6 pm under the Alipur Police Station area when Head Constable Amit, posted with the Traffic Unit at Singhu Border, was regulating traffic, police said. According to the police, the speeding vehicle rammed into the traffic policeman, and the driver fled the scene without stopping.

Yamunotri Highway Reopens; Bailey Bridge Ready

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Barkot, Uttarkashi : The Yamunotri National Highway has been reopened for traffic at Syanachatti after remaining closed for nearly a week due to heavy rainfall and massive landslides. Authorities have also completed the construction of a Bailey Bridge over the Yamuna River, providing much-needed relief to pilgrims and local residents. The highway was blocked after continuous heavy rains triggered a major landslide in the Syanachatti area. Around 100 metres of the road was severely damaged, disrupting traffic on the route to the Yamunotri shrine and causing inconvenience to pilgrims, local commuters and



transport operators. Executive Engineer Manoj Rawat said that restoration work began immediately after the weather improved. Heavy machinery and road maintenance teams

were deployed to clear debris and repair the damaged stretch on a war footing. The highway has now been made fit for vehicular movement. Rawat also confirmed that the

Bailey Bridge over the Yamuna River at Syanachatti has been completed, strengthening connectivity in the area, especially during the monsoon season when landslides frequently disrupt road traffic. He said the department has stationed excavators, JCBs and other heavy machines at vulnerable locations along the highway to ensure a quick response in case of fresh landslides or road blockages. Advising pilgrims and travellers to remain cautious, the Executive Engineer urged commuters to check the latest weather and road conditions before starting their journey and to follow official travel advisories during the ongoing monsoon season to ensure safe travel.

Barkot's Heritage Springs in Neglect

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand : The centuries-old Jal Kunds (traditional water springs) of Barkot in Uttarkashi district are rapidly deteriorating due to years of neglect, prompting growing demands for their restoration and protection. The Jai Ho Group, a local social organisation, has appealed to the Uttarakhand Government and district administration to launch a special conservation programme to preserve these invaluable heritage sites.

Nestled in the Himalayan region, Barkot is renowned not only for its breathtaking natural beauty but also for its rich cultural and historical legacy. The town once had hundreds of ancient water springs that served as the primary source of drinking water while symbolising religious faith, traditional water conservation practices and local folklore. Over the years, however, many of these historic



springs have either disappeared or fallen into a state of disrepair due to prolonged neglect. Some of the prominent surviving heritage springs include Sahasrabahu Kund, Chandreshwar Mahadev Temple Kund, Baukhnag Devta Kund near Aramshin, the Bus Parking Kund, and Saraswati Mata Kund located inside the Government Inter College campus. Despite their historical and religious significance, these sites remain poorly maintained and require urgent restoration.

The ongoing renovation of the Saraswati Mata Kund has raised hopes among local residents. An ancient stone inscription at the site continues to bear testimony to Barkot's glorious past and its traditional water management system. According to the Jai Ho Group, scientific conservation, beautification and proper documentation of these heritage water springs could transform Barkot into a major centre for religious and cultural tourism, generating employment opportunities

while preserving the region's unique identity for future generations.

A memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami was submitted through Sub-Divisional Magistrate Brijesh Kumar Tiwari. The memorandum was led by Sunil Thapliyal, Convener of the Jai Ho Group. Other signatories included Advocate Vinod Bisht, Ajay Rawat, Mohit Agrawal, Jai Singh Panwar, Pradeep Jain, Mahitab Singh, Dinanath, Mrs. Suman Chauhan, Bhagwati Ratudi, Vinod Nautiyal, Nitin Chauhan, Madan Painuly, Dinesh Rawat, Dwarka Semwal, Jai Prakash Bahuguna, Manmohan Singh, Ravindra Singh, Pradeep Rangad, Ankita, and Rajat Adhikari.

The group has demanded a comprehensive conservation and restoration plan for all ancient water springs in Barkot and sought effective measures to protect these historic structures from encroachment and further damage.

Pakistan: Four killed, 15 injured in bus accident

ISLAMABAD

At least four people were killed and 15 others injured after a speeding passenger bus overturned following a collision with a motorcycle in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province on Tuesday, rescue officials said on Wednesday. The accident occurred near Kala Khatai Road in the Muridke area of Sheikhupura district when the bus lost control after hitting the motorcycle and overturned, a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 said. Rescue teams rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to a government hospital after providing first aid. Six other injured passengers received treatment at the scene and were discharged, the spokesperson said. On July 3, at least 40 people were killed and eight others injured after a passenger bus plunged into a deep ravine in the Sherani district of Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province. Assistant to the Balochistan Chief Minister for Political and Media Affairs, Shahid Rind, said that the death toll rose after several of the injured succumbed to their injuries while being transported to hospitals and undergoing treatment.

Routine border checks lifted at Spain-Gibraltar crossing

GIBRALTAR

Routine border checks at the Spain-Gibraltar land crossing were lifted on Wednesday, in line with new border arrangements under the post-Brexit agreement between the European Union and Britain. The agreement, signed in Brussels on Tuesday, began provisional application on Wednesday and remains subject to the consent of the European Parliament and the completion of ratification procedures by both sides. Hundreds of residents from Gibraltar and the neighbouring Spanish city of La Linea de la Concepcion gathered near the crossing before midnight, Xinhua news agency reported. Shortly after midnight, Ludwig van Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" - the anthem of the European Union - was played near the frontier, where the vehicle checkpoint had been removed. The doors of the pedestrian border-control office on the Gibraltar side stood open, and pedestrians, cars and motorcycles began crossing without routine passport or identity checks. Under the agreement, the movement of goods and workers between Gibraltar and Spain will be significantly facilitated, boosting economic links between Gibraltar and the EU.

Concerns mount over Pakistan's misuse of detention laws against peaceful activists

ISLAMABAD

A leading international human rights organisation has urged the Pakistani authorities to immediately release Pashtun leader Zubair Shah Agha, Baloch female activist Syed Bibi Baloch and journalist Ahmad Farhad, while calling for an end to the misuse of administrative detention laws against peaceful dissent and the protection of rights to liberty, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. According to Amnesty International, Zubair Shah Agha, a core committee member of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), was arbitrarily detained on June 28 after attending a press conference organised by the Baloch Yakjehi Committee (BYC) in Quetta over the sentencing of Baloch human rights activist Mahrang Baloch. It noted that he has since been held in administrative de-



tention under section 3 of Pakistan's Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance (MPO), a law that allows "preventative detention" based on the government's assessment of "potential threats to public order". "Zubair Agha's detention is the latest in a growing pattern of Pakistani authorities using administrative detention powers to arbitrarily deprive activists, journalists and human rights defenders of their liberty," Amnesty International stated. The rights body further said that Baloch activist Syed Bibi Baloch was taken into administrative detention under MPO on July 1 in the Turbat region of Balochistan after a peaceful protest was announced regarding Mahrang's sentencing. Following Bibi's arrest by Pakistani forces, several other leading human rights organisations sharply criticised the

move, describing it as part of an escalating crackdown on peaceful activists and "Pakistani fascism". According to the BYC, Bibi was arrested by Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on July 1 from her residence in Kech district without any legal justification. It said that although her name had been placed on the Fourth Schedule of Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act, for the past few months she had been regularly reporting to the CTD office every week in compliance with the authorities' directives. Expressing grave concern over the continued escalation of reprisals against peaceful activists in Balochistan, the Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRCB) said that Bibi's arrest is part of a "sustained pattern of harassment and intimidation" targeting her in the past few years. Furthermore, Amnesty International highlighted that journalist Ahmad Farhad was also detained under MPO on June 20, in Bagh city of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), where he remains in custody. Last week, Ireland-based rights group Front Line Defenders also called on the Pakistani authorities to immediately release journalist Farhad and withdraw all charges against him, alleging that he is being targeted for his legitimate reporting and human rights work in PoK. The organisation strongly condemned the repression in PoK, saying the crackdown is not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of violence against individuals who speak out against authorities and seek to end impunity for human rights violations. It said that journalists such as Farhad are especially vulnerable as they challenge state-sponsored misinformation and report independently from the ground.



Iran's IRGC claims attacks on US military facilities in Bahrain, Jordan

TEHRAN

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that it conducted retaliatory strikes against the US military facilities in Bahrain and Jordan, attacking their military infrastructure, aircraft shelters, key command centres and strategic drones, local media reported. In a statement, the IRGC said its Aerospace Force targeted the US military base at al-Azraq in Jordan in response to renewed US aggression against Iran. The attack destroyed shelters which have US F-15, F-16, and F-35 fighter jets, and several MQ-9 strategic drones stationed at the base, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The IRGC claimed that a significant amount of US military attacks against Iran were conducted from American bases in Jordan. It urged people of Jordan to end the presence of US forces in their country and prevent its territory from being used as a launchpad for attacks against Islamic nations and the Palestinian people. The IRGC also urged Jordanians to take up every opportunity to "destroy American institutions and expel the occupying US army from Jordan." In a separate statement, the IRGC said its navy attacked the US Fifth Fleet's facilities in Bahrain, targeting the NSI management centre, large warehouses sheltering military parts and equipment, the command and control centre, and fuel storage facilities. It said that the strikes were conducted in response to the US deploying its naval forces in the Indian Ocean and blocking maritime routes under the pretext of controlling the Strait of Hormuz, IRNA reported. "The enemy should know that now that its pirates have blocked the Indian Ocean route for the export of the region's oil and gas to the world - a move that endangers the interests of America's economic rivals - it must expect other oil and gas export routes that serve the interests of the United States and its allies to be closed as well," the IRGC said while adding that the region's oil and gas exports will either be available to everyone or to none.

Nepal to export up to 1,650 MW of electricity to India under new agreement

KATHMANDU

Nepal and India have agreed to increase the volume of electricity traded between the two countries through two cross-border transmission line projects. During the 13th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Steering Committee (JSC), an energy Secretary-level bilateral mechanism held in the western Nepali city of Pokhara, the two sides agreed that Nepal could export up to 1,650 MW of electricity to India and import up to 1,400 MW through two 400 kV cross-border transmission lines connecting the two countries. The two transmission lines to be used for power transfer are the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur and Dhalkebar-Sitamari 400 kV cross-border transmission lines. Of the two, the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line has been in operation since 2016, while the Dhalkebar-Sitamari transmission line project is nearing completion, according to Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation. SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company, established by India's state-owned SJVN Limited to develop the 900 MW Arun III Hydropower Project in eastern Nepal, is also constructing the Dhalkebar-Sitamari transmission line. Previously, the two countries



had agreed to allow Nepal to export up to 1,100 MW of electricity to India and import up to 1,000 MW through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border transmission line. With the high-capacity Dhalkebar-Sitamari transmission line nearing completion, the two sides agreed to increase the amount of electricity that can be traded through the two transmission lines. The meeting was co-chaired by Sarita Dawadi, Secretary at Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, and Pankaj Kumar, Secretary at India's Ministry of Power. A meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) at the Joint Secretary level was held on Tuesday ahead of the JSC meeting. The two sides also agreed to expedite work on several new high-capacity cross-border transmission line projects. According to a press statement issued by Nepal's Energy Ministry, the meeting approved the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Chameliya (Nepal)-Jauljibi (India) 220 kV double-circuit transmission line, setting a target to complete construction by December 2028. The meeting also agreed to expedite the establishment of a joint venture company between the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) to develop the Inaruwa-New Purnea and Doodhara (New Lamki)-Bareilly 400 kV cross-border transmission line projects. The Shareholders' Agreement (SHA) and Joint Venture (JV) Agreement for the proj-

ects have already been signed by the two entities. The meeting approved the DPR for the Motihari-Nijgadh 400 kV double-circuit transmission line, which is expected to facilitate additional electricity exports from Nepal to India by 2034-35. It also approved the DPR for upgrading the Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar 400 kV transmission line by replacing the existing conductor with a High Temperature Low Sag (HTLS) conductor to increase its transfer capacity. The Ministry said that additional technical studies would be conducted before finalising the proposed Lucknow-Kohapur (Lamahi) 400 kV transmission line project. The meeting also reached an understanding on the New Butwal-Gorakhpur 400 kV cross-border transmission line. As the Nepal section of the line is expected to be completed by August 2026, while the New Butwal 400 kV substation is scheduled for completion only by December 2027, the transmission line will temporarily operate at 220 kV until the substation is completed. The Nepal section of the project is being developed with funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), an aid agency of the US government. "Under this interim arrangement, the transmission line will be capable of importing up to 130 MW of electricity from India and exporting up to 200 MW from Nepal," the Ministry said.

Pentagon taps new firms for low-cost missiles

WASHINGTON

The Pentagon has signed framework agreements with three new industry partners to accelerate the testing and qualification of low-cost, air-launched cruise missiles for the US Air Force. The agreements with Anduril, CoAspire and Zone 5 cover the Family of Affordable Mass Missiles programme, known as FAMM. The initiative seeks to rapidly validate a new family of inexpensive cruise missiles and expand US weapons production. The Pentagon said the agreements were a direct result of its Acquisition Transformation Strategy. The approach aims to give industry stable demand signals, procure industry-driven systems and make greater use of flexible contracts. "The Arsenal of Freedom of the 21st Century requires doing business differently," said Michael P. Duffey, Under Sec-



retary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment. "Today's announcement showcases the Acquisition Transformation Strategy in action, expanding the defence industrial base, fielding capabilities faster, and attracting private investment to fund innovation and increase manufacturing output." A key part of the plan is the proposed establishment of seven-year agreements with companies whose weapons successfully complete validation and competitive selection. The awards will be subject to Congressional appropriations and the enactment of all required authorisations.

Pakistan's struggle with terrorism consequence of strategic choices, evolving militant ecosystems: Report

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's struggle with terrorism is the result of historical strategic decisions, evolving militant ecosystems, ideological radicalisation, governance deficiencies, and regional instability. Pakistan's experience showcases that the cultivation or selective tolerance of militant organisations can eventually produce security threats that extend far beyond its original goals, a report has detailed. Pakistan's struggle with terrorism is often projected as a security challenge arising from regional instability and cross-border militancy. While these factors have contributed to internal security problems in Pakistan, however, a broader perspective showcases that many of the challenges faced by Pakistan in the present time is due to policies it followed over several decades. "The use of militant proxies as instruments of strategic influence, combined with weak governance, ideological radicalization, and regional geopolitical rivalries, has created an environment in which terrorism has become deeply entrenched. Today, Pakistan



is increasingly confronting the unintended consequences of these policies, with militant groups frequently turning against the very state that once viewed some of them as strategic assets," Syed Jahanzeeb wrote in an opinion piece for 'Global Kashmir'. The origins of Pakistan's proxy plan can be traced back to the Soviet-Afghan War. During this period, Pakistan was the main logistical hub for Afghan resistance groups. While the immediate objective of forcing a Soviet withdrawal was achieved, the infrastructure - training camps, ideological networks, and militant organisations, created in Paki-

stan, during this time, did not disappear after the war ended. The events after 9/11 changed Pakistan's security landscape as it had to participate in the global campaign against terrorism and launch military operations against several extremist organisations after facing increasing international pressure. This policy of Pakistan alienated many militants who believed that Islamabad had abandoned their cause. The emergence and expansion of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) showcased this shift as several factions conducted violent attacks against Pakistani military installations, police forces and

people. Another factor which contributes to the persistence of terrorism in Pakistan is the presence of ideological infrastructure. Years of sectarian polarisation, extremist propaganda and radical recruitment in Pakistan have created social environments in which violent narratives continue to find receptive audiences. The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has increased concerns about cross-border militancy. Pakistani authorities have accused Afghan authorities of providing safe havens to TTP, a claim rejected by Taliban. Internal governance challenges have further increased

Pakistan bombing Afghanistan to distract its own people from security doctrine failures

KABUL

Pakistan has been facing insurgency inside its territory despite fencing the border, closing the crossings and conducting strikes inside Afghanistan, a report has highlighted. "Pakistan can demonstrate military reach across the Durand Line, pressure Kabul, restrict trade and deport Afghans. But none of these measures explains why militant violence inside Pakistan keeps regenerating after years of operations, surveillance and emergency laws," Afghan researcher and Fulbright scholar Dawood Safi wrote in an opinion piece for Afghanistan's leading media outlet Tolo News. "Pakistan has genuine security concerns. Armed groups have killed civilians, police officers and soldiers, and Kabul should not permit Afghan territory to be used against neighbouring states. But sanctuary is only part of the picture. It cannot explain the persistence, geographic concentration and political resilience of militancy within Pakistan itself," he added. According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), the country witnessed 1,066 militant attacks in 2025 -- the highest since 2014 and 17 per cent more in comparison to the previous



year. Security forces carried out 482 operations and 2,138 militants were reported killed -- more than double the previous year -- yet attacks still increased. Majority of violence remained concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Safi mentioned that military action can disrupt network and stop attacks but cannot do the work of political legitimacy. People have faced military brutality and state coercion in Pashtun areas. Pakistani authorities banned Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and arrested its several activists as the group demanded accountability for extrajudicial killings, information about missing people, removal of landmines and an end to col-

lective suspicion. Similarly, people in Balochistan - a province which supplies gas, minerals and strategic value to Pakistan - have remained poor, politically marginalised and excluded from decisions over their own resources. Enforced disappearances occur in Balochistan and the life sentence imposed on Baloch rights activist Mahrang Baloch in June highlights the danger of this approach. Pakistan can speak about cross-border networks, demand action from Kabul and present each new military operation as defence against an imported threat. The external dimension becomes convenient when used as the explanation for a crisis with deep domestic roots, the opinion piece in Tolo News stated.



India Key
EU Chip
Partner: EC VP

NEW DELHI: India is a very important partner for the European Union in the semiconductor sector as the bloc seeks to work with trusted partners to strengthen its chip supply chains and build its own capacity, a senior European Commission leader said on Wednesday. Speaking at a joint press conference after the third India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) meeting in Brussels, European Commission Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy Henna Virkunnen said India is an important partner for semiconductor research and development because of its vast pool of highly skilled talent. "With semiconductors, we see that India is a very important partner for the European Union. Our Chips 2.0 was adopted in June. We are especially focusing on improving the resilience of our supply chains.

BHUBANESWAR, JULY 15, 2026:

As millions of devotees prepare to gather in Puri for the annual Rath Yatra, Reliance, in collaboration with the Puri administration, is strengthening on-ground support through Puri Rath Yatra Seva Services 2026. Bringing together a comprehensive range of initiatives spanning Anna Seva, public support infrastructure, sanitation, volunteer engagement, community outreach and technology-enabled coordination, the initiative aims to enhance frontline assistance and help ensure safe, seamless and well-managed pilgrimage for lakhs of devotees expected to visit the holy city. Beginning on July 16, 2026, the annual Rath Yatra is a deeply revered festival that draws devotees from across the country to witness the sacred procession of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple. For millions of devotees, it is a journey of faith, devotion and tradition, making the festival one of India's most cherished spiritual gatherings. In light of the extensive coordination, public infrastructure and required support for personnel entrusted with ensuring safety and well-being of pilgrims, Reliance with its 'WeCare' philosophy is honoured to contribute to this effort supporting frontline personnel and public services to make the sacred journey safer, smoother and accessible

Sensex recovers but profit booking wipes out most intraday gains amid oil concerns

The S&P BSE Sensex settled 130.49 points, or 0.17%, higher at 77,185.43 after climbing more than 500 points during the session. The NSE Nifty50 also erased a large part of its intraday gains to close 27.70 points, or 0.11%, higher at 24,078.50.

Benchmark stock market indices gave up most of their early gains to end marginally higher on Wednesday, as investors booked profits amid elevated crude oil prices and persistent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East despite positive global cues. The S&P BSE Sensex settled 130.49 points, or 0.17%, higher at 77,185.43 after climbing more than 500 points during the session. The NSE Nifty50 also erased a large part of its intraday gains to close 27.70 points, or 0.11%, higher at 24,078.50. The rally earlier in the day was driven by gains in financial stocks after soft-



er-than-expected US inflation data improved global risk appetite. However, concerns over the ongoing US-Iran conflict and rising crude oil prices prompted profit booking in the latter half of the session, limiting the upside. Brent crude was trading at \$85.38 per barrel, up 0.77%, while WTI crude rose 0.88% to \$80.04 as of 3:30 pm IST. **BROADER MARKETS OUTPERFORM, BANKS LEAD GAINS** The broader market out-

performed the benchmark indices. The Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 1.13%, while the Nifty 500 advanced 0.65%. Nifty 100 rose 0.61%, Nifty 200 climbed 0.58% and the Nifty Midcap 100 added 0.46%. India VIX, the market's fear gauge, declined 4.92% to 13.07. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Chemicals emerged as the top gainer with a rise of 1.65%, followed by Nifty PSU Bank (1.33%), Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank (1.20%), Nifty Financial

Services (1.17%), Nifty Private Bank (1.02%) and Nifty Oil & Gas (0.96%). On the other hand, IT stocks remained under pressure. Nifty IT fell 0.64%, while FMCG, Metal and Media indices also ended in the red. Among Sensex constituents, UltraTech Cement topped the gainers with a 2.96% rise, followed by Eternal (2.85%), SBI (1.50%), Bajaj Finance (1.49%), Tech Mahindra (1.30%), InterGlobe Aviation (1.09%) and Asian Paints (1.09%). Power Grid was the biggest laggard, falling 1.73%, followed by Larsen & Toubro (-1.69%), Tata Steel (-1.65%), Infosys (-1.41%), NTPC (-1.12%) and Bajaj Finserv (-0.98%). **OIL PRICES, EARNINGS TO REMAIN IN FOCUS** The rupee slipped 0.06% against the US dollar to close at 96.2550, caught between modest foreign portfolio inflows and dollar demand from local corporates, while traders continued to



RECPDCL Signs MoA with Gandhigram Rural Institute for Setting Up 1 MW Solar Power Plant in Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, JULY 14, 2026

REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI), for the establishment of a ground-mounted, grid-connected 1 MW Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant at the institute's campus in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu. The MoA was signed by Mr. Jaspal Singh Kushwaha, General Manager, RECPDCL, and Dr. M. Sundaramari, Registrar, GRI, in the presence of Prof. Dr. N. Panchanatham, Vice-Chancellor, GRI, and Ms. Thara Ramesh, Head of Department & CPM, REC Regional Office, Chennai. Senior officials and representatives from both organizations were also present during the signing ceremony. The proposed 1 MW so-

lar power plant will meet the entire electricity requirement of Gandhigram Rural Institute, enabling the institution to transition to 100% green energy consumption. In addition to providing clean and sustainable power, the project will serve as a demonstration facility showcasing various solar photovoltaic technologies, thereby creating valuable opportunities for practical learning, research, and innovation for students, scholars, and faculty members. The initiative reflects RECPDCL's continued commitment to promoting renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting India's transition towards a sustainable and low-carbon future. The project is also aligned with the Government of India's renewable energy goals and reinforces RECPDCL's efforts to accelerate the adoption of clean energy solutions across the country.

Seva to Humanity

With Anna Seva, volunteers, tech-enabled co-ordination, Reliance rolls out Puri Rath Yatra Seva for pilgrims and frontline workers

The Puri Rath Yatra Seva reinforces on-ground support for frontline personnel, towards safer supportive journey for devotees. The comprehensive Puri Rath Yatra Seva 2026 by Reliance Foundation supports pilgrims, frontline personnel and civic authorities. Anna Seva providing free, satvik meals and safe drinking water to pilgrims and frontline service providers. Supporting around 90 Police Aid posts across over 50 km of key pilgrim routes and strategic locations. Volunteer support, sanitation initiatives and community awareness activities strengthening public safety and hygiene. Tech for Seva GIS Platform enabling planning, monitoring and coordination of seva activities across Puri.



for devotees. "Service to Humanity is Service to God. This is something we deeply believe in. This year, building on our long-standing commitment to serve people especially at times like this where millions gather, we see an opportunity to offer service to people at Puri as truly a blessing. We believe that by serving pilgrims and personnel during Rath Yatra, we are serving the divine. We are committed to enhancing nutrition, safety and sanitation, to make not just journeys smoother but to also lend a helping hand to the administration," said Shri Anant M Ambani, Executive

Director, Reliance Industries Limited. **Reliance Foundation's Seva initiatives include:** Anna Seva: Freshly prepared satvik meals for pilgrims and frontline personnel, along with safe drinking water, being served from 15 to 27 July through a Central Kitchen; includes dedicated serving facility at Bholanath High School, Grand Road, Puri. Tech for Seva - Puri Annaseva 2026 GIS Platform: A GIS-enabled platform is supporting planning, monitoring, verification and documentation of seva activities while strengthening field

coordination and operational decision-making. Police Aid Posts: Supporting the establishment of approximately 90 Police Aid Posts across more than 50 km of key pilgrim routes, including temple-access areas, transit points, medical zones, major junctions and coastal locations. Support for Frontline Personnel: Facilities aim to support around 1,000 police personnel on a shift basis with water, ORS, refreshments and other essential support provided during extended duty hours. Crowd Management and Volunteer Support: Volunteers are assisting yatis with route

guidance, safety support and essential information. Cleanliness Drive: Garbage bags and protective gloves are being provided through Puri Municipality to sanitation teams, volunteers and pilgrim-service organisations in high-footfall areas. Community Outreach and Awareness: Health, hygiene and safety awareness activities are being undertaken for pilgrims and the wider community. Enhancing the Pilgrim Experience: Together, these initiatives will help facilitate safe and orderly movement of over 20 lakh pilgrims. Reliance has been engaging in community service during the Rath Yatra for several years, standing alongside communities during one of the country's largest spiritual and culturally significant gatherings. Working in close coordination with government authorities, Reliance Foundation has supported initiatives from food and clean drinking water to medical as-

sistance and environmental cleanliness with timely, collaborative interventions. This year's initiatives carry forward that commitment - deepened by experience, expanded in reach and driven by the conviction that every pilgrim, traveller and frontline service personnel serving during the Rath Yatra deserves care, comfort and support. Through Puri Rath Yatra Seva Services 2026, Reliance continues to work alongside the Puri administration, frontline agencies, communities and institutions to strengthen public support infrastructure and help create a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and well-managed pilgrimage experience for millions of devotees. **About Reliance Foundation:** Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 97 million people across India, in over 98,000 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org.

Ms Isha Ambani joins children at 'Emotions Lab'

an immersive learning experience by Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Reliance Foundation and Dadu 'Emotions Lab', for emotional literacy and social-emotional development of children opened in India with Reliance Foundation's ESA Day for children from under-resourced communities

MUMBAI, JULY 15, 2026

It was an emotive learning experience for over 100 children from non-governmental organisations supported by Reliance Foundation, at the special opening of 'Emotions Lab' this month. Ms Isha Ambani joined the children during the launch, as they explored how to recognise, understand and express their emotions in a safe, playful and engaging environment through immersive, interactive exhibits. Brought to Mumbai by Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC), Reliance Foundation in collaboration with Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar 'Emotions Lab' was launched as part of NMACC's annual Bachpan festival. It invites young audiences to explore emotional literacy and social-emotional development through immersive, play-based experiences. Designed for children aged 5 to 11 years and their families, it helps recognise, understand, express and regulate emotions. The dedicated Education and Sports for All (ESA) days on the opening days, marked the inaugural experience of this first-of-its-kind initiative in India. Ms Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Foundation, who interacted with the children during the event said, "We believe learning should be an adventure driven by playfulness and curiosity. We are thrilled to build on our partnership with Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar to bring Emotions Lab to young minds in India. It is vital for children to learn emotional literacy and intelligence early in life, both inside and outside the classroom. The exhibition with a dedicated day for children under our Education and Sports for All (ESA) initiative, is in line with our commitment to ensure educational experiences are accessible to all children." The exhibition is centred on the Mood Meter, developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence as a signature tool of the RULER approach to cultivating emotional intel-

ligence in schools. Through a simplified adaptation of the Mood Meter, 'Emotions Lab' helps children build five key emotional intelligence skills: recognising, understanding, labelling, expressing and regulating emotions, through interactive experiences and practical tools. Under the vision of Reliance Foundation's ESA programme, children participated in guided explorations of Emotions Lab, where they engaged in activities that encouraged them to recognise emotions through facial expressions and body language, understand how everyday experiences influence feelings, and explore how emotions shape communication and relationships. Through these hands-on experiences, children learned to interpret emotional cues, express themselves with confidence and develop practical tools for emotional awareness and resilience. They also took part in an NMACC Art Walk, which encouraged observation, creativity and self-expression through engagement with art. Guided by Reliance Foundation's 'We Care' philosophy, ESA aims to inspire and empower children to dream big and achieve their potential by expanding access to education, sports and experiential learning opportunities for children from all backgrounds. Developed by the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Reliance Foundation, and Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, in collaboration with education experts in India and internationally, 'Emotions Lab' transforms conventional spaces into immersive learning environments through play. Adapted for the Indian context, it enables children to explore emotions through engaging and accessible social-emotional learning experiences. 'Emotions Lab' is the second exhibition in the Museum in Residence series, building on the collaboration established through Light Atelier in 2025, which engaged more than 13,000 children through playful exploration of light, shadow and colour.

Ensuring Our Smallest Riders Are Safest: Steelbird Introduces

NEW DELHI, JULY 2026

Steelbird has had the distinct privilege of protecting millions of Indian riders. Today, as India's oldest and largest helmet manufacturer, we are humbled to announce our latest endeavor: a specially engineered helmet designed exclusively for the safety and comfort of our most precious passengers—children. As family commuters on two-wheelers remain a cornerstone of Indian daily life, the safety of child pillion riders is a responsibility we take deeply to heart. Recognizing that a child's neck and spine require entirely different support systems than an adult's, our research and development team has spent the last two years quietly working on a solution that brings cutting-edge safety technology to our youngest riders. Combining advanced safety, lightweight construction, comfort, and vibrant child-friendly styling, DOODLE is designed to enhance protection and comfort for child pillion pas-



sengers, helping make every two-wheeler journey safer and more enjoyable. Our new line of children's helmets integrates advanced, lightweight impact-absorption technology. By utilizing state-of-the-art, EPS (Expanded Polystyrene) paired with a high strength ABS shell, the helmet significantly reduces neck fatigue while providing robust impact protection. Keeping the unique ergonomic and safety requirements of children in mind, Steelbird has engineered the DOODLE helmet with a lightweight construction weighing just 700 ± 50 grams, significantly reducing neck strain and fatigue during daily commutes and recreational rides. The

helmet is available in both Spoiler and Non-Spoiler variants, offering children an exciting and sporty appearance while maintaining superior comfort and protection. Designed specifically for children's unique head shapes, the DOODLE series is available in sizes XXXS to M. It precisely accommodates head circumferences of 50 cm, 52 cm, 54 cm, 56 cm, and 58 cm, ensuring an optimal, snug, and secure fit. Each size is engineered with a precisely matched EPS liner, featuring optimized inner circumference and liner thickness to ensure an optimal, snug, and secure fit. This size-specific construction enhances comfort, improves impact energy

management, and provides superior protection for children with different head sizes and shapes. **Certified Safety for Child Pillion Passengers, The DOODLE helmet is ISI certified, ensuring compliance with Indian safety standards. It features:** • High-strength ABS outer shell for enhanced impact resistance. • EPS energy-absorbing liner designed to effectively dissipate impact energy. • Optical-grade polycarbonate visor providing clear vision and improved durability. • Strategically positioned air intake vents to enhance

airflow, keeping the rider cool and comfortable. • Aerodynamically optimized shell design for improved stability and riding comfort. **Children require helmets that are not only safe but also comfortable for extended use. DOODLE incorporates:** • Breathable and anti-odor interior liners. • Strategically positioned ventilation channels and pre-cut air vents for enhanced airflow. • Adjustable retention system with a secure micrometric buckle for easy operation and reliable fit. • Lightweight construction that minimizes neck fatigue and improves overall riding comfort. • Attractive Designs Kids Love Understanding that children are more likely to wear helmets they enjoy, Steelbird has introduced DOODLE with vibrant, eye-catching graphics and colorful themes that appeal to young riders. The

sporty visor, dynamic spoiler option, and engaging designs create a fun and exciting appearance while encouraging consistent helmet usage. With the launch of DOODLE, Steelbird reinforces its commitment to advancing road safety awareness and providing age-specific protective solutions. Designed specifically for children, DOODLE delivers certified protection, lightweight comfort, and child-friendly styling, giving parents greater confidence while ensuring a safer and more enjoyable travel experience for young passengers. The Steelbird DOODLE Kids Helmet will be available through Steelbird's extensive dealer network and authorized retail partners across India. Available in glossy painted finishes and a wide range of attractive graphic decal options, the DOODLE range is competitively priced, with prices starting from ₹999, making certified protection more accessible for young pillion passengers and their families



World's Largest Iceberg A23a Disappears

The world's largest iceberg, A23a, has finally disappeared after nearly four decades of drifting across the Southern Ocean, bringing to an end one of the most remarkable natural journeys ever recorded. Once covering an area of around 2,000 square miles—roughly the size of the Indonesian island of Bali—the giant ice mass spent decades trapped in Antarctic waters before beginning a slow voyage that fascinated scientists around the world. Its gradual breakup has provided researchers with

an unprecedented opportunity to understand how giant icebergs move, melt and influence the marine environment. The United States National Ice Center (USNIC) officially stopped tracking A23a in March 2026 after the iceberg had broken into pieces too small to meet the criteria for continued monitoring. Although a few fragments may still be floating in the Southern Ocean, scientists say the iceberg that once held the title of the world's largest has effectively reached the end of its life.

Origins in Antarctica

The story of A23a stretches back to the mid-1970s, when the Soviet Union established the seasonal Druzhnaya 1 research station on the Filchner Ice Shelf in Antarctica. The station served as a summer base for Soviet scientists conducting research in one of the coldest and most remote regions on Earth.

Every Antarctic summer, researchers returned to Druzhnaya 1 to continue their scientific work. However, an extraordinary discovery was made in October 1986 when a new expedition arrived. The station was no longer where it had been left. At first, Soviet officials believed the base had been carried away on a relatively small iceberg that later overturned, making recovery impossible.

Subsequent scientific investigations revealed a far more dramatic explanation.

Researchers found that a massive section of the Filchner Ice Shelf had broken away in a huge calving event. The breakup created three enormous icebergs, designated A22, A23 and A24. Druzhnaya 1 had unknowingly been sitting on the newly formed A23 when it detached from the continent and began drifting into the Weddell Sea.

Recovery Mission

Determined to retrieve valuable scientific equipment, a Soviet expedition landed on the drifting iceberg in January 1987. Working under harsh Antarctic conditions, the team spent nearly two weeks digging through deep snow to recover instruments, machinery and supplies left behind at the abandoned station.

The successful mission marked what is believed to have been the last time humans set foot on A23 before it continued its lonely journey across Antarctic waters.

Birth of A23a

The original iceberg remained largely intact until 1991, when it fractured into several pieces. The largest fragment was officially named A23a.

Even after the split, A23a remained enormous. Covering nearly 2,000 square

miles, it ranked among the largest icebergs ever observed. Yet despite its massive size, A23a showed little movement for many years. It became trapped in the Weddell Sea, held in place by thick sea ice while parts of its base rested on the ocean floor. The combination of grounded ice and surrounding pack ice effectively locked the iceberg in position for decades. Meteorologist and marine glaciologist Jan Lieser first noticed the iceberg during the late 1990s while tracking another large iceberg. At the time, he considered it just one of many giant ice masses scattered around Antarctica and had no idea it would eventually become internationally famous.

A Rare Ocean Phenomenon

One of the most fascinating chapters in A23a's journey occurred in March 2024. Instead of continuing its northward drift, the iceberg became trapped in a circular ocean current and began spinning repeatedly in almost the same location for several months. Satellite images showed the giant block of ice rotating slowly around a fixed point. Researchers identified the unusual behaviour as the result of a rare oceanographic phe-

nomenon known as a Taylor column. A Taylor column forms when ocean currents encounter an underwater mountain or ridge. The interaction creates a rotating column of water that can temporarily trap floating objects above it. The phenomenon effectively held A23a in place despite strong surrounding currents. Scientists described the event as extremely rare, particularly for an iceberg of such enormous size. After months of slow rotation, the iceberg eventually escaped the oceanic trap in late 2024 and resumed its journey through warmer waters.

Relics of the Soviet Era

As A23a continued melting during early 2025, remarkable reminders of its history began emerging from the ice.

Rusted fuel barrels, storage tanks and other remains from the abandoned Druzhnaya 1 research station became visible after spending more than 38 years frozen inside the iceberg. These relics had travelled approximately 2,000 miles from their original location on the Filchner Ice Shelf. The emergence of the equipment offered a striking visual reminder of how long the iceberg had survived and how far it had

Decades of Stillness

For almost 30 years, A23a remained virtually motionless.

Unlike many Antarctic icebergs that drift northward within a few years of calving, A23a appeared frozen in place. Researchers occasionally monitored it using satellite imagery, but there was little change to report.

The iceberg quietly withstood Antarctic winters and summers while slowly weathering natural processes of melting and fracturing.

Finally on the Move

Everything changed in 2020. Satellite observations showed that A23a had rotated several nautical miles, indicating it had broken free from the seabed that had anchored it for decades. The United States National Ice Center confirmed that the iceberg was finally moving. Scientists believe thinning at its base and changing sea ice conditions eventually reduced the forces holding it in place. Once free, A23a entered the powerful circulation of the Weddell Gyre, an ocean current that carries icebergs around Antarctica before pushing them into the open Southern Ocean. The iceberg travelled nearly 1,000 nautical miles over the following two years. Although it gradually shrank

because of melting and wave erosion, A23a still covered about 1,500 square miles by the time it entered open waters. That was large enough for it to reclaim the title of the world's biggest iceberg.

International Attention

As A23a drifted into the Southern Ocean in late 2023, it attracted worldwide interest. News agencies, scientific institutions and satellite-monitoring organisations closely followed its movement. Despite widespread concern over climate change, scientists emphasised that the iceberg's journey was largely part of the natural life cycle of Antarctic ice shelves. Large calving events have occurred for centuries, although researchers continue to study whether climate change may influence their frequency or long-term behaviour. The iceberg nevertheless presented an extraordinary opportunity for scientific research. Expeditions travelling through the Southern Ocean collected water samples near A23a, measuring nutrients released by melting freshwater and observing changes in marine ecosystems. Scientists were especially interested in understanding how giant icebergs affect ocean circulation, plankton growth and wildlife habitats.

travelled since separating from Antarctica.

Close to South Georgia

During 2025, A23a drifted toward the island of South Georgia, an important wildlife sanctuary in the South Atlantic. Scientists closely monitored its approach because giant icebergs can sometimes disrupt feeding routes used by penguins, seals and other marine animals. Some experts worried that the iceberg might block access to feeding grounds or alter local ocean currents. However, A23a eventually grounded temporarily on an underwater ridge before breaking free again. Although its presence attracted considerable attention, researchers concluded that its ecological effects were likely to be temporary.

Losing the Crown

By mid-2025, the iceberg had undergone significant changes. Constant exposure to warmer ocean temperatures, wind, waves and ocean currents caused large sections to fracture away. Satellite measurements showed that A23a had shrunk to less than 1,200 square miles. With its reduced size, it lost its status as the world's largest iceberg. Scientists expected the deterioration to accelerate as the iceberg moved

farther north into increasingly warmer waters. Large cracks spread across its surface, while repeated collisions with ocean swells weakened its structure. Each new fracture produced smaller icebergs that drifted away from the parent ice mass.

Final Breakup

Throughout late 2025 and early 2026, A23a continued fragmenting into progressively smaller pieces. Eventually, the iceberg no longer resembled the giant block of ice that had once dominated satellite images. Instead, it became a collection of scattered fragments spread across the Southern Ocean. By March 2026, the United States National Ice Center determined that the remaining pieces were too small for continued operational tracking. Under international monitoring guidelines, only icebergs exceeding certain size thresholds receive official designations and regular surveillance. Since A23a no longer met those standards, its official record came to an end. Although some fragments may continue drifting for months or even years before melting completely, the world's largest iceberg has effectively disappeared.

A Scientific Treasure

Lessons for Climate Science

Although scientists stress that A23a's movement was part of a natural process, its journey has contributed significantly to ongoing climate research.

Understanding how giant icebergs behave helps improve computer models used to predict future changes in Antarctic ice shelves and global sea levels.

Researchers are also studying how warming oceans may affect the lifespan, movement and melting rates of large Antarctic icebergs in coming decades.

The extensive satellite record created during A23a's journey will remain an important scientific resource for years to come.

End of an Extraordinary Voyage

From carrying an abandoned Soviet research station across Antarctic waters to spinning above an underwater mountain and eventually melting into the Southern Ocean, A23a experienced one of the longest and most remarkable journeys ever recorded for an iceberg.

Its story spanned nearly 40 years, crossed thousands of miles and captivated scientists and the public alike.

Though the giant iceberg has now disappeared, the data gathered throughout its lifetime will continue helping researchers unlock the secrets of Antarctica, the Southern Ocean and Earth's changing climate for many years to come.





Budapest Series 2026

Olympic medallist Aman Sehrawat storms to gold



BUDAPEST (HUNGARY): India's Olympic bronze medallist and U23 Asian Champion Aman Sehrawat delivered a commanding performance to clinch the gold medal in the men's 57kg freestyle category at the Polyák Imre, Varga János & Kozma István Memorial Senior Ranking Tournament 2026 in Budapest, Hungary, on Wednesday. Continuing his impressive form on the global circuit, Aman Sehrawat outclassed Georgia's Roberti Dingashvili with a decisive 13-3 victory by technical superiority in the championship bout.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Wawrinka bids farewell to Gstaad, receives special ceremony



GSTAAD (SWITZERLAND): Life came full circle for three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka as he bid farewell to the event where he started his career at the start of the century. Wawrinka's farewell season reached a special milestone this week when the Swiss star competed for the final time at the Swiss Open at Gstaad, the tournament where his ATP Tour journey began more than two decades ago.

Test win at Lord's will always be special, we manifested creating history: Sneh Rana



NEW DELHI

India's off-spin bowling all-rounder Sneh Rana has revealed that the historic 270-run victory over England in the first-ever women's Test match at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground was the culmination of deep manifestation and visualisation of "creating history" long before the team even set foot on the hallowed turf.

It took 142 years for Lord's to host its first-ever Women's Test match, and the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side registered themselves as winners of the historic game at the iconic venue. The mammoth and very special victory also marked India's second-highest win by runs in women's Tests and the fourth biggest victory overall in the longer format, apart from maintaining their clean slate in red-ball games in England.

"If I tell you personally, since the time we came to know that the Lord would host the Test match, and it is the first time Test cricket would be played there, our manifestation started from there. Like what to do and for visualisation, we used to think of going there and would say that if we win, India's name will come here and it will remain forever and become history.

"So all this was going on in the dressing room before the match, and finally, when that moment came, it was a very special feeling, and I just want all our players to keep writing their names on the honours board and create more history," Sneh told IANS in an exclusive conversation after coming back home.

Quizzed on the moments from the victory which will stay in her mind forever, a not-so-jet-lagged Sneh stated two moments: the walk from the long room to singing the national anthem on

day one, and sealing the victory in one and a half hours on the fourth day.

"The first thing that will always be there in mind will be when we wore the Test whites and were going from the Long Room to Lord's, and everybody was clapping. When the national anthem started, we wore the whites, and we could see the Lord's in front, including the iconic balcony.

"Standing on that ground and you are singing the national anthem while wearing the whites - I think that is the most special memory. Second, of course, is winning the Test match, as that has become a part of history, and India's name has come to be there. So this will be very special."

The belief that a famous victory at Lord's was further fuelled by head coach Amol Muzumdar, who urged the players to seize their opportunity of a lifetime. "Yes, absolutely. When we were in the dressing room, Amol Sir was saying that history would be made because it was the first Test. After this, there will be Test matches or other women's matches. But this will always be special, and the name of India will always be there.

"So, play by just thinking that history is going to be made, and you have to create history, as it is a very good opportunity. He also said that there is a very special chance to write your name on this board, and the names of very special people come there. There are very few players whose names are on this honours board.

"For the first time, one of you will be writing someone's name there, which no one can erase. It will be imprinted in history. I mean, as long as cricket is played at Lord's, it will remain a board. So, it will remain your name. It was a very good motivation for us, and so,

this talk was going on for the Lord's Test."

Recalling the exact moment she castled Sophie Ecclestone to seal a very special victory for India and end with 4-42 in the second innings, Sneh said, "We were waiting for the last wicket for a very long time. Like, when will the wicket come, and when will we celebrate? Finally, when I took that wicket, it was a very, very good feeling.

"You represent India, and when you pick such important wickets, it obviously makes us very happy. But everyone had the same thought because it was the first Test at Lord's. After so many years, the first women's Test took place, and it is now in history - India and England played, and India won the Test match. So, it will always be a special feeling," she said.

The historic Test saw young pacer Kranti Gaud claim a five-wicket haul and wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia score a spectacular century as both etched their names on the iconic honours board at Lord's.

Speaking about Kranti, who is now the first pacer to pick a five-wicket haul in a women's Test at Lord's, Sneh highlighted how the younger crop of players are extremely self-aware. "I would like to say about Kranti that she is a young talent.

It's good that we don't have to tell youngsters much these days because they are already so experienced from playing so much cricket. So, they know what to do when and at which stage." Sneh was involved in Kranti picking Sophie Ecclestone as her fifth wicket, and though she spilt the chance, a diving Shafali Verma managed to grab it. "As you said, I had a hand in it too, and I was thanking Shafali that she finally caught that catch because I missed it.

UTT Season 7: U Mumba clinch first win in Golden Point Thriller against Dabang Delhi

PANAJI

Anusha Kutumbale held her nerve in a dramatic Golden Point finish to guide reigning champions U Mumba TT to their first victory of Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7, sealing a thrilling 8-7 win over previously unbeaten Dabang Delhi TTC at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Talegaon near Panaji on Wednesday.

The tie came down to a dramatic final Women's Singles contest, where Anusha needed just one game to secure victory for U Mumba. Delhi's Spanish stalwart Maria Xiao, however, refused to go quietly, saving four tie points to steal the opening game before taking the second to level the tie at 7-7. With the contest hinging on a winner-takes-all decider, Anusha held her nerve in a tense Golden Point finish to clinch U Mumba's first victory of the season.

Youssef Abdelaziz gave Delhi the early advantage by defeating Manush Shah in three games, but Anna Hursey responded with another statement performance, coming from behind to beat Sutirtha Mukherjee 2-1 and hand the Delhi paddler her first



game—and first match—defeat of the campaign. U Mumba then struck another significant blow as Hursey and Manush stunned the previously unbeaten pairing of Sathiyam Gnanasekaran and Maria Xiao, ending their seven-match winning streak stretching across Seasons 6 and 7.

U Mumba tightened their grip through Lilian Bardet, who overcame Sathiyam Gnanasekaran in another closely fought three-game battle. In doing so, the Frenchman also maintained his unbeaten international record against the Indian veteran. With the tie on the line, Xiao twice fought back from the brink to level the contest at 7-7 before

Anusha overcame her in a gripping Game 3 Golden Point rally finish to seal U Mumba's first victory of Season 7.

Hursey was named Foreign Player of the Tie after another impressive display, while U Mumba captain Manush claimed the Indian Player of the Tie award. Xiao was adjudged the ChatGPT Match IQ Player of the Tie, with Sathiyam earning the Bislari Shot of the Tie honour. Earlier in the day, UTT Juniors, UTT's grassroots competition running alongside Season 7, saw Dempo Goa Challengers become the first team to secure a semifinal berth with a commanding 7-2 victory over Ahmedabad APL Pipers.

CGM 2026: World champion Gukesh to face Nihal Sarin in first round marquee clash

CHENNAI

The fourth edition of the Chennai Grand Masters 2026, India's most prestigious classical chess tournament, will kick off at The Westin Chennai Velachery Hotel, with a marquee clash between world champion Dommaraju Gukesh and compatriot Nihal Sarin as chess fans would get to witness high-quality clashes over the next seven days.

The tournament will witness eight grandmasters face off in a double-round robin format, with all games to begin at 3:00 PM IST starting Thursday.

There are four Indians in the fray along with four foreign GMs in the tournament that offers a prize purse of Rs 75,00,000 and valuable FIDE Circuit points.

According to the draw, last



edition's Challenger winner M. Pranesh will face Frenchman Alireza Firouzja with white pieces in the opening round, while Arjun Erigaisi will take on Dmitry Andreikin.

The only match without any Indian representation on the opening day will witness Uzbekistan's GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov face off against the USA's GM Hans Niemann.

The Chennai Grand Masters tournament has become an important milestone in the chess journey of many players, as Gukesh won the crown in the inaugural edition and went on to qualify for the Candidates and eventually win the world title. He will be the only former champion in the fray this year.

Speaking ahead of the start of yet another edition of the tournament, Sreekar Chanapragada, Co-founder of MGD1, said, "The Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters 2026 is not just an elite tournament but a powerful platform for India's chess talent to showcase their mettle against the world's best on home soil. This year's competition has once again attracted some of the world's best players, and I am confident that the quality of chess will mesmerise the fans like always."

Former champ Borges beats Dimitrov in second round at Bastad

BASTAD (SWEDEN)

Nuno Borges advanced to the quarterfinals of the Nordea Open in Bastad, cruising past Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 6-2 for a statement win in the second round of the event on Wednesday. With this win, Borges reached his fourth tour-level quarterfinal of the season.

Borges has fond memories of the event in Bastad, having won his only ATP Tour title at the 2024 edition in Sweden, when he defeated Rafael Nadal in the final. The fifth seed was at his intense best against Dimitrov, who advanced to the fourth round at Wimbledon earlier this month.

Dimitrov was competing at the ATP 250 clay-court event for the first time since reaching the semifinals in 2013. The 35-year-old Bulgarian earned his first clay-court win of the year in his opening match against Dalibor Svrčina - highlighted by a moment of amazing sportsmanship by Dim-



itrov - but was unable to back it up against Borges, according to a report on the official website of the ATP Tour.

Borges, the 29-year-old Portuguese, outmanoeuvred Dimitrov in the baseline exchanges and was aggressive on the Bulgarian's second serve, winning 67 per cent of points to improve to 2-1 in the pair's ATP head-to-head series.

Chasing his second semifinal of the season, Borges will next play the winner of the match between

defending champion Luciano Darderi and Daniel Altmaier.

Earlier, Adolfo Daniel Vallejo clawed past Botić van de Zandschulp 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(4) in two hours and 57 minutes to become the first Paraguayan to reach a tour-level quarter-final since Roman Delgado in Mumbai in 2006. The 22-year-old, currently No. 65 in the PIF ATP Live Rankings, will next meet Mariano Navone or Stefano Travaglia.

Dimitrov continued his impres-

sive recent form on Tuesday at the Nordea Open in Bastad, where he rallied past Dalibor Svrčina 7-6(5), 1-6, 6-4 to reach the second round at the ATP 250 clay-court event.

Dimitrov enjoyed a run to the fourth round at Wimbledon earlier this month and quickly adjusted to the clay in Bastad, where he advanced to the semi-finals in 2012 and 2013, according to the ATP Win/Loss Index. Competing at the tournament for the first time since 2013, the 35-year-old battled back from 3-5 in the first set and recovered from squandering a break advantage in the third set to advance after two hours and 24 minutes.

Earlier on Tuesday, Dimitrov continued his impressive recent form at the Nordea Open by rallying past Dalibor Svrčina 7-6(5), 1-6, 6-4 in the first round at the ATP 250 clay-court event. That win had helped Dimitrov become the second-oldest match winner in Bastad this decade behind the then-38-year-old Rafael Nadal, who reached the final in 2024.

Asian U-19 & U-23 Boxing: India clinch three gold, 10 silver, four bronze in women's section

JAKARTA

India capped off a stellar campaign in the women's section of the Asian U-19 & U-23 Boxing Championships, securing a total of five gold, 10 silver, and four bronze medals across U-19 and U-23 categories in the finals held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Wednesday.

In the U-19 women's category, India secured two gold and six silver medals, underlining the depth of its youth programme.

Chandrika Bhoresh Pujari (51kg) delivered a dominant performance to clinch gold with a 5:0 win over Uzbekistan's Nazokat Mardonova, while Prachi also secured gold with a convincing victory over Indonesia's Dira Artika. India's other finalists



in the U-19 category put up strong fights but settled for silver, contributing to the team's overall tally.

In the U-23 women's category, India registered an equally impressive showing with one gold, four silver,

and four bronze medals.

Nisha (54kg) led the charge with a commanding 5:0 victory over Japan's Koi-in Kokufu to clinch gold. India's other gold medallists in the category continued their strong form to finish on top

of the podium.

Meanwhile, Nikita Chand (60kg), Kajal (65kg), and Muskan (75kg) fought hard in their respective finals but settled for silver after facing strong opponents from Uzbekistan. The bronze medals came from semifinal finishes, further highlighting India's consistency across weight categories.

With these results, India once again showcased exceptional depth and dominance at the youth level, particularly in the women's division, with a clean sweep into the finals. India's overall performance in the women's section reflects its growing dominance in age-group boxing at the continental level, with a strong pipeline of talent delivering across both U-19 and U-23

CM FIFA Fan Park at Lakhimpur as World Cup fever grips Assam

GUWAHATI

Football frenzy continues to sweep Assam with the Chief Minister's FIFA Fan Park initiative reaching Lakhimpur after successful editions in Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Jorhat, reflecting the Northeast's enduring passion for the sport during the FIFA World Cup, officials said on Wednesday.

The Lakhimpur Fan Park, set up by the district administration under the patronage of local MLA Manab Deka, will allow football enthusiasts to watch late-night World Cup matches on giant screens, recreating the atmosphere of a stadium for thousands of fans. The initiative is expected to draw youngsters, families and football lovers from across the



district, who traditionally stay up through the night to follow the biggest football tournament despite the time difference.

The expansion of the Fan Park to another district underlines football's unique cultural significance in the Northeast, where the sport commands a following unmatched in most other parts of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Deka said that football has always occu-

pied a special place in the hearts of people in the region. "In India, cricket is undoubtedly a religion. But at the same time, in the Northeast, football is the heartbeat," he added. He said that football transcends borders, languages and cultures and has the power to unite communities through a shared passion.

According to Deka, the CM FIFA Fan Park is aimed at enabling fans to experience the excitement of the World Cup together in a festive atmosphere closer to home while strengthening the spirit of community participation.

The initiative comes at a time when excitement surrounding the tournament has reached its peak with the World Cup entering the knockout stage.

Manipur's football legacy continues to inspire youth: Guv

IMPHAL

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Wednesday said that the state's rich footballing legacy has inspired generations of athletes and continues to shape the sporting aspirations of its youth, while Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh described football as an integral part of Manipur's identity that has produced numerous sporting icons.

The Governor, along with the Chief Minister, on Wednesday graced the Trophy Showcase Ceremony of the 135th Edition of the Durand Cup 2026 at the City Convention Centre in Imphal.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Bhalla said that Manipur has long been recognised as one of India's leading football nurseries, with its players consistently bringing laurels to the state and the country. He emphasised



that the government's continued support for sports infrastructure and grassroots development would help nurture young talent and strengthen the state's sporting ecosystem.

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said that football is deeply embedded in Manipur's culture and identity, and the state has produced several outstanding footballers whose

achievements continue to inspire younger generations.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting sports by improving training facilities and expanding opportunities for aspiring athletes. The three iconic trophies, the President's Cup (1956), the Durand Cup (1888) and the Simla Trophy (1903), were showcased following

their ceremonial flag-off by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre earlier this month.

Earlier in the day, the tournament's promotional campaign in Manipur commenced with the flagging off of the 135th Durand Cup Trophy Tour from Sendra in Bishnupur District.

Speaking at the event, the Governor said that the Durand Cup is more than a football tournament, representing a celebration of history, resilience and the unifying power of sports. He remarked that Manipur's rich footballing legacy has inspired generations of athletes and continues to shape the sporting aspirations of its youth. Bhalla expressed confidence that the tournament would provide young footballers with an opportunity to compete at the highest level, while reinforcing the values of discipline, teamwork and perseverance.



Sreeleela Set to Lose Another Biggie?

Sreeleela is keeping a low profile when it comes to her career. She stepped away to complete her studies, and so far, 2026 has been a dull year for her as Parasakthi and Ustaad Bhagat Singh did not bring her much luck at the box office. Sreeleela was also part of another interesting film, Lenin, and she had pinned a lot of hopes on the project. However, as the Akhil starrer kept getting delayed time and again, she walked out, and Bhagyashri Borse replaced her. Cut to the latest scenario, Lenin has turned out to be a hit, and Bhagyashri is getting all the limelight. If that was not enough, news has emerged from the Tamil media

that Sreeleela has been replaced in another big project. The rumor is that she has been replaced in Adhik Ravichandran's new Ajith film, with Kayadu Lohar, the new-age sensation, taking her place. Though an official confirmation is yet to be made, this news is slowly grabbing headlines. Sreeleela started her career with a bang and bagged several big films, but multiple flops have held her back. She is all set to make her Hindi debut in Anurag Basu's film with Kartik Aaryan, but that project is also taking a lot of time and facing delays. With films slipping out of her hands and several high-profile projects getting delayed, Sreeleela is surely going through a slump and needs to make a strong comeback. One needs to see what kind of films does she act in the days to come.



'Peddi' Sets Netflix Ablaze

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's Peddi is proving that blockbuster success doesn't end with a theatrical run. After creating waves at the box office, the sports action entertainer has found an even wider audience on Netflix, where it is rapidly emerging as one of the platform's biggest hits. Helmed by Buchi Babu Sana and backed by Vridhhi Cinemas, the film was celebrated for blending intense action with strong emotional drama. The positive word-of-mouth during its theatrical release has now translated into exceptional digital viewership, helping the film dominate Netflix charts within just a few days of its arrival. The film is ruling the streaming rankings in India. While the movie is available in all south Indian languages, the Hindi version will be released soon. Peddi has now set a new record among highest viewed south Indian movies on Netflix. Another major reason behind the renewed buzz is the revised OTT cut. With viewership continuing to surge, the film is expected to establish new milestones on Netflix in the near future.

'Elage Pilla' Delivers SWEET MELODY



provided the story and screenplay for the film but also plays an important role in it. Earlier songs from the film, 'Ammoru Diginadi' and 'Labbaru Bomma', received a positive response on YouTube, and the latest romantic track is expected to further boost the film's pre-release buzz. The film features dialogues by Uday Bhagavatula, music by Dev Jand, cinematography by Maya V, and editing by Srikrishna Attaluri. Alongside Vikram Sahidev and Sandhya Vashishta, the cast includes Tarak Ponnappa, Indrāja, Nandini Rai, and Sangeetha in key roles. With its rustic backdrop, youthful romance, and promising soundtrack, Anakapalli is aiming to entertain audiences when it arrives in theatres on August 7.

The makers of the upcoming Telugu film Anakapalli have intensified promotions by unveiling a fresh romantic track titled 'Elage Pilla'. The film, which is being promoted as a unique rural entertainer, is all set for a grand theatrical release on August 7. Directed by Khagesh Tammineni, Anakapalli is jointly produced by Kandregula Naidu and Trinadha Rao Nakkina under the Bhavya Sri Movie Makers and Nakkina Narratives banners, with Kandregula Kumar Raja serving as the co-producer. The newly released love song was officially launched by Sithara Entertainment's producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi, who praised the team for delivering a visually appealing and melodious track. He appreciated the song's pleasant tune, beautiful visuals, and picturesque locations, adding that the lyrical video creates a refreshing feel-good vibe. 'Elage Pilla' captures the budding romance between the lead pair in a simple and natural manner. Acclaimed lyricist Anantha Sriram has penned meaningful yet easy-to-relate-to lyrics, while singers Kapil Kapilan and Dev Jand bring warmth and charm to the melody with their soothing vocals. The song carries a classic romantic flavor that is expected to strike a chord with music lovers, especially the youth. The choreography has also been kept subtle and elegant, avoiding unnecessary extravagance. Lead actors Vikram Sahidev and Sandhya Vashishta perform the hook steps effortlessly, making them easy to recreate. Given the popularity of dance reels on social media, the song's signature moves have the potential to become a trending challenge online. Interestingly, Trinadha Rao Nakkina has not only

Fauzi Shooting At Jet Speed With Two Teams



The makers of Fauzi have intensified production by shooting simultaneously with two units at Kokapet and Taher Sound Unit. With a December release in sight, the team is racing to wrap up the remaining portions. Prabhas is expected to join the shoot later this month and complete his part on a fast track.

Who Is Boyapati's Next Hero?

For some time, things have not been working out well for filmmaker Boyapati Sreenu, who is known for his brand of action movies. The likes of Legend and Akhanda with Balakrishna Nandamuri have worked out for him big time, and then Sarraiodu-like movies got him good fame too. However, in recent times, his quest for a big star hero is not been fulfilled. Before the release of Akhanda 2, it was heard that Allu Arjun would be teaming up with director Boyapati for a film, which will be produced by Geetha Arts. But by the time the discussions happened for real, Allu Arjun got Pushpa 2 fame to another level, and he signed the likes of Raaka, Lokesh Kanagaraj's film, and Basil Joseph's movie as well. After Allu Arjun, who could be the next hero for Boyapati, who is available, is the big question now. Reports are coming that the director is also trying for a top star only, but the dates of those Tier 1 heroes are not even available. Either he should team up with Balakrishna again, but for that also, there's a huge waiting list.



Malavika Shares 'Idhayam Murali' First Look



Actress Malavika Mohanan unveiled her first look from her special cameo in the upcoming Tamil film 'Idhayam Murali', and also shared candid moments with actor and good friend Fahadh Faasil from the sets. Taking to her social media account, the actress posted a series of behind-the-scenes in which she looked radiant as a traditional Tamil bride and was seen dressed in an elegant silk saree paired with temple jewellery, jasmine flowers and classic bridal accessories. The carousel also featured cheerful moments with Fahadh, marking their first on-screen collaboration. Sharing the pictures, Malavika wrote, "My favourite things about it were. Getting to dress up as a Tamil bride. @pallavi_85 this is the first time you've dressed me up for a film after 'Master' and it was so lovely doing this pretty look together. Doing a fun scene with Fafa. We've been friends since years and keep talking about finding the right film to do together but for now this cameo will have to suffice, I guess. Working with the young, fun crew of 'Idhayam Murali' fully felt like being-back-in-college energy." The actress also revealed that she and Fahadh have shared a close friendship for years and had often discussed collaborating on the right project. The actress further said the special cameo offered them an opportunity to finally share screen space, while a full-fledged film together is yet to happen. On the work front, Malavika made her acting debut with the Malayalam film 'Pattam Pole' in 2013 before making a successful transition to Tamil cinema with films such as 'Petta', 'Master', 'Maaran' and 'Thangalaan'. She has also featured in the Hindi action drama 'Yudhra'. The actress will next be seen alongside Vijay Sethupathi in 'Pocket Novel' and opposite Karthi in the much-awaited 'Sardar 2'.

Rukmini Still Awaits Main Heroine Tag

Young Kannada actress Rukmini Vasanth has emerged as one of the busiest actresses in South Indian cinema. With a string of high-profile pan-India films in her lineup, her career is clearly on an upward trajectory. However, an interesting discussion has started among film circles. While she continues to bag opportunities in big-budget films alongside some of the biggest stars, many feel she is yet to be positioned as the primary female lead in these projects. Rukmini's journey has always stood out because of her passion for acting and her strong academic background. She trained at the prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London before making her acting debut with the 2019 Kannada film Birbal Trilogy Case 1. From the very beginning, she consciously chose performance-oriented roles over glamorous appearances, earning appreciation for

her acting skills. The film that truly changed the course of her career was Sapta Sagaradaache Ello. Her emotionally powerful performance won praise from both audiences and critics, establishing her as one of the most promising young talents in South Indian cinema. The film also introduced her to a wider audience and strengthened her reputation as an actress capable of carrying emotionally demanding roles. Another major milestone came when she was cast in Kantara: Chapter 1. Being part of one of the most anticipated Kannada films significantly boosted her visibility and helped her connect with Telugu audiences as well. Today, Rukmini's lineup speaks volumes about the industry's confidence in her talent. She is part of several of the biggest upcoming pan-India projects, including Yash's Toxic, Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel's Dragon, and Rajinikanth's Dharman. These are among the most talked-about films currently in production, featuring some of Indian cinema's biggest stars. Yet, this is where the debate begins. Despite being associated with such prestigious projects, many observers point out that Rukmini is not being projected as the principal heroine in these films. While her roles may be significant and impactful, they are not necessarily the central female characters around whom the narrative revolves. After proving her acting prowess with Sapta Sagaradaache Ello, many believe she deserves films where the story is driven primarily by her character. Given her talent and screen presence, there is a growing opinion that she should also be offered female-centric or lead heroine roles that fully showcase her potential. At the same time, being cast alongside stars like Yash, Jr NTR, and Rajinikanth is an achievement in itself. If these films become major box-office successes, they could elevate Rukmini's stature across the industry and pave the way for her to land more prominent lead roles in the future. Whether these blockbuster collaborations become the stepping stone that finally earns Rukmini Vasanth the recognition as a mainstream leading lady remains to be seen.