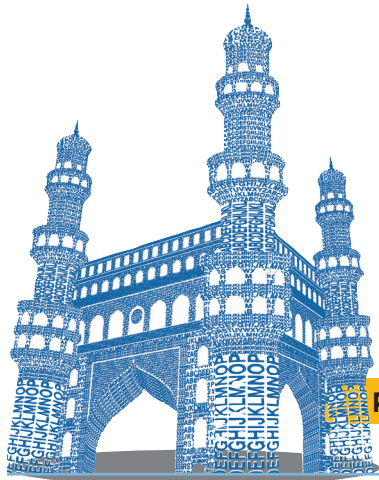




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## Innovation Should Not Burden Teachers...

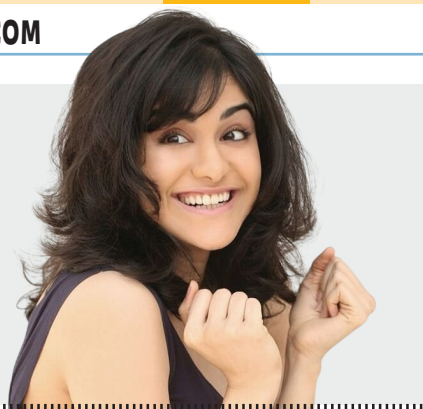
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# Pursue Sports With Passion

STATE BOOSTS SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GLOBAL CHAMPIONS: CM REVANTH

HYDERABAD , JULY 16

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy emphasized that the sport enthusiasts should pursue a career in the sports with a passion. Without focus, no one will excel in sports or any other field also, the Chief Minister asserted.

The TG20 League winners – Hyderabad – e Champions team paid a courtesy call on CM today. The CM handed over cheques to the team accompanied by prominent badminton coach Pulela Gopichand and Eenadu Group Managing Director Ch. Kiran.

Speaking on the occasion, CM Revanth Reddy said that the state government unveiled a vision to promote the sports and bring back the glory to Hyderabad which had

hosted national-level sporting events long back . “ Special emphasis is given to sport as the government introduced an exclusive sport policy for Telangana ”, the Chief Minister said that the government was already providing jobs and cash rewards to those who won medals in national and international sports events.

Stating that the government was focusing on developing sports infrastructure, the CM said a sports University was already established and upgraded the Gachibowli Stadium on par with the international standards.

The TG20 was a good platform for sports persons from villages to display their talents, the Chief minister said hoped that the winners will bring laurels to the country in the future.



## Sitarama project to be completed on priority: Bhatti



**Hyderabad, July 16:** Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka made it clear that the People's government is moving forward with special focus on maximising the utilisation of the waters flowing in the Godavari River through both gravity and lift irrigation. He was speaking to the media after conducting a field-level inspection of the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Scheme and the Seethamma Sagar multipurpose project in Bhadradi Kothagudem district on Thursday, along with Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy and Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy.

He said the State government is preparing in advance with a comprehensive plan to withstand the challenges arising from global climate change and adverse conditions, and is taking rapid steps in that direction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## KTR alleges Congress betrayed EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY



**Hyderabad, July 16:** Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president K.T. Rama Rao said the Congress government has completely lost the confidence of the people and will be remembered in history as a government that invited massive public resentment even before completing half of its term. He alleged that the Congress had transformed itself into a deceitful government by failing to implement the promises it made before the elections and

betraying every section of society.

That is precisely why every section of the people is now strongly opposing the Congress government, he said.

KT Rama Rao made these remarks while addressing an extensive meeting of party leaders, Hyderabad MLAs, MLCs, public representatives and senior leaders at LB Nagar MLA Sudhir Reddy's residence in Hyderabad on Thursday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



## Golconda Bonalu begins with traditional fervour

Golconda Fort came alive with spiritual fervour and vibrant colours on Thursday, marking the grand commencement of the month-long Ashada Bonalu festival. The celebration began with the traditional presentation of the first bonam to the deity at the Jagadambika temple atop the fort.

SPECIAL 02

## BJP DEMANDS PMFBY FOR FARMERS

HYDERABAD, JULY 16:

BJP MLA Payal Shankar on Thursday demanded for immediate implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in Telangana, alleging that the Congress government had failed to fulfil its election promise despite earmarking funds in successive state budgets.

Claiming that farmers were facing severe distress due to erratic rainfall, floods, pest attacks and crop losses, Shankar said the Centre's crop insurance scheme provides vital financial protection and was being implemented successfully in several states. He alleged that while the previous BRS government implemented the scheme only for one year, the Congress had promised in its 'Rythu Declaration' and election manifesto to implement PMFBY with the state bearing farmers' premium. However, despite announcing a Rs.3,000-crore allocation in the budget, the government had not implemented the scheme, he remarked.



## BANDI DEMANDS ACTION OVER HOMEWORK ROW

HYDERABAD, JULY 16

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar strongly condemned the alleged incident in which a Class II Hindu student at Hyderabad-based Success school was reportedly asked to recite Islamic religious verses as part of homework.

Speaking to the media in Hyderabad, Bandi Sanjay termed the directive to recite the Kalma and Surah Al-Fatiha as atrocious. He questioned why the so-called secular groups were remaining silent on this issue and urged the entire Hindu community to condemn it unanimously. He demanded immediate action against the school management. He warned that turn-



ing a blind eye to this incident could lead to spread of this culture across Telangana.

The BJP leader also demanded action against police personnel and Majlis leaders over the alleged harassment of an auto-rickshaw driver, Bharat. Accusing the authorities of adopting double standards, he said equal action should be taken against those making derogatory remarks against Hindus.

He asserted that the BJP would come to power in Telangana and said the party would work to promote Hindu culture and traditions. He made it clear that wearing 'tilak' would be made mandatory for all the Hindu students once the BJP comes into power.

## Heavy Rain Dampens Puri Rath Yatra, Claims Two Lives



**Puri:** Two devotees lost their lives and several others fell ill during the annual Rath Yatra in Puri on Thursday amid heavy rain and an unprecedented influx of pilgrims, officials said.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), seven devotees were shifted to hospitals after experiencing health complications during the festival. Of them, an elderly male devotee aged above 60 years died, with the exact cause of death yet to be confirmed. In a separate incident, another male devotee aged above 35 years suffered a cardiac arrest and passed away despite receiving immediate medical attention.

The CMO stated that the incidents were not linked to any stampede or failure in crowd management. Continuous rainfall and the massive gathering reportedly led to cases of

fatigue, dehydration, suffocation and other minor health-related ailments. Many devotees who became unwell were treated at nearby hospitals and later discharged.

An estimated 8 to 9 lakh devotees from across India and abroad participated in the annual chariot festival. Inspector General of Fire Services Umashankar Dash said rescue teams evacuated nearly 100 devotees who experienced suffocation due to overcrowding on the Grand Road (Bada Danda), where the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are pulled towards the Shree Gundicha Temple.

"We rescued around 100 devotees who felt suffocated in the crowd and shifted them to temporary hospitals and ambulances for treatment," Dash said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## NEET-UG Results Declared

NEW DELHI

Punjab's Aryan Gupta and Haryana's Panshul Bansal emerged as the joint toppers in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) 2026, with both securing 715 out of 720 marks, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Thursday.

Out of nearly 25 lakh candidates who appeared for the country's largest undergraduate medical entrance examination, 11.21 lakh candidates qualified this year. The results showed a strong performance by female candidates, who accounted for over 58 per cent of the qualified students.

According to the NTA, 19 candidates scored 700 marks, while 138 candidates secured 690 marks. A total of 1,492 candidates scored 650 marks or above, and 10,160 candidates obtained 600 or more marks.

The examination, originally con-



ducted on May 9, was cancelled on May 12 following allegations of a question paper leak. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is currently probing the matter. A re-examination was held on June 21, and the results were declared on schedule to ensure that the medical admissions and counselling process remains unaffected.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



## T-SAT to Air Special Programme on Tourism Careers Today

T-SAT (SoFTNET) will telecast a live programme on career opportunities in Tourism and Travel Management today at 2 pm on T-SAT Nipuna. Experts from Mahatma Gandhi University will explain the course, career prospects and industry opportunities. T-SAT will also launch a 30-day lecture series on the subject from July 18 to August 20.

HYDERABAD

## Telangana plans to maximise gains from INDIA-UK CETA: SRIDHAR BABU

**Hyderabad, July 16:** Telangana is drawing up plans to derive maximum benefit from the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) concluded between India and the United Kingdom, IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu announced.

He recalled that under the agreement, which came into force on Wednesday, the UK has removed tariffs on 99 per cent of industrial products exported from India. The Minister met a delegation led by UK Deputy Trade Commissioner (South Asia) Chandru K Iyer at the Secretariat on Thursday. He expressed confidence that bilateral trade between the two countries would grow substantially as a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



తెలంగాణ - ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ - కర్ణాటక

**మాంగళ్య**

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**మెయిన్ రోడ్, బిల్ సుభానగర్.**

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MaangalyaShoppingMall

**MAANGALYA SHOPPING MALL**

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**నాగార్జున**



# Golconda Bonalu begins with TRADITIONAL FERVOUR

HYDERABAD, JULY 16

The historic Golconda Fort came alive with spiritual fervour and vibrant colours on Thursday, marking the grand commencement of the month-long Ashada Bonalu festival.

The celebration began with the traditional presentation of the first bonam to the deity at the Sri Jagadambika temple atop the fort.

Minister for Forest, Environment and Endowments Konda Surekha participated in the inaugural celebrations of the Golconda Fort Sri Jagadambika Ammavari Bonalu festival at Langar Houz Cross-roads in Hyderabad.

The Minister was accorded a grand welcome with traditional Purna Kumbha by temple priests amid Vedic chants upon her arrival at the venue.

Along with Hyderabad in-charge Minister Ponnam Prab-



hakar, she offered silk clothes to the presiding deity.

Marking the commencement of the Bonalu festivities, the Ministers participated in the traditional rituals by offering the first Bonam to the god-

dess and fulfilling their vows amidst the rhythmic beats of drums, performances by Pothurajus, devotional dances by Shiva Sattulu, and vibrant cultural programmes presented by artists.

On the occasion, Ministers Konda Surekha and Ponnam Prabhakar released a booklet on the Ashada Bonalu Festival prepared by the department of Culture. The two Ministers also handed over

a cheque for ₹11 lakh to the Jagadambika Temple Committee on behalf of the State government.

Extending Bonalu greetings to the people of Telangana, Konda Surekha said the State government is celebrating the festival with great grandeur as it symbolises Telangana's rich culture, traditions and spiritual heritage.

She said Hyderabad has been immersed in a festive atmosphere with the sounds of traditional drums, performances by Pothurajus, devotional rituals by Shiva Sattulu and cultural programmes by folk artists.

Expressing hope that the offering of Bonalu to Goddess Jagadambika would help mitigate the impact of El Niño, bring abundant rainfall, calm Mother Earth and usher in prosperity, the Minister wished for Telangana's contin-

ued progress across all sectors.

Konda Surekha said comprehensive arrangements have been made to ensure that devotees can participate in the Ashada Bonalu festivities and have darshan of the presiding deities without any inconvenience.

Government Advisor V. Hanumantha Rao, MLA Danam Nagender, former MP Madhu Yaskhi Goud, Telangana State Women's Congress President Errabelli Swarna, Principal Secretary of the Endowments department Shailaja Ramaiyer, Director Hanumantha Rao, Hyderabad District Collector Priyanka Ala, Director of the department of Culture Enugu Narasimha Reddy, Golconda Jagadambika Temple Committee Chairman Akula Chandrashekar, several Congress party leaders, and others participated in the programme.

## Neelima Calls for Timely SIR Verification



HYDERABAD, JULY 16

accuracies, if any, are corrected in time.

Dr. Kota Neelima, Vice President of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) and Congress In-charge for the Sanath nagar Assembly Constituency, submitted her duly completed Enumeration Form as part of the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Dr. Neelima handed over the form to Booth Level Officer Sudarshan and BLO Supervisor Vitthal, who visited her residence at Road No. 10, Banjara Hills, as part of the ongoing enumeration process. During the visit, she interacted with the election officials and sought details about the progress of the SIR exercise, the implementation of the enumeration drive, and the overall conduct of the voter roll revision programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kota Neelima said that a comprehensive, transparent, and error-free electoral roll is essential for strengthening India's democratic system. She noted that the Special Intensive Revision is a crucial exercise to ensure that every eligible voter is properly included in the electoral rolls and that in-

Welcoming the extension of the deadline for submitting Enumeration Forms to Booth Level Officers until August 3, Dr. Neelima said the decision provides an important opportunity for citizens to verify and update their electoral details. She appealed to all eligible voters to make full use of the extended deadline and submit their completed forms to their respective BLOs within the stipulated time.

Dr. Neelima emphasized that participation in the voter roll revision process is not merely a procedural requirement but a democratic responsibility. She urged citizens to cooperate with the Election Commission and ensure that no eligible voter is left out of the electoral rolls.

She also called upon election officials and the public to discharge their duties with sincerity, transparency, and commitment so that the Special Intensive Revision is completed efficiently. Dr. Neelima said that an accurate voter list would reinforce public confidence in the electoral process and further strengthen the foundations of democracy.

## Extensive security arrangements in place for Golconda Bonalu celebrations

HYDERABAD, JULY 16

The annual Ashada Bonalu celebrations at Sri Jagadambika Mahankali Temple in Golconda commenced on a grand note here on Thursday with the offering of the first Bonam.

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police V.C. Sajjanar personally inspected the security and bandobast arrangements from the foothills to the temple atop the Golconda Fort before offering prayers and participating in special rituals.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said elaborate arrangements had been made to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the festival. Around 2,000 police personnel have been deployed for security.

Special police contingents have been stationed along the entire route from Langar Houz X Roads to the temple. Drone cameras and an extensive CCTV surveillance network

are being used to monitor the festivities and prevent any untoward incidents.

The Crime Wing has stepped up vigilance to prevent offences such as pickpocketing and chain snatching, while dedicated SHE Teams have been deployed to ensure the safety of women devotees. The Traffic Police have also made special parking and traffic management arrangements to facilitate the movement of devotees.

The Commissioner said the Law and Order, Traffic Police and other government departments were working in close coordination to ensure that the Bonalu celebrations are conducted peacefully, safely and in a spiritually uplifting atmosphere. The inspection was attended by Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) D. Joel Davis, DCP (CAR Headquarters) R. Venkateswarlu, DCP (Golconda Zone) J. Raghavendra Reddy, and other senior police officials.

## PM to inaugurate redeveloped Hi-Tech city Station Virtually

HYDERABAD, JULY 16

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the redeveloped Hi-Tech City Railway Station in Hyderabad through video conferencing on Friday as part of the nationwide inauguration of 75 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

During his visit to Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab, the Prime Minister will dedicate development projects worth around Rs.25,000 crore. Local public representatives will participate in the inaugural function at the Hi-Tech City Railway Station.

The 75 redeveloped stations, spread across 20 states, have been modernized at a total cost of about Rs.1,570 crore under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, one of the world's largest railway station redevelopment programmes.

The Hi-Tech City Railway Station in Telangana has been redeveloped at a cost of Rs.26 crore. The upgraded station features contemporary architecture, airport-style passenger amenities, modern facilities and technology-driven infrastructure aimed at providing a seamless travel experience for commuters, par-



ticularly those travelling to Hyderabad's IT corridor. The station is among 40 railway stations identified for redevelopment in Telangana under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

The Prime Minister will also flag off India's first hydrogen-powered passenger train between Jind and Sonapat.

Developed using indigenous technology, the train features a 10-coach configuration powered by a 3,200 HP propulsion system, making it one of the world's most powerful hydrogen-powered passenger trains. The launch marks a significant step towards clean and sustainable mobility in the Indian Railways.

## KTR alleges Congress betrayed EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY

➤FROM PAGE 1

The BRS working president said the Congress government had failed to fulfil a single promise made to women, farmers, students and unemployed youth. Instead of focusing on public welfare, it had turned corruption, scams, irregularities and administrative excesses into its daily agenda. He criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that his words, governance and policies had become a burden on the people.

He further said that even the Chief Minister's own internal survey reflected severe public dissatisfaction with the Con-

gress government. Realising that the Congress government's days are numbered, Revanth Reddy has resorted to making reckless statements out of frustration, KTR remarked.

Referring to the ongoing agrarian crisis, KT Rama Rao said it was unfortunate that while farmers were pleading for irrigation water, the Chief Minister responded with remarks implying that "blood would have to be shed." At a time when Telangana's agriculture sector is reeling under drought-like conditions and severe distress, such statements have angered people across the state, he said.

KT Rama Rao said the Congress government had pushed farmers to a stage where they were saying, "Take our blood if you want, but give water to our fields."

The BRS leader also accused the Congress government of deceiving the youth and unemployed in the name of its Youth Declaration. Students and unemployed youth continue to expose the government's failure to honour those promises, he said.

The meeting held extensive discussions on all logistical and organisational arrangements to ensure the grand success of the proposed Yuva Sangrama Sabha.

## NEET-UG Results Declared

➤FROM PAGE 1

The NTA said it expedited the evaluation process by redesigning the workflow, allowing multiple stages to run simultaneously while maintaining transparency. "The results were declared within time through re-engineering of the process, with stages designed to run in parallel rather than in sequence. Each stage was completed in full and made available for candidate view," the agency said.

NEET-UG serves as the gateway for admission to undergraduate medical programmes across the country. This year, around 1.08 lakh MBBS seats are avail-

able, including approximately 56,000 seats in government medical colleges and 52,000 seats in private institutions. The examination is also used for admissions to undergraduate courses in BDS, Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha.

Following the controversy surrounding the paper leak and alleged irregularities, the Centre has decided to conduct future editions of NEET-UG as a Computer-Based Test (CBT) instead of the traditional pen-and-paper format. The move follows extensive consultations between the Ministries of Education and Health aimed at enhancing the security and transparency of the examination process.

## Heavy Rain Dampens Puri Rath Yatra, Claims Two Lives

➤FROM PAGE 1

The Odisha government maintained that the Rath Yatra was conducted peacefully and in an orderly manner despite the challenging weather conditions. Officials said there was no stampede or systemic breakdown in crowd management, crediting the coordinated efforts of the administration, security agencies, servitors and volunteers for ensuring the smooth movement of devotees and uninterrupted essential services.

Reacting to the incident, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over the loss of lives and wished a speedy recovery to the injured. He urged party workers to assist affected devotees and called on the state government to further strengthen crowd

management and safety measures.

State Congress president Bhakta Charan Das criticised the administration, alleging that inadequate arrangements led to the deaths and urged authorities to prevent such incidents in future.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahi thanked the servitors, officials and lakhs of devotees for their patience and cooperation during the festival. He reiterated the government's commitment to enhancing infrastructure, public services and administrative preparedness to ensure the safety, dignity and convenience of every pilgrim.

The incident comes a year after a tragic stampede near the Gundicha Temple during the previous Rath Yatra claimed three lives and left several devotees injured.

## Telangana plans to maximise gains from INDIA-UK CETA: SRIDHAR BABU

➤FROM PAGE 1

result of the agreement, noting that there is potential for trade worth Rs 32.56 lakh crore (25 billion pounds) between the two nations.

Sridhar Babu said Telangana offers highly favourable conditions for investment in industrial manufacturing, life sciences, aviation, defence, IT, semiconductors, chip design, and electronics. The state has developed world-class infrastructure, and UK industrialists should make use of it, he said. The Minister pointed out that exports from the state to the UK currently stand at only Rs 3,553 crore, and explained that

the benefits flowing from the new agreement present an opportunity to increase exports significantly.

Sridhar Babu noted that 40 per cent of India's pharmaceutical production takes place in Telangana, and the state accounts for 30 per cent of the country's vaccine exports. He recalled that Telangana leads the nation in the manufacture of precision components for the aviation sector. Facilities for manufacturing and overhauling components for world-renowned aviation companies, including Airbus, Boeing, Rolls-Royce, aircraft engine maker Pratt; Whitney, and the

Rafale aircraft produced by Dassault Aviation, are located in the state.

The Minister also recalled that Tata Advanced Systems and Safran Aviation have established manufacturing units here and Hyderabad is home to 350 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) set up by leading organisations, including Fortune 500 companies. Sridhar Babu directed Industries Special Secretary Krishna Aditya to organise a meeting with local industrialists on the manufacture of goods that can be exported to the UK and to brief them on the benefits arising from the CETA agreement.

## SITARAMA PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED ON..

➤FROM PAGE 1

Bhatti Vikramarka recalled that three days ago, at the Sammakka Barrage backwaters of the Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme, all pumps were switched on to lift water to full capacity. He personally stayed there and reviewed the programme to fill 22 reservoirs covering nearly 12 districts and 17 Assembly constituencies.

He said that today they also visited the Sitarama Project, conducted a review, and issued on-the-spot instructions to accelerate the works. He stated that the Congress government's objective is to complete this project on the Godavari River in the Telangana region at the earliest and ensure water reaches the last ayacut.

Bhatti Vikramarka said that the



people, having witnessed the misdeeds of the previous government, gave power to the Congress party. Soon after assuming office, the entire Cabinet conducted an extensive review of these projects. Since a substantial amount had already been spent, the Cabinet decided that stopping the project would not be appropriate and resolved to continue and

complete it, he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that deficiencies such as the absence of distributary canals and reservoir capacity issues are being rectified. Rajiv Canal is being linked with the Sagar Canal, while programmes are being taken up to fill the Wyra and Paleru reservoirs through link canals and tunnels. Works are being accel-

erated to take water up to Sathupalli, he said. Bhatti Vikramarka further said that a monthly calendar has been prepared for completing these works and periodic reviews are being conducted to ensure timely completion. "This is the People's government. Not even a single rupee will be misused. We will carry forward the works already executed, prioritize them, and complete them as early as possible," the Deputy Chief Minister declared.

On the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka reiterated that the government would utilise the maximum possible water from the project, located at the tail-end of the Godavari River, and fulfil the long-cherished aspirations of the farmers of the district.





# NITHM Launches 10-Day Canteen Chef Training Programme for Transgender Persons

HYDERABAD

The National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management (NITHM) has inaugurated a 10-day Canteen Chef Training Programme for transgender persons, being conducted from 15 to 24 July 2026. Sponsored by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens and Transgender Persons (DEPwD, SC & TGP), Government of Telangana, the initiative reflects NITHM's ongoing commitment to inclusive skill development and sustainable livelihood creation.

The programme was inaugurated by Prof. Venkata Ramana, Director, NITHM, who said that skill-based training in hospitality can help transgender persons build successful careers and improve their livelihoods. He encouraged the participants to make the most of the programme and expressed confidence that the training would enhance their skills and create opportunities for employment and self-employment.

Sri Ch. Srinivas, DCP, Cyberabad Police Commissionerate, attended the event as the



Special Guest. In his address, he commended NITHM for its efforts to promote inclusive education and skill development for the transgender community. Encouraging the participants to make the most of the opportunity, he underscored the importance of professional competence, discipline, and self-confidence in building successful careers and achieving financial independence.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Dr. Niraj Gohil, Dean, NITHM; Ms. Michelle J. Francis, Training Coordinator; Dr. N. Yadagiri, Chief Warden,

along with faculty members, staff, and programme participants. The intensive 10-day programme has been carefully structured to provide participants with comprehensive culinary training alongside essential employability skills. Morning practical sessions, led by experienced guest chefs, include training in egg preparations, salads, sandwiches, beverages, rice varieties, snacks, noodles, gravies, rotis, tiffins, biryani, sweets, traditional thali preparation, and fish dishes.

Complementing the practical training, afternoon sessions fo-



cus on personality development, communication and soft skills, customer service, food safety and hygiene, financial literacy, technology for business, social media marketing, and emergency response. These modules are designed to prepare participants for employment and self-employment opportunities in canteens, restaurants, catering establishments, and institutional kitchens.

To facilitate effective learning, NITHM has provided state-of-the-art training kitchens, well-equipped classrooms, and comfortable boarding and

lodging facilities throughout the programme.

Reaffirming the Institute's vision, Prof. Venkata Ramana stated that NITHM remains dedicated to advancing inclusive growth through quality hospitality education and skill development initiatives. He noted that the programme aligns with the Government of Telangana's commitment to social inclusion and economic empowerment, enabling transgender persons to build sustainable livelihoods and participate more actively in the hospitality sector.



## Governor invokes Goddess Mahankali's blessings for Telangana's prosperity

HYDERABAD

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said the Bonalu festival embodies the spiritual ethos, cultural identity and collective faith of the people of Telangana, and reflects the State's enduring traditions of devotion and harmony.

Participating in the historic Golconda Bonalu Mahotsavam, organised by the Bhagyanagar Bonalu Utsava Samithi at Golconda Fort on Thursday, the Governor offered prayers to Sri Jagadambika Mahankali Ammavaru and sought the Divine Mother's blessings for peace, prosperity and the well-being of the people.

Addressing devotees, Shukla observed that Bonalu is not merely a religious festival, but a timeless celebration of devotion to the Divine Mother, reverence for Shakti and the living cultural heritage of Telangana.

He said the tradition of offering Bonam during the sacred month of Ashada symbolises the harmonious rela-



tionship between humanity and nature that has been an integral part of Indian civilisation for centuries. The use of turmeric, neem leaves and flowers in the rituals, he noted, reflects the ecological wisdom and scientific outlook of India's ancestors, while traditions such as Ghatam, Pothuraju and Rangam continue to preserve Telangana's distinctive cultural legacy.

The Governor said prayers offered during Bonalu for timely rains, abundant harvests and social well-being underscore the Indian ethos

of gratitude towards nature. The festival, he added, reinforces the timeless ideals of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" and "Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu", emphasising universal peace, harmony and the welfare of all. Invoking the blessings of Goddess Mahankali, Shukla prayed for peace, good health and prosperity for Telangana, the nation and the world. He also extended Bonalu greetings to the people and appealed to devotees to celebrate the festival with devotion, discipline and communal harmony.

## Vishweshwar Reddy was met by members of the iFocus organization

HYDERABAD

Chevella Member of Parliament Shri Konda Vishweshwar Reddy was met today by members of the iFocus organization at his residence in Banjara Hills. During the meeting, iFocus Coordinator Shri Vasu Deva Sharma explained that the organization has been working since 2005 and has united nearly 100,000 families around four core principles: Integrity, Efficiency, Indianness, and Maitreem Bhajata (Fostering Friendship and Harmony).

On the occasion, Sharma and Shri Satya Suri Shetty, Secretary of the



organization's Su Swatantra Wing, informed the MP that iFocus will or-

ganize cultural programs under the theme "Maitreem Varadhi" on August

2 at the Visvesvaraya Auditorium in Khairatabad. They also formally invited the MP to attend the event as the chief guest.

The meeting was arranged by BJP National Council Member and iFocus Premier Smt. Geetha Murthy. Others who met the MP included Shri Bittu Satish, Shri Kiran, Shri Vishnu Kantha Reddy, Shri Vikram Aditya, and Shri Vinod, among others. The MP assured the members that he would attend the organization's August event and appreciated iFocus for organizing such initiatives that promote social harmony and community engagement.

## GITAM Scholar Awarded Ph.D. in Pharmacy

HYDERABAD

GITAM Deemed to be University has awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmacy to Dr. Sreedharala V. Nookaraju for his pioneering research titled "Development of Novel Carrier-Mediated Topical Teriflunomide Dosage Forms to Treat Chronic Inflammatory Diseases." The research was carried out under the guidance of Dr. Pavan Kumar Chintamaneni, School of Pharmacy, Hyderabad.

Dr. Nookaraju's research focused on developing innovative topical formulations of Teriflunomide for the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis and Atopic Dermatitis, aiming to deliver the drug directly to the affected site while minimizing systemic side effects. The study successfully developed disease-specific topical formulations with promising therapeutic performance, offering safer, targeted, and patient-friendly treatment options. The work also demonstrates strong potential for future clinical development and commercialization, marking a significant contribution to topical drug delivery research.

Congratulating Dr. Nookaraju on this academic achievement, Prof. D. S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor; D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director; and Prof. G. Shiva Kumar, Principal, School of Pharmacy, appreciated his outstanding research contribution and wished him success in his future scientific endeavours.



## Adluri conducts surprise inspections of Gurukul institutions

HYDERABAD

Minister for Social Welfare Adluri Lakshman Kumar said the State government is committed to providing students in Gurukul educational institutions with quality education along with better hostel accommodation, nutritious food, safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities.

The Minister on Thursday visited the TGSWREIS Chaitanyapuri Women's Law College, Residential Degree College (RDC), Ibrahimpatnam, and the Girls' Gurukul School at Saroor-nagar and other institutions in Hyderabad, all functioning under the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TG-SWREIS). During his interaction with students, Adluri Lakshman Kumar sought feedback on academics, hostel management, food quality, drinking water, sanitation, security and teaching standards. The students informed him that the presence of three educational institutions on the same campus was causing difficulties in the supply of drinking water.

Treating the issue as a priority, the Minister immediately spoke to the Rangareddy district Collector over the

phone and directed officials to provide a permanent drinking water facility through the Mission Bhagiratha pipeline. He also instructed them to make alternative arrangements until the permanent solution is put in place, ensuring that students do not face any inconvenience.

The Minister later inspected hostel rooms, the dining hall, kitchen, classrooms, library, laboratories, toilets and sanitation facilities. He also reviewed the quality of food being served, implementation of the prescribed menu and hygiene standards. Interacting warmly with the students, Lakshman Kumar urged the students to bring any issues they face to the notice of the authorities without hesitation. He said the government attaches great importance to students' feedback and suggestions.

The Minister said that he was conducting surprise inspections to understand students' problems firsthand and resolve them on the spot. Adluri Lakshman Kumar said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has accorded the highest priority to the educational advancement of students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.

## DGP calls for State to lead nation in cyber policing

HYDERABAD

Director General of Police C.V. Anand has directed the officials to make Telangana a national model in technology-driven cyber policing, stressing the need for faster response, stronger investigations and greater public awareness to combat cyber-crime.

During a review of the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau, Anand inspected the Cyber Lab, Security Operations Centre, Digital Forensics Unit, Social Media Unit, Child Protection Unit and other divisions. He also reviewed the functioning of the Bureau's AI-powered cyber call centre and instructed officials to expand AI-based services for quicker assistance to victims.

Director of the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau Shikha Goel, along with other officials, briefed the DGP via a Power-



Point presentation on the current cybercrime trends, investigation methods, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), services provided to victims and future action plans.

Officials informed the DGP that cybercrime-related financial losses in Telangana stood at Rs.1,524 crore in 2025, a 20 percent decline compared to 2024, while complaints dropped 3 percent to 91,369. The amount frozen in fraudsters' accounts increased from Rs.255 crore to Rs.279 crore,

improving recovery efforts. The Bureau also reported that 21,639 of the 49,620 cybercrime FIRs registered nationwide in 2025 were from Telangana, accounting for 44 percent of all such FIRs, reflecting the State's proactive enforcement. Out of the 86,177 FIRs registered for major crimes in the state in 2025, 21,639 were related to cybercrimes. It noted that while other major crimes resulted in a financial loss of Rs.207 crore, the cybercrimes caused a loss of Rs.1,524 crores. The officials

stated that the financial loss caused by the cybercrimes was nearly seven times higher than that caused by other major crimes. Anand said cybercrime poses a far greater financial threat than conventional crime and urged every police officer to strengthen technical expertise in AI, data analytics and digital investigations. He also stressed the need to tackle the growing menace of investment frauds, online trading scams and digital financial crimes before they become more serious.

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# Harish slams Congress govt over rising power outages, coal shortages

HYDERABAD

Former minister and BRS deputy floor leader T. Harish Rao on Wednesday accused the Congress government of pushing Telangana towards a severe power crisis due to its lack of foresight and failure in governance.

Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, he said unannounced power cuts had become a daily occurrence across the State, causing immense hardship to farmers, students, traders and people from all sections of society.

Harish Rao said that during the BRS government, uninterrupted power supply had become the norm, whereas under the Congress government, uninterrupted electricity itself had become news. He pointed out that farmers staged protests in front of electricity substations in 11 districts on Monday, expressing their anger over frequent power disruptions.

Harish Rao alleged that the crisis was entirely man-made and blamed the Congress government for its failure to maintain adequate coal stocks for thermal power stations. He recalled that the BRS had repeatedly warned the government, through presentations and supporting data, that thermal plants were facing a serious shortage of coal despite the government's claim that 40 lakh tonnes of coal were available.

According to Harish Rao, major thermal power stations, including Kothagudem, Kakatiya, Bhadradi and Yadadi, have



coal reserves sufficient for only six to seven days. He said power generation had already stopped in Units 1 and 4 of the Yadadi Thermal Power Plant due to coal shortages, while generation at the Bhadradi Thermal Power Station had also been affected because of poor maintenance.

Questioning the government's handling of the power sector, Harish Rao said Telangana's peak demand currently stood at around 15,000 MW, while the State had a thermal generation capacity of 7,180 MW. However, only 3,190 MW of thermal power was generated on the previous day, meaning that only 44 per cent of the available capacity was being utilised while 56 per cent remained idle.

The BRS MLA alleged that the government had failed in coal procurement, reservoir management and maintenance

of thermal power stations despite repeated warnings about possible drought conditions. He questioned why advance planning had not been undertaken to ensure uninterrupted electricity generation.

Harish Rao further alleged that instead of fully utilising Telangana's own thermal generation capacity, the government was purchasing nearly 80 million units of electricity from the Power Exchange at exorbitant prices. He asked why consumers, farmers and industries should bear the burden of expensive power purchases when sufficient generation capacity existed within the State.

The BRS MLA also accused the government of concealing facts by stopping the publication of production, coal supply and coal quality data on the Singareni Collieries Company Lim-

ited (SCCL) website. According to him, high-quality Singareni coal was being supplied to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, while Telangana's thermal stations were receiving inferior-quality coal. He alleged that nearly 30 out of every 70 railway rakes carrying coal were being rejected due to poor quality, adversely affecting thermal power generation.

Harish Rao said the Congress government had pushed Telangana's farmers back into uncertainty after the BRS government had successfully ensured uninterrupted 24-hour quality free electricity for agriculture. Former Ministers Satyavathi Rathod and Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, MLA Chinta Prabhakar, and employees' union leader Devi Prasad also attended the press conference.

## BJP condemns "Education Jihad" in Hyderabad school, seeks action

HYDERABAD

BJP Telangana state president N. Ramchander Rao on Thursday alleged that a new trend of "Education Jihad" has emerged in Hyderabad's Old City and termed it 'highly condemnable and objectionable'.

In a statement, Rao expressed concern over an incident at Success School in Saidabad, where he alleged that a second-grade Hindu student was directed to recite the Kalma and was assigned homework to learn and write the Kalma and Surah Al-Fatiha. Holding Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy responsible, Rao alleged that the Congress government's "vote-bank politics" and Muslim appeasement had emboldened such incidents.

He praised the student's mother for questioning the school management after discovering that her daughter had been asked to write the Kalma. Rao criticized the state government and the Education Department for allegedly failing to take strict action against the school management, stating that merely removing a teacher was insufficient and that the management should also be held accountable.

Rao further alleged that forcing the students to recite prayers belonging to another religion was unacceptable and claimed that similar attempts were being made in some educational institutions to discourage Hindu students from displaying religious symbols such as the tilak or bindi. He asserted that educational institutions should focus on imparting education while respecting the constitutional rights and religious freedom of every student. Demanding strict action, Rao urged the Congress government to conduct an impartial and comprehensive inquiry into the incident.



## Uttam pledges timely completion of key Godavari irrigation projects

BHADRADI KMOATHAGUDEM / SATHUPALLI,

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday declared that the Congress government was committed to completing the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project, Sitamma Sagar Project and Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme during its present term.

He said irrigation had been accorded the highest priority by the State government and assured that all administrative, financial and legal hurdles would be resolved to ensure timely completion of these projects.

Addressing a review meeting at the Sathupalli tunnel point after inspecting the Sitarama Project along with Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government was accelerating works at every level.

On the Sithamma Sagar Project, the Minister said the project had been facing legal hurdles, including proceedings before the National Green Tribunal, even before the Congress government assumed office. He said the State was pursuing the matter vigorously in the Supreme Court and expected a positive outcome.

"If necessary, the government will continue its legal fight through a special leave petition while simultaneously securing

all pending Central clearances," he said. Highlighting a major achievement of the present government, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana had secured the final Central Water Commission clearance for utilisation of 67 TMC of Godavari water for the Sitarama Project after he assumed charge as Irrigation Minister. He said this approval would significantly strengthen the project's implementation.

The Minister also referred to the recent review of the Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme and said that although the previous government had spent enormous amounts on irrigation between 2014 and 2023, it had failed to complete Sitarama, Seethamma Sagar and Devadula projects.

He assured that all three projects would be completed during the Congress government's tenure and that adequate Godavari waters would be utilised for irrigation.

Earlier in the day, Uttam Kumar Reddy had an on-ground review of the work progress on the Sitarama and Sitamma sagar projects in Bhadradi Kothagudem district along with Deputy Chief Minister, Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister for Revenue, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the government would ensure that the works on the projects progressed strictly in accordance with environmental laws, engineering standards and statutory procedures.



## Dr. Peruka Raju Pays Courtesy Visit to Director, Telangana Sainik Welfare

HYDERABAD

Renowned national poet, author, multilingual scholar, and founder of the My Gift voluntary organization, Dr. Peruka Raju, paid a courtesy visit to Brigadier N. R. Balu, Director of the Telangana Sainik Welfare Department, at his office chamber in Hyderabad today.

During the meeting, the two held detailed discussions on the welfare of ex-servicemen, the promotion of literature, and various social service initiatives. Brigadier N. R. Balu appreciated Dr. Peruka Raju for successfully balancing his responsibilities in national service with his outstanding contributions to literature in Telugu and several other languages, as well as his commitment to social welfare. He expressed confidence that Dr. Peruka Raju would continue to scale greater heights in the literary world and earn many more prestigious honours at both the state

and national levels. On the occasion, Dr. Peruka Raju, on behalf of the My Gift voluntary organization, felicitated Brigadier N. R. Balu with a ceremonial shawl and presented him with a memento as a mark of respect and gratitude. Proudly regarded as a distinguished son of Telangana, Dr. Peruka Raju is presently serving as a Junior Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army. Alongside his military duties, he has consistently pursued literary excellence, earning widespread recognition at the national level.

In addition to his literary accomplishments, Dr. Peruka Raju is deeply involved in social service. Through his My Gift voluntary organization, established with the mission of uplifting the poor and marginalized sections of society, he has been organizing numerous humanitarian initiatives across the country, setting an inspiring example of selfless service.



## Hyd Cong launches voter helpline for SIR assistance

HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad District Congress Committee (DCC) has launched a dedicated helpline to assist voters during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. TPCC president B Mahesh Kumar Goud inaugurated the helpline - 8826777445, which will operate daily from 10 am to 10 pm, offering guidance on enumeration forms, required documents, verification procedures and voter-related issues. Hyderabad DCC president Syed Khalid Saifullah said the helpline would support voters who have not been contact-

ed by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), need help filling forms, require corrections in electoral details, or have been flagged under the anomaly category. While assistance will be provided, all additions, deletions and corrections will remain subject to approval by the Election Commission. The Congress has deployed 101 DCC office-bearers, 44 local unit presidents and nearly 1,200 Booth level agents to support voters. If issues cannot be resolved over the phone, local representatives will visit voters' homes, with priority assistance for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, women and economically weaker sections.

## BRS complains to EC alleging CM Revanth has two voter registrations

HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leaders on Thursday lodged a complaint with the Telangana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), alleging that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has two voter registrations and sought a detailed inquiry into the matter.

A BRS delegation comprising SIR (Summary Intensive Revision) Coordination Committee members Abhilash Rangeneeni, Mujeebuddin and Sumitranand, along with party leader Mamata, met State Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy and submitted a representation outlining their concerns.

The party urged the Election Commission to - conduct a forensic audit, including time-stamps, of the voter registrations in Kodangal and Kondareddipalli (Achampet) linked to EPIC number TESO274035 to determine the dates of creation, modification and deletion of each entry, to independently verify the facts through the Election Commission's own official channels and place the complete factual position on record without relying on any communication from state government-affiliated official



handles. Further, it wanted to examine whether the Chief Minister disclosed the Kondareddipalli voter registration in the nomination affidavit filed during his candidature from Kodangal. If it was not disclosed, the party sought an inquiry into whether the matter attracts action

under Sections 31 and 125A of the Representation of the People Act.

The BRS leaders urged the authorities to issue directions clarifying that no state government department or official is authorised to speak on behalf of the Election Commission or its field-level officials on

matters that fall within the Commission's constitutional jurisdiction. They requested the Election Commission to treat the complaint with due seriousness and take appropriate measures to safeguard the impartiality, transparency and credibility of the electoral process in Telangana.

## BDL celebrates its 57th foundation day

HYDERABAD

Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) on Thursday celebrated its 57th Formation Day with great enthusiasm across all its units and offices. The celebrations commenced with Shailesh Vagerwal, CMD, BDL, cutting the ceremonial Formation Day cake in the presence of Directors, senior officials, employees, office bearers of recognized unions and associations, marking another milestone in the Company's illustrious journey of serving the Nation.

As a mark of respect and gratitude to the great nation-builders whose ideals continue to inspire the organization, floral tributes were paid to Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Babu Jagjivan Ram, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Bharat Ratna Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Addressing the employees on the occasion, Shailesh Vagerwal extended his heartfelt greetings to the entire BDL family and congratulated them on the Company's 57th Formation Day. He expressed gratitude to the present and retired employees of the Company, their family members, customers, officials

from the Ministry of Defence, CISF, business partners and other stakeholders for their unwavering cooperation and support that have contributed to BDL's growth and success.

CMD called upon employees to remain steadfast in their commitment to customer satisfaction, timely delivery, operational excellence, quality, innovation and teamwork to meet the growing expectations of the Armed Forces and to support the Government's vision of Viksit Bharat.

Further, he also outlined his vision for transforming the Company into a globally respected defence manufacturing enterprise through a customer-first approach, uncompromising quality, timely delivery, innovation, accountability, integrity and teamwork.

Reaffirming BDL's pivotal role in advancing the national vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, he emphasised the importance of employee empowerment, continuous learning, digital transformation, technological excellence, safety, sustainability and strong partnerships with the Armed Forces, DRDO, industry and academia.



## Naredco Telangana holds workshop on future-ready infrastructure planning

HYDERABAD

National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) Telangana, in association with the Indian Plumbing Association (IPA) Hyderabad Chapter, conducted a workshop to highlight the importance of integrating Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MEP) services at the early stages of project planning for sustainable and efficient urban development.

The workshop, titled "Basic requirement of MEP services and coordination with Architects & other consultants", brought together the developers, architects, consultants and industry professionals to discuss best practices in infrastructure planning, water management and stakeholder coordination.

Experts stressed that early MEP planning helps avoid costly design changes, improves project efficiency and enhances long-term building performance. Sessions covered topics including utility planning, pumping

systems, water treatment plants (WTPs), sewage treatment plants (STPs) and sustainable water management for large residential and commercial projects.

Speaking at the event, NAREDCO Telangana president K Sreedhar Reddy said quality infrastructure is as important as quality construction, adding that early integration of MEP systems is key to developing safe, efficient and sustainable buildings.

IPA Hyderabad chapter chairman P Sraavan Kumar said many infrastructure issues stem from poor planning during the design phase and emphasised the need for stronger coordination among developers, architects and technical consultants to create resilient, future-ready projects. The workshop concluded with interactive discussions on implementation challenges and strategies to improve collaboration among stakeholders, with NAREDCO Telangana reaffirming its commitment to promoting best practices in infrastructure planning and sustainable urban development.



Amit Shah to  
visit W.Bengal on  
July 17-19

NEW DELHI, JUL 16

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit West Bengal from July 17 to 19 with focus on border security, governance, law and order, and development, sources said. This will be the first exhaustive visit of the home minister to West Bengal after the BJP scripted a historic victory in the Assembly elections in May forming its first government in the state. During the three-day trip, Shah will visit the Jumagach Border Outpost in Siliguri on July 18, where he will interact with Border Security Force personnel.

Crane Collapse  
in Mira Road  
Kills One,  
Injures Three

MUMBAI: A 20-year-old man was killed and three others were injured after a crane collapsed from the 13th floor of an under-construction building in Thane district on Thursday, a police official said. The incident took place at JP North residential complex in Mira Road (East) and the deceased has been identified as Mujammil Khokhar, he said. The crane, which was being used for construction work, suddenly gave way and crashed into the society premises, hitting several vehicles parked below, the official said.

Opposition Leaders Back Sonam Wangchuk  
Demand Education Minister's Resignation

NEW DELHI, JULY 16

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal, Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav, and several opposition leaders on Thursday met educationist and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk at Jantar Mantar, expressing solidarity with his ongoing hunger strike demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged NEET-UG paper leak.

Wangchuk has been on an indefinite hunger strike for 19 days, leading a youth-led protest seeking accountability for alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination.

Addressing the gathering, Kejriwal urged the Centre to engage with the protesting students and heed their demands. Calling for Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, he suggested that Sonam Wangchuk be appointed as the next Union Education Minister, praising his commitment to education

NEXT DOOR  
Jagan asks YSRCP MPs to raise  
public issues in Parliament

AMARAVATI, JULY 16

Former Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said governance in Andhra Pradesh has completely collapsed under Chandrababu Naidu and directed YSRCP MPs to strongly raise people's issues, corruption, illegal cases, farmer distress, employee problems, rising debt and scams in both Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session beginning July 20. Jagan chaired the YSR Congress Parliamentary Party meeting at the party's central office in Tadepalli to discuss the strategy to be adopted in Parliament. The meeting was attended by YSRCP Parliamentary Party leader and Rajya Sabha MP V.Y. Subba Reddy, Rajya Sabha MPs Meda Raghunath Reddy and Golla Baburao, YSRCP floor leader in Lok Sabha Peddireddy Mithun Reddy, Lok Sabha MPs M. Gurumoorthy, Y.S. Avinash Reddy and Gumma Tanuja Rani. Former MPs Pili Subhash Chandra Bose and Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy attended as special invitees.

Addressing the MPs, Jagan said that the interests of the people of Andhra Pradesh must remain the party's foremost priority and urged them to raise their voices forcefully in Parliament. He reiterated YSRCP's support for the Wom-



en's Reservation Bill and said the party stands by its earlier position. He said governance in the State has been thrown to the winds, and scams are visible everywhere, with DSC 2025 emerging as a major recruitment scandal.

Jagan said serious irregularities had occurred in the filling of DSC posts, including appointments made before candidates even wrote the competitive examination. He said several issues had also emerged regarding DSC question paper leaks and serious irregularities in sports quota appointments. Government Orders were issued only to benefit favoured persons and were cancelled once their purpose was served, he said.

He pointed out that the sports associations that issued certificates were also in the hands of ruling party leaders, citing the Softball Association, headed by TDP MLA Kuna Ravi Kumar, and the Judo Association, where Visakhapatnam

MP and Lokesh's brother-in-law, Bharath, is Honorary President. He said land allotments across the State had become arbitrary and corrupt. Nearly Rs 5,000 crore worth of government lands were handed over to Minister Lokesh's brother-in-law for a pittance, he said, calling it a grave act of corruption. He said massive loot was taking place in Amaravati construction, with costs exceeding Rs 20,000 per square foot, a rate unheard of anywhere in the country. He said roads, too, had become a source of loot, while farmers who refused to give up their land under pooling were being harassed and their land forcibly taken. Farmers are questioning why more land is being acquired when even the thousands of acres already taken remain undeveloped, he said. Jagan said those exposing government failures or questioning the ruling party were being harassed with false cases and arrests. In the name of social media, Chandrababu is un-

leashing severe repression and arresting people at will, he said. He asked MPs to raise these attacks on democratic rights in Parliament. He also directed MPs to take up the problems faced by teachers due to the mandatory TET requirement.

He said it is unfair to force teachers who entered service before TET was introduced to write the examination now, especially when they had already cleared competitive examinations at the time of recruitment. Teachers who have been teaching one subject for many years should not be compelled to write a TET covering all subjects, he said, asking MPs to meet the Union Minister concerned and present the issue.

Jagan said public assets in the State are being distributed like freebies to private parties. He strongly criticised the privatisation of ports, harbours, and other institutions, especially since many of these projects were initiated under the YSRCP government and are either com-

pleted or nearing completion. He questioned how the nearly completed Ramayapatnam Port, worth around Rs 5,000 crore, could be handed over for just Rs 1,500 crore, asking whether this was not a major scam. If such revenue-generating assets are handed over to private parties, how will the State earn revenue, he asked.

He said the coalition government is setting debt records while corruption continues everywhere. Land is being allotted arbitrarily, while the sand, liquor, and mining sectors have become centres of organised loot. Mafias are operating in every sector, he said.

In just two years, the government has borrowed nearly Rs 3.6 lakh crore, violating the FRBM Act and borrowing without limits, yet nothing has been done for the people, he said.

Jagan said aqua farmers are suffering heavily due to syndicates, while farmers across the State are facing losses due to the absence of remunerative prices for any crop. The anger of aqua farmers was evident at the Bhimavaram meeting, where they openly expressed that they were being deceived, he said.

He also said government employees are facing severe problems, with no implementation of manifesto promises, no PRC, no IR, five DAs pending, surrender leaves pending, and every issue unresolved.

Assam Assembly  
issues directive to curb  
electricity wastage

GUWAHATI, JULY 17



The Assam Legislative Assembly has issued a directive to curb electricity wastage within its premises by asking staff to ensure that lights, fans, and air conditioners are switched off whenever rooms and passages remain unoccupied, officials said on Thursday. According to an official order issued by the Assembly Secretariat, there is "considerable wastage of electricity" in the Assembly complex, with electrical appliances frequently found running even when no one is present in offices, rooms, and corridors. The communication, signed by the Secretary of the Assam Legislative Assembly, has been addressed to the Additional Secretary and In-charge of the Nazarat Branch, seeking immediate corrective measures. The memorandum noted that fans, lights, and air conditioners are often left switched on in unoccupied rooms and passages, resulting in unnecessary power consumption. It stated that such avoidable use of electricity not only leads to additional expenditure from the public exchequer but also runs contrary to the principles of energy conservation. Seeking strict compliance, the Assembly Secretariat requested the Nazarat Branch to issue suitable instructions to all concerned staff to en-

sure that all electrical appliances are switched off whenever rooms or passages are vacant. "It is therefore requested to kindly take proper note of the matter and issue suitable instructions/directions to all concerned staff for strict compliance so that all electrical appliances are switched off when the rooms or passages are unoccupied," the memorandum said. A copy of the communication has also been forwarded to the Private Secretary to the Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly for information. The move comes amid growing emphasis by governments and public institutions across the country on energy efficiency and reducing avoidable expenditure through better management of electricity consumption in government offices. Officials said the directive aims to promote responsible energy use within the Assembly premises and encourage staff members to adopt simple conservation practices that can collectively reduce electricity bills and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Andhra: PPP projects worth Rs 1.23  
lakh crore under implementation

AMARAVATI, JULY 16

Andhra Pradesh is currently implementing 260 projects worth over Rs 1.23 lakh crore in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, officials said. At a review meeting on the status of PPP projects and related government investments on Thursday, officials informed Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu that projects worth Rs 1,23,229 crore are at various stages of implementation across sectors such as industry, infrastructure, urban development, tourism, medical colleges, roads, and solar power. The Chief Minister stated that Viability Gap Funding (VGF)-supported projects will play a pivotal role in driving future infrastructure development. He observed that while India witnessed an era of economic reforms in the past, it is now undergoing an infrastructure revolution. He stressed that PPP projects offer the best oppor-



tunity to accelerate development across multiple sectors. Naidu said all PPP projects should be developed on a sustainable model with adequate opportunities for economic activity built into every project. He instructed officials to effectively leverage Central Government support mechanisms, such as the Urban Challenge Fund, and called for the establishment of an efficient institutional mechanism for managing ports, airports, and other major infrastructure. The Chief Minister directed officials to place the Andhra Pradesh Public-Private

Partnership-VGF Policy 1.0 before the next Cabinet meeting and to issue detailed implementation guidelines at the earliest. He also instructed officials to study various PPP frameworks being implemented by the Central Government. Officials projected that, in line with the Swarna Andhra 2047 Vision, the State could attract Rs 8 lakh crore in annual investment through PPP projects. They explained that large-scale infrastructure investments would be concentrated in the Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, and Tirupati Economic Regions. Naidu said all projects should align with the micro and macro objectives of the Swarna Andhra Vision. He stressed the need to continuously identify gaps, improve implementation, and seize emerging opportunities. He noted that supplying water to industries would generate revenue for the Water Resources Department and said irrigation associations would

also play an important role in the process.

He directed every government department to prepare a comprehensive financial plan with short-, medium- and long-term revenue strategies. Government departments, he said, should implement PPP projects in a manner that inspires investor confidence. He further emphasised that Andhra Pradesh should secure a first-mover advantage in every promising sector.

The Chief Minister directed that local fishermen be made stakeholders in coastal tourism projects so they can directly benefit from these developments.

He also instructed officials to create better public infrastructure and economic activity zones around 21 major temples across the State.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that the Central Government has sanctioned Rs 178 crore in VGF for the Waste-to-Energy plants in Vijayawada and Tirupati.

ISKCON to Handle  
Mid-Day Meals in  
Bengal Schools

KOLKATA, JULY 16

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari said on Thursday here that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) will gradually hand over the responsibility of mid-day meal service in state-run schools throughout the state gradually. "ISKCON had already been given the responsibility of mid-day meal services in state-run schools within the Kolkata Municipal Corporation from August 1. Next, ISKCON will be given the responsibility for all state-run schools in Nadia district. Gradually the society will be given the same responsibility in all districts in West Bengal," the Chief Minister told media persons at the sidelines of a Rathayatra festival programme at Mecheda in his

native East Midnapore district. "ISKCON has reached a preliminary agreement with the state government on this count. I assure you all that only nutritious food will be served to the school students," he added. For so long, eggs were served in the school mid-day meals. After ISKCON was given the responsibility of providing that food to schools in Kolkata, many people raised the question on whether the students get eggs henceforth. Chief Minister Adhikari gave clarifications on this issue and said that the school students will be provided with nutritious food. "The students coming from ordinary families generally consume mid-day meals. ISKCON will provide them with nutritious food," he said. However, he did not clarify what food will be served at the mid-day meals.

Lokesh Alleges YSRCP Vendetta Forced  
Amara Raja to Shift to Telangana

AMARAVATI, JULY 16

Andhra Pradesh Minister for Education, IT and Electronics Nara Lokesh on Thursday expressed regret over the treatment meted out to the Amara Raja Group during the previous YSRCP government, alleging Andhra Pradesh had lost a historic industrial opportunity due to the "harassment and intimidation" faced by one of its most respected home-grown enterprises. Reacting to the inauguration of Amara Raja's new Customer Qualification Plant at the Divitipalli Giga Corridor in Telangana's Mahabubnagar district, Minister Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh owed an apology to Amara Raja Chairman Galla Jayadev and his family. "Over four decades, Amara Raja has been more than just one of Andhra Pradesh's greatest industrial success stories. It has created world-class manufacturing, generated thousands of jobs, and carried the name of Chittoor and Andhra Pradesh across India



and the world," Minister Lokesh said in a post on X. "The harassment your company endured under the previous government should never have happened. An entrepreneur who chose to build in his home state deserved encouragement, not intimidation," he added. Minister Lokesh said it was painful that a company born in Andhra Pradesh had to look beyond the state's borders for its next chapter of growth. However, he expressed hope that Amara Raja's biggest chapters would still be written in the state where its journey began. "As we rebuild trust, Andhra Pradesh is

once again open for enterprise. We hope Amara Raja's biggest chapters will still be written in the state where its journey began. Our doors, and our hearts, will always remain open," he said. According to an official release, "Amara Raja was established by the Galla family after returning from the United States, and was built with the vision of creating employment opportunities for the youth of Chittoor district and transforming the economic landscape of Rayalaseema." Over the years, the company grew into one of India's most respected manufacturing brands with a global footprint. Despite its expansion, its major manufacturing operations remained in Chittoor, creating livelihoods for thousands of local families. "However, during the YSRCP regime, the company found itself at the centre of a vindictive confrontation with the state government because its Chairman, Galla Jayadev, was a prominent TDP Member of Parliament." The official release

added that the previous YSRCP government, "which was often accused of adopting a vindictive approach towards investors and businesses, moved to reclaim nearly 253 acres of industrial land allotted to the company and later initiated a series of actions against its manufacturing units. "The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board's closure notices to Amara Raja's flagship battery plants in Chittoor attracted national attention. Reports also surfaced of disruptions to power and water supply to the company's facilities, even as legal proceedings were underway.

"Faced with an increasingly uncertain business environment, Amara Raja eventually shifted its ambitious ₹9,500-crore Lithium-ion Giga Corridor project to neighbouring Telangana. The inauguration of the Customer Qualification Plant at the Divitipalli Giga Corridor marks a major milestone in that project and serves as a reminder of the opportunity Andhra Pradesh lost."

Tripura govt will continue  
to support festivals of all  
communities: CM Saha

AGARTALA, JULY 16

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Thursday said that Rath Yatra is not merely a religious festival but a timeless symbol of humanity, brotherhood, love, and unity, emphasising that such celebrations strengthen social harmony and reinforce the spirit of peaceful coexistence. The Chief Minister made the remarks while inaugurating the Rath Yatra celebrations organised by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) here, in the presence of Tripura Governor Indra Sena Reddy Nallu. Addressing the gathering, Saha said the annual chariot festival carries a message of inclusiveness and inspires people to move forward together, transcending barriers of caste, religion, and creed. "Rath Yatra is not just a religious festival; it is a unique symbol of humanity, brotherhood, love, and unity. This festival teaches us

to move forward together by taking everyone along, irrespective of caste, religion, and creed," the Chief Minister said. He said the present state government accords equal respect and importance to the festivals of all religions and communities and would continue extending its support in the future. "The government has always supported festivals of every religion and community with equal respect and importance, and this commitment will continue. Such festivals play a vital role in maintaining peace, harmony, and communal amity in society. They foster unity and strengthen the bonds of mutual respect and goodwill despite our rich cultural diversity," Saha said.

The Chief Minister noted that a large number of devotees from different parts of the state had assembled to participate in the Rath Yatra, reflecting Tripura's long-standing tradition of communal harmony and peaceful coexistence.



EDITORIAL

A Triumph Beneath the Vindhyas:  
Redefining Myth and Map in  
Madhya Pradesh

In central Indian folklore, the rivers Narmada and Sonbhadra are legendary estranged lovers destined to flow in opposite directions—Narmada running west and Sonbhadra traveling east, never to meet. For centuries, geography respected this lore. Today, however, a monumental engineering crusade has rewritten both.

The breakthrough of the Sleemanabad Water Tunnel in Madhya Pradesh's Katni district represents a historic leap. Stretching a massive 11.95 kilometers, it is India's longest underground gravity-flow irrigation tunnel. By carving a path directly beneath the Vindhya range, engineers have guided Narmada's waters across a continental divide to the parched Vindhya region without the aid of a single pump. This was a brutal, 17-year struggle against a complex geological labyrinth. When construction began in 2008 as part of the Bargi Diversion Project, few anticipated the nightmares hidden 20 to 40 meters below. The Vindhya ridge threw every possible hurdle at the builders: Geological Chaos: Shifting strata of hard marble, unstable slate, and dolomite. Torrential Seepage: Underground water ingress reaching up to 25,000 liters per minute. Toxic Subterranean Pockets: Sudden pockets of carbon dioxide and massive unmapped cavities. The terrain repeatedly broke a heavy-duty, American-made Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), stalling progress for years. The delay was so severe that the state considered abandoning the underground route. Instead, engineers pivoted, deploying a German-made TBM from the opposite end to initiate a successful dual-end breakthrough. Unlike traditional pipeline systems that consume massive amounts of energy, this 10.14-meter-wide tunnel relies entirely on gravity flow. It is a masterpiece of hydraulic physics, carrying water purely on a downward incline.

For the drought-prone Vindhya region, this tunnel is a literal lifeline. Once fully operational, the Bargi Diversion Project will radically transform the agricultural landscape: Agricultural Revitalization: Assured gravity-flow irrigation for approximately 2.45 lakh hectares of farmland. Consistent water security brought to 1,450 villages across Katni, Satna, Maihar, Rewa, and Panna districts. Clean drinking and industrial water supply to Jabalpur and Katni. For generations, unpredictable monsoons forced massive seasonal migration. This tunnel changes the equation, turning arid farmlands into fertile, multi-crop hubs. The project's cost virtually doubled. Extreme geological challenges explain some of this, but it highlights the critical need for advanced subterranean surveying before mega-projects begin. Furthermore, we must honor the silent heroes—the laborers and engineers who worked in high-risk, suffocating environments, including those who tragically lost their lives to cave-ins.

The Sleemanabad Tunnel is a masterclass in perseverance, proving India can execute incredibly complex, sub-surface gravity systems. Ultimately, it does something beautiful: it bridges the gap between folklore and reality, uniting two legendary river systems and proving that even the stubbornest mountains must yield to progress.



A MUSE OF BOUNDLESS, A MUSIC OF ENDLESS:  
SATCHIDANANDAN'S CRAFT

"I mark my journey  
Through words of smell of life"  
That all...  
— K. Satchidanandan

K. Satchidanandan can undoubtedly be described as a preeminent poet writing in Malayalam. The countless awards and honors he has received clearly demonstrate that his poetry has garnered acclaim across linguistic and cultural boundaries. A free spirit soaring through the boundless literary firmament, K. Satchidanandan stands as a magnificent mirror and a silent, poetic force one who has dedicated himself to internalizing and radiating the song of lived experience and the music of world poetry.

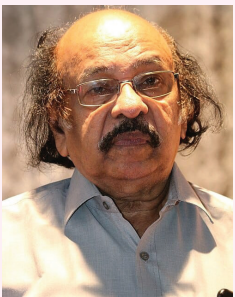
Pure, evocative poetry revolves around humanity and nature while asserting its own distinct identity; it is free from specific ideologies or mere subjectivity. Poets across the globe—such as Wordsworth, Robert Frost, Gulzar, Rayaprolu, Gurram Jashuva, Cinare, and K. Satchidanandan had magnificently described and revered nature, breathing life into the beauty of birds, trees, rivers, mountains, and seasons within their verses. However, Malayalam poet K. Satchidanandan describes poetry as 'a cry raised against all kinds of barriers.' It is his universal perspective that establishes him as a figure of interest beyond the borders of India. He is certainly not a poet who remains isolated from the world; rather, he is a poet constantly on the move being a traveler and a lover of nature. Sachidanandan's innovative creativity has distinguished him not only as a poet of unique style but also as a multifaceted writer. Born on May 28, 1946, in Pullut village, Thrissur district, Kerala, K. Sachidanandan is a poet, literary critic, playwright, and translator in both Malayalam and English.

He is a prolific author recognized as a pioneer of modern poetry in Malayalam literature. He emerged as a powerful social voice in contemporary Indian literature, championing the importance of human rights, the environment, and secularism. He obtained an M.A. degree (in English) in Kerala and a Ph.D. in 'Post-structuralist Literary Theory' from the University of Calicut. With nearly 25 years of experience as an English professor, he retired after serving as the Director of the School of Translation Studies and Training at IGNOU, Delhi.

He began his literary journey by writing poetry at the age of eleven and made his formal debut in the literary world in 1971 with the collection Anchu Suryan (Five Suns). He is one of the contemporary Indian poets whose works have been translated into the highest number of languages; a poet of global reach, his verses have been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, English, Irish, French, German, and Italian, as well as nearly all major Indian languages.

He is a prominent Indian poet. Furthermore, the versatile poet K. Satchidanandan holds the record of being perhaps the most translated among contemporary Indian poets.

Environmental consciousness, social justice, and humanism are prominent features of Sachidanandan's distinctive poetic style. His poems, which view the destruction of nature as a threat to human survival, have garnered international acclaim.



layalam poet, critic, and playwright Dr. K. Ayyappa Paniker mentor guided as a great beacon for K. Satchidanandan, one who served as the Chief Executive of the Sahitya Akademi. His recent poetry collections in English include While I Write, Misplaced Objects and Other Poems, The Missing Rib: Collected Poems, Not Only the Oceans, Questions from the Dead, and The Whispering Tree: Poems of Love and Longing and his books as an author also include Singing in the Dark and Words Matter (co-authored with K. Satchidanandan and Nishi Chawla).

He began his literary journey at the age of eleven by writing poetry and made his formal debut in the literary world in 1971 with the collection Anchu Suryan (Five Suns). Over time, he emerged as one of the most translated contemporary Indian poets, with his works rendered into Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, English, Irish, French, German, and Italian, as well as nearly all major Indian languages, establishing him as a poet of global reach.

Environmental consciousness, social justice, and humanism are the central themes of Sachidanandan's poetry, which is distinguished by a unique style. His poems, which view the destruction of nature as a threat to human survival, have garnered international acclaim. His writing style is simple, expansive, and profoundly resembling as a song of humanity and acts like a silent melody that awakens the inner self. It is a matter of joy that poet Sachidanandan has recently received the 'Cinare Viswambhara International Literary Award'. K. Sachidanandan has garnered numerous awards from both within the country and abroad for his contributions to the field of literature. In addition to the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, he has received the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, the Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, the Vayalar Award, a Knighthood from the Italian government, and the 'World Prize for Poetry Peace' from the United Arab Emirates.

Sachidanandan's essays on literary and cultural criticism, written in both Malayalam and English, have been compiled into over twenty volumes. When one also considers his plays, travelogues, newspaper articles, editorials, and numerous other works he has compiled, it is no exaggeration to proudly describe Sachidanandan himself as a walking library and indeed, a valuable mobile encyclopedia. Sachidanandan, a poet deeply rooted in nature and a traveler across the landscape of world literature is a creative spirit in toto deserves the Jnanpith Award. Let us hope for the best.

...: Dr. T. Radhakrishnamacharyulu ...  
9849305871

Some personalities transcend the limits of their lifetime and become the cultural conscience of an era. Even after their physical departure, their life's work continues to live on through the collective memory, traditions, and values of society. Kesari Chand (K.C.) Malu was one such towering figure in the fields of Rajasthani folk music, language, literature, and culture. His passing is not merely the loss of an individual; it marks the conclusion of a glorious chapter in Rajasthan's cultural history. The unwavering dedication, commitment, and spiritual devotion with which he devoted his life to preserving the identity of Rajasthan place him far above the ordinary. At a time when globalization and commercialization are threatening the survival of indigenous cultures, the significance of visionaries like K.C. Malu has become even greater. He proved that a single determined individual can safeguard an entire cultural heritage from fading into oblivion.

K.C. Malu did not merely collect Rajasthani folk melodies and songs; he ensured that they resonated with the hearts of future generations. He refused to let culture become a museum artifact, instead keeping it alive in the everyday lives of people. He was a vigilant guardian of folk traditions, a passionate cultural ambassador, and a lifelong devotee of the arts. For him, music was never merely entertainment—it was the very soul of civilization. He commissioned the documentation of thousands of folk songs, prepared manuscripts, created musical notations, supervised recordings, and preserved them with remarkable dedication. Without any governmental support, he safeguarded more than 5,000 folk songs, an extraordinary achievement of global cultural significance. Such an undertaking would challenge even large institutions, yet he made it his life's mission. As a result, countless traditional Rajasthani genres—including Maand, Panihari, Ghoomar, Chirmi, wedding songs, and heroic ballads—have been preserved for posterity.

The establishment of Veena Music was not merely the creation of a commercial enterprise; it was a mission to give voice to the soul of Rajasthan. At a time when many folk artists were disappearing into obscurity, K.C. Malu offered them a platform, dignity, and recognition. Numerous artists whose talents had remained confined to remote villages were introduced to national and international audiences through his efforts. He demonstrated that folk art is not limited by geography but belongs to the shared cultural heritage of humanity. Every chapter of his life echoed with the rhythm of music, and wherever



Rajasthani culture, folk melodies, and traditional music are celebrated, the footprints of K.C. Malu will always be found. His mind and actions were deeply rooted in creativity and cultural service.

His vision extended far beyond music. K.C. Malu was also one of the most committed champions of the Rajasthani language. He firmly believed that language is not merely a means of communication but the soul of a civilization and the repository of its cultural memory. His relentless campaign to secure constitutional recognition for Rajasthani under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India reflected his profound cultural nationalism and unwavering devotion to his native land. Through numerous national and international forums, he eloquently highlighted the richness, dignity, and literary heritage of the Rajasthani language.

One of the defining qualities of K.C. Malu was his humility. Despite earning widespread recognition and acclaim, he remained remarkably grounded. Within him coexisted the sensitivity of an artist, the vision of a literary scholar, and the compassion of a social reformer. He understood that culture survives not merely in books or on stages, but in the lives of ordinary people. That conviction inspired him to take Rajasthani folk music from villages to cities and from India to Rajasthani communities across the world. His social commitment was equally inspiring. In 1987, he organized the historic Lata Mangeshkar Night to raise funds for drought victims, successfully mobilizing ₹1 crore for relief efforts. This remarkable initiative reflected his belief that music is not only an artistic expression but also a powerful instrument of social service. At a time when art is increasingly driven by com-

mercial interests, K.C. Malu's life reminds us that the highest purpose of creativity is to enrich society.

His monumental collection of 221 traditional Rajasthani wedding songs stands as one of the world's most remarkable cultural archives. It is far more than a collection of melodies—it is a living record of Rajasthan's social customs, family traditions, and cultural heritage. He understood that if folk songs survived, the soul of the community would survive as well. Through music, he ensured the preservation of an entire civilization's cultural identity. My relationship with K.C. Malu was not merely that of an admirer; it was one of genuine affection and respect. Whenever my revered late father, Shri Ramswaroop Garg, visited Jaipur, he invariably met K.C. Malu. Their discussions often revolved around literature, culture, Jain philosophy, and social issues. I grew up hearing about those enriching conversations, which reflected not only intellectual exchange but also a shared concern for preserving cultural values and strengthening society. Later, I had the privilege of meeting him personally and experiencing his warmth, humility, and intellectual depth. Whenever he spoke about Rajasthan, his words reflected not just knowledge but a profound love for his motherland. He firmly believed that only a society connected to its roots can build a meaningful future. Even while embracing modern technology, he never abandoned tradition. Through digital platforms, he made Rajasthani music accessible across the globe, enabling every Rajasthani, wherever they lived, to reconnect with the fragrance of their homeland.

K.C. Malu's life also reminds us that each one of us can become a bridge—connecting generations, preserving culture,

and enriching lives. Together, we can build a society rooted in heritage, overcome challenges with collective wisdom, and become a source of light amidst darkness. This was the philosophy that guided the founder of Veena Music. His life teaches us that true greatness is never measured by power, position, or wealth, but by the legacy one leaves behind for society. He has left behind not merely an invaluable treasure of thousands of folk songs, but also the smiles of countless artists, cherished memories for millions of listeners, and an inexhaustible source of inspiration for future generations. This, indeed, is the highest achievement any human life can attain. As we mourn his passing, one truth resonates deeply: some individuals may leave this world physically, but they never depart through their deeds. K.C. Malu belongs to that rare league of immortal personalities. Whenever the vibrant rhythms of Ghoomar fill the air, the soulful notes of Maand echo across the desert, or traditional wedding songs celebrate Rajasthan's living heritage, his lifelong devotion will be remembered. He will continue to live in every melody that carries the fragrance of Rajasthan's sacred soil.

K.C. Malu's life is a timeless reminder that preserving culture is not solely the responsibility of governments—it is the collective duty of every conscious citizen. A single determined individual can protect the cultural memory of generations, and K.C. Malu proved this through his life's extraordinary work. His passing has created not only a void but also a solemn responsibility that society must now shoulder together. I pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the noble soul of Shri K.C. Malu, to bless his bereaved family, countless admirers, and the entire artistic fraternity with the strength to bear this irreparable loss. May the lamp of culture, music, and language that he lit continue to illuminate generations to come. That alone will be our truest tribute to his extraordinary legacy.



LALIT GARGG  
Writer, Journalist,  
Columnist

INNOVATION SHOULD NOT BURDEN TEACHERS...  
IT MUST STRENGTHEN STUDENT LEARNING

One of the most frequently used words in education today is "innovation." New apps, digital portals, assessment systems, learning materials, teaching modules, and technology-driven initiatives are being introduced at an unprecedented pace. While it is essential for education to evolve with changing times and technological advancements, not every change deserves to be called innovation. If a reform does not improve student learning but instead distances teachers from their students, it should be viewed not as an educational innovation but as an administrative expansion.

Whenever a new educational initiative is announced, the first question in a teacher's mind is rarely, "How will this improve children's learning?" More often, it is, "How many new reports must I prepare? How many registers should I maintain? How many photographs, videos, and screenshots must I upload? How many meetings will I have to attend?" This is not a reflection of teachers' unwillingness to innovate; it is a reflection of the growing administrative burden placed upon them.

The true purpose of innovation is to simplify work, save time, and improve quality. Unfortunately, in many educational systems, the opposite is happening. Digital platforms that were introduced to support teaching often demand so much documentation that teachers spend more time entering data into portals than engaging with students. The precious hours that should be devoted to classroom interaction are increasingly consumed by compliance requirements.

No successful profession has ever advanced by distrusting its professionals. Doctors are not required to submit daily digital evidence proving they treated patients. Engineers are not expected to upload photographs of every hour of their work. Judges

are not asked to provide video recordings of every judgment they deliver. Yet teachers are increasingly expected to document every activity with digital proof, as though their professional integrity alone is insufficient. As a result, the focus of education gradually shifts from learning to reporting.

The most valuable element in education is the relationship between the teacher and the learner. An effective teacher understands students' interests, identifies their learning difficulties, adapts teaching methods, and inspires curiosity. Such meaningful teaching requires time, attention, and human interaction. When teachers are overwhelmed by administrative responsibilities, it is not only the teachers who lose—it is the students.

Another important concern is that many educational reforms are designed by individuals who may have limited experience of teaching continuously in a real classroom. Policymakers, administrators, and technology experts undoubtedly play an important role in improving education. However, the practical wisdom of classroom teachers is equally valuable. In many schools, especially in rural areas, a single teacher is expected to teach multiple classes, meet parents, supervise nutrition programmes, conduct surveys, implement government schemes, and complete extensive documentation. Policies that ignore these realities often create unnecessary difficulties during implementation.

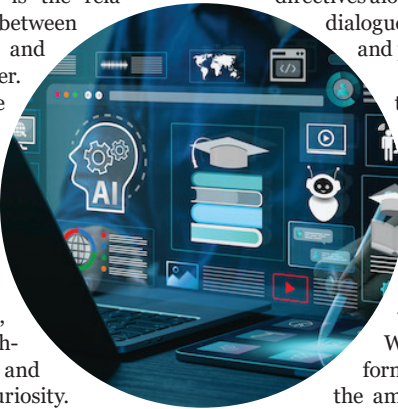
History clearly demonstrates that meaningful educational reform succeeds only when teach-

ers become active participants in the process. Changing textbooks alone does not transform education. Revising examinations alone does not improve learning. Introducing technology by itself cannot bring lasting change. Real transformation occurs only when teachers understand, trust, and embrace the change. Such ownership cannot be achieved through directives alone; it requires dialogue, respect, and partnership.

Before introducing any new educational initiative, policymakers should ask one fundamental question: Will this reform increase the amount of time teachers spend with students, or will it increase the time they spend on paperwork and screens? If the answer is the latter, then the reform deserves careful reconsideration.

The issue is not technology itself. Technology, when designed thoughtfully, can become a powerful ally of teachers. Systems that eliminate duplicate reporting, reduce repetitive paperwork, automate routine administrative tasks, and simplify classroom management represent genuine innovation. Technology should strengthen teachers' professional capacity—not replace it or burden it.

The time has come for policymakers to rethink their approach. Teachers must no longer be viewed merely as implementers of government directives. They should be recognised as co-creators of educational transformation. Their professional judgment deserves trust. Their classroom experience should influence policy decisions. Their voices should be heard before reforms are designed, not after problems arise.



Unnecessary administrative work, duplicate documentation, and excessive compliance requirements must be significantly reduced.

True innovation is not about launching another app or introducing another portal. It is about giving teachers more time to teach, mentor, and inspire. Genuine educational reform is not measured by the number of dashboards created but by the quality of learning that takes place inside classrooms. Real progress lies in nurturing curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities among students.

The greatest investment in education is neither buildings nor devices nor software. The greatest resource is the teacher. When teachers work in an environment of trust, professional autonomy, and respect, students flourish, classrooms become vibrant spaces of learning, and education fulfils its true purpose.

Trusting teachers, empowering them, and designing policies around the realities of classrooms are the foundations of meaningful educational innovation. Only then will innovation move beyond paperwork into practice, beyond compliance into commitment, and beyond administrative success into genuine student learning. On that day, innovation will no longer be visible only in reports and files—it will shine in the curiosity, confidence, and joy of children in every classroom. That is the direction in which our education system must move.



—DR. LION  
KOMATI REDDY  
GOPAL REDDY



## Civil Aviation Ministry Charts Next Phase of UDAN to Expand Regional Air Connectivity

NEW DELHI, JULY 17

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Thursday held a high-level workshop at Vigyan Bhawan to discuss the next phase of the Modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, aimed at further strengthening regional air connectivity and making air travel more accessible across the country.

The workshop was inaugurated by Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu in the presence of Minister of State Murlidhar Mohol, Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha, and Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Vipin Kumar. The event began with the inauguration of a digital exhibition showcasing UDAN's achievements, followed by the screening of a documentary highlighting the scheme's impact on regional aviation.

Addressing the gathering, Rammohan Naidu outlined the Centre's vision for the next phase of UDAN, which seeks to improve regional connectivity, promote balanced economic development and extend aviation services to remote and underserved areas.

Highlighting the rapid expansion of India's aviation infrastructure, the Minister said the country had only 65 airports in 2001, which increased to 74 by 2014. In the past 12 years, however, around 90 new airports have been added, including the revival of 55 previously unserved or underutilised airstrips. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016, for transforming India's aviation landscape and making the country the world's third-largest domestic aviation market.

The Minister said the UDAN scheme has changed public perception of air travel by making flying affordable for the middle class and people from smaller towns. He noted that the government's vision of "Hawai Chappal se Hawai Jahaz" has become a reality, enabling ordinary citizens to travel by air. He also highlighted the launch

of UDAN Yatri Cafes, offering tea for ₹10 and snacks for ₹20 at select airports.

Speaking on the sector's growth, Naidu said India is currently recording nearly five lakh domestic air passengers every day, while May 2026 witnessed the highest-ever monthly domestic traffic of over 1.5 crore passengers, despite global geopolitical uncertainties.

Sharing success stories under the UDAN initiative, the Minister said improved air connectivity has boosted local economies in several regions. He cited Darbhanga, where the airport has enabled exports of the famous Shahi Litchi to international markets such as Dubai, and Kishanganj, where better connectivity has strengthened the marble industry and facilitated easier access for nearly two crore pilgrims visiting Pushkar and Ajmer annually. He also highlighted the progress made in Keshod, Deogarh, Jharsuguda and Nanded through the scheme.

During the workshop, the Minister presented the features of the Modified UDAN Scheme and compared them with the earlier version, explaining the reforms aimed at enhancing regional aviation.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to making air travel affordable and accessible, particularly for people living in Tier-II, Tier-III and remote regions.

A major highlight of the event was the release of the UDAN Scheme Document, which outlines the vision, objectives and implementation framework for the scheme's next phase. The document serves as a roadmap for strengthening regional connectivity, expanding airport infrastructure and creating new opportunities for growth in the aviation sector.

The workshop brought together representatives from airlines, airport operators, state governments and industry stakeholders to deliberate on implementation strategies, infrastructure readiness and collaboration for further expanding regional air connectivity.

## NCP (SP) Seeks SIR Extension, Flags Voter List Issues

MUMBAI: (Jul 16) Senior NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil and party MLA Jitendra Ahwad on Thursday met Maharashtra Chief Electoral Officer S Chockalingam over difficulties faced by voters during Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and sought an extension of the exercise and greater transparency. Speaking to

reporters after the meeting, Patil said several discrepancies and technical issues had been noticed in the voter lists available on the SIR application. Booth Level Officers (BLOs) were facing confusion in implementing the exercise and, in many places, had not been able to reach voters, resulting in difficulties in the revision process, he claimed.

# HOMELAND

## Durand Cup Trophy Tour Reaches Guwahati, Boosting Assam Football

GUWAHATI, JULY 16, 2026

Assam reaffirmed its commitment to football on Thursday as the trophy tour of the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup arrived in Guwahati, marking the city's fifth consecutive year as a host venue for Asia's oldest football tournament. The two-day city tour was launched with a trophy unveiling and press conference at Hotel Vivanta. The event was led by Hon'ble Minister for Sports & Youth Welfare, Government of Assam, Shri Biswajit Daimary. Senior officials including Shri Kausar Jamil Hilaly, IAS (Retd.), Special Secretary, Sports & Youth Welfare; Major General Dinesh Kumar Singh, SM, VSM, Vice Chairman, Durand Cup Organising Committee; Major General Amit Dhir, VSM, Chief of Staff, Gajraj Corps; and Parthib Gogoi, forward of defending champions NorthEast United FC, were present. **"Football is integral to Assam's culture"** Addressing the gathering,



Minister Biswajit Daimary said football is not just a matter of pride but also a chance to inspire the next generation.

"Along with world-class stadiums, we must provide playgrounds and competitive opportunities where children can develop skills from an early age. If we continue investing in our youth and work with organisations like the Indian Army, I am confident India can emerge as a strong footballing nation," he said.

Major General Dinesh Kumar Singh added that the Durand Cup "is a platform that inspires young football-

ers across the Northeast and strengthens the growth of Indian football."

Parthib Gogoi, representing NorthEast United FC, said winning last year taught the team that "success comes through determination, hard work, and self-belief."

### Trophy Tour Across Guwahati

Following the ceremony, the Durand Cup, President's Cup, and Simla Trophy began a two-day tour of Guwahati. The trophies will visit the Assam Legislative Assembly, Veer Lachit Barphukan Statue, IIT Guwahati, and City Centre Mall, giving fans a

chance to witness the historic silverware.

**Tournament Details**

Since 2023, Assam has been a key host. This year, Guwahati will host all six Group F matches featuring NorthEast United FC, Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC, Bodoland FC, and FC 1. Three of the four clubs are from Assam. The 135th IndianOil Durand Cup will be held from July 25 to August 23, 2026 across five cities: Kolkata, Shillong, Imphal, Guwahati, and Ranchi, which joins as a host city for the first time. Organised by the Indian Army's Eastern Command, the Durand Cup is the world's third-oldest football tournament, started in 1888. The 2026 edition will feature 24 teams, including Sri Lanka Armed Forces, playing 43 matches. The tournament kicks off on July 25 at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan with the Kolkata Derby between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and East Bengal FC. The final will be played at the same venue on

## Scindia Seeks BJP Office Redesign

BHOPAL, JULY 16

Union Communications Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Jyotiraditya Scindia on Thursday asked party leaders to redesign the under-construction BJP district office in Ashoknagar to make it more modern and future-ready, with larger open spaces and infrastructure suited to the organisation's long-term needs. Reviewing the project's

progress on the second day of his Ashoknagar visit, Scindia said the office should be developed with future generations of party workers in mind. He said the district office should be built keeping the needs of future generations in mind, and that it should be modern, functional and capable of serving the organisation effectively for years to come. The Union Minister, who represents Guna in the Lok Sabha, inspected the construc-

tion site and reviewed the proposed layout and facilities with BJP district office-bearers. While appreciating the design, Scindia suggested creating more open spaces on campus to make it more convenient for party workers, elected representatives, and visitors. He said the office should have adequate open spaces so that workers, public representatives and members of the public can use the premises comfortably, and

that it should emerge as a vibrant organisational centre. District BJP leaders informed Scindia that the proposed office would include separate rooms for various party morchas, a lawn, a stage for organisational programmes and public meetings, a VIP entrance and other facilities.

Scindia directed those executing the project to complete the construction within the stipulated timeframe without compromising on quality.

## South Haryana Set for Modern Healthcare, Green Rail Boost

**PM Modi to Inaugurate Major Development Projects**  
**India's first hydrogen-powered train on the Jind-Sonapat route will mark a milestone in environmental sustainability and infrastructure development, says Health Minister Arti Singh Rao**

CHANDIGARH, JULY 16

Haryana Health Minister, Ms. Arti Singh Rao said that July 17 will be a landmark day for the state's development and the expansion of public services. During his upcoming visit, Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi will inaugurate several major development projects for the people of Haryana, aimed at strengthening healthcare services and modern infrastructure. The projects include the launch of India's

first hydrogen-powered train on the Jind-Sonapat railway section, as well as the inauguration of the long-awaited Bhiwani Medical College and Koriawas Medical College in Mahendragarh, which are expected to significantly enhance healthcare access in South Haryana. The Health Minister said that the Central and State Governments are jointly working to implement welfare-oriented initiatives and improve public infrastructure across the state. She said that the

opening of the new medical colleges in Bhiwani and Koriawas will enable residents to access quality healthcare closer to home, reducing the need to travel to larger cities for treatment and saving both time and money. The institutions will also create better opportunities for local students pursuing medical education. Describing the visit as historic from both environmental and technological perspectives, Ms. Arti Singh Rao said that the commencement of India's first hydrogen fu-

el-powered train service on the Jind-Sonapat route is a matter of pride for the entire nation. She said the initiative will not only help reduce pollution but also pave the way for a greener and more sustainable transportation system in the future.

She further added that the government's ongoing efforts to strengthen road infrastructure, modernise the railway network, and enhance the state's healthcare system will provide fresh momentum to Haryana's progress in the future.

## Gorakhpur-Unaula Doubling Work Deferred

Train Operations Restored on the Gorakhpur Cantt-Unaula Section

GORAKHPUR, JULY 16, 2026

The Railway Administration has postponed the commissioning work for the patch doubling project between Gorakhpur Cantt and Unaula stations on the Gorakhpur Cantt-Paniyaha rail section of the Varanasi Division. Earlier, in view of the commissioning work, pre-non-interlocking and non-interlocking operations were scheduled from July 16 to 21, 2026, and an inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety was planned for July 21,

2026. Consequently, several trains had been cancelled, diverted, short-terminated/short-originated, rescheduled, and regulated during this period. However, due to unavoidable reasons, the commissioning work has now been postponed. As a result, all trains that were scheduled to be cancelled, diverted, short-terminated/short-originated, rescheduled, or regulated between July 16 and 21, 2026, on the Gorakhpur Cantt-Unaula section will now operate as per their original routes, stoppages, and scheduled timings.



## CM Yadav Engages Social Media Influencers in Indore

DR. BHUPENDRA VIKAL

**Bhopal / Indore :** 16 July .Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been making sustained efforts to empower youth, women, farmers and the poor through a range of welfare initiatives, which have contributed significantly to strengthening society. He said the Madhya Pradesh Government is committed to promoting animal husbandry and the dairy industry, adding that increasing livestock and milk production is essential for the state's prosperity. The Chief Minister was addressing a conference of social media influencers organised during the Balam Krishi Mahotsav at the Laxmibai Nagar Agricultural Produce Market in Indore. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav held a warm and inspiring interaction with young social media influencers who create content related to agriculture and allied sectors. Responding to their questions, he advised farmers to adopt crop rotation to maintain soil fertility and minimise losses during periods of low rainfall by cultivating short-duration crops. He urged influencers from across the state to create reels highlighting the welfare schemes being implemented by the state government so that more farmers could benefit from them.

### Chief Minister Shares Plan for Care of Aged and Stray Cattle

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav outlined the state's strategy to promote animal husbandry while addressing the issue of aged and stray cattle. He said the government is working on a plan to develop high-quality breeds from stray and aged cattle, which would help address both challenges while also boosting milk production through the Hiranagarbha Yojana. He said there is no shortage of chemical fertilisers in the state and that farmers are being supplied adequate quantities based on their crop requirements. A new digital fertiliser distribution system has been introduced to curb black marketing and ensure that fertilisers are distributed according to farmers' landholdings and actual requirements. The Chief Minister reiterated the government's firm stand against substance abuse, saying that addiction is the root cause of social destruction and has devastated many families. He said illegal trade in nar-

cotic substances would not be tolerated anywhere in the state and that strict legal action would be taken against those involved. Referring to the state's liquor prohibition policy, he said the decision to ban liquor in religious towns has yielded positive results. Liquor prohibition has been implemented in 19 religious towns, including Ujjain, Omkareshwar and Orchha. **Influencers Share Success Stories**

Young farmer and social media influencer Shri Kapil said that, inspired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call for the 'Ek Bagiya Maa Ke Naam' initiative, he had developed a garden where he cultivates spinach, pumpkins and other vegetables, helping him become self-reliant. He also grows lemons, guavas and other fruits on his farm. Social media influencer Shri Praveen Dhakad from Shajapur said he cultivates vegetables on a large scale and expressed his desire to establish a food processing unit in the region, noting that it would enhance the income of vegetable growers. Farmer and influencer Shri Tikam Sankhla from Sehore said he owns 70 head of livestock and cultivates cereals, pulses and vegetables. Another farmer from Shajapur said he grows a wide variety of crops, enabling him to achieve self-reliance. A woman influencer from Sehore shared that she creates agriculture-focused videos that have received wide appreciation. A farmer from Rajgarh said he cultivates short-duration crops suited to low-rainfall conditions. The young influencers also interacted with Chief Minister Dr. Yadav in the Malvi and Nimadi dialects and posed for a group photograph with him. Urban Development and Housing Minister Shri Kailash Vijayvargiya, Water Resources Minister Shri Tulsiram Silawat, Member of Parliament Shri Shankar Lalwani, Mayor Shri Pushyamitra Bhargav, Chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Housing and Infrastructure Development Board Shri Om Jain, District Panchayat Chairperson Smt. Reena Satish Malviya, MLAs Shri Madhu Verma, Smt. Malini Gaur and Shri Golu Shukla, Divisional Commissioner Dr. Sudam Khade, Police Commissioner Shri Santosh Kumar Singh, Shri Shrawan Chawda, Shri Kapil Yarde, along with other public representatives and senior officials, were present on the occasion.

# Silkyara Tunnel Worker Killed; Safety Norms Under Scrutiny

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Barkot, Uttarakashi (Uttarakhand): A tragic accident occurred late Friday night at the Silkyara-Polgaon Tunnel Project, one of Uttarakhand's major infrastructure works, after a shotcrete lining block collapsed inside the tunnel, killing a 22-year-old worker, identified as Naresh Gunj of Jharkhand. The incident has sparked protests among workers, who alleged negligence in workplace safety by the executing agency. According to eyewitnesses, the accident took place nearly 900 metres inside the tunnel from the Barkot side while Naresh was on duty. A large section of the tunnel's concrete (shotcrete) lining suddenly detached and fell on him. Fellow workers imme-



diately rushed to rescue him and transported him to the Community Health Centre, Naugaon, where doctors declared him dead. Police later took custody of the body and sent it for post-mortem examination. Following the incident, workers gathered at the project site and expressed strong resentment, claiming that adequate safety measures were not being followed inside the tunnel. They alleged that concerns



regarding workplace safety had been raised repeatedly but were not addressed by the project management. Ravikant Singh, Project Manager of Navayuga Company, said the accident was not caused by any loose rock formation, but occurred when a block of the tunnel's shotcrete lining unexpectedly collapsed. He maintained that all prescribed safety protocols were in place and assured that the

deceased worker's family would receive compensation, including insurance benefits, as per company policy and statutory provisions. The district administration responded immediately after receiving information about the accident. District Magistrate Prashant Arya directed the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Barkot, to visit the site, assess the situation and conduct a detailed inquiry into the cause

of the accident. The District Magistrate also ordered a thorough review of the safety measures being followed by the executing agency and sought an early investigation report. The administration further instructed officials to ensure all legal formalities were completed promptly, extend every possible assistance to the bereaved family and take immediate steps to strengthen the safety of workers engaged inside the tunnel. Meanwhile, workers including Vikas, Deep Ranjan and Vivek demanded adequate compensation for the deceased worker's family, implementation of Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and other statutory labour benefits for all workers, and significant improvements in workplace safety. They warned that they would not

resume work until their demands were satisfactorily addressed. Sunil Thapliyal, a Para Legal Volunteer (PLV) associated with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Uttarakashi, visited the project site, informed workers about their legal rights and welfare provisions, and urged the company to provide fair compensation to the deceased worker's family in accordance with the law. Police have launched an investigation into the incident, while the district administration has also ordered a detailed inquiry. The accident has once again raised serious concerns over occupational safety and the enforcement of safety standards at large infrastructure and tunnel construction projects in the Himalayan region





'Violence against women, attacks on minorities and mob violence surge'

DHAKA

Bangladesh has witnessed a surge in human rights violations, including abuses against women and children, mob violence, attacks on minorities, political clashes, assaults on journalists, and deaths in jail custody during the first half of 2026, local media reported citing a human rights organisation.

In its latest report, the Dhaka-based Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) documented 1,621 cases of violence against women and girls between January and June 2026, marking a 56 per cent rise from the 1,042 cases recorded during the same period last year.

As per the findings, 404 were rape victims, including 238 children and adolescent girls. It added that among them, 88 women and girls were

gang-raped and 17 were killed after being raped, while one died by suicide, Bangladesh's leading newspaper, The Daily Star, reported. Additionally, 473 women and girls, including 173 children, were subjected to sexual harassment.

According to the report, domestic violence against women resulted in 320 deaths, 211 injuries and 147 suicides, compared with 166 deaths, 27 injuries, and 72 deaths by suicide reported during the same period last year.

The report further recorded a sharp rise in child abuse, with 1,077 children falling victims during the first half of this year. Among the victims, 305 were killed and 772 suffered physical or mental torture, while the corresponding period last year recorded 673 cases of child abuse, including 132 deaths and 541 instances of physical or mental torture.



HRSS also reported increasing violence against minority communities in Bangladesh, documenting 50 incidents that left 56 people injured, compared with 10 attacks and four injuries during the same period last year. The incidents included attacks on 19 temples; vandalism of 15 idols

and 43 houses, along with four land-grabbing cases; and the gang rape of an indigenous woman.

Highlighting an escalating surge in mob violence incidents, HRSS recorded 261 incidents, resulting in 133 deaths and 256 injuries. This marked a significant rise from 141 inci-

dents reported during the first six months of 2025, which left 67 dead and 119 injured.

The report recorded a rise in political violence, with 830 incidents leaving 56 people dead and 5,246 injured. It further documented 396 incidents of electoral violence, leaving 13 people dead and 2,578 injured,

ahead of and following the 13th national election in February this year. It added that over 600 businesses, houses, and election offices were attacked, vandalised, looted, or set ablaze during the same period.

The organisation also recorded 200 incidents of attacks and harassment targeting journalists, affecting 383 media workers. Compared with the same period last year, the figures represented a 32 per cent increase in incidents and a 49 per cent rise in the number of journalists affected, when 152 cases involving 257 journalists were reported.

As custodial deaths across Bangladesh increased, the report noted that 58 prisoners died in jails nationwide, which included 26 convicted prisoners and 32 detainees. This marked a 45 per cent increase from 40 fatalities during the same period last year.



India and Central African Republic discuss enhancing bilateral relations

BANGUI

India's Ambassador to the Central African Republic (CAR), Vajapayajula Venkataraman, on Thursday paid a courtesy call on Felix Moloua, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the CAR in Bangui.

The Ambassador and the Prime Minister held discussions on enhancing bilateral relations between India and CAR.

"Ambassador V. Venkataraman pays a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Felix Moloua, Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Central African Republic, in his office in Bangui today. Fruitful discussions on enhancing bilateral relations between India and CAR were held," the Embassy of India in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) wrote on X.

Earlier in the day, the Ambassador presented his Credentials to Faustin-Archange Touadera, President of CAR.

"Ambassador Vajapayajula Venkataraman presented his Credentials Letters to H.E. Prof. Faustin-Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic (CAR), accrediting him as Ambassador of India to CAR with residence in Kinshasa (DRC) today," the Indian Embassy in DRC wrote on X.

The Ambassador also pre-

sented copies of his credentials to Marc Mandaba, Minister of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation, on Tuesday.

"Mr. Vajapayajula Venkataraman, Ambassador of India designate to the Central African Republic, presented copies of his Credentials to H.E. Mr. Marc Mandaba, Minister of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation, Central African Republic today," the Embassy stated on X.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India and the Central African Republic (CAR) enjoy friendly relations. The Central African Republic generally supports India's candidature at various international forums. Both countries are keen to strengthen the existing relations.

India has contributed troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) since 2014, specifically through the deployment of Formed Police Units (FPUs) and military observers.

The CAR is a landlocked nation located in the heart of Central Africa, bordered by Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo.

Foreign student, journalist and research scholars visa rules tightened

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration on Thursday announced a final rule ending a decades-old policy that allowed many foreign students and exchange visitors to remain in the United States without a fixed end date, replacing it with time-limited admissions and mandatory federal reviews for visa extensions. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said the final regulation eliminates the "duration of status" framework for non-immigrant visa holders in the F, J and I categories. Under the new rule, foreign students, media representatives and exchange visitors will be admitted for the length of their approved programme, subject to a maximum stay of four years.

US restores tougher public charge rule

WASHINGTON

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has finalised a rule rescinding the Biden administration's 2022 public charge regulation, restoring broader discretion to immigration officers when deciding whether applicants for visas or permanent residency are likely to become dependent on government assistance.

The department said the move aligns immigration policy with what it described as Congressional intent that immigrants should be self-reliant and not depend on taxpayer-funded public benefits.

"The Trump administration is upholding the rule of law and protecting American taxpayers from subsidising aliens who may become dependent on public benefits. US Citizenship and Immigration Services



(USCIS) is committed to safeguarding the safety, security, and financial well-being of Americans," USCIS spokesperson Zach Kahler said.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, an individual applying for a visa, admission

to the United States or adjustment of status can be found inadmissible if officials determine that the person is likely at any time to become a public charge.

The Biden-era regulation limited the range of public

benefits immigration officers could consider when making those determinations, restricting their ability to evaluate all relevant facts surrounding an applicant's circumstances, the DHS said.

The new rule removes those limitations and allows USCIS officers to examine all pertinent information on a case-by-case basis when assessing whether an applicant is likely to become dependent on public support.

DHS said rescinding the 2022 regulation restores broader discretion to officers and reinforces what it called the long-standing principle that immigrants should be self-sufficient.

The department also said the final rule revises provisions governing public charge bonds, which may be required in certain cases involving applicants

found likely to become public charges. The rule will take effect on September 18, 2026.

USCIS said it will issue a revised Form I-485, the application used to register permanent residence or adjust immigration status. Applications submitted using older editions of the form on or after the effective date will not be accepted.

The department said immigration officers will begin applying the revised framework once the rule takes effect and will issue updated guidance for adjudicating applications.

The final rule marks another shift in the Trump administration's broader immigration agenda, which has emphasised stricter enforcement, reduced reliance on public assistance and increased scrutiny of applicants seeking permanent immigration benefits.

Nepal, India discuss strengthening ties as senior MEA official visits Kathmandu

KATHMANDU

Additional Secretary (North) at India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Munu Mahawar, on Thursday paid courtesy calls on Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shisir Khanal, and Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai.

During the meetings, both sides held productive discussions on India-Nepal cooperation across various sectors and explored ways to further strengthen the unique partnership, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu said in a social media post.

Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the discussions focused on further strengthening the close and enduring ties between Nepal and India in areas of mutual interest. Mahawar is part of the Indian delegation that participated in the 13th meeting of the Ne-



pal-India Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Power Sector Cooperation, co-chaired by Nepal's Energy Secretary Sarita Dawadi and India's Power Secretary Pankaj Agarwal in Nepal's western city - Pokhara on Wednesday.

During the JSC meeting, the

two sides conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral cooperation in the power sector, covering hydropower development, cross-border electricity trade and transmission infrastructure, according to a press statement issued by the Indian Embassy. The meeting

also discussed the coordinated operation of the Indian and Nepali power grids, the development of solar energy projects, cooperation in green hydrogen, and capacity building for Nepali energy professionals. The two sides also agreed to expedite work on several new

high-capacity cross-border transmission line projects.

Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation said the two countries had agreed to increase the volume of electricity traded through two cross-border transmission line projects.

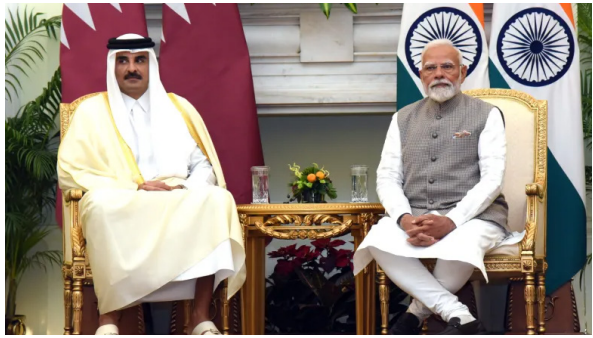
The two sides agreed that Nepal could export up to 1,650 MW of electricity to India and import up to 1,400 MW through the two 400 kV cross-border transmission lines connecting the two countries. The transmission lines are the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur and Dhalkebar-Sitamarhi 400 kV cross-border links. Of the two, the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line has been operational since 2016, while the Dhalkebar-Sitamarhi transmission line is nearing completion, according to Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.

PM Modi dials Qatar Emir, offers condolences on passing of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday spoke with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar and conveyed condolences on the demise of the Father Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. During the conversation, PM Modi recalled Sheikh Hamad's affection for India and his warmth towards the Indian community.

"Spoke with H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar and conveyed heartfelt condolences on the passing of H.H. the Father Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Recalled his deep affection for India, his warmth towards the Indian community in Qatar and his steadfast commitment to India-Qatar relations. His enduring legacy will continue to



guide our two countries as we further strengthen our Strategic Partnership," PM Modi wrote on X.

Earlier this week, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju travelled to Qatar to convey India's condolences on the death of Qatar's former Amir, who passed away on July 12 at age 74.

"On behalf of the Government of India, Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi ji and

the people of India, I conveyed deepest condolences to HH the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the sad demise of Father Amir of Qatar HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. I thank HH Qatar Amir as well as HE Qatar PM/FM and other dignitaries for graciously receiving me and for their warmth towards India and the Indian community in Qatar," Rijiju wrote on X.

One killed, several injured in Pak gunfire and shelling in Balochistan

QUETTA

At least one civilian was killed and several others injured after Pakistani military forces allegedly carried out indiscriminate gunfire and heavy mortar shelling in the Jhao region of Balochistan's Awaran district, a leading human rights organisation said on Thursday.

Condemning the brutal actions of the Pakistani military, Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, said that the incident had created a climate of terror and put countless civilian lives at risk. Citing reports, the rights body said that this "unjustified and reckless" use of force in Jhao has resulted in numerous civilian injuries and the tragic death of a resident, identified as Zahid.

It further alleged that military personnel confiscated and took away Zahid's body, denying his family their fundamental right to mourn and perform his last rites.



"Targeting civilian areas with heavy weaponry is a blatant violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. Furthermore, the arbitrary confiscation of a victim's body is an abhorrent practice that echoes a deeply troubling, systematic pattern of extrajudicial abuses and enforced disappearances in Balochistan," Paank stated.

Highlighting the atrocities against civilians in Balochistan, the rights body further revealed that another civilian, Asif, was forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces from Eman city in the provincial capital Quetta, on

July 13, with his whereabouts remaining unknown.

"According to his family, no official information has been provided regarding his fate or location, leaving them in severe distress and uncertainty. If the reported detention has occurred, the authorities must immediately disclose Asif's whereabouts, ensure he has access to his family and legal counsel, and either promptly charge him with a recognisable criminal offence and bring him before an independent court, or release him without delay," Paank noted.

White House says inflation falls to six-year low

WASHINGTON

The White House has hailed the latest inflation figures as evidence that President Donald Trump's economic policies are delivering results, pointing to falling consumer prices, rising real wages and lower prices at major retailers as signs that the administration's agenda is benefiting American families.

Opening the daily White House briefing on Thursday, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) report had exceeded expectations. "Tuesday's CPI report confirmed what President Trump predicted -- prices are falling, and this administration's economic policies are working," she added.

"Inflation dropped 0.4 per cent last month, beating expectations and marking the largest monthly decline in more than six years."

Leavitt said price declines were recorded across several sectors.

"Prices fell, including for gas-



oline, electricity, non-prescription drugs, car insurance, medical care services and hotels, delivering relief for American working families."

She also highlighted gains in workers' earnings.

"We also saw real weekly earnings rise in the month of June. For private sector workers, real wages have increased by roughly \$1,000 since President Trump took office, after falling nearly \$3,000 during

the previous administration."

Calling the figures "real progress", Leavitt said the administration remained focused on reducing household costs.

"There is still more work to do, no doubt, which is why President Trump remains laser focused on lowering costs and raising wages for working families across the country."

The White House also welcomed recent announcements by major retailers to cut prices.

"Just last week, Walmart and Sam's Club announced they will be lowering prices on thousands of items in their stores across the country," Leavitt said.

"Shoppers can expect meaningful savings on groceries, household essentials, outdoor living products, toys, apparel and other everyday staples." She added: "President Trump said, Walmart answered his call and stepped up in a big way,

and we commend them for that. We hope other major retailers will follow the lead of this patriotic American company."

Responding to questions later in the briefing about Trump's planned national address on election integrity, Leavitt rejected suggestions that the administration was shifting attention away from the economy.

"The administration and especially this President, are able to walk and chew gum at the same time and tackle a number of issues on a number of different subjects every single day," she said.

She added that Trump would continue travelling across the country to promote his economic programme, saying he had recently visited a Mack truck facility in Pennsylvania that had benefited from the administration's policies. Inflation has remained one of the most closely watched economic indicators in the United States, influencing interest-rate decisions, consumer spending and political debate.





SwitchOn raises  
USD 8 mn in  
funding round  
led by IvyCap  
Ventures

NEW DELHI:

Physical AI startup SwitchOn, which focuses on quality inspection in manufacturing, has raised USD 8 million (Rs 78 crore) in a funding round led by IvyCap Ventures. The Pre-Series B funding round also saw participation from SIG Tattva and Trifecta Capital, the company said in a statement. SwitchOn (Abee Research Labs Pvt Ltd) plans to deploy the capital to accelerate the company's international expansion, deepen R&D in next-generation Physical AI, and scale its go-to-market capabilities across key manufacturing verticals globally.

RBI Bars  
Buyback of  
Recovered  
Properties

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank on Thursday said a bank which has acquired an immovable asset in an exceptional case as part of a recovery process cannot sell it back to the borrower or related parties. Regulated entities (banks), in normal course, are not expected to come into possession of non-financial assets in lieu of their regular lending operations. owever, in exceptional cases, where the exposures become non-performing and legal or contractual remedies have been invoked, regulated entities may, as part of a recovery strategy, acquire ownership of an immovable asset furnished as collateral security.

Wipro Q1 Profit  
Flat, Warns  
of Uncertain  
Outlook

NEW DELHI: IT major Wipro on Thursday reported almost flat consolidated net profit of Rs 3,352 crore in the April-June quarter of FY27, in a macro environment described by the management as "resilient" but marked by uncertainties influencing client decisions. Its revenue from operations grew 10.6 per cent to Rs 24,478.6 crore in Q1 FY27 from Rs 22,134.6 crore in Q1 FY26.

MONEY MATTERS  
Markets ends flat as banking drag  
offsets IT gains amid US-Iran tensions

The S&P BSE Sensex ended almost unchanged, rising just 1.44 points to close at 77,186.87. The NSE Nifty50 slipped 5.75 points, or 0.02%, to settle at 24,072.75.

Benchmark stock market indices ended on a subdued note on Thursday as gains in information technology stocks were offset by weakness in financial and banking shares following quarterly earnings, while escalating tensions in the Middle East kept investor sentiment cautious.

The S&P BSE Sensex ended almost unchanged, rising just 1.44 points to close at 77,186.87. The NSE Nifty50 slipped 5.75 points, or 0.02%, to settle at 24,072.75.

Markets traded in positive territory for most of the session, supported by a rebound in IT stocks. However, selling in financials and banks erased most of the gains in the latter half of the day, limiting the upside. The ongoing US-Iran conflict also remained an overhang on investor senti-



ment despite a slight decline in crude oil prices. As of 3:30 pm IST, Brent crude was down 0.47% at \$84.55 per barrel, while WTI crude slipped 0.24% to \$79.41 per barrel.

IT SHINES, FINANCIALS  
WEIGH

The Nifty IT index emerged as one of the top-performing sectoral indices, rising 0.67%, supported by gains in HCLTech, Tech Mahindra, TCS and Infosys. Nifty Media advanced 1.18%, Consumer Durables gained 1.48% and Chemicals rose 1.41%.

However, financial stocks remained under pressure. Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank declined 1.17%, MidS-

mall Financial Services fell 1.53%, Financial Services slipped 0.71%, while Realty lost 0.98%. Private Bank and PSU Bank indices also ended lower. The broader market ended mixed. The Nifty 100 slipped 0.08%, Nifty 200 declined 0.15%, Nifty 500 fell 0.13%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 lost 0.41%. The Nifty Smallcap 100 was down 0.10%. India VIX eased 2.92% to 12.88.

INDIGO, HCLTECH  
LEAD GAINERS

Among Sensex constituents, InterGlobe Aviation topped the gainers with a rise of 1.81%, followed by HCLTech (1.73%), Bajaj Finance (1.57%),

Maruti Suzuki (1.42%), Mahindra & Mahindra (1.30%), Tech Mahindra (1.15%), ITC (1.05%) and Titan (1.04%). On the losing side, Eternal was the biggest laggard, declining 2.82%. BEL fell 1.00%, Bajaj Finserv lost 0.96%, HDFC Bank slipped 0.86%, NTPC declined 0.54%, Trent fell 0.41% and Axis Bank dropped 0.34%. The rupee weakened 0.1% against the US dollar to close at 96.345. Despite softer crude prices and strength in regional currencies, the domestic unit remained under pressure due to dollar demand linked to maturing non-deliverable forward contracts.

MARKETS IN CONSOLI-  
DATION PHASE

Riyank Arora, Associate Vice President – HNI & Derivatives, Hedged.in, said the market is currently consolidating after recent volatility.

"Indian equity markets ended on a largely flat note in today's session as benchmark indices traded within a narrow range. The market witnessed stock-specific action, while the broader trend remained stable with indi-

ces holding above key support levels. "Nifty 50 closed at 24,081.50, up 3.00 points (+0.01%). The index continues to trade above the 24,000 mark, with immediate support placed around 24,000–23,950, followed by 23,850. On the upside, resistance is seen near 24,200–24,300. A sustained move above this zone could attract fresh buying momentum.

"BSE Sensex settled at 77,251.08, up 65.65 points (+0.09%). Immediate support is placed around 77,000–76,800, while resistance is seen near 77,500–77,700. A breakout above this range could strengthen the ongoing bullish trend.

"Overall, the market is witnessing a phase of consolidation after recent volatility, with benchmark indices continuing to hold above their crucial support levels. As long as these levels remain intact, the broader outlook stays constructive. Traders may continue to adopt a buy-on-dips strategy while maintaining disciplined risk management."

REC's ISO 31000 Risk  
Recognition Renewed

Last year, REC Limited became the first Indian Public Sector NBFC to become ISO 31000:2018 (Enterprise Risk management Guidelines) Compliant

NEW DELHI:

REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading Infrastructure Financing NBFC, has successfully renewed its ISO 31000:2018 Letter of Recognition for Risk Management Guidelines following a comprehensive reassessment conducted by the British Standards Institution (BSI). The renewed recognition reaffirms REC's commitment to maintaining globally benchmarked risk management practices and strengthening organizational resilience in an evolving business environment.

The reassessment exercise was undertaken by REC's Risk Management Division to evaluate and enhance the organization's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework in line with evolving regulatory requirements, emerging business risks, industry best practices, and changing market dynamics. Following an extensive audit and evaluation process, BSI renewed REC's Letter of Recognition for compliance with



the principles and guidelines prescribed under ISO 31000:2018.

ISO 31000:2018 is an internationally recognized standard that provides principles, framework, and guidelines for effective risk management. It enables organizations to systematically identify, assess, monitor, and mitigate risks, thereby enhancing decision-making, improving governance, strengthening resilience, and supporting long-term sustainable growth.

REC had earlier achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Indian Public Sector NBFC to receive recognition from BSI for compliance with ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines in July 2025, demonstrating its pioneering approach towards institutionalizing a robust and enterprise-wide risk management culture.

Foreign assets, income details  
for 2022-24 now available  
under AIS on income tax portal

NEW DELHI: (JUL 16)

The annual information statement (AIS) of the income tax department will now show information about foreign assets and income of an assessee as per details received under the Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI), government sources said on Thursday. As of now, information, as received, pertaining to calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024 has been displayed in the AIS, according to sources. Information for 2025 will be displayed in the AIS once it is received in the month of

September or October 2026, they said. India receives financial information relating to its tax residents from over 100 partner jurisdictions under the various international agreements and mechanisms for the exchange of financial account information. Such information may include details relating to foreign bank accounts, custodial accounts, certain financial investments, interest, dividends and other specified financial income, as reported by the partner jurisdictions under internationally accepted standards of information exchange.

Chhattisgarh Passes Ease  
of Doing Business Bill

RAIPUR: The Chhattisgarh legislative assembly on Thursday passed a bill aimed at reducing bureaucratic hurdles, lowering compliance costs and creating a more business-friendly environment for investors, particularly micro, small

and medium enterprises. Commerce and Industry Minister Lakhan Lal Dewangan introduced the Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business Bill, 2026, in the House, where it was passed with a partial amendment after a discussion.

No Micromanagement,  
More Freedom..

What makes a job worth staying in? Is it a bigger pay cheque, or the freedom to switch off once the workday ends? An Indian software engineer working remotely for a UK-based company has sparked a lively discussion online after saying that while being paid in pounds is a nice perk, it isn't the biggest reason he has stayed with the company for more than five years.

Instead, he says, it's the trust, flexibility and respect for employees' personal time that make all the difference. His comments have resonated with thousands of social media users, many of whom said they could relate to his experience with Indian workplaces. "THE BIGGEST BENEFIT ISN'T THE SALARY"

Diwakar Singh, an Indian software engineer who has been working remotely for a



UK-based company for over five years, shared his experience in a video posted on Instagram. The video began on a personal note, with Singh revealing that it was his birthday and that his company had given him the day off. He then went on to explain what he values most about his workplace. While he acknowledged that earning in pounds is financially rewarding, he said that the real advantage lies elsewhere. "The biggest benefit isn't getting paid in pounds. It's the trust," he wrote alongside the video.

'NO ONE CALLS AFTER  
WORK'

According to Singh, his company offers flexible working hours, allowing employees to complete their work at a time that suits them, as long as the

that this amount is larger than the annual infrastructure budgets of several Indian states.

A HIDDEN FINANCIAL  
BURDEN

Unlike rent, which is a monthly expense, security deposits remain locked for the entire duration of the tenancy.

The report describes this as idle household capital that could otherwise earn returns through investments, fund education, support a home purchase or simply provide families with greater financial flexibility. Instead, it remains tied up with landlords, often for years. "This isn't just idle

money—it's capital that could have been earning returns in the stock market, funding education, or simply providing financial security," the report noted.

MUMBAI HAS THE MOST  
MONEY LOCKED UP

Among the six metros covered in the study, Mumbai accounts for the highest amount of tenant money tied up in security deposits.

According to the report:

- Mumbai: Rs 41,156 crore
- Bengaluru: Rs 31,628 crore
- Delhi-NCR: Rs 24,054 crore
- Chennai: Rs 17,346 crore
- Hyderabad: Rs 6,843 crore

something I really miss in the Indian work culture. That's one of the biggest reasons I have no desire to move back to an Indian workplace," he said in the end.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS  
RELATE TO THE EXPERIENCE

The video struck a chord with many viewers. One Instagram user asked, "Can you tell me how did get into this company." Another user pointed to a wider issue, writing that many skilled Indians choose to work for foreign companies because of a better work-life balance and healthier workplace cultures.

A DEBATE THAT GOES  
BEYOND SALARY

Singh's video has once again brought the conversation around workplace culture into the spotlight. While salary continues to be an important factor in choosing a job, many professionals today are also placing equal importance on flexibility, mental well-being and the ability to disconnect after work.

Four-Year Diagnostic Mystery  
Solved at Medicovert Hospitals

HYDERABAD, 16 JULY, 2026

Doctors at Medicovert Hospitals successfully solved a rare four-year medical mystery by removing an aspirated tooth along with its dental fixture from a patient's lung through a minimally invasive bronchoscopy procedure, bringing relief to a 60-year-old man who had suffered from recurrent pneumonia for years. The patient, Mr. Satyam, a resident of Mandalpadu village, Penuballi Mandal, Khammam district, had been experiencing repeated episodes of pneumonia and respiratory distress for nearly four years. During this period, he visited several hospitals in Khammam and Vijayawada, where he was treated for pneumonia, while some doctors suspected tuberculosis and even initiated anti-tubercular therapy. However, despite prolonged treatment, his condition failed to improve as the ac-



tual cause remained undetected.

When the patient approached Medicovert Hospitals, Dr. Yasaswini Ganjam, Consultant Pulmonologist, conducted a detailed clinical evaluation and carefully reviewed the patient's medical history. During the consultation, the patient recalled that he had accidentally aspirated a tooth along with the dental fixture used to secure it several years earlier, allowing it to enter his airway and lodge in the right main bronchus.

A CT scan of the chest revealed the foreign body lodged in the right main

bronchus. The pulmonology team successfully removed the aspirated tooth along with the dental fixture using flexible bronchoscopy with the help of a Dormia basket. Following the retrieval, copious thick infected secretions from the right lower lobe were completely cleared, restoring the airway and significantly improving the patient's breathing. Speaking about the case, Dr. Yasaswini Ganjam said, "This was a rare and challenging case. The patient's symptoms closely resembled recurrent pneumonia and tuberculosis, making diagnosis diffi-

cult. A detailed history and careful evaluation helped us identify the actual cause. Early recognition of foreign body aspiration is crucial, even in adults, especially when recurrent lung infections do not respond to treatment." The doctors said retained foreign bodies in the airway can remain undiagnosed for years and may lead to repeated infections, chronic cough, bronchiectasis, and permanent lung damage if not identified in time. The successful procedure was made possible through the coordinated efforts of the Pulmonology, Radiology, Anaesthesia, and Bronchoscopy teams, whose teamwork ensured the safe removal of the aspirated tooth along with the dental fixture and complete airway clearance. Following the procedure, Mr. Satyam recovered well and expressed gratitude to the doctors at Medicovert Hospitals for identifying the root cause of his illness after four years of suffering.



# Traditional Odia Food, Global Flavours

## A New Chapter in Odisha's Culinary Journey



### Mangsa Muri: Comfort Food with Heritage

Among Odisha's most comforting dishes is Mangsa Muri, a specialty from Mayurbhanj. This humble yet deeply satisfying dish begins with tender mutton marinated in ginger-garlic paste, turmeric and mustard oil. The meat is slow-cooked with onions until it becomes exceptionally soft and absorbs every layer of seasoning. A gentle finishing touch of saunf powder adds subtle sweetness and aromatic warmth. The cooked mutton is traditionally paired with crisp puffed rice, creating an unusual yet delightful contrast between juicy meat and airy crunch. For many Odias, Mangsa Muri evokes childhood memories, village gatherings and festive celebrations. Chef Nag preserves its traditional preparation while presenting it with refined elegance, proving that heritage dishes require no dramatic reinvention to impress modern diners.

### Macho Besaro: The Royal Flavours of Mayurbhanj

Fish has always occupied a central place in Odisha's culinary landscape, and Macho Besaro remains one of its finest expressions. Associated with the royal kitchens of Mayurbhanj, the dish reflects the state's enduring love for mustard. Fresh fish is marinated in a fragrant paste of yellow mustard, cumin and coriander before being gently cooked in mustard oil. Rather than overwhelming the fish, the spices complement its delicate texture, allowing the mustard's sharpness and the oil's distinctive aroma to create a beautifully balanced flavour. Chef Nag retains the traditional cooking method while presenting the dish in a refined style suitable for fine dining, demonstrating that simplicity often defines culinary excellence.

### Daab Chingudi: Coastal Luxury in a Coconut Shell

Perhaps the most visually striking dish in Chef Nag's repertoire is Daab Chingudi. Inspired by Odisha's long coastline and abundance of coconuts, the dish combines seafood with the natural sweetness of tender coconut. The coconut water and soft

cream are carefully removed and reserved. Fresh prawns are lightly sautéed with a rich paste made from mustard, poppy seeds, onions and green chillies. The prawns are then returned to the coconut shell along with the reserved water and cream before the entire coconut is steamed for around fifteen minutes. This slow steaming allows every flavour to meld together naturally. The final result is delicately smoky, subtly sweet and intensely aromatic, with the coconut enhancing rather than overpowering the prawns. Served alongside plain steamed rice, Daab Chingudi celebrates Odisha's coastal identity while presenting it in a format that immediately captures diners' attention.

### The New Generation Takes the Lead

While Chef Nag represents experience and classical refinement, Chef Omar Sawant embodies the confidence of a younger generation eager to explore global culinary influences. His cooking reflects contemporary restaurant trends while remaining firmly connected to local ingredients. Chef Sawant believes that traditional recipes should continue evolving to remain relevant for younger audiences. His dishes combine French, Italian and Japanese inspirations with unmistakably Odia flavours.

### Dalma Velouté: A French Interpretation of Odisha's Favourite Stew

Dalma is one of Odisha's most iconic comfort foods. Prepared using arhar dal and seasonal vegetables, it is traditionally flavoured with roasted spices and grated coconut. Chef Sawant transforms this humble staple into Dalma Velouté, borrowing inspiration from classical French cuisine. The vegetables are boiled until tender before being blended into a smooth puree along with mashed lentils. Butter and cream provide richness without masking the original flavours. Freshly ground dalma masala—a fragrant blend of coriander, cumin, dried red chillies and cardamom—is added to preserve the unmistakable Odia identity of



### A Bright Future for Odia Cuisine

Across India and abroad, regional cuisines are increasingly capturing global attention. Diners are looking beyond generic Indian food to discover authentic local traditions. Odisha is well positioned to benefit from this growing curiosity. Its distinctive use of mustard, fresh seafood, seasonal vegetables, lentils, coconut, chhena and aromatic spices provides chefs with an extraordinary foundation for innovation. As more restaurants embrace creative reinterpretations, Odia cuisine is finding its place on contemporary menus while preserving the values that have defined it for

generations. Fusion cuisine is not replacing grandmother's recipes. Those cherished dishes continue to anchor family meals, festivals and celebrations. What fusion offers is another way of telling the same story—through modern techniques, elegant presentation and global influences.

Whether it is Chattu Besera Croquettes, Daab Chingudi served inside a tender coconut, Dalma Velouté, Baingan Chhena Lasagna or Koraput Tiramisu, every dish carries the unmistakable flavours of Odisha while confidently speaking an international culinary language.

authentic flavours.

This emerging movement is not merely about making traditional food look modern. It reflects changing lifestyles, increased global exposure and a growing confidence among young Odias in celebrating their own culinary identity. While pasta, sushi and burgers have become common in urban India, there is also a renewed appreciation for regional food. Rather than choosing one over the other, chefs are finding creative ways to bring them together.

### Tradition Meets Innovation

At the forefront of this culinary transformation is Senior Chef Abhijit Nag, whose extensive experience in leading Indian and international hotels has given him a unique perspective on food. Having mastered continental cooking techniques over decades, Chef Nag believes experimentation is essential for keeping regional cuisines relevant. "We are making Indian food with a continental touch," he says. "Experimentation is necessary. Today, masala pizzas are popular across the country. If Italian food can successfully absorb Indian flavours, why shouldn't Odia cuisine travel the same path?" For Chef Nag, innovation does not mean altering the soul of a dish. Instead, it involves reinterpreting traditional recipes while preserving their authentic flavours, ingredients and cultural significance. His philosophy demonstrates that innovation and authenticity can coexist harmoniously.

A burrito wrapped around fermented pakhalha rice, a French-style velouté inspired by dalma, a lasagna layered with baingan and chhena, or a tiramisu featuring Koraput coffee—these dishes demonstrate how Odisha's culinary traditions are embracing the future while staying rooted in the past.

Today, fusion cuisine in Odisha is not about replacing tradition. It is about giving traditional recipes a fresh vocabulary that appeals to younger diners and international audiences alike.

### Chattu Besera Croquettes: A Rustic Classic Reimagined

One of Chef Nag's signature creations is Chattu Besera Croquettes, a contemporary interpretation of a traditional mushroom and mustard preparation. recipe begins with fresh mushrooms marinated in a vibrant yellow mustard paste. They are then sautéed with onions, garlic, kasuri methi and carefully balanced spices until the flavours develop depth. Instead of serving the mixture in its conventional form, Chef Nag shapes it into elegant croquettes that are shallow-fried until golden brown. The crisp outer layer gives way to a soft interior bursting with earthy mushroom flavours and the unmistakable pungency of mustard—a flavour profile deeply associated with Odia cuisine. By transforming a rustic village recipe into an elegant appetiser, Chef Nag demonstrates how traditional ingredients can effortlessly adapt to contemporary dining.

the dish. A garnish of freshly grated coconut completes the presentation. The result is silky, elegant and comforting, retaining the familiar flavours of dalma while offering an entirely new dining experience.

### Baingan Chhena Lasagna: Odisha Meets Italy

Perhaps no dish better illustrates culinary fusion than Chef Sawant's Baingan Chhena Lasagna. Instead of conventional pasta sheets, roasted slices of brinjal form the layers. The filling features freshly shredded chhena, Odisha's beloved cottage cheese, combined with spicy arrabbiata sauce. As the lasagna bakes beneath a generous layer of mozzarella cheese, the chhena softens while the roasted brinjal absorbs the rich tomato flavours. The final dish offers familiar Italian comfort with unmistakably Odia ingredients. Rather than competing against one another, the flavours complement each other beautifully, creating a dish that feels both innovative and comforting.

### Basil Paneer Tikka: Reinventing a Popular Favourite

Paneer tikka is already one of India's most recognisable dishes. Chef Sawant gives it a fresh twist by replacing the conventional yogurt marinade with a vibrant basil-based mixture. Fresh basil leaves combine with Indian spices to create a bright green marinade that infuses the paneer with herbaceous freshness. Cooked in the tandoor until lightly charred, the cubes develop smoky notes while retaining their soft texture.

The dish successfully combines Mediterranean aromas with Indian grilling techniques, making it familiar yet refreshingly different.

### Koraput Tiramisu: Celebrating Local Coffee

Desserts have become an exciting canvas for culinary innovation, and Chef Sawant's Koraput Tiramisu perfectly demonstrates this trend. Koraput has emerged as one of India's promising coffee-growing regions, producing high-quality Arabica beans.

Instead of relying entirely on imported ingredients, Chef Sawant showcases this local coffee in a globally recognised dessert. Traditional ladyfinger biscuits are replaced with Biscoff biscuits, while creamy mascarpone provides the familiar richness associated with tiramisu.

Freshly brewed Koraput coffee delivers bold aroma and earthy complexity.

The dessert balances international technique with regional ingredients, celebrating Odisha's agricultural diversity while appealing to modern dessert lovers.

### Prawn Tempura with Ghee Podi Dust

Chef Sawant also draws inspiration from Japanese cuisine through his Prawn Tempura with Ghee Podi Dust.

Fresh prawns are carefully straightened before being coated in a chilled batter prepared from refined flour, corn flour, rice flour and soda water. The chilled batter ensures a light, crisp texture after frying. Instead of serving the tempura traditionally, Chef Sawant finishes it with aromatic ghee podi—a spicy seasoning familiar to South Indian cuisine—and crispy fried curry leaves. The combination creates multiple layers of flavour: delicate seafood, airy crunch, fragrant spices and rich buttery notes. It is an example of how Asian culinary influences can merge seamlessly with Indian seasoning traditions.

### Preserving Identity While Embracing Change

Despite their different culinary styles, both chefs share a common belief: Odia cuisine deserves far greater recognition nationally and internationally. Chef Nag focuses on protecting authenticity while introducing refined techniques. Chef Sawant pushes boundaries, encouraging diners to experience familiar flavours in unexpected ways. Neither approach diminishes Odisha's culinary heritage. Instead, both strengthen it by making traditional recipes more accessible to new audiences. Their work demonstrates that regional cuisine need not remain confined to nostalgia.





FOOTBALL

FIFA WC Final: 'Spain must deny Messi space to stop Argentina



**NEW DELHI:** Former England striker Robbie Fowler believes Spain's hopes of lifting the FIFA World Cup 2026 trophy will hinge on how effectively they restrict Lionel Messi's influence, saying La Roja must deny the Argentine captain time and space rather than focus solely on man-marking him. Fowler said England's semifinal performance offered valuable lessons on how to limit the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, particularly during the opening stages of the match. "England, for a large portion, were in control. They stopped all the offensive Argentinian players from creating dangers.

IGPL Tour 2026

Getafe strengthens squad with full-back Andres Garcia



**MADRID:** Getafe have strengthened their squad a month before the start of the new 2026/27 La Liga season by signing right-back Andrés García from Aston Villa. The 23-year-old Spaniard joins on loan after making just 18 first-team appearances for the Premier League club, which he joined from Levante in January 2025. He will help cover the loss of Juan Iglesias, who left on a free transfer at the end of June to join Sevilla. Announcing the signing, Getafe's official website described Garcia as a "full back who covers a lot of ground and has his main strengths, his ability to push into attack, his defensive security, and his strength in the air." Getafe narrowly missed out on European qualification last season after a strong performance in the second half of the campaign.

England Root to victory: Joe smashes 99 as hosts level ODI series vs India

CARDIFF

Veteran Joe Root produced another masterclass in ODI batting, finishing agonisingly unbeaten on 99, as England defeated India by four wickets in the second ODI at Sophia Gardens to level the three-match series 1-1.

Chasing a modest target of 234, England rode on Root's composed 99 not out off 133 balls, laced with nine fours, as the former captain anchored the innings despite wickets falling around him. Gus Atkinson played a crucial supporting hand with an unbeaten 23, sealing the chase with 35 balls to spare.

They were struggling at 8/2 in the fourth over after losing Ben Duckett (0) and Jacob Bethell (4), and had slumped to 125/5 at the halfway stage before Root and Will Jacks (30, 44 balls, 2x4) raised 72 runs for the crucial sixth-wicket partnership to take them to 197. Root and Atkinson raised 38 runs for the unfinished seventh-wicket partnership to guide England to 235/6 and victory.

Earlier, India, after being asked to bat first, looked well placed at 178/3 before suffering a dramatic collapse, losing their last seven wickets for just 55 runs to be bowled out for 233 in 44 overs. Virat Kohli (65, 66 b, 8x4) and Shreyas Iyer (66, 71 b, 5x4, 2x6) struck fighting half-centuries, but none of the lower-order batters could capitalise as England's pace attack tightened the screws.

Jofra Archer (3-47), Gus Atkinson (3-50), and Saqib Mahmood (2-52) shared eight wickets between them, repeatedly striking at key moments to



derail India's innings after the visitors had appeared set for a total in excess of 280. England's chase wasn't entirely straightforward. Jasprit Bum-

rah and Axar Patel kept India in the contest with timely breakthroughs, reducing the hosts to a vulnerable position. But Root's trademark patience,

immaculate shot selection, and calm temperament ensured England never lost control of the pursuit.

The 35-year-old manipulated the field brilliantly, rotating strike while punishing loose deliveries, before being left stranded one run short of a deserved century when Atkinson struck the winning boundary.

The victory snapped India's chance of wrapping up the series in Cardiff and set up a winner-takes-all decider at Lord's on Sunday (July 19).

Brief scores:

India 233 all out in 44 overs (Shreyas Iyer 66, Virat Kohli 65; Jofra Archer 3-47, Gus Atkinson 3-50) lost to England 235/6 in 44.1 overs (Joe Root 99\*; Gus Atkinson 23\*; Gurnoor Brar 2-67, Jasprit Bumrah 1-45, Axar Patel 1-35) by four wickets.



Tuchel's conservative tactics questioned after England's defeat

NEW YORK

England supporters and pundits have been almost unanimous in pointing the finger of blame for Wednesday's 2-1 FIFA World Cup semifinal defeat to Argentina at coach Thomas Tuchel and the decisions he made after Anthony Gordon had given his side the lead early in the second half.

Until Gordon's goal, it had been a tight and cagey contest. Argentina sought to congest central areas and deny England space around its penalty area, while England looked to use the flanks and exploit the width of the pitch. Both sides were careful in possession and reluctant to take unnecessary risks.

The breakthrough came when England stretched Argentina down the right, allowing Morgan Rogers to deliver a cross that Gordon converted. England had managed possession effectively, and although the match was hardly a spectacle for neutral viewers, its game plan was working, reports Xinhua.

With Argentina now forced

to chase the match, logic suggested more space would open up for England's wide players to exploit on the counterattack and create opportunities to put the game beyond reach.

It did not work out that way. Tuchel's substitutions completely altered the dynamic of the contest. Argentina would almost certainly have pushed forward regardless, but replacing Gordon with Ezri Konsa effectively removed England's most obvious counter-attacking outlet. The change left Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham increasingly isolated, deprived England of an outlet to retain possession, and allowed Argentina to establish sustained pressure in the England half.

Almost immediately after the substitution, Argentina created three clear chances, twice denied by reflex saves from Jordan Pickford and once by the woodwork. The question then became whether Tuchel would respond by introducing players capable of helping England regain possession or adding pace on the break.

Swiss Open: Ruud survives a scare, comes back to beat Faria, reaches quarters

GSTAAD (SWITZERLAND)

Casper Ruud survived a major scare in his opening match at the Swiss Open Gstaad on Thursday, as he rallied past Portugal's Jaime Faria 6-7(1), 6-4, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinals of the clay court event. Faria, who overcame Stan Wawrinka in the first round, was at his free-flowing best for large parts of his clash against Ruud to move close to his first win against a Top-20 player.

However, from a set down, the Norwegian crucially increased his weight and depth of shot. The second seed broke Faria's serve on his sixth break point of an intriguing ninth game of the second set before he put his foot down to race clear in the third and record his first win since Roland Garros.

"Sometimes it is hard to say



when you get a good feeling, and you start to win some games in a row," said Ruud, who is chasing his first title of the season. "You try from the first game to the last, but suddenly something clicked in the middle of the second for me, luckily. Ruud is aiming to join Sergi Bruguera and Alex Corretja as just the third player to lift the trophy in Gstaad on three occasions.

The 2021 and 2022 champion, who owns a 10-1 tournament record, according to the Infosys ATP Win/Loss Index, will next meet Juan Manuel Cerundolo. Cerundolo, who upset the No. 1 player in the PIF ATP Rankings, Jannik Sinner, on clay at Roland Garros in May, overcame Miomir Kecmanovic 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 to advance to his third tour-level quarter-fi-

nal of the season. Stefanos Tsitsipas battled past Swiss wild card Jerome Kym 6-4, 6-7(2), 7-6(5) in a match that was suspended due to bad light at 5-5 in the third set on Wednesday night. Upon resumption, the Greek Tsitsipas quickly saved two break points and then prevailed in the tie-break, letting out a huge roar after reaching his second quarter-final of the season.

"Over two days sounds like a cricket match. I am happy to have it done. It was a long one. We played for a long time. He played an unbelievable match from his side and made my life pretty difficult out there," Tsitsipas said when reflecting on his two-hour and 29-minute win. "It is a bit strange going to bed without the match being completed. I was trying to visualise what I was going to do today, and it worked out pretty well."

UTT Season 7: Holders U Mumba pick up second win on the bounce, beat Maharashtra rivals Pune 9-6

PANAJI (GOA)

Reigning champions U Mumba TT continued their resurgence in Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7, defeating Maharashtra rivals PBG Pune Jaguars 9-6 at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Taleigao near Panaji on Thursday to register a second successive victory and climb to the top of the standings.

After a cagey opening, U Mumba seized control through a commanding Mixed Doubles display from captain Manush Shah and Anna Hursey, before France's Lilian Bardet held his nerve in a thrilling Golden Point finish against Omar Assar to put the tie beyond Pune's reach.

Living up to its billing, the Maharashtra Derby began with Pune drawing first blood as Snehit Suravajjula extended his unbeaten run this season, recovering from a game down to defeat Manush in the first Men's Singles. U Mumba responded immediately through Hursey, who produced another composed display to overcome Diya Chitale in three games and level the tie.

The momentum shifted decisively in the mixed doubles, where Manush and Hursey combined superbly to sweep Snehit and Prithika Pavade in straight games, handing the defending champions a



crucial cushion. Pune's hopes then rested on Omar Assar, who took the opening game against Lilian Bardet before the Frenchman fought back to level the contest.

The decider produced the tie's defining moments, as Assar stunned the crowd with a breathtaking around-the-net winner—later named the Shot of the Tie—before Bardet held his nerve on the Golden Point to complete the comeback and seal U Mumba's second successive victory.

With the tie already decided, Pavade ensured Pune finished on a positive note with a 2-1 victory over Anusha Kumbhale. The pair produced

the longest rally of the season in the second game, a 31-shot exchange that saw Pavade absorb wave after wave of attack from deep behind the table before Anusha eventually blinked. Anusha bounced back to take the third game on Golden Point with a scintillating backhand winner.

For their contributions, Manush picked up the Indian Player of the Tie award, while Hursey was named the Foreign Player and the Player of the Tie.

Earlier, in the UTT Juniors, UTT's grassroots competition running alongside Season 7, Dabang Delhi TTC edged UP Prometheans 5-4 to keep their

playoff hopes alive; UP remained firmly in the top-four race despite the narrow defeat. Ahmedabad APL Pipers also signed off with a 5-4 victory over PBG Pune Jaguars, though both sides were eliminated from semifinal contention.

Final scores:

U Mumba TT 9-6 PBG Pune Jaguars  
Manush Shah lost to Snehit Suravajjula 1-2 (11-6, 9-11, 6-11)  
Anna Hursey bt. Diya Chitale 2-1 (11-9, 9-11, 11-6)  
Manush Shah/Anna Hursey bt. Snehit Suravajjula/Prithika Pavade 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-7)

Heliovaara and Patten storm into maiden men's doubles final

PARIS

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

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

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

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



FIFA to probe Argentina players for 'insensitive' banner on Falkland after England semis

NEW YORK

FIFA, football's world governing body, has launched an investigation over a controversial banner displayed by Argentina's players after their FIFA World Cup 2026 semifinal win against England in Atlanta on the disputed Falkland Islands, which had caused a war between the two countries a few decades back.

FIFA launched the probe after the Falkland Islands Government described as 'insensitive' the banner members of the Argentina team took out following their win against England, according to reports in the English media.

During their wild celebrations after the full-time whistle at the end of the match in which Argentina made a fine comeback after a goal deficit to win 2-1, a group of Argentina players held up a banner which read: "Las Malvinas son Argentinas (The Falklands are Argentine)." This is the second time that Argentina's players have raised this controversial issue during the ongoing World Cup. A few days back, they had sung a chant referencing the Falklands in the wake of their 3-2 victory over Egypt in the round of 16.

"The banner has sparked backlash from the UK, with many believing that it was offensive to the 255 British soldiers who were killed during the Falklands War in 1982," the Mirror newspaper said in a report. A statement from the UK Government issued on Thursday morning reiterated: "The World Cup might not be ours, but the Falkland Islands definitely are."

Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, even called for any players who celebrated with the banner to be 'barred from' Sunday's final against Spain. The Falkland Islands Government has also written to football's global governing body, the report in the Mirror said.

FIFA WC: England and France target redemption in bronze medal match

MIAMI

Beaten semifinalists France and England face off in the third-place match in the 103rd match of the FIFA World Cup 2026 at the Miami Stadium in Miami, eyeing a consolation prize that will elevate some of the hurt caused by missing the top prize.

France succumbed to a superior Spain side in the first semifinal, while England failed to capitalise on their lead and went down to defending champions Argentina on Tuesday night. The bronze final will also be Kylian Mbappé's last chance to add to his eight goals and overhaul Lionel Messi to win the Golden Boot, while Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham — on six goals each — can also stake their claim for the award.

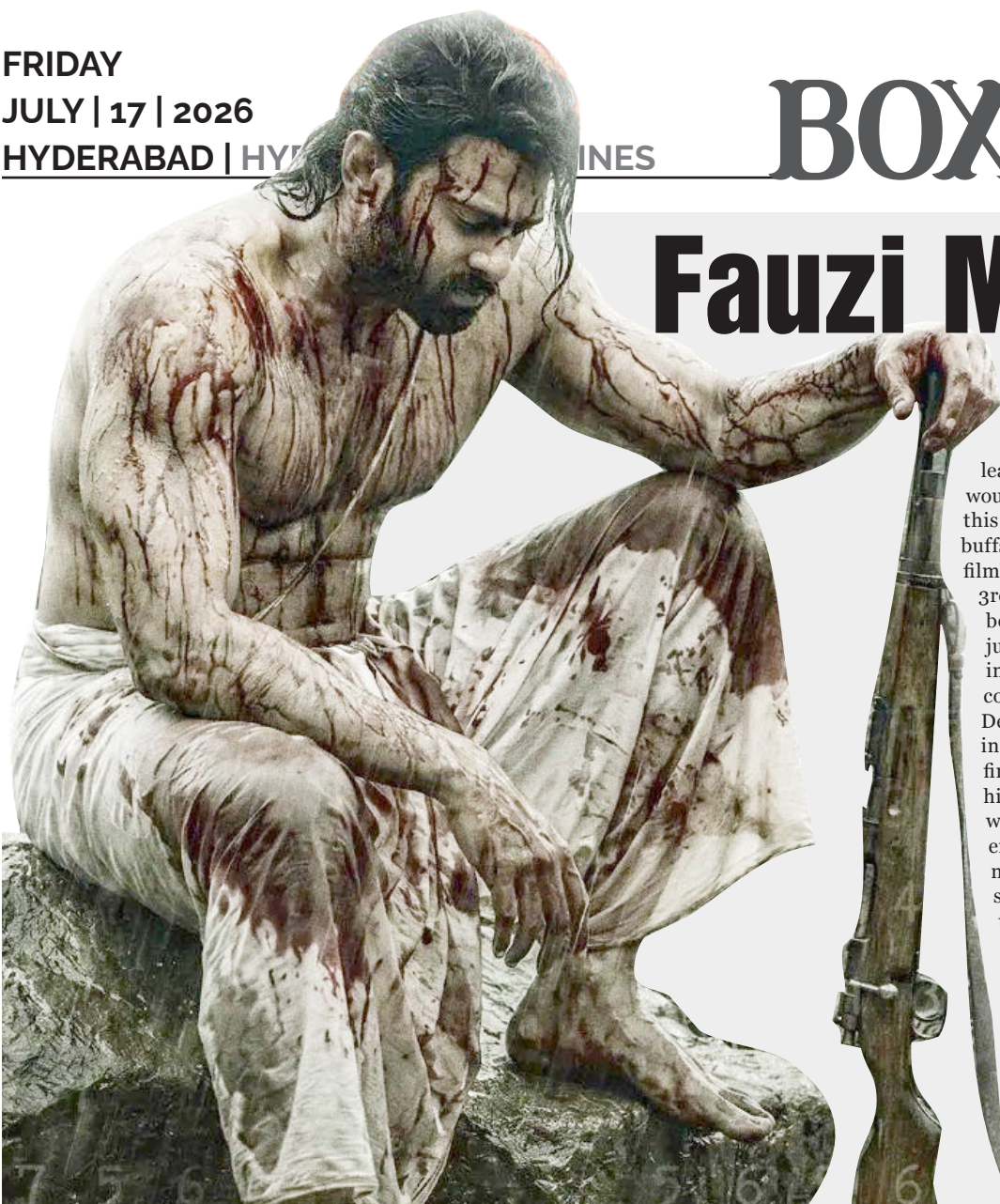
With Mbappé in his usual ferocious mood whenever a World Cup comes around, France made a blistering start to the tournament. They cruised to an impressive 3-1 victory over Senegal in their opening game, followed by a dominant 3-0 win over Iraq, before topping Group I by thrashing Norway 4-1.

France were similarly ruthless in the knockout stage, earning an imposing 3-0 win over Sweden before overcoming stiff challenges from Paraguay and then Morocco to make it to the last four. Didier Deschamps' side had high hopes of reaching a third successive final and repeating their triumph of 2018, but Spain had other ideas, winning the semi-final tie in Dallas 2-0.

England, meanwhile, had a more eventful journey through the tournament. The Three Lions powered to a 4-2 win over Croatia in their first game, then came back down to earth with a goalless draw against Ghana, but still topped Group L by beating Panama. They were given an almighty scare by Congo DR in the Round of 32 before Kane's inspirational second-half double saw them through.

Then came an enthralling and spirited 3-2 win over co-hosts Mexico in the last 16 and another comeback win over Norway after extra time in the quarter-finals. Old enemy Argentina awaited in the semis, and this time it was England who were on the wrong end of a dramatic turnaround.





# Fauzi Marches Into Theatres Dec 3

The makers of director Hanu Raghavapudi's eagerly awaited action entertainer 'Fauzi', featuring Pan Indian star Prabhas in the lead, on Thursday announced that the film would hit screens worldwide on December 3 this year, much to the delight of fans and film buffs. Taking to his social media timelines, the film's director Hanu Raghavapudi wrote, "On 3rd DECEMBER 2026, the #Fauzi march begins. Come witness a story that won't just unfold on the big screen, it will live on in the hearts of everyone who believes in courage, honor, and freedom. #FauziOn-Dec3." The film has triggered huge interest in fans and film buffs ever since the makers first announced the project last year. Fauzi hit the limelight earlier this year in April, when director Hanu Raghavapudi made an emotional appeal to people, asking them not to circulate leaked images of the film on social media. Taking to his social media timelines, he had then said, "We've poured our hearts into #Fauzi to give you something truly special. Humbly requesting everyone, please don't spoil the magic with leaks. Let's experience it the way it's meant to be... together in theatres." At that point, the makers of the film, using the official handle of the film on the social media platform X, issued a stern warning to those accounts that were circulating the leaked images of

the film. The makers had then said, "It has come to our attention that certain accounts are circulating leaked images from the sets of #Fauzi. Please treat this as a strict warning - any such content will be reported, and necessary action will be taken against those involved." The makers had further said, "These leaks compromise the experience we are carefully building. What's coming on the big screen will be far bigger and worth the wait. We urge everyone to refrain from sharing or engaging with leaked content." For the unaware, director Hanu Raghavapudi's upcoming historical action film, featuring actor Prabhas in the lead, was titled 'Fauzi'. While announcing the title of the film, the makers had used Sanskrit Shlokas. Opening up on why they had used the Shlokas, director Hanu Raghavapudi had said, "We intentionally used Sanskrit Shlokas because they add gravity and meaning to our warrior tale. However, this is not a mythological film. We've only drawn philosophical inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita. 'Fauzi' is a powerful patriotic drama that explores human emotions and socio-political tensions during the British era, many of which still resonate globally today." The director, known for his visually rich storytelling in films like 'Sita Ramam', is said to be crafting 'Fauzi' as a large-scale cinematic experience that highlights the courage and inner conflicts of its protagonist. Prabhas, who has been experimenting with diverse roles, reportedly plays a complex character torn between duty, emotion, and ideology. 'Fauzi' marks Prabhas's return to a grand period drama epic after 'Baahubali', prom-

ising an emotional and visually breathtaking cinematic experience. The film is expected to be released in theatres in multiple languages this year. The film, which is set in the 1940s and which was tentatively being referred to as #PrabhasHanu before being titled 'Fauzi', will be a fictional historical and will feature actress Imanvi as the female lead. Apart from Prabhas and Imanvi, the film also will feature veteran actors Anupam Kher, Mithun Chakraborty, Bhanu Chander and Jayapradha in pivotal roles. The film has music by Vishal Chandrasekhar, who is one of director Hanu Raghavapudi's favourite music directors. Interestingly, it was Vishal Chandrasekhar who had scored the music for the director's earlier blockbuster 'Sita Ramam', featuring Dulquer Salmaan and Mrunal Thakur in the lead. Cinematography for the film is by Sudeep Chatterjee and lyrics for the songs in the film are by Krishna Kanth. Sheetal Sharma is the costume designer for this historical film, which has triggered huge expectations among fans and film buffs.

## Can Varanasi Win the IMAX Battle Against Hollywood?

Varanasi is undoubtedly the most anticipated Indian film of 2027, and trade circles are already predicting a massive overseas run for the SS Rajamouli directorial after the success of RRR. However, a new challenge may emerge from Hollywood, especially in the IMAX format. Unlike many films that are simply converted to IMAX after filming, Varanasi is being designed and shot to take full advantage of the IMAX experience. On the other hand, the current Hollywood lineup between late March and mid-April 2027 looks packed with major IMAX releases. Godzilla x Kong: Supernova is scheduled for a March 26, 2027 release, while Panic Carefully is also confirmed for IMAX screens on April 9, 2027. Industry trackers expect more big-budget titles to join the race in the coming months, making the IMAX screen availability a bit tighter. As premium large-format screens contribute a sizable share of revenue for big films, sharing screens with Hollywood biggies could reduce Varanasi's access to limited locations and hence reduce the collections a bit. Even if regular screens remain unaffected, the battle for IMAX screens abroad could be something the makers of Varanasi will be closely monitoring ahead of the film's release on April 7, 2027. On the other hand, India's biggest problem is the limited number of true IMAX theatres. Although several multiplexes advertise IMAX screens, only a small number can deliver the full experience. So, will cities like Hyderabad have an IMAX screen built before the release, and how all this will pan out needs to be seen in the days to come.



## One Film, Every Language: Adah's Goal

Adah Sharma, who is all set to make her debut in Marathi cinema with Gajra, revealed that when she told her father she wanted to become an actor, he said that she should do "one film in every language in India". Talking about why she thought it was the right time to make a debut in Marathi cinema, Adah, who stepped into the glitzy world of acting in 2008 with the horror flick 1920, told IANS: "I've always wanted to work across languages. Good stories don't come with subtitles—they come with great characters." Recalling her father's advice, she said: "When I told my father that I wanted to become an actress, he said, 'You should do one film in every language in India'. Each state has its own culture, each language has its own intricacies." "So that will be a great challenge for you, to be a different person in each language and each film that you do," said the actress, who has also showcased her prowess in language films such as Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Adah is all set to step into the world of Marathi cinema with the upcoming film titled Gajra, which is based on true events. The upcoming film is directed by Shreyas Jadhav and will hit the screens next year in 2027. Asked if 'Gajra' succeeds, would she actively pursue more Marathi films, or would she still see Bollywood as her primary space? Adah said: "I've always seen myself as a pan Indian actress." "The Kerala Story" was a Bollywood Hindi film with 60 percent in Malayalam, 10 percent in English, and 30 percent in broken Hindi. In 'Commando', a Hindi film, I play a Telugu girl. In my debut I played an anglo-Indian Liza." Adah said that she is open to playing anything "human, non-human also, and the language doesn't matter." "I would ideally like to take up space in all languages," concluded the actress.



## Chennai Love Story Bets Big on Shock Value

After the success of Baby, Sai Rajesh and SKN are back with Chennai Love Story. The romantic drama is one of the most awaited films, and the buzz surrounding the film has gone up considerably ahead of its July 24 release. Directed by Ravi Namburi, the film stars Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya in the lead, and they have hyped the film a lot. What has caught everyone's attention is the way the lead pair is promoting the film's interval and second-half twists. During recent promotions, Kiran Abbavaram stated that the interval block will leave audiences shocked, while heroine Sri Gouri Priya went a step further, saying that no one would have imagined such an interval and that the second half would completely turn the story on its head. These are bold claims at a time when Telugu audiences have become accustomed to routine twists and shock-value moments. In recent times, films like Lenin featured decent twists that worked well for the narrative, but viewers are no longer impressed by surprises that exist only for the sake of it. This is where Chennai Love Story faces its biggest test. The makers have repeatedly promised a fresh love story and an emotional experience unlike anything seen before. The big question now is whether Chennai Love Story will deliver a genuinely fresh shock value or whether expectations have been raised a little too high. The answer will be known on July 24.



## VD12 Gets A Grand Launch

Tollywood young star Vijay Deverakonda has taken this next project onto the floors. The film is to be directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri. One of the most happening heroines in Telugu cinema, Sreeleela is the female lead. Music is composed by one of the top most Music Director's of India, Anirudh Ravichander. Naga Vamsi S and Sai Soujanya are bankrolling the prestigious project under Sithara Entertainments & Fortune Four Cinemas respectively. The first poster of the untitled film featuring Vijay as a cop created ripples recently. VD12 was formally launched at 11.16am with a pooja ceremony amidst the cast, crew and several film dignitaries today. While producer S Radha Krishna (Chinababu) of Haarika and Hassine Creations handed over the script to the team, Paruchuri Mahendra, MD of Pragati Printers switched on the camera. Chukkappalli Suresh, Honorary Counsel General of South Korea, sounded the claspboard at the event. The shoot of the cop drama will commence this June.



## Sonali Shares Her Wellness Mantra

Actress Sonali Bendre has revealed what helps her stay energized during her busy days. Talking to Instagram, the 'Sarfaroosh' actress shared insights into her daily routine and the source of motivation that keeps her moving forward. Sonali shared a glimpse of her busy day through a video on Instagram. In the clip, the actress was seen relying on coffee to stay energized while managing her packed schedule. She also gave a peek into her food breaks, enjoying meals and another cup of coffee after a few hours. For the caption, she simply wrote, "A busy busy day powered by coffee." In the video, Sonali said, "I need coffee, please." Meanwhile, on the work front, Bendre recently appeared in the web series 'Raakh'. In an interaction with IANS following the show's release, the actress shared that 50% of her work was already done before she arrived on set. "I had just superb material to work on. So, quite frankly, 50% of my work was already done. More than 50%, I would say, was already

done because they gave me such amazing material to work with. After that, all I had to do was just add a couple of things to it to make it my own. So, thanks to them, it was a great subject matter that was given to me. As of now, I would say that not having dialogues was the easier part for me because earlier in life, you could read the whole page and remember it. But my memory is not what it used to be. So, the fact that I don't have to remember dialogues was actually the fun part for me." Sonali further mentioned, "But jokes apart, when there are no dialogues, it is more internalized, and that also makes it more real. There is a different struggle with that. And the struggle was that when you internalize it so much, how do you leave it behind? So, this was one character that I did struggle to leave behind on the sets. I did carry it home sometimes, and that was scary for me." 'Raakh', the investigative thriller set in the late 1970s, was heavily inspired by the Ranga-Billa case of kidnapping and extortion of siblings.



Actress Tamannaah has commenced the shooting of her upcoming date night horror entertainer Ragini 3. The film, helmed by Balaji Motion Pictures, has gone on floors in London, and the film is scheduled for a theatrical release in 2027. Tamannaah Bhatia has begun filming the first schedule in London, and on Wednesday the actress had shared a picture from the sets, with a clapboard in her hand that had Ragini 3 written on it. Directed by Shashanka Ghosh, Ragini 3 takes the popular Indian horror franchise into a thrilling new chapter. Produced by Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures, a division of Balaji Telefilms Ltd., Ragini 3 is currently being filmed across London, with more details about the cast and story set to be unveiled in the coming months. For the uninitiated, The Ragini MMS franchise began with Ragini MMS in 2012. Inspired by alleged real-life events, the found-footage horror film starred Rajkumar Rao and Kainaz Motivala and became a surprise box-office success. It was followed by Ragini MMS 2 in 2014, starring Sunny Leone, which blended horror with glamour. Talking about Tamannaah Bhatia, the actress has established herself as one of the leading actresses across Hindi, Tamil and Telugu cinema. She made her acting debut with the Hindi film 'Chand Sa Roshan Chehra' in 2005 before rising to fame in the South with hits such as 'Happy Days', 'Kallloori', 'Ayan', 'Paigaa' and '100% Love'. She achieved nationwide recognition with S.S. Rajamouli's 'Baahubali' franchise, where she played Avantika. Tamannaah has also delivered many chartbuster songs, including 'Kaavaalaa' from 'Jailer', 'Aai Ki Raat' from 'Stree 2' and 'Nasha' from 'Raid 2', all of which became massive hits. On the dancing front, she was last seen in the song, Gafoor from the OTT series The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood.

## Ragini 3 Shoot Begins with Tamannaah

