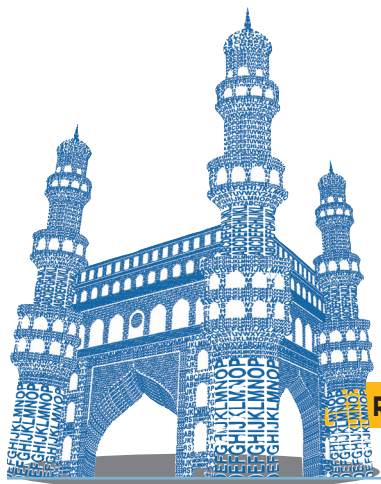




HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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NEET Row Stalls Parliament on Day One



New Delhi, July 20: Proceedings in both Houses of Parliament were repeatedly disrupted on the opening day of the Monsoon Session on Monday as Opposition parties demanded a discussion on the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and sought the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha witnessed multiple adjournments

amid sloganeering by Opposition MPs, who also raised the issue of police action against student protesters in Delhi. Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said the future of lakhs of students was at stake and condemned the lathi-charge on protesters.

Outside Parliament, thousands of protesters led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) attempted to march towards the complex but

were stopped by police using barricades, tear gas and baton charges. Security was tightened and some Parliament gates were briefly closed.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra criticised the Centre over the handling of the protests, demanding a detailed debate in Parliament and accountability over the alleged examination irregularities.

Medigadda Testing Nearly Complete

Now focus is on Rehabilitation Design; Uttam

Minister says revival plan will be implemented only after scientific validation and safety approvals



Hyderabad, July 20: Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday said the comprehensive scientific investigation of the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages was nearing completion and that rehabilitation designs were now being prepared to enable the safe restoration of the Kaleshwaram barrages.

Addressing a meeting of MLAs, MLCs and senior officials from Nalgonda, Suryapet and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri districts, the Minister said the Congress Government was fol-

lowing a scientific approach to revive the barrages and would not permit their operation until experts certified them as safe.

He said extensive investigations covering the soil, foundations, concrete and other structural components had been carried out through premier national institutions, including the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS) and the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI).

According to the Minister, the testing process is almost

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



DELHI GRIDLOCKED

Pitched Battles as CJP and Police Clash over Paper Leaks

Nadda Meets Protest Leaders as Government Opens Talks

New Delhi, July 20: Central Delhi witnessed unprecedented chaos on Monday as thousands of protesters marching under the banner of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) clashed with police during the "Sansad Chalo" march demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination irregularities and paper leaks.

The protests, held on the opening day of Parliament's Monsoon

Session, brought large parts of the national capital to a standstill. Police used lathi-charge and tear gas to disperse demonstrators attempting to move towards Parliament after they breached security barricades.

According to Delhi Police, 118 police personnel and about 60 protesters sustained injuries during the violence. The police alleged that protesters hurled stones, damaged public property and attempted to break through mul-

tiplle barricades. Protest leaders, however, accused the police of using excessive force, claiming several students were injured. They also alleged pellet guns were used, an accusation on which the police has not officially commented. The protest drew students, parents, senior citizens and civil society activists carrying the national flag and placards while raising slogans demanding accountability over examination-related issues.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM'S TWO-DAY KODANGAL TOUR TO FOCUS ON EDUCATION HUB, SIR

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will undertake a two-day tour of Kodangal Assembly constituency beginning Tuesday.

DAY 1 – TUESDAY

4:00 PM
Inspect Education Hub at Hakimpet village, Dudyal mandal

5:00 PM
Review meeting with officials on all development works in Kodangal constituency

Overnight stay in Kodangal

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY

10:00 AM
Review meeting on SIR exercise with local leaders and Booth Level Agents (BLAs)

After the meeting, return to Hyderabad

Embrace 'Nation First' spirit to build self-reliant India

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla



Hyderabad, July 20: Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Monday called upon students to embrace the spirit of "Nation First" and contribute towards building a developed and self-reliant India.

He said value-based education, discipline and a spirit of service were the cornerstones of nation-building and urged the youth to uphold these ideals.

The Governor was addressing the 86th Foundation Day celebrations of the Keshav Memorial Educational Society (KMES) at Narayanaguda, where he participated as the chief guest. Earlier, he paid floral tributes to the statue of the institution's founder, Pandit Vinayak Rao

Vidyalankar.

Speaking on the occasion, Shukla said that inspired by the ideals of Justice Keshav Rao Koratkar, KMES has consistently upheld the values of education, service, patriotism and social responsibility. He noted that what began as a modest educational institution has grown into a distinguished group of institutions offering school, technical, management, law and higher education. Describing KMES as a model institution, the Governor said it was imparting quality education to more than 16,000 students with the support of a committed faculty and staff.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Bonalu from New Indiramma Houses Next Year: Ponguleti

HYDERABAD, JULY 20

Telangana Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Monday announced the launch of the Indiramma Housing Scheme on a pilot basis in 16 Assembly constituencies under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), declaring that next year's Bonalu celebra-

tions would be held from the newly constructed Indiramma houses.

The first phase of the programme will provide 8,000 houses, with 500 houses in each of the 16 Assembly constituencies. The government also plans to extend the scheme to another eight constituencies in the next phase.

Launching the programme at the Secretariat along with Ministers

Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Ponnamp Prabhakar, and Mohammed Azharuddin, the Minister unveiled the Indiramma Housing brochure, MeeSeva application, and WhatsApp application facility. On the occasion, Konda Nagaraju of Nakirekal village in Nalgonda district was presented a ₹1 lakh cash prize for creating an awareness video on the scheme.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Modi Driving Defence Revolution: NRR



Hyderabad, July 20: BJP Telangana State President N. Ramchander Rao on Monday said India has witnessed revolutionary changes in the defence sector under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 12-year tenure, with defence exports rising to Rs.38,400 crore and the country emerging as one of the world's strongest defence powers.

Addressing a meeting of the BJP State Ex-Servicemen Cell at the party's state headquarters, Rao said the defence budget had increased from Rs.2.5 lakh crore to Rs.8 lakh crore during the Modi government. He claimed the defence production had grown to Rs.1.50 lakh crore, while self-reliance in ordnance manufacturing had increased from 32% to 90%.

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Uttam sounds El Niño alert

Says in case of extreme crisis, state can expect some solace from Karnataka seeking releases from Krishna

Hopes late rains may bail out state from the adverse climate phenomenon

04

Varuna Japam at Chilkur on July 21

Hyderabad, July 20: The famous Chilkur Balaaji Temple will conduct the traditional "Varuna Japam" on Tuesday (July 21) from 8.30 am to 11 am at the Osmansagar (Gandipet) Lake, seeking abundant monsoon rains for Telangana.

The Vedic ritual, organised during periods of deficient rainfall, will see temple priests and Vedic scholars stand in waist-deep water while chanting hymns from the Taittiriya Samhita of the Vedas 108 times to invoke the blessings of Varuna, the Hindu god of water, and Lord Indra. The ceremony will be led by CS Lakshmi Narasimhan, with Vedic scholars headed by Dr V Srimara Ghanapati of Vedabhavanam.

Kishan Reddy Meets Assam CM

Discusses Coal and Mining Issues Related to Assam



New Delhi, July 20: Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma met Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy at his residence in New Delhi on Monday (July 20). During the meeting, the two leaders held detailed discussions on the development of Assam's coal and mining sector and other related issues. They reviewed proposals for new coal production projects in the state, exploration of new mines, efficient utilization of mineral resources, investment opportunities in the mining sector, and other key matters concerning the industry's growth.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma brought several issues and challenges related to Assam's coal and mining sector to the attention of the Union Minister. In response, G. Kishan Reddy assured him of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL
TAMPER PROOF PACKING

3 TIMES BETTER

Oil palm cultivation can transform FARMERS' INCOMES: BHATTI

HYDERABAD, JULY 20

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka stated that oil palm cultivation is a transformative opportunity for the farming community of Khammam district, enabling farmers to achieve higher productivity and better returns in a region that is predominantly dependent on agriculture.

He inaugurated the prestigious Godrej Integrated Palm Oil Industry, established at an investment of nearly ₹300 crore in Anjanapuram village of Konijerla mandal in Khammam district on Monday, along with Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and representatives of the Godrej management.

Addressing the public meeting on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said Khammam is synonymous with agriculture and farming is the primary livelihood for its people.



He recalled that the undivided Khammam district once had several industries, but after the reorganisation of districts, it has largely remained dependent on agriculture.

Since farming is the backbone of the local economy, the Deputy Chief Minister stressed the need to encourage crops that provide higher yields and greater income. As part of this

vision, he urged farmers to take up oil palm cultivation.

Bhatti Vikramarka said that oil palm provides farmers with assured income even under adverse climatic conditions such as El Niño and drought. To encourage cultivation, the government is providing subsidies ranging from ₹4,000 to ₹45,000 per acre, he said.

Bhatti Vikramarka said that

if India could produce more palm oil domestically, it would strengthen the national economy while significantly benefiting farmers.

The Deputy Chief Minister described the newly inaugurated ₹300-crore integrated palm oil industry at Anjanapuram in Konijerla mandal as a major boon for the farmers of Khammam district, whose livelihoods are almost entirely dependent on agriculture.

Responding to requests for improved infrastructure, he assured that the government would sanction road connectivity through the Industrial Infrastructure Corporation to support the industry's growth.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed hope that the new unit would emerge as an anchor industry, attracting several ancillary industries to the region and transforming it into a major hub for agro-based industries.

"Avva" Short Story Anthology Unveiled

Released by Colonel K. S. Rao in Secunderabad

Secunderabad, July 20: The short story anthology "Avva", authored by eminent national poet, writer, multilingual literary personality, and founder of the My Gift voluntary organization, Dr. Peruka Raju, was formally unveiled today by Colonel K. S. Rao, Army officer and Chairman of Sai Kore Security & Training at his office in Secunderabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Colonel K. S. Rao lauded Dr. Peruka Raju for successfully balancing his responsibilities in the Indian Army with an extraordinary literary career. He remarked that contributing meaningful literature in several Indian languages while serving the nation in uniform is a rare achievement and an inspiring example for the younger generation.

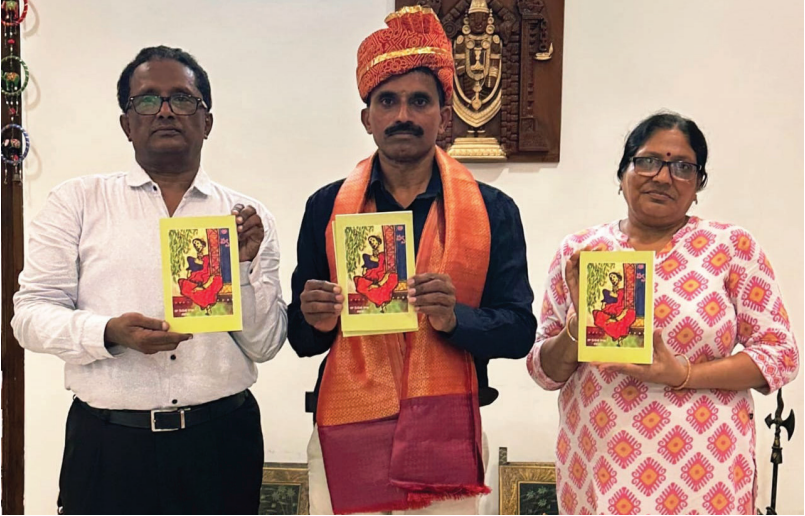
He expressed hope that Dr. Peruka Raju would continue to enrich Indian literature with many more works that promote human values and serve as guiding lights for society. He also conveyed confidence that "Avva" would receive wide appreciation from readers.

Dr. Peruka Raju, a proud son of Telangana, is currently serving as a Junior Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army. As a national poet, author, and multilingual literary figure, he has built literary and cultural bridges among several Indian languages and earned recognition across the country for his outstanding contributions to literature.

Alongside his literary pursuits, Dr. Peruka Raju is deeply committed to social

service. Through his voluntary organi-

The event was attended by Mrs. Pad-



zation, My Gift, established to support the underprivileged and marginalized sections of society, he has undertaken numerous humanitarian initiatives across India. Guided by his life philosophy, "Encouragement is My Gift," he continues to inspire and serve society.

The anthology carries heartfelt forewords by Dr. Lolapu Tirupati and Anil. It comprises 15 thoughtfully selected short stories from various Indian languages, each reflecting human emotions, social realities, and universal values that encourage readers to reflect on life and society.

ma Chirumamilla, Subranth, Arya, and Aneesh, among others. Dr. Peruka Raju has received numerous prestigious national literary awards and honours, establishing a distinguished place in contemporary Indian literature.

Following the book release, Colonel K. S. Rao hosted a cordial luncheon, during which meaningful discussions were held on literature, culture, and social responsibility. He concluded by expressing his belief that "Avva" would emerge as a significant literary bridge connecting readers through timeless stories and shared human values.

DELHI GRIDLOCKED

FROM PAGE 1

Demonstrations spread across Parliament Street, Jantar Mantar, Connaught Place and adjoining areas, leading to severe traffic congestion and disruption of Metro services.

Talks Begin

Amid escalating tensions, a two-member CJP delegation met Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda to discuss the protesters' demands, including the resignation of the Education Minister, release of activist Sonam Wangchuk, and compensation for families of NEET aspirants who allegedly died by suicide. Nadda later said discussions were held in a cordial atmosphere and appealed to protesters to end their sit-in and cooperate in restoring normalcy. The CJP, however, maintained that the government had initiated the dialogue and said discussions would continue.

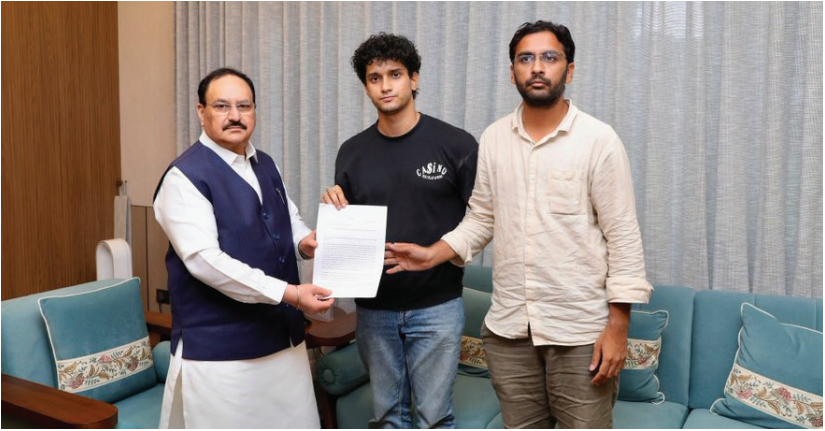
Later, senior Union ministers, including Amit Shah, Dharmendra Pradhan, J.P. Nadda, Piyush Goyal, and BJP president Nitin Nabin, held a closed-door meeting in Parliament to review the situation.

Protest Site Cleared

Police also attempted to clear the month-long protest site at Jantar Mantar, where demonstrators had been staging a sit-in since June 20. Temporary tents were dismantled, though protesters later regrouped and resumed their agitation.

The CJP alleged that police briefly detained several leaders, including its founder Abhijeet Dipke, while electricity at the protest site was also disconnected.

The movement, which originated



against alleged paper leaks and examination irregularities, gained momentum after activist Sonam Wangchuk joined the hunger strike. Three student protesters ended their 23-day fast on Monday.

Parliament Disrupted

The issue echoed inside Parliament, with repeated disruptions forcing adjournments in both Houses as Opposition members demanded a discussion on the protests and alleged police excesses. Security around Parliament was tightened, and access to several roads was restricted as demonstrators attempted to march towards the complex.

Opposition Slams Government

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of being "anti-youth" and criticised the Centre for refusing to remove the Education Minister despite repeated allegations of

examination irregularities.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal condemned the police action and urged the Centre to engage in dialogue instead of using force against students. Several opposition leaders, including Atishi, Manish Sisodia, M.A. Baby, Brinda Karat, and Dimple Yadav, joined the demonstrations.

Actor Shabana Azmi, who participated in the march, said the protesters were exercising their constitutional right to peaceful protest.

Nationwide Support

Solidarity protests were also reported from Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Lucknow, with students and job aspirants demanding greater transparency in recruitment and entrance examinations.

The demonstrations severely affected traffic across central Delhi, while several Metro stations temporarily restricted entry and exit due to security concerns.

Clean and Green Campus Drive Held at Govt Degree College for Women

HYDERABAD, JULY 20

The NSS Units I, II and III of Government Degree College for Women, Hussainialam, Hyderabad, organized the Swachh Bharat - Clean & Green Campus Drive on Monday as part of the nationwide Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme began with the Swachh Bharat Pledge, taken by teaching staff, non-teaching staff and NSS volunteers in front of the college main gate. The pledge highlighted the importance of cleanliness, personal responsibility and collective participation in building a cleaner India. Following the pledge, NSS volunteers and staff members actively participated in a campus cleaning drive. Various areas of the college campus were cleaned as part of the initiative. Green activities were also carried out to promote environmental protection, hygiene, respon-



sible waste management and awareness about maintaining a clean and healthy campus.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of Principal Prof. Ch. Appiya Chinnamma and Vice Principal Dr. MD Ghouse. They appreciated the enthusiastic participation of students and staff and emphasized that educational institutions play an impor-

tant role in creating awareness about cleanliness, discipline and environmental responsibility.

The event was coordinated by NSS Programme Officers Dr. P. Latha, Dr. Anita Monga and Dr. B. Geetha Rani. IQAC Coordinator Dr. K. Sreedevi, Academic Coordinator Dr. M. Pranitha, Eco Club Coordinator V. Sunitha, faculty members,

non-teaching staff and a large number of students also took part in the programme.

The college administration stated that such activities help inculcate social responsibility, civic sense and environmental consciousness among students. The initiative also reflected the institution's commitment to the national mission of "Clean India, Green India."

Kishan Reddy Meets Assam CM

FROM PAGE 1

a positive approach and directed the concerned officials to examine the issues on priority and take necessary steps to resolve them at the earliest.

The Union Minister reiterated that the Central Government is giving special priority to the overall development of the Northeastern states. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has been focus-

ing on infrastructure development, including roads, railways, connectivity, tourism, and the efficient utilization of natural resources across the region.

Kishan Reddy emphasized that, in partnership with the Northeastern states, the Central Government remains committed to accelerating the development of the coal and mining sector to support the region's economic growth.

Medigadda Testing..

FROM PAGE 1

complete and the findings have been forwarded to IIT Bombay and its technical partners for preparing detailed repair and rehabilitation designs. These designs are expected over the next few months, after which the State Government will take up rehabilitation works after obtaining all necessary technical approvals.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said preliminary assessments indicated that construction of a diaphragm wall across the barrages could form part of the rehabilitation strategy. However, he clarified that the final repair methodology would be determined only after experts completed their evaluation of all investigation reports.

He said the Union Government had already constituted a Technical Oversight Committee to scrutinise the rehabilitation proposals before repair works commence. The Telangana Government would implement the restoration programme strictly in accordance with the recommendations of

the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the oversight committee.

The Minister said the Government had also engaged experienced engineers with Indian Army backgrounds to strengthen technical coordination during the rehabilitation process. A coordination committee headed by Colonel Parikshit Mehra is supervising the testing and planning exercise to ensure transparency and engineering integrity.

Reiterating that public safety would remain paramount, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Government would not operate the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages until rehabilitation was completed and all statutory agencies declared the structures safe. "Our objective is to restore these barrages and protect the huge public investment made in the project. We will bring them back into operation only after scientific testing, expert-designed rehabilitation and statutory safety clearance," he said.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

Modi Driving Defence..

FROM PAGE 1

He said 97% of equipment on Indian Navy and Coast Guard vessels were now "Made in India" and cited the Tejas fighter aircraft and INS Vikrant as examples of the country's growing indigenous defence capability. Under PM Narendra Modi's 12-year rule, India has transformed into a "Surakshit Bharat" (Secure India), witnessing revolutionary changes in defense under 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India), he affirmed. Referring to India's response to terrorism, Rao said the country had moved from a policy of "talks" to "action," pointing to the Uri surgical strikes and Balakot airstrikes as demonstrations of India's military resolve. Calling upon retired armed forces personnel to continue serving the nation, he urged them to fight corruption and injustice in society after retirement. He appealed to BJP workers and ex-servicemen to work with military discipline to strengthen the party and bring it to power in Telangana.

Embrace 'Nation First' spiri...

FROM PAGE 1

He appreciated the Society's efforts in extending support to economically weaker students, providing healthcare initiatives, skill development programmes and community welfare activities.

The Governor observed that programmes such as the National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC), personality development initiatives, technical training and cultural activities were playing an important role in the holistic development of

students. He emphasised that the true purpose of education was not merely the acquisition of knowledge but also the cultivation of character, compassion, discipline and responsible citizenship. The Governor said India was making rapid strides in innovation, research, technology and self-reliance, with the youth serving as the driving force behind the nation's transformation.

Expressing concern over the growing menace of drug abuse, Shukla urged students to actively support the

mission of building a drug-free Telangana in line with the vision of "Nasha Mukta Bharat". He appealed to every student to become an ambassador of a healthy and drug-free lifestyle.

The Governor advised students to dream big, work with dedication, remain rooted in Indian values and always place national interest above personal considerations. He also urged teachers to go beyond classroom instruction by nurturing integrity, leadership, social responsibility and excellence among students.

Bonalu from New Indiramma Houses Next Year: Ponguleti

FROM PAGE 1

Ponguleti said the Indiramma Housing programme would continue until every eligible poor family receives a permanent house, describing it as a long-term welfare initiative of the State Government.

Massive Housing Push

The Minister said the government had already sanctioned 4.5 lakh houses in the first phase across Telangana, while Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy launched another 2.5 lakh houses in the second phase. With the addition of one lakh houses in the GHMC area, the total number of Indiramma houses sanctioned in the State has reached eight lakh.

He expressed confidence that more than two lakh houses would be completed by next month.

Houses Near Beneficiaries

Explaining the new housing model, Ponguleti said previous governments had constructed housing colonies 30-35 km away from Hyderabad, making them inconvenient for ben-

eficiaries and affecting their livelihoods. Consequently, many allottees did not occupy the houses.

To address this, the present government has decided to construct houses within the constituencies where beneficiaries already reside, enabling them to continue their livelihoods without displacement.

Each beneficiary will receive a 525 sq. ft. one-bedroom flat comprising a bedroom, hall and kitchen. The land, valued between ₹40 lakh and ₹60 lakh, will be registered free of cost in the name of the woman of the family. Beneficiaries will not be allowed to sell the property for ten years, though it can be mortgaged to obtain bank loans.

Cost and Financial Assistance

Each house will cost approximately ₹11 lakh, of which the government will provide a ₹5 lakh subsidy, while beneficiaries will contribute ₹6 lakh in four instalments.

Applicants must pay a ₹10,000 deposit while applying. The amount will be adjusted towards the beneficiary's

contribution if selected, and refunded if the application is unsuccessful.

Applications from July 21

Applications will be accepted from July 21 to August 10 through Mee-Seva centres, the WhatsApp service (8096958096) and the official government portal. Applicants must belong to the constituency where they are applying, have an annual family income of up to ₹6 lakh, should not own a house or residential plot within GHMC limits, and only one application per family will be accepted.

Beneficiaries will be selected through a 360-degree verification process, and if applications exceed available houses, allotments will be made through a transparent public lottery.

Reservations, Expansion Planned

The Minister said reservations in house allotment would be provided to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Backward Classes (BCs). Land identification for another

eight Assembly constituencies will begin shortly as part of the scheme's expansion. He also hinted at a housing scheme for the middle class, saying the government would make an announcement soon.

Bonalu Goal

Launching the programme during the Bonalu festival, Ponguleti said the government aims to complete construction at the earliest so that next year's Bonalu festivities can be celebrated from the newly built Indiramma houses across GHMC.

He reiterated that despite financial constraints, the government remained committed to housing the poor and noted that payments for construction progress were being released every Monday.

Ministers Hail Initiative

IT and Industries Minister Dudhala Sridhar Babu described the programme as a landmark initiative fulfilling one of the Congress government's six guarantees.

Transport Minister Ponnamp

hakar said the government was implementing all its election promises, including free bus travel for women, free electricity, ration cards for eligible families, and the Indiramma Housing Scheme.

Minister Mohammed Azharuddin welcomed the launch of the housing programme for Hyderabad's urban poor and termed it a major step towards inclusive urban development.

First-Phase Constituencies

The first phase covers Rajendranagar, Maheshwaram, Serilingampally, Ibrahimpatnam, Malkajgiri, Nampally, Khairatabad, Karwan, Bahadurpura, Amberpet, Kukatpally, Medchal, Quthbullapur, Sanathnagar, Secunderabad Cantonment, and Malakpet, with designated housing locations in each constituency.

The programme was attended by MLC Addanki Dayakar, MLAs, Housing Department Managing Director V.P. Gautham, Collector Priyanka Ala, commissioners and senior officials.

Uttam sounds El Niño alert; says drinking water will receive priority over irrigation until next June

- Says in case of extreme crisis, state can expect some solace from Karnataka seeking releases from Krishna
- Hopes late rains may bail out state from the adverse climate phenomenon
- Directs officials to alert government 20 to 25 days before water sources dip to critical levels
- Farmers urged to avoid paddy where water is not assured

HYDERABAD / NALGONDA

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said today that the Telangana Government may approach the Karnataka Government for emergency releases from the Krishna River if deficient rainfall continues and the drinking-water situation worsens in the coming months. Sounding a serious caution over the possible impact of El Niño on the monsoon, the Minister said drinking water would receive the highest priority over all other uses until next June. Water available in reservoirs and irrigation projects would have to be conserved carefully to meet essential requirements if the State failed to receive adequate rainfall during the remaining monsoon period.

Uttam Kumar Reddy made the observations during a comprehensive district-level review of drought preparedness, drinking-water availability, irrigation, agriculture, groundwater, electricity supply and Mission Bhagiratha infrastructure in the erstwhile Nalgonda district. Ministers Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Adhuri Lakshman (District incharge) and MPs, MLAs, MLCs, Collectors and senior officials from the irrigation, agriculture, horticulture, groundwater, electricity, municipal administration and Mission Bhagiratha departments participated in the meeting.

The Minister said El Niño could weaken the Indian monsoon even while causing excessive rainfall and floods in other parts of the world. Experts had indicated the possibility of an intense



El Niño event, and the rainfall recorded up to July 20 had already raised concerns about the availability of water during the coming months, he said. "If rainfall does not improve during September, October and November, we may have to manage with the available water until next July. Drinking water must therefore be given first priority, and every available source should be protected," Uttam Kumar Reddy said.

He said that, in an extreme situation, the State could request the Karnataka Government to release Krishna water to meet drinking-water requirements. Officials were directed to continuously assess reservoir levels and prepare proposals well in advance instead of waiting for the situation to become critical.

No risky paddy cultivation

The Minister advised farmers not to take up water-intensive paddy cultivation in areas where irrigation supply, rainfall or groundwater availability was uncertain. He said farmers depending on borewells should first assess whether the available groundwater would sustain the crop until harvest. Paddy transplantation without assured water could result in crop failure and heavy financial losses, he cautioned.

Agriculture and horticulture officials were directed to intensify field-level awareness programmes and encourage farmers to shift to crops requiring less water. Green gram, sesame, vegetables and other short-duration crops could be considered depending on soil and local conditions.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said officials

should not limit themselves to presentations and assurances at district meetings. They should visit villages, interact directly with farmers and offer crop-specific advice based on water availability, soil type and local rainfall conditions.

Reservoir position reviewed

Officials informed the meeting that drinking water in the combined Nalgonda district was being supplied from seven major sources. The Udaya Samudram reservoir, which serves 578 habitations and four urban local bodies, was being filled to about 1.5 TMC. This quantity was expected to meet requirements until December. Additional water would be needed to maintain supplies from December until July, next year. The Paleru Reservoir, with about 1.99 TMC, was expected to support drinking-water supply for nearly 90 days. A further release from the Nagarjuna Sagar Project could be required after about 70 days, depending on availability. The Minister directed officials to issue an alert at least 20 to 25 days before Paleru reaches a critical level, enabling the government to arrange an alternative source or seek emergency assistance. He directed the electricity and drinking-water departments to jointly resolve power fluctuations, transformer failures and inadequate power infrastructure affecting water-pumping systems.

Tankers and borewells to be kept ready

Gram panchayats were instructed to keep drinking-water tankers ready for

immediate deployment if grid-based supplies failed. Agricultural borewells could also be hired in emergency situations. Officials were asked to inspect and repair hand pumps, single-phase and three-phase borewells, pipelines, leakages, motors, pump sets and local storage systems. The Minister said villages without alternative water sources would be particularly vulnerable if the El Niño impact intensified. Special attention should therefore be given to such habitations.

Mission Bhagiratha agencies warned

Reviewing Mission Bhagiratha works, Uttam Kumar Reddy said adequate water releases were being made to drinking-water network in the combined Nalgonda district.

The agencies that have been tasked with the upkeep of infrastructure must deploy adequate staff, attend to leakages and motor issues and keep the systems operating.

No Nagarjuna Sagar water for irrigation

During the irrigation review, officials said water could not be assured from the Nagarjuna Sagar Project for irrigation under the prevailing conditions. Similarly, water from SRSP Stage-II was ruled out for around 2.13 lakh acres. The Musi Project, which had storage of about 3.2 TMC, was expected to provide three wettings until October 4. A fourth wetting could be considered only if inflows continued.

The Musi system was being operated on a 15-days-on and 15-days-off basis, with releases of about 250 cusecs each through the left and right canals. It was expected to support nearly 30,000 acres. Officials said about 850 of the 1,220 irrigation tanks reviewed had less than 50 per cent storage. Minor irrigation tanks could support only a limited extent under the existing availability. Uttam Kumar Reddy directed all departments to work in close coordination and remain in the field. He said protecting drinking-water supplies and preventing farmers from suffering crop losses would be the government's foremost responsibilities during the emerging El Niño-related crisis.

"If the Revanth Reddy government interferes with government schools, people will bring down your government"

- "If the Revanth Reddy government interferes with government schools, people will bring down your government"
 - We will defeat conspiracies to completely privatize government education.
 - The government is rolling out a red carpet to invite corporate schools into villages.
 - There was malpractice in the tenders for Integrated Schools, and half of the works were given only to Megha and KMV companies.
- BRS chief Kalvakuntla Kavitha

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is allegedly conspiring to completely privatize government education. In the name of the Education Commission report, an attempt is being made to reduce 27,000 schools to 4,000 schools. The Telangana Rakshana Sena has been opposing this from the beginning.

Recently, under the name of Young India Integrated Schools, it is proposed to spend ₹146 crore on each school.

Out of the total 72 schools, more than half of the works have been awarded only to companies called Megha and KMV.

Since they quoted 5% excess in their bids, it is putting an additional burden of more than ₹600 crore on the government.

It is being said that nearly



₹11,000 crore will be spent for 72 schools. However, it is not possible to complete the construction of these schools within the next two and a half years.

Each school construction will take at least more than three years. If schools are built at the revenue division level, buses will again have to be arranged for students to travel.

It is clear that those buses too will be given to the Megha company. Overall, a red carpet is being laid to invite private schools into Telangana's villages.

Budget schools are being killed by not releasing the dues that should be paid to them.

Moreover, Young India Schools have been given only to two organizations. This clearly shows that there was a cartel arrangement in the tenders.

This issue was even reported in the Velugu newspaper, which belongs to a Congress MP.

The Chief Minister must definitely give clarity to the people regarding the alleged irregularities in the tenders.

Just as a temple is important, a school is equally important. But even after a month since schools started, uniforms have

still not been provided.

They say they will reduce the number of schools. What will they do with the existing teachers? Will they not recruit new teachers?

If the government tries to privatize public education, the Telangana Rakshana Sena will not tolerate it under any circumstances. For the egg provided in the midday meal scheme, only ₹6 is being given. The market price of an egg is ₹8.

Instead of providing eggs three days a week, the government should provide them five days a week and increase the price allocation to ₹8.

The breakfast promised for children is not being provided. Uniforms are not being given.

If the government interferes with government schools, people will bring down this government itself. If schools are set up somewhere far away in the name of Integrated Schools, girl students will suffer.

Their parents will not send their children to schools that are located far from their homes. Therefore, schools should continue to exist in villages themselves. Village sarpanches should fight for this.

Revanth Reddy Mark 'Economic Destruction'.. Rs.12,289 Crore Revenue Deficit in Just 90 Days!

- Congress government's incompetence exposed by 'CAG' report.. Audit report proves all budget estimates are completely bogus!
- Telangana government pushed Telangana into an abyss of debt!
- Grave economic destruction exposed by Q1 'CAG' report
- Revanth, the 'King of Debts', exhausted 37.5% of annual debt limits in just 3 months!
- Wine shops crowded.. Treasury deserted! Probe required on diversion of liquor revenue: BRS MLC Dr. Dasoju Sravan fires up

HYDERABAD

Senior BRS leader and MLC Dr. Dasoju Sravan launched a fierce attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that he has completely degraded Telangana State's economy with his administrative failure and abusive rhetoric, plunging the state into a severe economic crisis within just a 90-day period of the financial year (April - June). Based on the latest June 2026 report

released by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), he ripped apart the Congress government with precise figures, exposing their claims of "Telangana Rising" and "3 Trillion Economy" as empty slogans and blatant lies.

He fired back saying that forgetting the maxim "If hard work is your weapon, the power to earn becomes your empire," Revanth Reddy has instead turned crude abuses and senseless chatter into his weapons, leading the state towards bankruptcy.

1. "Revenue Surplus" Vanished into Thin Air.. ₹12,289 Crore Deficit in Just 90 Days!

In the 2026-27 budget, the Revanth Reddy government deceptively misled the Assembly and the public into believing that the state would maintain a massive annual Revenue Surplus of ₹6,857.76 crore.

However, within the very first 90 days, that colorful dream completely shattered as the state plunged into a staggering Revenue Deficit of ₹12,289.38 crore.

* The government has crippled the state's financial health by pushing the treasury into a deficit of over ₹4,000 crore every single month.

* Those who do not even possess the

basic capability to run a household are deceiving the public by promising to turn the state into an economic powerhouse.

2. The 'King of Debts' Revanth Government: 37.5% of Annual Borrowings Wiped Out in 3 Months!

While the statutory net borrowing limit for the entire financial year was set at ₹58,458.71 crore, the Revanth Reddy government swept away a massive ₹21,919.23 crore (37.5%) of net borrowings in just these three months.

* Primary Deficit: The state recorded a shocking primary deficit of ₹14,141.05 crore in the very first quarter.

* They are raising record-breaking fresh loans merely to clear the interest payments of older debts, while absolutely no new asset creation (Capital Expenditure) is taking place in the state.

3. Failure of Core Revenue Sectors – Official CAG Data Analysis

In a healthy economy, a state must achieve at least 25% of its annual targeted revenue by the end of the first quarter (Q1). However, the official CAG statistics clearly demonstrate that under Revanth Reddy's governance, every single major revenue stream of the

state has miserably collapsed:

* Total Revenue Receipts Failure: Against an estimated annual target of ₹2,41,263.00 crore, the government managed to collect a meager ₹17,790.00 crore during these three months, which stands at a pathetic 7.00%.

* Collapsed Tax Revenue: While the budget projected a collection of ₹1,81,367.00 crore through various taxes, the actual realization stood at just ₹38,447.00 crore—amounting to only 21.00%.

* Drastically Declining Purchasing Power – GST: Against a massive annual target of ₹61,564.92 crore under GST, the collection was limited to ₹13,988.71 crore (22.72%). This stands as direct evidence of the crumbling purchasing power of the general public.

* Stamps and Registrations Hanging in the Balance: The government built high hopes of generating ₹19,540.54 crore through property registrations, but could only pull in ₹4,510.02 crore (23.08%).

* Business Transaction Sales Tax: Reflecting the heavy slowdown in business transactions across the state, the sales tax collections reached just ₹9,250.00 crore (24.00%) against the annual estimate of ₹38,105.00 crore.

BRS certain to win Banswada seat, says V Prashanth Reddy

HYDERABAD

Former Minister and Balkonda MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy on Monday expressed confidence that the BRS would register a decisive victory in the Banswada Assembly constituency, asserting that the people would reject those who had "betrayed" party president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR).

Speaking at Telangana Bhavan after businessman Moreli Srinivas Rao and over 1,000 leaders and workers from Banswada joined the BRS in the presence of working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), Prashanth Reddy said the party was steadily gaining strength. He praised KTR for



attracting investments, promoting Hyderabad globally and creating employment opportunities. He claimed that despite some leaders leaving the party, KCR continued to enjoy strong support across every village in Banswada.

The former minister alleged that former MLA Pocharam Srinivas Reddy had betrayed

KCR despite receiving his support over the years and said local party workers opposed his re-entry into the BRS.

Claiming that independent and ruling party surveys indicated a BRS victory in Banswada, Prashanth Reddy accused the Congress government of failing to fulfil its election promises.

Police welfare remains top priority, says DGP Anand

HYDERABAD

Telangana Director General of Police CV. Anand on Monday reaffirmed that the welfare of police personnel and their families remains the department's highest priority while reviewing the functioning of Police Welfare Society and Arogya Bhadratha health protection scheme. The DGP said the department is strengthening welfare initiatives through education, healthcare, marriage assistance, insurance, scholarships and low interest loans. He noted that 33,126 police personnel and family members availed treatment under Arogya Bhadratha in 2025, while 12,392 beneficiaries received treatment till June 2026. Expenditure under the scheme



stood at Rs.181.74 crore in 2025 and Rs.73.61 crore during the first half of 2026.

Reviewing insurance benefits, Anand said families of police personnel who die in accidents while in service receive financial assistance ranging from Rs.5 lakh to Rs.25 lakh,

depending on rank. The DGP directed officials to digitise all welfare schemes through an integrated online platform to ensure transparency, accountability and real-time monitoring. He also called for enhanced budget allocation, ethical implementation of wel-

fare programmes and effective utilisation of departmental resources to support initiatives such as the Young India Police School, scholarships, coaching for competitive examinations and marriage assistance.

He instructed officials to ensure timely access to low-in-

terest housing, education, marriage and personal loans for eligible personnel and stressed that welfare benefits must reach every deserving police employee fairly and transparently.

Senior police officers and representatives of the Telangana Police Association DG (I&O) Mahesh M. Bhagwat, ADG Sanjay Jain, IG Multi Zone II- Shahnawaz Qasim, IG (P&L) Gajarao Bhupal, Secretary Police Welfare, arogya bhadratha Uday Kumar Reddy, Finance Advisor Sharath Kumar and representatives of the Telangana Police Association, including Gopi Reddy, Srinivas Reddy and along with other senior officers attended the review meeting.



Bhogapuram Airport: North Andhra's Jewel

Prime Minister to inaugurate GMR Skill Development Centre, Aviation Hub–University, and EduCity along with the airport
Chief Minister Chandrababu reviews arrangements for Prime Minister Modi’s visit

AMARAVATI, JULY 20
Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu stated that the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, being constructed at Bhogapuram, will become a jewel of North Andhra. In view of the inauguration of the international airport by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 1, the Chief Minister reviewed the arrangements for the event with senior officials. iCM Chandrababu instructed officials to conduct the inauguration ceremony of the prestigious Bhogapuram International Airport, built in North Andhra, in a grand and historic manner. He said that

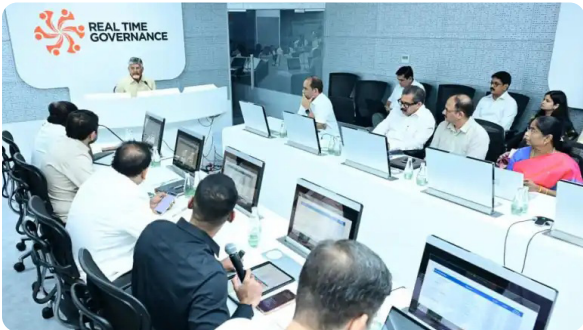
Prime Minister Modi should be given a warm welcome showcasing the culture and traditions of North Andhra through traditional dance forms such as Thimsa, Savara, and Kommu Koya performances. Officials informed that on August 1, along with inaugurating the airport's passenger terminal building, Prime Minister Modi will also formally launch the GMR Skill Development Centre, Aviation Hub–University, and GMR–MANSAS EduCity. The Chief Minister stated that the airport, which is set to become the pride of North Andhra, will provide global connectivity as a logistics hub and act as a game changer for



the state's economic development.
Airport inauguration to be celebrated across North Andhra
The Chief Minister instructed officials to provide a one-time free flight opportunity to the farmers and landowners who contributed their lands for this project, as a mark of respect. He suggested conducting a public meeting as part of the airport inauguration celebrations. He directed officials to ensure proper traffic diver-

sions, dedicated parking slots, and strong security arrangements so that people attending the meeting do not face any inconvenience. He also instructed that facilities such as breakfast, lunch, and drinking water be provided for attendees. The Chief Minister suggested conducting extensive publicity for the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport from tomorrow until July 31. He said that programmes should be organised so that the spirit of the inauguration celebrations reaches every household in the North Andhra districts over the next ten days. He also suggested using the platform to promote the Araku Coffee

brand, which Prime Minister Modi has been highlighting on international platforms. The Chief Minister directed that all public representatives from North Andhra should participate in the programmes beginning Tuesday.
Those who attended the review meeting included Home Minister Anita, Chief Secretary Sai Prasad, Special Chief Secretary of Industries and Infrastructure M.T. Krishna Babu, the Collectors and Superintendents of Police of Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts, TDP State President, Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao, civil aviation officials, and GMR representatives.



Andhra Pradesh CM denies privatisation of Sub-Registrar Offices

AMARAVATI, JULY 20

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday clarified that 'Registration Seva Kendras' (Registration Service Centres) are being established solely to provide better services to the people and directed officials to counter the misinformation that Sub-Registrar offices are being privatised. He asked officials to inform the public of the facts regarding the deliberate misinformation campaign. The CM reviewed the performance of various departments at the RTGS Centre in the State Secretariat on Monday.

The issue of alleged privatisation of Sub-Registrar offices came up during the review. Speaking on the occasion, CM Chandrababu said, "The government is firmly committed to providing better registration services to the public. We are establishing Registration Seva Kendras (RSKs) to make registration services much easier. This is by no means privatisation," Stating that these centres will function similarly to Passport Seva Kendras, he directed officials to explain how Passport Seva Kendras operate and how the subsequent processes are handled. Passport processing became very easy after Passport Seva Kendras were introduced; Registration Seva Kendras will function in the same manner. The Chief Minister alleged that some people are deliberately spreading false propaganda regarding these centres. "Officials must take responsibility for explaining the facts to the public and highlighting the benefits of registration service centres. Furthermore, document writers need not worry; we will devise ways to ensure their livelihoods remain unaffected," he said. The Chief Minister said the subsidy for 'Deepam-2.0' scheme beneficiaries needs to be disbursed systematically, and officials should consider scheduling these payments for specific dates. Officials from the Civil Supplies and Finance departments must coordinate on this matter, examine the technical aspects, and ensure implementation, he said. He also called for addressing the issue of 'litigant petitioners.' "Individuals who file complaints without any genuine public interest should be identified and counseled. We have identified 81 such litigant petitioners across the state; on average, each of them files 246 petitions. Their details should be forwarded to the District Collectors. While petitions containing genuine public interest should be examined, we must identify those filed with the sole intent of maligning the government or officials," he said. CM Chandrababu Naidu said non-financial grievances should be resolved immediately, while financial issues will be addressed based on priority. Stating that there is 49 per cent rainfall deficit due to the impact of El Nino this year, he called for exploring alternative strategies to mitigate this impact and raise awareness among farmers accordingly. Naidu said farmers should be encouraged to cultivate dryland crops.



Karnataka man falls 40 feet after zipline snaps, suffers severe injuries

A 24-year-old man from Karnataka's sustained critical injuries after falling around 30 to 40 feet during a zipline ride at a private resort in Uttara Kannada district, with his family alleging negligence and safety lapses on the part of the resort.

The victim, identified as Kubera Surapura, suffered multiple fractures and severe nerve damage in the fall at the Sterling River Resort in Dandeli on July 3. He has undergone multiple surgeries and remains under treatment.
According to his family, the accident occurred while Surapura from Vijayapura district was participating in a zipline activity at the resort. They alleged that inadequate safety measures led to the incident and claimed the resort had initially assured them it would bear the cost of his medical treatment but later failed to honour the commitment.

Andhra: Sharmila demands TDP-led coalition to raise farmers' voice in Parliament

AMARAVATI, JULY 20

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president Y. S. Sharmila on Monday demanded that the partners in the ruling coalition in the state raise the voice of farmers in Parliament. In an open letter to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, she said the MPs of Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should highlight in Parliament the problems faced by farmers in the state. She said the MPs must confront the Central government on issues faced by aqua,

tobacco, mango, tomato, onion and other farmers. If necessary, they should stage a walkout and exert pressure for farmers' welfare. Sharmila warned that if the government fails to respond immediately, the Congress Party will intensify the statewide agitation along with the farmers. The APCC chief stated she was writing the letter in extreme anguish after directly witnessing the plight of the state's farmers. Referring to the saying that a kingdom where farmers cry does not prosper, she said farmers in Andhra Pradesh are shedding tears. The system that once pro-



vided a helping hand to the farming community has vanished under coalition rule, she added. She claimed that from tomato to mango farmers, and from tobacco to aqua farmers, the entire

farming community in Andhra Pradesh is in deep crisis. There are no guaranteed prices and exploitation is rampant across the state, she said. Sharmila alleged that both the Central and state governments have let down the farmers. She stated that it was a disgrace that when debt-ridden farmers were dying by suicide, MPs from the state were busy pleasing Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She demanded that the problems faced by 30 lakh aqua farmers in the state should be discussed in Parliament. The Congress leader also demanded that the Centre bear the addi-

tional burden of Rs 30,000 per tonne resulting from the increase in shrimp feed prices. She sought a Rs 100 crore corpus fund for aqua farmers. Sharmila said the ruling coalition should put pressure on the Centre to ensure that the United States reduces the 30 per cent tariff on aqua products to zero. The APCC chief also demanded a thorough debate on the problems of tobacco farmers in Parliament. She said the problems faced by tobacco farmers should be resolved permanently. She demanded that the Centre procure 230 million kilograms of tobacco held by farmers.

YSRCP Seeks House Debate on Andhra Law and Order

NEW DELHI, JULY 20

YSR Congress Party Member of Parliament Maddala Gurumoorthy submitted an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha seeking an urgent discussion on the deteriorating law and order situation in Andhra Pradesh.
In his notice, he stated that the state is witnessing a disturbing rise in police excesses, crimes against women, atrocities against Scheduled Castes, political violence, and serious violations of civil liberties, making the issue one of urgent public importance.
He highlighted the recent reported deaths allegedly linked to police harassment, including the reported custodial deaths



of Sai Krishna in Krishna district and Yedukondalu in SPSR Nellore district. He also referred to the deaths of Mala Gangamma in Kurnool, Kranti Kumar in Krishna district, and Sk. Dariya Hussain of Piduguralla, who reportedly left behind a suicide note alleging police harassment. He said these incidents have raised grave concerns over custodial safety and police accountability.
Gurumoorthy pointed out that between June 2024 and March 2026, Andhra Pradesh recorded 209 reported crimes against women, including 126 rape and sexual assault cases, 12 attempted rape cases, 35

sexual harassment cases, 97 physical assaults, 34 murders or suspicious deaths, and 15 suicides or suicide attempts linked to harassment.
The MP further noted that the state witnessed 69 reported incidents involving Scheduled Castes, including allegations of murders, custodial violence, police excesses, social boycott, land grabbing, demolition of houses, and offences under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. He also cited 133 reported incidents of political violence, comprising 49 murders, six attempted murders, six kidnappings, 58 physical attacks, 10 incidents of property destruction, and four alleged suicides due to political harassment.

He also referred to 12 reported adverse observations made by the Andhra Pradesh High Court regarding police functioning and 79 documented law and order incidents, which, according to the MP, indicate a broader breakdown of governance and civil liberties in the State.
Through the adjournment motion, he urged the Centre to seek a comprehensive report from the Andhra Pradesh government, ensure impartial and time-bound investigations into all reported incidents, fix accountability wherever violations are established, and take immediate steps to restore the rule of law and safeguard the constitutional rights of every citizen.

The Junk Food Evolution in Hyderabad: A Three-Decade Transformation

The culinary landscape of Hyderabad, a city historically renowned for its rich Nizami heritage, spicy Biryani, and traditional sweets like Qubani ka Meetha, has undergone a radical transformation over the last thirty years. As we step into the latter half of the 2020s, the city's streets, which were once dominated by small-scale "tiffin centers" and local eateries, are now saturated with international fast-food chains, cloud kitchens, and a seemingly endless variety of "junk food" options. This evolution from traditional kitchens to rapid, processed, and high-calorie food consumption reflects the broader global shift in urban lifestyles, reflecting a complex mix of economic prosperity, changing demographics, and the convenience-driven culture of modern Hyderabad.

In the mid-1990s, Hyderabad was a city that still valued the ritual of home-cooked meals. Fast food was limited to a few iconic spots serving Dosa, Vada, or the occasional local burger. However, with the onset of the IT boom and the development of Hitech City, the city's socio-economic fabric changed dramatically. Young professionals, moving to Hyderabad for the burgeoning software industry, sought quick, inexpensive, and standardized food options. This created a massive market opportunity for multinational fast-food corporations. By the early 2000s, global brands began establishing their presence in major commercial hubs like Banjara Hills and Jubilee Hills. This marked the beginning of a steady climb in junk food consumption that has not slowed down since.

The Economic Scale of the Shift
To understand the magnitude of this change, one must look at the financial data. In the mid-1990s, the organized fast-food market in Hyderabad was nascent, estimated at a few hundred crores. By 2010, the market value ballooned as the city's middle-class population surged. Industry reports indicate that between 2006 and 2019 alone, the market for ultra-processed foods in the city grew from a modest base to an estimated ₹8,000–₹10,000 crores. Fast forward to 2026, and analysts suggest the current market size for junk food in Hyderabad has surged to nearly ₹25,000–₹30,000 crores annually. This represents a staggering growth rate of over 400% in terms of market valuation over the last two decades. The sheer volume of consumption has seen a steady annual compounded growth rate (CAGR) of 15–18%, significantly outpacing the growth of traditional food sectors. This massive influx of capital into the fast-food economy reflects a fundamental pivot in the city's purchasing power and dietary habits.

Between 2006 and 2016, the growth of fast food in Hyderabad became exponential. The advent of food delivery platforms in the mid-2010s acted as a catalyst. Before these apps, getting a pizza or a burger required visiting a restaurant, which served as a natural barrier to frequent consumption. However, when food became accessible at the click of a button, the consumption rate skyrocketed. Data from industry analysts suggests that during this decade, the frequency of ordering processed food among middle-class households in Hyderabad increased by nearly 300%. The "convenience economy" turned unhealthy, nutrient-poor snacks into daily staples for office workers and students alike.

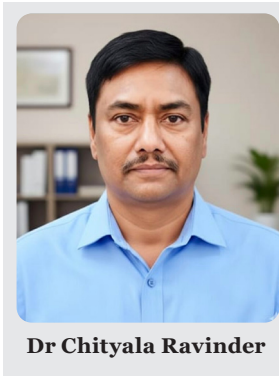
As we move into the 2020s, the data indicates that Hyderabad has one of the highest consumption rates of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) in South India. Surveys conducted in residential corridors like Narsingi, Gachibowli, and Kokapet reveal that over 90% of households consume packaged snacks at least three to four times a week. The variety has also expanded; it is no longer just about burgers and pizzas. It now includes ready-to-eat meals, frozen snacks, and high-sugar energy drinks that have become common in local supermarkets. This trend is not merely a change in taste; it is a fundamental shift in how the city consumes energy.

The health implications of this thirty-year trend are significant. Medical experts in Hyderabad have noted a stark rise in "lifestyle diseases" such as Type-2 diabetes, hypertension, and childhood obesity, correlating directly with the increased availability and affordability of junk food. The shift away from traditional millet-based or fiber-rich diets toward processed carbohydrates and unhealthy fats has impacted the city's overall public health metrics. While the economic growth of Hyderabad is something to celebrate, the "junk food epidemic" serves as a reminder of the hidden costs of rapid urbanization.
As the city continues to expand, the challenge lies in balancing modernity with health. The younger generation, accustomed to the fast-paced nature of the "Hitech City lifestyle," often finds it difficult to revert to labor-intensive

CM Vijay's surprise inspection of India's first bio-CNG plant in Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay made a surprise visit to India's first bio-CNG plant in Chennai. He used the inspection to press for stronger scientific waste management and wider replication of such projects across Tamil Nadu.

ically process biodegradable waste into bio-CNG. He also directed that non-biodegradable waste be utilised for road construction and in the cement industry wherever feasible.
Vijay stressed that Tamil Nadu should move towards comprehensive scientific waste management within a fixed timeframe and asked officials to replicate similar waste-processing projects in urban local bodies across the state.
According to an official release, the Greater Chennai Corporation collects around 6,150 metric tonnes of waste every day. Of this, nearly 3,200 metric tonnes comprise biodegradable waste, while about 2,950 metric tonnes consists of non-biodegradable waste and roadside soil particles.
The inspection came as the Vijay-led government seeks to improve waste segregation, recycling and sustainable disposal practices while reducing the volume of garbage sent to landfills.



Dr Chityala Ravinder

EDITORIAL

The Crackdown on Democratic Dissent

Central Delhi resembled a fortress on Monday, the opening day of Parliament’s Monsoon Session. Barricades, rapid response teams, and multi-layered security cordons choked the high-security zone. The target of this overwhelming state apparatus was not a foreign threat, but thousands of youth, students, and citizens participating in the “Chalo Sansad” march. Organized to demand accountability over persistent irregularities, paper leaks, and corruption in competitive examinations, the rally became a lightning rod for the deep-seated anxieties of India’s younger demographic. However, the state’s response—marked by pre-emptive detentions, the imposition of Section 163 of the BNSS, tear gas, and baton charges—offered a sobering reflection on the narrowing space for public agitation in the heart of the republic.

The grievances animating the protest are legitimate and urgent. The recent wave of systemic failures in national level competitive examinations has compromised the futures of millions of aspiring students. When academic integrity crumbles, it destroys the social mobility of the middle and lower-middle classes who view these examinations as their singular pathway out of economic insecurity. The agitation at Jantar Mantar, bolstered by the hunger strikes of activists like Sonam Wangchuk and youth leaders, was a cry for institutional reform and basic accountability from the political leadership. Yet, the administrative machinery chose to treat these citizens as a law-and-order hazard rather than as aggrieved stakeholders in the nation’s future. The preventive shutdown of local metro stations, the reported disruption of internet services, and the swift detention of peaceful protesters at entry points like Patel Chowk and Mandi House expose a governance model that prioritizes cosmetic order over systemic engagement.

While the Delhi Police maintains that its response was professional and aimed at protecting high-security installations, the images of police personnel clashing with students paint a far more distressing picture of state overreach. A functioning democracy must not only tolerate dissent but must actively provide safe spaces for it to manifest. When the national capital transforms its high-security zone into an impenetrable bubble, it creates an unhealthy insulation between the elected representatives sitting inside Parliament and the citizens protesting on the streets. Restricting assemblies and issuing blankets of prohibitory orders during parliamentary sessions defeats the foundational purpose of a representative democracy, where the legislature is meant to echo the anxieties of the public, not shield itself from them.The “Chalo Sansad” rally should serve as a wake-up call for the government. The unrest among the youth cannot be lathi-charged into oblivion, nor can structural failures in the education system be managed through public relations spin. The administrative and political leadership must pivot from hostility to dialogue. Initiating talks with the organizers is a necessary first step, but it must be followed by genuine legislative accountability and deep-seated reforms in our examination boards. If the state continues to meet peaceful civil expressions with tear gas and heavy-handed blockades, it risks alienating an entire generation of young citizens who are simply asking for fairness, meritocracy, and their right to be heard.

THE SENTINEL OF WORDS

A poet does not write to fill empty hours. He writes to awaken the humanity sleeping beneath history.

He is not a merchant of words. He is a farmer of souls, a labourer of language, a silent architect of tomorrow.

His ink is never bought. It is gathered from the sweat of the farmer, from the blood of the soldier, from the tears of a mother, from the breath of a worker, from the dust of the earth, and from the hope that refuses to die.

That is why his poems are not written to be admired. They are written to be lived.

The sanitation worker cleans the streets. The poet cleanses the forgotten chambers of the human heart.

The farmer plants grain to feed the body. The poet plants truth to feed the soul.

One harvest feeds a season. One poem can nourish centuries.

The potter shapes clay. The weaver preserves dignity. The physician heals wounds. The soldier guards borders. The poet guards the frontier where humanity meets conscience.

The mountains teach him courage. The trees teach him generosity. The rivers teach him perseverance. The earth teaches humility. Silence teaches him to hear the voices history forgets.

He does not write for applause. He does not write for awards. He does not write for fame. He writes because truth deserves a voice, and hope deserves a future.

His words become a compass for the lost, a bridge between earth and sky, a lamp for those walking through darkness, a seed for unborn generations, and a mirror in which every civilization must one day see itself.



A true poem carries the vigilance of a soldier, the patience of a farmer, the compassion of a mother, the healing of a physician, the devotion of a weaver, the imagination of a potter, and the humility of the earth itself. Only then does poetry become life.

Awards are forged from metal. Statues are carved from stone. Certificates fade. Empires collapse. Names are forgotten.

But a poem that becomes someone’s courage, someone’s bread, someone’s conscience, someone’s hope, someone’s tomorrow can never perish.

For a true poet never dies. The body returns to the earth. The poem does not.

It keeps breathing wherever a child discovers hope, a soldier remembers home, a farmer sows tomorrow, a mother sings to her child, or one human being chooses compassion over silence.

Then Time itself lays down its crown and whispers:

He was never merely a poet. He became humanity’s conscience.

That is poetry. That is eternity. That is the immortality of a true poet.

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



Parliament’s Monsoon Session

TIRUPATI ECONOMIC REGION: DRIVING RAYALASEEMA’S ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The Andhra Pradesh Government has taken another significant step toward accelerating the economic development of Rayalaseema by initiating the Tirupati Economic Region (TER), following the launch of the Rayalaseema Horticulture Hub. The initiative aims to promote balanced regional growth, attract investments, strengthen infrastructure, and generate employment across southern Andhra Pradesh.

Economic regions are geographically defined areas identified on the basis of economic activities, resource availability, industrial development, and growth potential. Such regions help governments reduce regional disparities, encourage industrialisation, improve infrastructure, create jobs, attract investments, ensure sustainable resource utilisation, and promote the unique strengths of different areas. Across India, each economic region has distinct strengths. The Northern Region is known for agriculture, manufacturing, and services; the Western Region serves as the country’s industrial and financial hub; the Southern Region leads in information technology, electronics, and automobiles; the Eastern Region is rich in minerals, coal, and steel production; the Central Region focuses on mining, power generation, and agriculture; while the Northeastern Region is developing through agriculture, tourism, handicrafts, and natural resources.

Andhra Pradesh’s Three Economic Regions

To promote balanced development, the Andhra Pradesh Government has divided the state into three major economic regions:

Visakhapatnam Economic Region
Amaravati Economic Region
Tirupati Economic Region

The Tirupati Economic Region has been designed primarily to accelerate development in Rayalaseema and Nellore.

Nine Districts Under TER
The Tirupati Economic Region comprises nine districts:

Tirupati, Nellore, Chittoor
Annamayya, Kadapa, Nandyal
Kurnool, Anantapur, Sri Sathya Sai



Tirupati serves as the headquarters and growth centre of the region. The city has emerged as a rapidly expanding industrial, tourism, educational, spiritual, and infrastructure hub, supported by new investments and large-scale development projects.

Economic Strengths of the Region

Each district contributes unique economic strengths:

- Tirupati:** Tourism, hospitality, electronics manufacturing, education, healthcare
- Nellore:** Aquaculture, seafood exports, thermal power, logistics, manufacturing
- Chittoor:** Dairy, food processing, textiles, automobile components
- Annamayya:** Agriculture, horticulture, food processing, mineral-based industries
- Kadapa & Nandyal:** Cement manufacturing, limestone mining; Kadapa also has steel and solar energy projects
- Kurnool:** Cement, pharmaceuticals, seed production, renewable energy
- Anantapur:** Automobile manufacturing, renewable energy, textiles, agro-processing
- Sri Sathya Sai:** Electronics manufacturing, wind and solar power, food processing, textiles

The region’s economy is further strengthened by:
Revenue generated through the Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Temple tourism ecosystem.
Industrial production and exports from the Sri City Industrial Area.
Expansion of renewable energy parks across Rayalaseema.

Improved road and railway connectivity. Growth in agriculture, horticulture, and food-processing industries. These developments are positioning the Tirupati Economic Region as a major growth engine for Andhra Pradesh.

Challenges Before India’s Economic Regions
Despite rapid growth, India’s economic regions continue to face several structural challenges:

- Persistent regional economic disparities, with western and southern India contributing over 60% of GDP, while eastern, central, and northeastern regions contribute less than 20%.
- High logistics costs (around 13–14% of GDP) due to inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure.
- Unemployment and underemployment leading to migration toward economically advanced cities.
- Heavy dependence on agriculture in several regions, making them vulnerable to climate change and low productivity.
- Uneven industrial investment concentrated in a few states.

Addressing these issues requires better infrastructure, diversified industrial growth, balanced investment policies, skill development, and sustainable agricultural practices.

The Way Forward
For economic regions to succeed, governments should:

- Increase investments in roads, railways, ports, and digital infrastructure.
- Expand industrial corridors and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- Strengthen skill development and vocational training.
- Support MSMEs, agriculture, and food-processing industries.
- Promote renewable energy projects.
- Develop region-specific policies based on local resources and comparative advantages.

The Tirupati Economic Region has the potential to transform Rayalaseema into a leading industrial, tourism, logistics, and renewable energy hub. By leveraging its diverse economic strengths and improving infrastructure, the region can play a pivotal role in achieving balanced regional development and supporting Andhra Pradesh’s long-term economic growth.



DR. P. SUBRAMANYACHARY
Professor, School of Commerce and Management, Mohan Babu University

MOON’S FOOTPRINTS: THE IMMORTALITY OF HUMAN ASPIRATION



The first step that humanity took towards the Moon has not remained mere history even today. It continues as a priceless inspiration, expanding the horizons of our future. Nations across the world are now moving forward with long-term visions — establishing permanent bases on the Moon’s southern pole, extracting water from its ice and converting it into fuel, and using the Moon as a launchpad for human missions to Mars.

Programmes like Artemis, which will see women astronauts set foot on the lunar surface, and the construction of the Lunar Gateway Station through international co-operation, are breathing new life into humanity’s collective adventure. This is not just a technological triumph, but a magnificent opportunity to preserve Earth’s resources, gather fresh knowledge from the universe, and make human life more sustainable. In this journey, countries like India are emerging as bridges of global co-operation through their indigenous technology.

The International Moon Day, in this context, sends a clear message to the youth — it is not enough to merely dream; we must move forward with scientific thinking, team spirit, and a sense of responsibility towards the Earth to turn those dreams into reality. Only then can we truly carry forward the step taken by Neil Armstrong.

On 20 July 1969, one of the most wondrous events in human history unfolded. Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon and declared to the world, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” In honour of this historic moment, the United Nations observes 21 July as International Moon Day.

The Moon has lived in human culture for thousands of years — in the farmer’s sowing of seeds, in the poet’s moving pen, in a mother’s lullaby, and in the painter’s imagination. He has been a silent companion. From calendars that measure time to literature where he symbolises love, his influence has spread far and wide. But science did not see the Moon merely as a symbol of beauty; it viewed him as a celestial world to be explored. This perspective led human civilisation from imagination to investigation.

The resolve to reach the Moon was not

born in a single day. It was built on decades of research, the toil of thousands of scientists, countless failed experiments, and innumerable technical challenges. Finally, America’s NASA, through the Apollo-11 mission, opened a new chapter in human history. On 21 July 1969 (Indian time), astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first human to step on the Moon. Shortly after, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin also walked on the lunar surface. Michael Collins, orbiting the Moon in the Command Module, played a crucial role in the mission’s success.

Neil Armstrong’s personal style was marked by great humility. Even though he became the first person to step on the Moon and captured the attention of the entire world, he never claimed the glory for himself alone. He always believed that the real mantra behind the victory was teamwork. He made it clear that the blood and sweat of four lakh engineers, workers, and scientists who worked behind the scenes along with NASA were responsible for that success.

During the final moments of the Apollo-11 lunar module Eagle’s descent, the computer got overloaded and technical problems arose. Fuel remained for just sixty seconds. In that tense situation, without a trace of panic, Armstrong took manual control, carefully observed the rocky terrain, and safely landed the module in a secure spot. His calm nature, extraordinary presence of mind, and courage were the foundation of this achievement.

After the mission, despite receiving global acclaim and numerous royal honours, and having plenty of opportunities to enter politics and occupy high positions, he chose the quiet profession of a teacher. He joined as a Professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Cincinnati and dedicated himself to sharing knowledge with generations of students. He humbly described himself as merely an engineer and scientist, nothing more.

Today, the importance of the Moon has grown even further. What was once just about reaching it has now evolved into plans for permanent research stations. Scientists are drawn towards new explorations — traces of water in the form of ice, mineral wealth, possibilities for fuel, and using the Moon as a stepping stone for journeys to other planets. India has written history by becoming the first country to successfully land on the Moon’s southern polar region through Chandrayaan-3. This achievement, made with limited resources, is a shining example of what self-reliance, determination, and hard work can accomplish.

Space research is not limited to scientists alone. Its impact is visible across many fields — from agriculture to disaster management, from education to information technology. Investment in space research is not an expense; it is an investment in the future.

Yet, even as science advances, superstitions continue to spread in new forms.

Therefore, we must expand programmes in schools that nurture a scientific temperament — astronomy camps, visits to science centres, and efforts that ignite curiosity for research. Only children who learn to question will become tomorrow’s scientists.

Literature and science may travel different paths, but their goal is the same — to expand human thought. The poet sees the Moon through emotion; the scientist through investigation. Both are explorations. One measures the depths of the heart, the other the depths of the universe. Literature without science is incomplete; science without the touch of literature is lifeless. The harmony of these two is the true strength of a creative society.

Every astronaut who has seen the Earth from space has conveyed the same message — what we see are not national borders, but one single Earth. That sight instils humility in human beings. International Moon Day reminds us once again to protect nature, choose peace over war, and use knowledge for human welfare rather than destruction.

21 July is not merely a historical date for us; it is a symbol of human resolve. The first step Neil Armstrong placed on the Moon did not fall only on the lunar soil — it echoes in every child’s dream, every scientist’s research, every student’s aspiration, and every nation’s developmental vision. This day reminds us that to conquer the universe, we must first conquer ignorance. Looking at the Moon is an experience, but understanding the Moon is a responsibility. Only a society that accepts this responsibility can build tomorrow’s world.



CHITKENA KIRAN KUMAR
Eminent Poet,
Writer & Editorial Columnist
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CM Yogi Adityanath orders flood, drought safety measures

LUCKNOW, JULY 20

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to ensure the safety and well-being of every citizen as the state faces the dual challenge of floods and drought due to irregular rainfall. The Chief Minister stressed that agricultural activities must not be disrupted in districts with below-normal rainfall. He ordered maximum use of canals, reservoirs, and government tube wells, along with real-time monitoring of sowing and irrigation.

Joint action plans by the agriculture and irrigation departments were mandated to provide immediate relief to farmers wherever sowing is threatened.

In flood-prone districts, CM Yogi directed that relief camps be fully prepared within three days, ensuring fresh food, clean water, medical facilities, and sanitation. Milk supplies for children and special care for women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and pregnant women were emphasised. Larger boats are to be arranged where necessary, with trained "Aapda Mitras" deployed extensively. District magistrates must personally monitor relief operations. The Relief Commissioner's office control room will remain operational 24 hours a day, with hourly updates sent to the Chief Minister's office, the DGP office, and relief agencies. District-level dashboards will track the evolving situation.

Delhi Health Minister reviews hospital readiness for Monsoon diseases

NEW DELHI, JUL 20

Delhi Health Minister Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh on Monday directed all government hospitals in the national capital to remain on high alert for monsoon-related illnesses, including dengue, malaria and chikungunya, while ensuring uninterrupted availability of medicines, diagnostic services and other essential healthcare facilities. Chairing a high-level review meeting with senior Health Department officials, Singh assessed the preparedness of Delhi's government healthcare system amid the ongoing monsoon season. The meeting focused on strengthening healthcare delivery across government hospitals and ensuring that patients continue to receive timely and quality medical care. The minister instructed officials to maintain adequate stocks of essential medicines and ensure that all diagnostic and laboratory investigations remain functional without interruption in every government hospital. "Every government hospital must maintain adequate stocks of medicines and ensure uninterrupted availability of essential diagnostic and laboratory services. Citizens visiting our hospitals should receive timely treatment and quality healthcare services without any inconvenience," Singh said during the meeting.

Sharavathi project crucial for K'taka's power needs: Shivakumar

BENGALURU, JULY 20

In a major decisive move, Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday announced that the Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project is vital to meeting the state's future electricity requirements and that the government would pursue its implementation.

He was speaking after inaugurating the 57th Foundation Day celebrations of Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) held at the Jnana Jyothi Auditorium of Bengaluru City University on Palace Road. "The groundwork for the Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project had been initiated long ago, but it did not materialise then. Efforts are

now underway to implement it, and the required statutory clearances are being obtained. Although some people are raising objections, we will not retreat from a project that is crucial for the state," he said.

Recalling a similar experience, the Chief Minister said that when KPCL proposed the gas-based power plant at Yelahanka, there was considerable opposition. However, the project was implemented in the state's interest and is now generating electricity.

Referring to the Pavagada Solar Park, Shivakumar said that instead of purchasing land from farmers, they were made stakeholders in the project, making it a model for the entire country. The park is currently generating



2,000 MW of electricity, and farmers in the region have now come forward to provide another 10,000 acres for its expansion. Work on the expansion will begin shortly.

"The state government is providing free electricity to 1.61 crore households under the Gruha Jyothi Scheme, and KPCL has played a vital role in making the scheme a suc-

cess. The government spends around Rs 10,000 crore annually on Gruha Jyothi.

Similarly, it provides Rs 20,000 crore every year as subsidy for free electricity to agricultural pump sets. Together, these two initiatives have resulted in savings of nearly Rs 30,000 crore for the people of the state," the Chief Minister added.

Calling upon everyone to contribute to Karnataka's progress, Shivakumar said KPCL employees should take pride in being "Team Karnataka" and work together for the state's development and prosperity. It can be noted that the Sharavathi Pumped Storage Hydropower Project (SPSHP) is a proposed pumped-storage power plant to be built along

the course of the Sharavathi River in the Western Ghats. It would have an installed capacity of 2,000 MWe and would use Francis turbines.

The project was put on hold and is under review by the Government of India citing environmental concerns. If built, it would be one of the largest pumped storage hydroelectric projects in the country. Around 15,000 trees across 57 hectares of land were planned to be cut down for the project, many of which are endangered or threatened species, potentially leading to an ecological disaster. Environmental activists have opposed the project and demanded that the Central Government Gazette cancel it completely.

Sikkim Budget Focuses on Infrastructure, Tourism and Healthcare

GANGTOK, JULY 20



Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Monday presented a Rs 18,455-crore Budget for the financial year 2026-27, laying out an ambitious roadmap centred on infrastructure creation, healthcare, education, sustainable tourism and fiscal discipline as the Himalayan state seeks to realise its long-term vision of becoming a high-income economy under the "Viksit Sikkim @2047" initiative.

CM Tamang, who also holds the Finance portfolio, tabled the Budget in the Assembly, projecting the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at Rs 62,973 crore. The government has targeted annual economic growth of over 13 per cent while emphasising environmental sustainability and prudent financial management. Marking the opening of the Budget Session, Tamang and members of his Cabinet attended the Assembly in traditional Lepcha attire, responding to Speaker Mingma Norbu Sherpa's appeal that legislators wear the traditional dress of Sikkim's ethnic communities during the four-day session.

A major feature of the Budget is the allocation of Rs 5,896 crore towards capital expenditure, signalling the government's emphasis on creating long-term public assets. The proposed investments include construction of nearly 570 km of climate-resilient roads using mastic asphalt technology, modernisation of the state's electricity distribution network with assistance from the Asian Development Bank, development of satellite townships around Gangtok and expansion of urban infrastructure. The government has also proposed major tourism projects, including the Bhaleydunga ropeway and skywalk, the Singshore adventure tourism project, improved visitor infrastructure at Nathula and

several eco-tourism initiatives. Plans have also been announced for the Swarna Jayanti Integrated Sports and Cultural Village and a world-class convention centre to promote MICE tourism and destination weddings. Healthcare has emerged as another priority sector. The Budget provides for operationalising Sikkim's first Government Medical College with 100 MBBS seats, launching the state's first renal transplant programme, expanding HPV screening for women and introducing fertility treatment facilities at STNM Hospital.

The education sector has been allocated nearly 15 per cent of the total Budget. The government also proposed legislative reforms relating to private universities, open schooling and vocational education to improve employability and align education with future workforce requirements.

In agriculture, the state announced an additional subsidy that will reduce the effective interest rate on Kisan Credit Card crop loans to one per cent for eligible farmers. The government also reiterated its commitment to revive large cardamom cultivation under the "Mero Alaichi, Mero Dhan" mission.

Highlighting improvements in public health, the government said Sikkim's suicide rate has declined by nearly 15.8 per cent, from 43.1 per lakh population in 2022 to 36.3 in 2024, attributing the reduction to strengthened counselling services and expanded mental health interventions.

Delhi Police Destroy ₹897-Crore Drug Haul

NEW DELHI, JULY 19

In one of the biggest narcotics destruction drives, the Delhi Police on Monday destroyed 1452 kg of drugs, with its international market value standing at Rs 897 crore.

The destruction of drugs, the tenth such event, was carried out jointly by Delhi Police and the Crime Branch in the presence of several senior officials, highlighting the city government's 'zero tolerance' towards drugs.

With the destruction of 1452 kg of narcotic drugs worth ₹ 897 crore today, the

total volume of drugs seized and destroyed has reached 49,663 kg worth ₹ 14,799 crore in the international market. The drive was undertaken after the declaration of 'Drug-Free' India as a national goal by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the policy of 'Zero Tolerance' articulated by the Home Minister Amit Shah. The drugs destroyed today included - 1,010 kg of officials, highlighting the city government's 'zero tolerance' towards drugs.

With the destruction of 1452 kg of narcotic drugs worth ₹ 897 crore today, the



over 36 thousand bottles of codeine syrup and other psychotropic substances seized during various operations and

drives. Speaking on the occasion, Sh. H.G.S Dhalwal, IPS, Special Commissioner of Police, Delhi Crime Branch underlined that the event was not merely about destroying seized narcotic substances, but dismantling an ecosystem that threatens youth's future, weakens families and harms the future of the society as a whole. Delhi Police is working rigorously on a 'Zero-Tolerance Policy' against narcotics and is committed to eradicating drugs from their roots. It has taken

strict measures against smugglers/traffickers/peddlers of drugs and narcotics.

"Through initiatives like 'Operation Kavach' and various other rigorous narcotic detections, operations as well as seizure of high-quality drugs and Drug Destruction program, we have taken significant steps to curb drug trafficking and aim to uproot this menace completely. CP/Delhi has also tasked & sensitised all ranks to make concerted and focused efforts to make Delhi drug-free," said an official statement by Delhi Police.

MP to Revive Guru-Shishya Tradition in Schools

BHOPAL, JULY 20

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday directed the School Education Department to use this year's Guru Purnima celebrations to promote the Indian knowledge system and the guru-shishya tradition in schools in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Reviewing preparations for Guru Purnima, which will be observed on July 29, the Chief Minister instructed officials to organise state-wide programmes under the banner of 'Maharshi Sandipani Shraddha Parv' and ensure the participation

of educational institutions across the state. Yadav said Guru Pujan programmes should be organised in all schools and colleges, with local public representatives invited to participate. He also directed officials to familiarise students with the lives and values of Lord Krishna and Sudama as part of the celebrations.

He stated that Guru Purnima is a festival of serving, honouring and seeking the blessings of teachers. In accordance with the objectives of NEP 2020, the ideals of the Indian knowledge system and the guru-shishya tradition should be widely propagated. The Chief Minister



asked the School Education Department to publish a booklet on Maharshi Sandipani, his contribution to education and the Gurukul system. The booklet will be distributed in schools to help students understand India's traditional knowledge system and educational heritage. He also direct-

ed officials to complete the inauguration of all remaining Sandipani school buildings before Guru Purnima so that they can be part of the statewide celebrations. Officials were instructed to ensure that 'Maharshi Sandipani Shraddha Parv' is celebrated across Madhya Pradesh with public participation and activities highlighting Indian cultural values and the importance of the teacher-disciple tradition. Yadav said the festival should become one of public participation, stressing that it is the collective responsibility to strengthen respect for teachers, reinforce faith in Indian cultural values and firm-

ly establish the ideals of the guru-shishya tradition among the younger generation. Guru Purnima is observed every year to honour teachers and spiritual guides. The Madhya Pradesh government has been promoting Maharshi Sandipani, revered in the Hindu tradition as the guru of Lord Krishna, through various educational initiatives.

This year's celebrations will be linked to the implementation of NEP 2020 and will focus on value-based education, the Indian knowledge system and the preservation of the country's traditional educational heritage.

Odisha CM Announces ₹10 Lakh Ex-Gratia for Rath Yatra Victims' Families

BHUBANESWAR, JULY 20



Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday announced ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh each for the next of kin of the two devotees who died during this year's Rath Yatra in Puri on July 16. "Chief Minister @MohanMODisha has expressed deep grief over the demise of Anil Das of Katakata and Ashok Subare Raikar of Mumbai, who passed away while undergoing treatment after falling ill in Puri on July 16. The Chief Minister has also announced financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh each from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for the next of kin of the deceased," informed the CMO.

The state government had earlier confirmed the death of two devotees during the Rath Yatra but denied allegations that a stampede had occurred during the festival.

Following the incident, the state government noted, "during the course of the festival, seven persons felt unwell and were immediately evacuated by the deployed personnel and shifted to the hospital without delay. Among them, one male devotee aged above 60 years unfortunately succumbed."

The government also added that in a separate and unrelated incident, a male devotee aged above 35 years had a cardiac arrest and, despite immediate medical intervention, unfortunately passed away. Besides, many devotees who became unwell due to incessant rain-induced illness were given medical treatment at the hospital and were discharged after proper medical treatment.

The incident triggered widespread outrage, with opposition leaders accusing

the state government of serious lapses in crowd management that allegedly led to the deaths of the devotees.

The opposition also alleged that the state government is trying to suppress the stampede incident in which three devotees died while over 350 others sustained injuries.

The main opposition BJD claimed that during the Rath Yatra on July 16, four critically injured devotees were brought to the Puri District Headquarters Hospital following the stampede near Marichikote Chowk on the Grand Road (Bada Danda) of Puri.

The party also alleged that the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO), Puri, declared three of them dead while the post-mortem reports clearly established that the three devotees died due to the stampede.

"What is even more surprising is that every possible attempt is being made to cover up the administrative lapses by attributing the incident to 'Lord Jagannath's will.' This is highly condemnable. We demand a judicial inquiry into the stampede that occurred during the Ghosa Yatra (Rath Yatra). The government should now ensure that all rituals and religious ceremonies of Lord Jagannath, from the upcoming Bahuda Yatra to Niladri Bije, are conducted smoothly and without any disruption," demanded BJD.

Landslide kills seven members of a family in Poonch as heavy rain batters J&K

The Poonch landslide was among several rain-related incidents reported across Jammu and Kashmir. At least 11 people were killed on Monday, taking the total death toll from the past two days to 23.



Seven members of a family, including two children, were buried alive after a landslide triggered by heavy rainfall brought down their mud house in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Monday. The incident took place in the upper reaches of Loran in Poonch, where the victims were trapped under debris after their house collapsed. Villagers later recovered the bodies of all seven deceased. The victims were identified as Zahida Begum (38), her children Manan Rafiq and Aleesa (aged six and four), her brother-in-law Tanveer Ahmad Bhat (27), sisters-in-law Shamim Akhter (33) and Shabnam Bano (31),

and nephew Mohd Irfan (17), officials said. They were residents of Arigam village in Mandi tehsil. Expressing grief over the incident, Jammu and Kashmir Governor Manoj Sinha conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families. He also directed senior officials to provide immediate relief and assistance to those affected.

RAIN-RELATED DEATH TOLL RISES TO 23

The Poonch landslide was among several rain-related incidents reported across Jammu and Kashmir. At least

11 people were killed on Monday, taking the total death toll from the past two days to 23.

In Doda district, two people died after a passenger bus was hit by a boulder that rolled down from a hillock near Raggi Nallah along the Jammu-Kishtwar National Highway. Six people were injured in the incident reported around 9.30 am. The highway remained blocked for a prolonged period after multiple vehicles were hit by falling rocks, though no casualties were reported in that incident. In another incident

in Doda's Kashtigarh area, a woman identified as Shiv Devi was killed after being hit by a falling stone near her house. In Rajouri, the body of Vikas Ahmed, who was swept away in flash floods, was recovered from the river near the Salani area of Rajouri town.

RAINFALL HAMPER RESCUE EFFORTS

Seven people were reported missing as continuous rainfall hampered rescue and relief operations in the affected districts of Poonch and Rajouri. The fresh spell of rainfall began around 3 am on Monday in the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri and continued intermittently through the day. Officials said heavy rain over the past two days has caused extensive damage to public and private infrastructure. Ten people have died and six remain missing in Poonch, while two deaths and one missing person have been reported from Rajouri. Rescue operations are being

carried out by teams from the police, Army, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), civil defence personnel and local volunteers. However, swollen streams, slippery terrain and poor visibility have slowed down the operations.

CM ANNOUNCES COMPENSATION

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday announced an ex gratia compensation of Rs 6 lakh for the next of kin of those who died in rain-related incidents. A government spokesperson said the relief package includes Rs 4 lakh from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and an additional Rs 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF). With the weather department forecasting moderate to heavy rainfall till July 23, CM Abdullah has directed district administrations to submit situation reports every six hours until July 24 to ensure coordinated monitoring of the situation.

India developing partnerships amid concerns about US commitments in Indo-Pacific

NEW DELHI

India is increasing engagement with Indo-Pacific middle powers as uncertainty is rising about the future of US security commitments in Asia. According to analysts, India is developing partnerships that enables nations with different strategic interests to cooperate without joining a formal alliance, a report has detailed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a visit to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand from July 6-11, where India signed several agreements with these Indo-Pacific nations to boost defence, maritime security and trade ties.

His three-nation visit came after the Japanese Prime Min-

ister Sanae Takaichi's visit to India from July 1-3, her first to New Delhi after assuming office. During the visit, PM Takaichi and PM Modi signed several agreements, including their first-ever joint defence co-development project.

According to a report in the South China Morning Post, Srinivasan Balakrishnan, Director of Strategic Engagements and Partnerships at Delhi-based security think tank 'Indic Researchers Forum', believes that India's approach showcases a preference for flexible partnerships over Cold War-style alliance structures.

"This is not Cold War-style containment but a practical, multi-aligned network that fills the vacuum left by fluc-

tuating US commitments," South China Morning Post quoted Balakrishnan as saying. He opined that India could use its credibility as a "non-hegemonic power" to become a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific.

During Prime Minister Modi's State Visit to Jakarta, India and Indonesia concluded 20 comprehensive agreements and outcome documents aimed at strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors.

Wide-ranging discussions between PM Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto focused extensively on defence exports, maritime connectivity, critical minerals, digital public infrastructure and trade.



As part of the defence cooperation, Indonesia agreed to expand its inventory of Indian-made BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles by acquiring additional missile batteries.

Jakarta also decided to procure India's indigenous Astra Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (BVRAAM), which will be integrated into Indonesia's Su-30 fighter air-

craft by Bharat Dynamics Limited. The two countries also finalised an agreement for the joint development of the strategically important Sabang Port.

During his visit to Melbourne, PM Modi and Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese finalised the Administrative Arrangement, which enables long-term exports of Australian uranium to India for peaceful purposes.

The two leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to an open and rules-based Indo-Pacific. They strongly opposed any destabilising or unilateral action to change the status quo and undermine regional peace and stability, the joint statement released following the third Australia

India Annual Summit had detailed. PM Modi had then travelled to Auckland, where he and his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon finalised a bilateral free-trade pact.

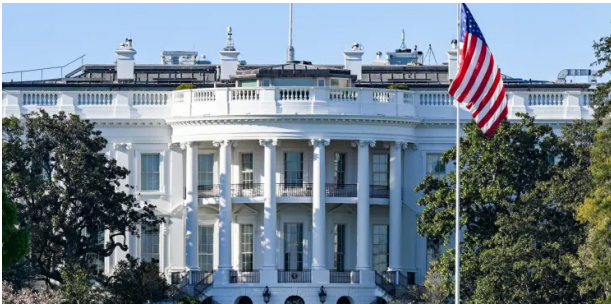
Srinivasan Balakrishnan stated that these agreements "clearly signal a proactive new playbook", with PM Modi's visit aimed at advancing concrete outcomes.

Earlier in May, India and Vietnam elevated their ties to Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during President To Lam's State Visit to New Delhi. Balakrishnan said that elevation of ties reflected India and Vietnam's shared Indo-Pacific security concerns and greater economic integration.

Balakrishnan said India was strengthening ties with Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand through joint defence exercises and quietly bolstering maritime security.

"India's outreach comes amid concerns regarding the US commitment to security in the Indo-Pacific region stemming from recent political rhetoric and trade frictions with Washington.

These concerns also include the US renaming of its Indo-Pacific Command – one of the largest unified military commands – to the US Pacific Command, which Indian observers worry downplays Delhi's central role in strategic planning in the region," the report in South China Morning Post highlighted.



US says Cuba aided global anti-US network

WASHINGTON

Cuba has acted as a force multiplier for China, Russia, Iran and other American adversaries while maintaining influence networks inside the United States, the US State Department alleged Monday.

The accusation is contained in a 70-page State Department report titled "Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism". It examines what the department describes as Havana's sustained campaign of espionage, infiltration and ideological subversion against the United States.

"For more than six decades, the Cuban regime has been the leading sponsor of radical leftism and Third Worldism in the United States. The State Department is exposing the full history of Cuban espionage and subversion in our country. The American people deserve to know," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

The report alleges that Cuba developed an unconventional model of conflict because it lacked the military capacity to defeat the United States in a conventional war. That model, it says, relied on espionage, infiltration, sabotage, proxy networks and a revolutionary infrastructure inside America.

Cuban agents infiltrated senior levels of the State Department, the National Security Council and the Pentagon and operated undetected for de-

CADES, according to the report. It also accuses Cuba of training and arming tens of thousands of left-wing guerrillas, overseeing violent insurgencies abroad and backing extremist attacks in the United States.

The island, the department says, became a refuge for American fugitives wanted for bombings, armed robberies and murders. The department says Havana's influence extended beyond traditional espionage. Beginning in the 1960s, Cuba allegedly recruited and cultivated activists, intellectuals and political groups while helping shape movements ranging from the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground to Antifa.

The report alleges that parts of this network continue to have ties to left-wing non-profit organisations, anti-ICE collectives, socialist groups and Marxist militant organisations in the United States.

It identifies the Cuban Institute of Friendship with Peoples (ICAP), National Network on Cuba (NNoC), National Lawyers Guild, The People's Forum and Code Pink as organisations within what it calls a Cuba-aligned network. The material released by the department does not contain responses from Cuba or the named organisations. The report says Havana has also forged or deepened partnerships with foreign governments and movements hostile to Washington.

Flash floods kill 20, leave over 100 missing in eastern Afghanistan

KABUL

At least 20 people were killed, around 80 others injured and more than 100 remain missing after flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall struck Nuristan province in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, a government official said. Yousuf Hammad, spokesperson for Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, said in a post on X that the floods caused heavy casualties in the province.

He said officials from the provincial disaster management department had arrived in the affected areas and launched search-and-rescue operations, including efforts to recover the bodies of victims, rescue the injured and search for those missing, Xinhua

News Agency reported. Preliminary figures on casualties and property losses will be released after investigations and damage assessments are completed, Hammad added.

In a separate statement posted on X, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Afghan government, expressed condolences to the families of those killed and stressed the need to speed up ongoing search-and-rescue operations. According to local authorities, Parun, the provincial capital of Nuristan, was the worst-hit area, with numerous houses and infrastructure facilities damaged by the floods.

On June 9 the Afghanistan authorities announced that At least 301 people have lost their lives



and 385 others sustained injuries from seasonal flash floods and related natural disasters sweeping across Afghanistan in the span of 10 weeks. The disasters have also wreaked widespread devastation on infrastructure and livelihoods, according to Hafiz Mohammad Yusuf Hammad, spokesperson for the country's National Disaster Management Authority. Nearly 2,000 homes have been completely razed, while an additional 7,187 have sustained partial damage, said Hammad, adding that around 580 km of roads have been washed away, and agricultural produce spanning more than 30,300 acres of farmland has been submerged or destroyed.

EAM Jaishankar and Uzbek FM discuss deepening bilateral ties



NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Monday stated that he had a good conversation with his Uzbek counterpart, Bakhtiyor Saidov, and discussed deepening India-Uzbekistan bilateral ties. "A good conversation with Bakhtiyor Saidov of Uzbekistan today. We spoke about deepening our bilateral ties, including in trade, investment and other areas," EAM Jaishankar wrote on X.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Bakhtiyor Saidov noted that he had a substantive phone conversation with EAM Jaishankar and agreed to continue regular dialogue.

He said bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and India, based on a strategic partnership, continue to develop steadily across all areas of cooperation.

He added that both sides also exchanged views on the schedule of upcoming bilateral engagements at the highest and high levels, as well as on further strengthening cooperation within international organisations. He emphasised that the two countries agreed to continue close, trust-based, and regular dialogue between their foreign ministries.

Last month, India and Uz-

bekistan agreed to deepen trade ties, address non-tariff barriers, and work towards doubling bilateral trade over the next three years, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Rajesh Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Commerce, co-chaired the 14th Session of the India-Uzbekistan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation with Shokhrukh Gulamov, Deputy Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan.

The meeting was held in Tashkent, with the Indian co-chair participating through video conference. "The Commission discussed several product categories where Indian exports to Uzbekistan can be expanded.

These include pharmaceuticals, medical devices, agricultural products, processed foods, agricultural machinery, engineering goods, electrical machinery, electronics, smartphones, automobiles and auto components, tractor accessories, textiles and textile machinery, chemicals, healthcare services, education services, tourism, logistics and other business services," the statement said.

Pakistani forces forcibly disappear four civilians in Balochistan

QUETTA

Another four civilians, including a minor girl, were forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces in Balochistan, leading human rights organisations alleged on Monday. Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, strongly condemned the enforced disappearances of three Baloch civilians across the province, stating that these incidents reflect an ongoing human rights crisis that requires immediate attention from the international community.

The victims were identified as 27-year-old Dilshad Baloch, 80-year-old farmer Azam Baloch and a student Zahid Baloch. The rights body noted that the civilians were abducted by Pakistani forces from across the province between July 5 and 17.

Expressing grave concern over the continuing pattern of



"arbitrary deprivation of liberty", Paank called on the Pakistani authorities to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of the three missing persons.

"They must be afforded all legal safeguards, including prompt access to their families, lawyers, and necessary medical care, and either be charged with a recognisable criminal offence and brought before an independent court, or released immediately and unconditionally if they are being held solely in violation of their fundamental rights," the rights body added.

Meanwhile, another human rights body, Baloch Voice for Justice (BVJ), on Monday sharply criticised the enforced disappearance of a 16-year-old first-year female student, Rizwana Baloch, by personnel of Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Department on June 28 from the provincial capital Quetta.

Describing the incident as one of the most disturbing manifestations of state repression, the BVJ alleged that the darkest chapter of Bangladesh's history is being repeated in Balochistan.

Additionally, the Baloch Women Forum (BWF) said that the enforced disappearance of Rizwana adds to the growing number of Baloch women who were forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces, including Khadija Baloch, Mahjabeen Baloch, Naseena Baloch and Habiba Baloch. "The increasing abduction of Baloch women and girls demonstrates that enforced disappearance has become a deliberate instrument of fear, intimidation and collective punishment against the Baloch nation. The targeting of women and even minors represents a dangerous escalation, violating the most fundamental principles of human dignity and justice," the BWF stated.

Pak military's coercive approach fails to bring stability in Balochistan: Report

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's reliance on an offensive, coercive approach has failed to bring lasting stability to Balochistan province, exposing the state's inability to move beyond the use of force and pursue a political solution built on dialogue, a report has stated.

While military operations such as 'Operation Shaban' showcase Pakistan's overwhelming use of force, they fail to address the root causes of the conflict. By prioritising coercive measures, meaningful political engagement and inclusive dialogue with regional stakeholders, the Pakistani authorities risk reducing tactical military gains to temporary fixes for a deeply entrenched political crisis, according to a report in the 'International Centre for Peace Studies' (ICPS).

"From 4 July to 8 July 2026, a wave of insurgent attacks swept through various districts of Balochistan Province. This included a raid aimed at targeting civilians near the provincial capital, an assault on a police checkpoint guarding important water infrastructure, and an ambush on



a key national highway. Approximately 42 people, including 38 security personnel and civilians, died as a result of this. These incidents throw up a pattern that is too coherent to be coincidental," the report detailed. "Reportedly, these attacks have been attributed to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) elements. These two groups are separated by ideology, ethnicity, and historical objective. However, they are becoming much more aligned in practice around a common rival, the Pakistani state. The Pakistani state responded with a multi-district counter-insurgency opera-

tion codenamed Operation Shaban, in which, by mid-July, over 100 militants had been killed," it added.

The report noted that the July attacks exposed structural weaknesses in Pakistan's counterinsurgency architecture, highlighting persistent gaps in territorial control, infrastructure security, and strategic mobility.

It argued that what distinguishes the July 2026 incident apart is the compressed timeline and the rapid escalation of events, which have exposed long-standing vulnerabilities in a new tactical context. Although 'Operation Shaban' — launched within a day of the

militant attack and carried out jointly by the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps, and provincial police — demonstrated the state's ability to deploy substantial kinetic force, the reactive nature of the response underscores deeper structural weaknesses, with significant force projected only after a major security breach.

"Also, it does not answer the more fundamental question the offensive raised, that is, whether Pakistan's counter-insurgency framework in Balochistan is structurally capable of anticipating, rather than merely avenging, the next coordinated challenge to its writ," the report stressed.

Tibet group urges US action against China

WASHINGTON

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) has urged the US Congress to pass legislation strengthening Washington's engagement with Tibet's elected leadership and called on the Trump administration to condemn China's new ethnic unity law.

The appeal came as the United States observed Captive Nations Week from July 19 to 25. The group said the occasion should be used to reaffirm bipartisan American support for the Tibetan people.

"Captive Nations Week reminds us that freedom cannot be taken for granted and calls on America to stand consistently with people who are denied their fundamental rights and act in solidarity with those who continue to defend it," ICT President Tencho Gyatso said.

The group asked Congress to pass the Assuring the Future of Tibet Act of 2026. The bill, H.R. 8982, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Democratic Congressman James P. McGovern and Republican Congressman Michael McCaul. The legislation would allow the US government to elevate its engagement with and recognition of the Central Tibetan Administration as the democratically



elected representative of the Tibetan people. It also seeks to ensure that US support for Tibet continues beyond the lifetime of the 14th Dalai Lama.

"At a time when Beijing has abandoned any pretence of offering autonomy for Tibetans and refuses to engage in dialogue with the Tibetan side, the United States needs to take a bold step forward in defence of freedom and democracy for the Tibetan people. This bill answers that call," Gyatso said when the measure was introduced. ICT also urged Washington to publicly condemn China's Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress Law, which came into force on July 1.

The organisation said the law expands policies aimed

at the forced assimilation of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians and other non-Chinese communities. It said the measure promotes Chinese-language dominance and ideological conformity while imposing restrictions on religion and expanding state control over education and culture. The law also contains provisions that have raised concerns about transnational repression, according to ICT.

The group called on the administration to raise the issue in bilateral engagements with Beijing and coordinate opposition through the United Nations and like-minded governments. It also sought stronger protections against transnational repression and greater

support for Tibetan language, religion, education and cultural preservation.

The appeal followed the death of Tibetan activist Lobzang Palden, widely known as Lobza Rangzen, who self-immolated outside the UN headquarters in New York on July 2. ICT said it was the first Tibetan self-immolation on US soil. Captive Nations Week was established by Congress in 1959 and proclaimed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to recognise people living under communist and authoritarian rule. Tibet was among the original captive nations named that year, months after China suppressed the Tibetan National Uprising and the Dalai Lama fled into exile.



Aastha Spintex to expand into value-added textile products

MUMBAI: (Jul 20) Gujarat-based integrated cotton yarn manufacturer Aastha Spintex plans to expand into forward integrated textile products, a statement said on Monday. The company is looking to strengthen its position in the textile value chain by expanding into value-added fabric products to drive its growth, it said. Divyang Jashwant Patel, Managing Director of Aastha Spintex Limited, said, "At Aastha Spintex, every phase of growth has been guided by a long-term vision of building a stronger and more integrated textile business. As we continue to strengthen our manufacturing capabilities, we believe this is the right time to move further along the textile value chain."

D P Abhushan posts 77 pc rise in Q1 PAT to Rs 64.45 crore

MUMBAI: (Jul 20) Jewellery retailer D P Abhushan on Monday reported 77 per cent growth in profit after tax at Rs 64.45 crore in the June quarter compared to the year-ago period. The company had posted a PAT of Rs 36.42 crore in Q1 FY26, D P Abhushan said in a statement. Total income for the quarter under review rose 58 per cent to Rs 853.63 crore from Rs 541.32 crore in the June quarter of the financial year ended March 31, 2026, the company said.

Rupee falls 6 paise to close 96.36 against US dollar

MUMBAI: (Jul 20) The rupee fell 6 paise to 96.36 against the US dollar on Monday, on risk aversion in global markets and a surge in crude oil prices. Forex traders said escalating US-Iran conflict and rising US Treasury yields weighed on the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 96.53 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 96.35 to 96.53 during the day. The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 96.36, down 6 paise from its previous close.

MONEY MATTERS
HDFC Bank, Axis Bank fall up to 6%: Why are bank stocks falling today?

The disappointing reaction to bank earnings was not the only factor weighing on the sector.

Banking stocks remained under heavy selling pressure on Monday afternoon, dragging the Nifty Bank down more than 1.5%, as investors gave a thumbs down to the June-quarter earnings of HDFC Bank and Axis Bank despite healthy loan growth and profit numbers. At around 12.55 pm, HDFC Bank was down 5.1% at Rs 778, while Axis Bank had plunged 5.7% to Rs 1,252.80. Kotak Mahindra Bank also fell 2.6% to Rs 379.85, pulling the Nifty Bank down 883.40 points, or 1.51%, to 57,638. The weakness in banking stocks spilled over to the broader market, with the Sensex tumbling over 750 points and the Nifty50 slipping below 24,150.

WHY ARE BANK STOCKS FALLING? The market reaction sug-



gests investors were looking beyond headline profit growth and focusing on the quality of earnings. HDFC Bank reported a muted quarter, with weaker-than-expected growth in net profit and pressure on its net interest margin (NIM)—a closely watched measure of profitability that reflects the difference between the interest a bank earns on loans and what it pays on deposits. Axis Bank, meanwhile, reported a 22.5% year-on-year rise in standalone net profit to Rs 7,114 crore, but investors

remained concerned about margin compression and management commentary, triggering a sharp sell-off in the stock. Brokerages had already flagged that rising deposit costs and a changing interest rate cycle could put pressure on margins, even as loan growth remained healthy. The biggest concern for investors is that banks are finding it harder to protect profitability. Over the past year, lenders have had to offer higher interest rates to attract deposits. At the same time, with policy rates eas-

ing, the ability to earn higher returns on loans has become more challenging. The result is a squeeze on net interest margins, a key driver of bank earnings. That is precisely what the market punished on Monday. However, it may be noted that the sell-off remained concentrated in select private lenders rather than the banking sector as a whole. ICICI Bank bucked the trend, rising 0.46% after reporting a strong set of quarterly numbers. Among public sector lenders, Punjab National Bank jumped 4.09%, Union Bank gained 3.62%, while Bank of Baroda and Canara Bank advanced 2.49% and 2.23%, respectively.

The divergence indicates that investors are rewarding banks that have managed to protect margins and deliver stronger operating performance, rather than indiscriminately selling the sector.

GLOBAL TENSIONS ALSO HIT STOCKS The disappointing reaction

to bank earnings was not the only factor weighing on the sector. Investor sentiment has also turned cautious after escalating tensions between the US and Iran pushed Brent crude above \$90 a barrel. Higher oil prices are a concern for India, which imports more than 85% of its crude oil needs. Costlier crude can fuel inflation, pressure the rupee, widen the current account deficit and weigh on economic growth. For banks, a weaker macroeconomic environment could eventually affect credit demand and asset quality, adding to concerns over already narrowing margins.

With the earnings season gathering pace, investors are likely to remain focused on whether banks can protect their net interest margins in the coming quarters. Monday's sharp sell-off suggests the market is no longer rewarding profit growth alone, but is placing greater emphasis on the sustainability of earnings.

Government says no proposal to scrap long-term capital gains tax on equities

The government has ruled out scrapping the long-term capital gains tax on listed equities, Finance MoS Pankaj Chaudhary told the Lok Sabha. The government also said LTCG tax collections rose 78% year-on-year, highlighting its growing contribution to revenue.



Although capital gains are typically subject to taxation as per the Income Tax Act, there are certain exemptions and criteria that can lead to these gains being completely tax-free. The government on Monday ruled out scrapping the long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax on listed equities, saying there is currently no proposal under consideration to abolish the levy for retail and domestic investors.

Responding to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the Centre has no plans at present to withdraw the LTCG tax, despite demands from sections of the market that the levy be removed to boost investor sentiment.

He added that tax policies, including capital gains tax rates, are reviewed periodically as part of the annual Budget exercise after considering broader macroeconomic conditions.

The clarification comes amid recurring calls from investors and market participants to roll back the tax, with some arguing that it discourages long-term investing and reduces post-tax returns. Others have sought parity between domestic investors and certain foreign investors after the government recently announced tax exemptions for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) investing in government securities. However, the government indicated there is little appetite for such a move, pointing to a sharp rise in tax collections from equity gains. According to data shared in Parliament, revenue from LTCG tax on eq-

uity transactions rose nearly 78% to Rs 1,29,158 crore in Assessment Year 2025-26 from Rs 72,249 crore in the previous year, highlighting the levy's growing contribution to the exchequer.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT LTCG TAX?

Long-term capital gains arise when listed shares or equity-oriented mutual funds are sold after being held for more than one year.

Under the current tax regime, gains exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh in a financial year are taxed at 12.5%, while gains up to that threshold remain exempt.

Short-term capital gains on listed equities are taxed at 20%. These rates have remained unchanged since the changes announced in the July 2024 Union Budget.

WHY WERE INVESTORS EXPECTING A CHANGE?

The issue has resurfaced several times over the past year as equity markets touched record highs and retail participation surged. Many investors and market experts had argued that reducing the LTCG tax rate or increasing the exemption limit could encourage long-term investing and improve market sentiment. Those expectations, however, have repeatedly been tempered by the government's stance. Similar questions on abolishing the tax have been raised in Parliament in the past, with the Finance Ministry consistently maintaining that there is no proposal to withdraw the levy. Monday's clarification reinforces that position. While the government says tax policies are reviewed regularly, there is currently no indication that it plans to scrap the LTCG tax on equity investments.

SBI Funds Management IPO lists tomorrow with 18% GMP: Is it a long-term buy?

SBI Funds Management is all set to debut on the stock exchanges tomorrow, backed by a strong 18% grey market premium. But does that make it a good long-term investment? Let's have a look.



SBI Funds Management is set to make its stock market debut on July 21, and the IPO is already generating strong interest in the grey market. After receiving an overwhelming response during the subscription period, the company's shares are now trading at a healthy grey market premium (GMP), indicating a positive listing.

The latest GMP stands at Rs 101 per share. Based on the IPO's upper price band of Rs 574, the estimated listing price is around Rs 675, suggesting a potential gain of 17.6% over the issue price.

IPO SUBSCRIBED OVER 41 TIMES

The Rs 9,813-crore IPO was

open for subscription from July 14 to July 16 and was subscribed 41.66 times overall.

According to SBI Funds Management, the issue received bids for 5,18,95,41,032 equity shares against 12,45,63,536 shares on offer.

Institutional investors led the demand. The Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIB) category was subscribed 140.11 times, while the Non-Institutional Investor (NII) portion was subscribed 22.51 times. The Retail Individual Investor (RII) category was subscribed 3.60 times. The Employee

Reserved category saw a subscription of 4.65 times, while the Shareholder Reservation portion was subscribed 9.52 times. Overall demand for the IPO touched nearly Rs 2.98 lakh crore, making it India's fifth-largest IPO by total bid value.

WHY ARE ANALYSTS POSITIVE?

Geojit Investments believes SBI Funds Management is well placed to benefit from the long-term growth of India's mutual fund industry.

The brokerage said the company is the largest asset

management company in India by quarterly average assets under management (QAUM) and benefits from its scale and market leadership.

It said, "As India's largest AMC by QAUM (15.3% market share), the company benefits from strong scale, industry-leading cost efficiency, extensive research coverage and favourable industry tailwinds." Geojit also noted that the company is supported by strong growth, a predominantly active asset mix, diversified revenue streams and a long operating track record, which it believes position the company well for future expansion. Here, it must be mentioned that SBI Funds Management was incorporated in 1992 and is the investment manager of SBI Mutual Fund. It is a joint venture between State Bank of India (SBI) and Amundi, Europe's largest asset manager.

SHOULD INVESTORS INVEST?

The strong subscription numbers and healthy grey market premium reflect positive market sentiment ahead of listing. Geojit Investments also remains optimistic about the company's long-term prospects, citing its leadership position, scale and diversified business model. However, investors should remember that the grey market premium is unofficial and does not guarantee listing gains. Stock market performance on the listing day can differ from GMP expectations. For long-term investors, SBI Funds Management's leadership in the mutual fund industry, large customer base and strong assets under management make it a company that many market participants will be watching closely. Meanwhile, with the listing scheduled for July 21, investors will now be watching whether SBI Funds Management lives up to the strong expectations reflected in the grey market.

Godrej Agrovet inaugurates India's first Integrated Oil Palm Complex in Telangana

Cumulative investment of INR 300 Crore; seed-to-refinery complex to support company's expansion plans

HYDERABAD, JULY 20, 2026

Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), one of India's largest farm-to-protein platforms, today inaugurated India's first Integrated Oil Palm Complex in Khammam, Telangana. The complex brings together every stage of the oil palm value chain under one roof – seed and genetics, nursery, R&D center, mill and upcoming state-of-the-art refinery in the complex. The company's cumulative investment will be INR 300 Crore once the entire complex is operational.

The complex was inaugurated by Sri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu Garu, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Hon'ble Minister for Finance & Planning, Government of Telangana in the presence of Sri Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy Garu, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue and Housing, Information & Public Relations, Government of Telangana; Tummala Nageswara Rao Garu, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operation, and Handlooms & Textiles, Government of Telangana; Sri D. Sridhar Babu Garu, Hon'ble Minister for ITE&C, Industries & Com-

merce, and Legislative Affairs, Government of Telangana and Sri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy Garu, Member of Parliament from Khammam.

Also present on the occasion were Nadir Godrej, Chairperson, Godrej Industries Group; Burjis Godrej, Chairperson Designate, Godrej Agrovet; Sunil Kataria, MD & CEO, Godrej Agrovet; Sougata Niyogi, CEO – Oil Palm Business, Godrej Agrovet and Rakesh Swami, Group President, Corporate Affairs, Godrej Industries Group. Commenting on the occasion, Sri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu Garu, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Hon'ble Minister for Finance & Planning, Energy, Government of Telangana, said, "This complex is a landmark for Telangana's oil palm mission and for our vision of making the state a leading edible oil producer. Telangana's oil palm mission is transforming the lives of lakhs of farming households while strengthening the nation's edible oil security, and Godrej Agrovet's deep expertise in the oil palm sector has made them the right partner to help us realise that vision. Bringing seed-to-refinery capability to Khammam, this



complex reflects the strength of that expertise, and I am confident it will accelerate our mission and bring lasting prosperity to our oil palm farmers."

"None of this would have been possible without the vision and steadfast support of the Government of Telangana. We deeply value the partnership that has brought us to this milestone", said Burjis Godrej, Chairperson Designate, Godrej Agrovet.

He further added, "This complex is more than an investment in infrastructure. It is our contribution to a larger national goal of building a self-reliant edible oil economy. Being India's first of its kind, it sets a benchmark for what an integrated approach

to sustainable oil palm can achieve. As we look ahead, our commitment remains the same. To build capabilities that serve our farmers today and strengthen the nation's food security for generations to come." As part of the complex, Godrej Agrovet has set up a seed garden in partnership with leading global companies, bringing their expertise in oil palm genetics to India. This partnership, along with the R&D center at the complex, will support the company's ongoing efforts to develop hybrid planting material that is tolerant of, and optimised for, Telangana's local climatic conditions.

The mill at the complex, first by a private company in the state, has commenced

operations with a capacity of 30 tonnes per hour and has been designed for expansion up to 60 tonnes per hour allowing the company to scale processing capacity in sync with its target of increasing area under plantation in the state from current 10,000 ha to 30,000 by 2030.

The complex also houses a Samadhan Centre, the company's flagship initiative that serves as a one-stop resource for oil palm farmers, offering advisory support and access to farm inputs and other services. "We have approached this complex the same way we approach every high-potential business at Godrej Agrovet – by investing early in the right capabilities, rather than scaling before the fundamentals are in place. With the entire oil palm value chain under one roof, we gain greater control over quality and consistency, and it reflects our confidence in Telangana's potential to lead the nation's edible oil security journey while uplifting farming families. We remain committed to building on this foundation and delivering consistent, long-term value to our farmers and stakeholders alike," said Sunil Kataria, MD & CEO, Godrej Agrovet.

The inauguration marks a significant milestone in the company's oil palm journey. The company remains committed to working closely with the governments and its farmer partners to put India on global sustainable oil palm map.

About Godrej Agrovet:

At Godrej Agrovet, part of the Godrej Industries Group, we craft abundance through innovation that empowers farmers and nourishes our nation. We are one of India's leading food and agri businesses, with a presence across Animal Feed, Crop Protection, Dairy, Food, and Oil Palm, serving farmers and partners across the agricultural value chain.

We are the number one producer of crude palm oil in India and the leading player in animal feed, contributing to food security and farmer livelihoods. Sustainability is at the core of how we operate. We are recognised as a leader, with a CDP A- rating across Climate, Forests, and Water, and as the first agri company in India with an SBTi-approved emission reduction target. For more information on the Company, please log on to www.godrejagrovet.com.

EPFO Pension: Submit Digital Life Certificate from Home in 6 Steps

If your Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) pension has suddenly stopped reaching your bank account, one possible reason could be the non-submission of your Digital Life Certificate (DLC), popularly known as **Jeevan Pramaan**. The EPFO has once again reminded pensioners to submit the certificate every year to ensure uninterrupted pension payments. The good news is that pensioners no longer need to visit an EPFO office or bank to complete this process. With digital services now available, the Digital Life Certificate can be submitted from the comfort of home using a smartphone. For those who are unable to use digital services, EPFO has also introduced a free doorstep facility with the help of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB).

Why Is the Digital Life Certificate Important?

Every EPFO pensioner is required to submit a Digital Life Certificate once every year. The certificate serves as proof that the pensioner is alive and eligible to continue receiving pension benefits. Failure to submit it within the stipulated period may result in pension payments being temporarily stopped until the certificate is updated. According to EPFO, once a Digital Life Certificate is successfully submitted, it remains valid for one year from the date of submission. Pensioners are therefore advised to keep track of the expiry date and renew it before the validity period ends.

EPFO's Reminder to



Pensioners

In a recent post on X (formerly Twitter), EPFO encouraged pensioners to use its simplified digital services for submitting Jeevan Pramaan. The organisation stated that pensioners can now easily schedule a doorstep Jeevan Pramaan service with a simple phone call, allowing them to complete the process without leaving their homes. In a video shared by EPFO, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner Alok Yadav explained that timely submission of the Digital Life Certificate is essential for uninterrupted pension payments. He also highlighted that the online and face authentication facilities have made the process quicker and more convenient than ever before. How to Check Whether Your Digital Life Certificate Is Valid Before submitting a new certificate, pensioners can check the validity of their existing Digital Life Certificate through the EPFO Pensioner Portal. By logging into the Pensioner Portal on the EPFO website, pensioners can verify the status of their current DLC and find out when it is due for renewal.



Sattal

Uttarakhand's Hidden Seven-lake Escape

Nestled in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, just a short drive from the bustling hill station of Nainital, Sattal remains one of the state's best-kept secrets. While destinations such as Nainital, Mussoorie and Rishikesh attract thousands of visitors every year, Sattal offers something refreshingly

different—peace, solitude and an intimate connection with nature. Named after the Hindi words *Sat* (seven) and *Tal* (lake), Sattal is a picturesque cluster of seven interconnected freshwater lakes surrounded by dense oak and pine forests. Hidden amid rolling hills, the

destination is a paradise for birdwatchers, trekkers, photographers, wildlife enthusiasts and travellers looking to escape the crowds. With crystal-clear waters reflecting the surrounding greenery, quiet walking trails, abundant biodiversity and adventure activities, Sattal combines natural

beauty with outdoor experiences in a way few destinations can. Whether you're planning a relaxing weekend getaway or an extended nature retreat, Sattal promises an unforgettable experience where time slows down and every corner reveals another breathtaking view.

A Natural Paradise in Uttarakhand

Located at an altitude of around 1,370 metres above sea level, Sattal lies approximately 23 kilometres from Nainital and about 7 kilometres from Bhimtal. Unlike many popular hill stations that have become heavily commercialised, Sattal has retained its untouched charm.

Towering pine, oak and rhododendron forests surround the lakes, creating a peaceful environment where birdsong replaces traffic noise. The fresh mountain air, calm waters and scenic landscapes make it one of Uttarakhand's most relaxing destinations. Nature lovers often describe Sattal as a living ecosystem rather than simply a tourist attraction. The forests support a remarkable variety of wildlife, making every visit unique.

The Seven Interconnected Lakes

Sattal derives its name from seven interconnected freshwater lakes, each possessing its own distinctive character and scenic beauty.

Ram Tal

Ram Tal is among the most accessible lakes in the group. Surrounded by thick forests, it provides peaceful surroundings for boating, photography and quiet relaxation.

Sita Tal

Located close to Ram Tal, Sita Tal is known for its calm waters and lush greenery. The peaceful atmosphere makes it ideal for

visitors seeking solitude.

Laxman Tal

Laxman Tal offers spectacular reflections of surrounding hills on clear days. Nature enthusiasts often stop here while exploring the lake circuit.

Garud Tal

Garud Tal remains one of the quieter lakes within the cluster. Its tranquil setting and rich birdlife make it a favourite among photographers and bird-watchers.

Purna Tal

Purna Tal is surrounded by dense vegetation and walking paths, making it an ideal destination for leisurely nature walks.

Sukh Tal (Sukha Tal)

Sukh Tal presents a quieter environment where visitors can unwind away from busy tourist areas. During certain seasons, water levels may vary, adding to its unique character.

Nal-Damyanti Tal

Perhaps the most fascinating among the seven lakes, Nal-Damyanti Tal is associated with the legendary tale of King Nala and Queen Damayanti from the Mahabharata. According to local folklore, the lake is believed to have mystical significance, attracting visitors interested in mythology as well as natural beauty.

A Haven for Wildlife and Birdwatchers

Sattal is widely regarded as one of India's finest birdwatching destinations. The forests surrounding the lakes provide hab-

itat for hundreds of resident and migratory bird species throughout the year.

More than 500 species of birds and butterflies have been recorded in the region, alongside over 20 species of mammals and an astonishing diversity of insects, including more than 10,000 species of moths.

Visitors may spot:

- Himalayan Bulbul
- Blue Whistling Thrush
- Scarlet Minivet
- Oriental White-eye
- Great Barbet
- Woodpeckers
- Kingfishers
- Eagles
- Flycatchers
- Various migratory birds during winter

Birdwatchers often begin their mornings before sunrise, when the forests come alive with colourful birds and melodious calls.

The biodiversity also attracts wildlife photographers from across India, making Sattal an excellent destination for nature documentation.

Things to Do in Sattal

The calm, crystal-clear waters make Sattal an excellent destination for boating and kayaking. Unlike crowded lakes in popular hill stations, visitors can paddle peacefully through serene surroundings while enjoying uninterrupted views of forests and hills.

Kayaking offers an opportunity to explore quieter sec-

Travel Tips

- Start birdwatching early in the morning for the best sightings.
- Carry binoculars and a camera with a zoom lens.
- Wear comfortable walking shoes for forest trails.
- Pack light woollens even during summer evenings.
- Avoid littering and help preserve the fragile ecosystem.
- Respect wildlife by maintaining silence during nature walks.
- Carry cash, as digital payment options may not be available everywhere.

Why Sattal Deserves a Place on Your Travel List

In an age where many hill stations struggle with overcrowding and commercialisation, Sattal remains refreshingly untouched. Its seven interconnected lakes, dense forests, rich biodiversity and peaceful atmosphere offer a rare opportunity to reconnect with nature. Whether you're kayaking across still waters, spotting rare Himalayan birds, trekking through pine forests, camping under star-filled skies or simply enjoying the silence beside a tranquil lake, Sattal delivers experiences that stay with you long after the journey ends. Far removed from the crowds of mainstream tourist destinations, this hidden Uttarakhand getaway is a reminder that some of the most memorable travel experiences are found in places where nature still takes centre stage. For travellers seeking serenity, adventure and breathtaking landscapes, Sattal is undoubtedly one of India's most rewarding offbeat destinations.



tions of the interconnected lakes that are inaccessible on foot.

Trek Through Pine and Oak Forests

Numerous forest trails connect different lakes and viewpoints. These walking paths wind through towering pine and oak forests, offering breathtaking scenery throughout the year. The soft carpet of fallen pine needles creates a unique walking experience, while fresh mountain air adds to the charm. Treks range from short walks suitable for families to longer hikes for experienced trekkers.

Birdwatching

With its incredible avian diversity, Sattal ranks among Uttarakhand's premier birdwatching destinations. Professional birding guides are available for visitors interested in identifying rare Himalayan bird species. The best birdwatching opportunities occur during early mornings and late afternoons.

Visit the Butterfly Museum

One of Sattal's unique attractions is the Butterfly Museum located at Jones Estate.

The museum houses an extensive collection of butterflies, moths and insects collected over several decades. It offers valuable insights into the region's remarkable biodiversity and remains a must-visit destination for students, researchers and nature enthusiasts.

Adventure Activities

For travellers seeking excitement, Sattal offers several outdoor adventure options.

Popular activities include:

- Zip-lining
- Rock climbing
- Rappelling
- Rope courses
- Camping
- Valley crossing
- Nature survival camps

Many adventure camps organise guided experiences suitable for beginners as well as experienced participants.

Hidden Experiences Around Sattal

Beyond the popular attractions, Sattal offers numerous lesser-known experiences that allow visitors to appreciate its untouched beauty.

Explore Garud Tal

Garud Tal remains one of the quietest lakes within the

cluster. Its peaceful surroundings make it ideal for meditation, photography or simply sitting beside the water while listening to birdsong.

Walk Through Pine Forests

The pine forests surrounding Sattal are among its greatest attractions. Long stretches of trails covered with dry pine needles create postcard-perfect landscapes. During the early morning hours, mist drifting through the trees creates an almost magical atmosphere.

Discover Local Mythology

Nal-Damyanti Tal holds cultural significance due to its association with King Nala and Queen Damayanti. According to local legends, the lake is linked to events described in ancient Indian mythology, adding historical and spiritual value to the destination.

Enjoy Stargazing

Thanks to minimal light pollution, Sattal offers excellent opportunities for stargazing. Clear winter nights reveal spectacular views of the Milky Way, making it a favourite destination for astronomy enthusiasts and photographers.

How to Reach Sattal By Air

Pantnagar Airport is the nearest airport, situated approximately 65 kilometres away. Taxis are readily available from the airport to Sattal, and the journey takes around two hours depending on road conditions.

By Rail

Kathgodam Railway Station serves as the nearest railway station.

It is well connected to Delhi, Lucknow and several major North Indian cities through regular train services.

From Kathgodam, Sattal is about an hour's drive by taxi.

By Road

Sattal enjoys excellent road connectivity with major cities in North India.

The distance from Delhi is approximately 300 kilometres via:

- Delhi
- Hapur
- Moradabad
- Haldwani
- Bhimtal
- Sattal

The journey generally takes

between seven and eight hours depending on traffic.

Regular buses also operate from Delhi to Kathgodam, where taxis are available for the onward journey.

Best Time to Visit March to June

Spring and early summer are considered the best months to visit Sattal. Pleasant temperatures ranging between 15°C and 28°C make sightseeing, trekking, boating and outdoor activities enjoyable. The forests remain lush and colourful, while migratory birds can still be spotted.

September to November

After the monsoon, Sattal transforms into a vibrant green paradise. Clear skies, fresh mountain air and excellent visibility make autumn perfect for photography, birdwatching and nature walks. Many experienced travellers consider this the finest season to visit.

December to February

Winter brings crisp mountain weather and significantly fewer tourists. Morning mist, chilly evenings and peaceful surroundings create an ideal atmosphere for travellers seeking solitude. Warm clothing is essential as temperatures can fall considerably at night.

July to August

The monsoon season paints the forests in brilliant shades of green, and waterfalls become more active. However, heavy rainfall can make trekking trails slippery and occasionally disrupt travel plans. Visitors should monitor weather forecasts before planning their trip.

Where to Stay

Accommodation in Sattal caters to a variety of travel styles while preserving the area's eco-friendly character.

Visitors can choose from:

- Nature resorts
 - Eco-lodges
 - Lakeside camps
 - Boutique cottages
 - Homestays
 - Budget guesthouses
- Many accommodations offer stunning lake views and organise birdwatching tours, trekking expeditions and adventure activities.
- Camping under the stars remains one of the most memorable experiences in Sattal.



PCI gives grand send-off to India's 28-member Para contingent ahead of Glasgow 2026

CRICKET

Roach to be honoured for historic 300-Test wicket milestone at Kensington



BRIDGETOWN: Cricket West Indies (CWI) said on Monday that it will formally honour veteran fast bowler Kemar Roach for his historic achievement of claiming 300 Test wickets during the innings break of the fifth ODI against New Zealand, to be played at the Kensington Oval on Tuesday. The special on-field presentation will take place during the innings break, where CWI will be joined by representatives from the Government of Barbados and the Barbados Cricket Association to celebrate Roach's achievement.

FOOTBALL

RBFA ends Rudi Garcia's tenure as Belgium coach



BRUSSELS: The Belgium national men's football team and head coach Rudi Garcia are set to part ways, ending their 19-month association with the country's football association, which announced that it will not extend the contract that runs until July 31, 2026. The 62-year-old Garcia, a French professional football manager and former player born to a Spanish expatriate father, took over as Belgium's national football team manager with the contract lasting till the end of the FIFA World Cup 2026. With Belgium's exit to eventual winners Spain in the quarterfinals, the manager and the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA) decided to part ways.

NEW DELHI

The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) on Monday organised a grand send-off ceremony for the 28-member Indian para contingent selected to represent the country at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. The para athletes form part of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) contingent, which comprises both able-bodied and para athletes.

The ceremony also marked the first official event under the leadership of Dr. Payal Kanodia, who was recently appointed as the Chairperson of the Paralympic Committee of India. Dr. Kanodia, who also serves as the Chairperson of M3M Foundation, reaffirmed PCI's commitment towards strengthening India's para sports ecosystem and ensuring greater opportunities for para athletes to excel on the world stage.

The ceremony was graced by Gaurav Gautam, Sports Minister, Government of Haryana; Devendra Jhajharia, President, Paralympic Committee of India; Dr. Payal Kanodia, Chairperson, Paralympic Committee of India and Chairperson, M3M Foundation; along with senior officials of the Paralympic Committee of India, National Sports Federation Presidents, partners, coaches, athletes and members of the media.

Also present on the occasion were J.P. Singh, President, Para Powerlifting Federation of India; Mr. Virender Dabhas, President, Para Swimming Federation of India; Mr. J.P. Nautiyal, President, Para Shooting Federation of India; and Dr. Aishwarya Mahajan, representing M3M



Foundation. The ceremony was attended by all 28 para athletes selected to represent India at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, along with their coaches and support staff, making it a fitting send-off before their departure for Glasgow.

The contingent will compete across five disciplines—para athletics (11 athletes), para powerlifting (7), para swimming (5), para track cycling (1) and women's wheelchair basketball (3x3) (4). Reflecting India's growing depth of talent across multiple para sports disciplines, the contingent heads to Glasgow with the ambition of surpassing India's previous Commonwealth Games para medal tally and scripting a historic campaign for the nation.

India's para sports movement has witnessed remarkable growth over the past two decades, with Indian para athletes consistently delivering outstanding performances at the Paralympic Games, Asian Para

Games, World Championships and other major international competitions.

Since making its Commonwealth Games debut in 2002, Indian para athletes have won a total of seven medals, comprising one gold, two silver and four bronze medals, showcasing the country's steady rise in para sport. With a talented 28-member para contingent representing the nation across five disciplines at Glasgow 2026, the Paralympic Committee of India is optimistic that the team will build on this legacy, surpass its previous Commonwealth Games medal tally and further strengthen India's standing on the international para sports stage.

Dr. Payal Kanodia, Chairperson, Paralympic Committee of India and Chairperson, M3M Foundation, said, "It is a privilege to begin my journey as Chairperson of the Paralympic Committee of India by

celebrating the remarkable athletes who will proudly represent our nation at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Their determination, resilience and unwavering spirit inspire millions across the country. At PCI, together with M3M Foundation and our partners, we are committed to building a stronger and more inclusive para sports ecosystem in India. Our vision goes beyond supporting athletes at competitions, we want to contribute to the development of accessible, para-friendly sports infrastructure across the country, including in rural India, so that every aspiring para athlete has the opportunity to train and compete without barriers.

M3M Foundation is committed to supporting athlete development through access to quality equipment, sports science, mental conditioning and high-performance support systems. We also aim to invest in coach development programmes and classifier development programmes, recognising that a strong support ecosystem is essential for sustained sporting success. We are already supporting several para athletes and will continue to work closely with them to help unlock their full potential. By strengthening infrastructure and investing in the entire para sports ecosystem, we also aspire to help India host more international para sporting events in the years ahead. As the country looks towards the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this is the time to create a lasting legacy for Indian sport.



World Cup triumph means big payday for Spanish Football Federation

MADRID

Celebrations continued in Spain on Monday following the country's second World Cup triumph, with Ferran Torres' injury-time winner against Argentina on Sunday earning him a place alongside Andres Iniesta, who scored the decisive goal in the 2010 final.

Beyond the honour of adding a second star to the national team shirt, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) and the 26 players in the squad also have significant financial reasons to celebrate.

Winning the 2026 World Cup earned the RFEF 50 million U.S. dollars in prize money from FIFA, while the federation also stands to benefit from increased sponsorship revenue. The Spanish national team is backed by 35 companies across sectors including travel, insurance, telecommunications, sportswear, energy, food and beverages, reports Xinhua.

Spain's status as world champion is also expected to boost the value of its television rights, while sales of replica

shirts have already surged across the country. The team's off-white away shirt is now virtually sold out in Spain, with demand also likely to rise internationally.

The triumph also means a substantial payday for the players, each of whom is set to receive a bonus of 756,000 euros (about 863,000 dollars), in addition to a World Cup winner's medal and ring. Spanish press celebrate World Cup success.

Spain's 1-0 victory over Argentina in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final on Sunday night has been widely celebrated in the Spanish press.

Ferran Torres scored the winner in extra time as Spain finally turned its dominance into victory against an opponent that only began to attack after falling behind and failed to register a shot on target in more than 120 minutes of football. Sports daily Marca led with the headline "Superstars," while Barcelona sports dailies Mundo Deportivo and Sport kept things simple with the headlines "Champions" and "Two-Time Champions" respectively.

Cricketer and DSP Mohammed Siraj calls on Telangana DGP

HYDERABAD

Indian cricketer and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mohammed Siraj paid a courtesy call on Telangana Director General of Police C.V. Anand here on Monday.

This was Siraj's first meeting with Anand after the latter took charge as the DGP in May.

Inspector General (P&I) Gajarao Bhupal and DSP (Sports) Ramarao were also present during the meeting at the DGP Office.

In October 2024, the India pacer officially took over as the DSP.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had announced a government job and a house site for Siraj after India won the ICC T-20 World Cup-2024. In August 2024, the State cabinet resolved to offer Group-I posts of DSP cadre to Siraj and champion boxer Nikhat Zareen. The state government had amended the Telangana (Regulation of appointments to public services and rationalisation of staff pattern



and pay structure) Act, 1994, to facilitate the appointments.

The government also allotted 600 square yards of land to Siraj at Road Number 78, Jubilee Hills.

Meanwhile, DGP Anand reviewed the functioning of the Police Welfare Society and Arogya Bhadratha (Health Protection) wings at the DGP Office and reaffirmed that the welfare of police personnel and their families remains one of the highest priorities of the Telangana Police. The meeting extensively reviewed the im-

plementation of welfare schemes, their progress and future course of action. Addressing the officers, the DGP said the department has been implementing a wide range of welfare initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of police personnel and their families.

He stated that the department has been encouraging meritorious children of police personnel through Merit Scholarships and Meritorious Scholarships. Financial assistance is also being extended to students preparing for

JEE, NEET and other national and state-level competitive examinations, thereby promoting higher education and academic excellence.

The DGP said the department is providing comprehensive welfare support through marriage loans, medical loans, education loans, merit scholarships, meritorious scholarships, additional corpus insurance and various grant-based assistance schemes, ensuring financial security for police personnel and their families.

Reviewing the Health Protection Scheme, the DGP noted that 33,126 police personnel and their family members availed treatment under the scheme during 2025, while 12,392 beneficiaries received treatment up to June 2026. Expenditure under the scheme stood at Rs 181.74 crore during 2025 and Rs 73.61 crore up to June 2026, reflecting the department's continued commitment to employee healthcare.

India to play four-day warm-up game in Colombo ahead of Tests against Sri Lanka



NEW DELHI

The Indian men's cricket team will play a four-day warm-up game in Colombo starting on August 7 ahead of facing Sri Lanka in a two-match Test series starting on August 15. The Shubman Gill-led visitors are scheduled to land in Colombo on August 4 and will go through some practice sessions before playing the warm-up game at the Non-descripts Cricket Club (NCC).

"Yes, the Indian team will have its practice game from August 7 to 10 at NCC, Colombo. It will help all players to adjust to the local conditions on offer before the main series gets underway," said a source familiar with the development to IANS on Monday.

Following the conclusion of the four-day tour game, the Indian team will travel to Galle, where the opening Test match will be played at the picturesque Galle International Cricket Stadium

(GICS) from August 15 to 19. The second and final Test is scheduled to be held at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in Colombo from August 23 to 27. Both matches are scheduled to commence at 10 am local time. The series is crucial for both teams as they look to climb the WTC standings.

As of now, India has a points percentage (PCT) of 48.15 after nine matches and is in fifth place. Sri Lanka, meanwhile, is in sixth spot with a PCT of 44.44. A series victory will provide a much-needed push for either side in their bid to secure a top-two finish and make the final. The tour will also mark India's return to Sri Lanka for playing Tests after 2017, when, under the captaincy of Virat Kohli, they managed to get a 3-0 victory. India's last Test assignment saw them get an emphatic innings victory over Afghanistan in June, while Sri Lanka suffered a 2-0 series defeat to the West Indies.

Special Olympics Bharat football team felicitated after Gothia Cup 2026 bronze medal



NEW DELHI

The Special Olympics Bharat football contingent was felicitated at a ceremony in New Delhi on Monday, celebrating the team's impressive performance at the Gothia Cup 2026 in Sweden. The event brought together athletes, coaches, officials, partners, and dignitaries to honour the contingent's achievement on the international stage.

The highlight of India's campaign was the bronze medal won by the Special Olympics Bharat boys' football team at the Gothia Cup 2026, one of the world's largest and most prestigious international youth football tournaments. The result marked another significant milestone for India's inclusive sports movement and reflected the team's resilience and determination.

Speaking at the event,

Shailesh Sharma, Managing Director, SKF India Ltd., said the achievement demonstrated the athletes' perseverance and the transformative power of sport.

"We are immensely proud of the Special Olympics Bharat Boys' Football Team for bringing home the Bronze Medal at the Gothia Cup 2026. Their achievement is a testament to the power of perseverance, discipline, and teamwork. At SKF India, we believe that sport can transform lives, promote inclusion, and unlock human potential. We remain committed to supporting initiatives that create equal opportunities for athletes to dream big and excel on global platforms."

Mallika Nanda, President, Special Olympics Bharat, described the bronze medal as another landmark achievement for the organisation,

which has now secured three consecutive international trophies at the Gothia Cup. "This bronze medal is far more than a podium finish; it is a testament to the resilience, determination, and indomitable spirit of our athletes. Winning three consecutive international trophies at the Gothia Cup reflects the consistency of excellence that Special Olympics Bharat stands for. I congratulate our athletes, coaches, and support staff on this remarkable achievement. I also extend my sincere gratitude to H.E. Jan Thesleff, Ambassador of Sweden to India, and our valued partner SKF for their unwavering support and steadfast belief in the power of inclusion. Together, your continued support and belief in inclusion help make these extraordinary achievements possible."

The team's head coach, On-

aciss, credited the players' discipline and belief for the podium finish. "Every medal has a story, and ours is one of resilience, trust, and relentless belief. This team proved that true champions are defined not only by victories but by the courage to rise stronger after every challenge. The Bronze Medal at the Gothia Cup is the outcome of months of discipline, sacrifice, and teamwork, and I couldn't be prouder of these remarkable athletes. I am grateful to Special Olympics Bharat and SKF India for believing in our players and creating opportunities for them to compete with confidence on the world stage. This achievement is just the beginning of an even bigger journey for Indian inclusive football."

The ceremony also featured interactions with athletes and coaches, who shared their experiences from the tournament, followed by a felicitation of the players, coaching staff, and partner organisations.

SKF India said its partnership with Special Olympics Bharat is part of its broader CSR efforts to promote inclusion and equal opportunity through sport. The company added that it remains committed to supporting specially abled athletes and helping build an inclusive sporting ecosystem that enables them to compete and represent India on the global stage.

Former England captain and coach Kevin Keegan dies aged 75

LONDON

Liverpool, Newcastle United and England great Kevin Keegan died at the age of 75, seven weeks after revealing he had been diagnosed with stage four cancer, his family confirmed on Monday. The former England captain and manager is one of the country's most decorated players -- he was an attacking midfielder who also played as a forward-- and enjoyed successful spells at Scunthorpe United, Liverpool, Hamburg, Southampton and Newcastle during an illustrious playing career. Later he managed Newcastle, Fulham and Manchester City and the national men's squad.

"We are devastated to learn of the passing of Kevin Keegan, one of the most iconic, influential and deeply loved figures in our club's history. Kevin was more than a legendary footballer and manager. He was the beating heart of Newcastle United for generations of supporters," Newcastle United announced in posts on its official social media handle.

As a player, he brought world-class talent, ambition and belief to St. James' Park, helping to transform perceptions of what Newcastle United could be. "As a manager, he ignited our city. Kevin gave supporters hope and pride, and led a team whose style, spirit and passion captured the imagination of football fans around the world. He was so much more than an Entertainer."

"Above all that, Kevin forged an extraordinary bond with Newcastle, built on the roots of his father, Joe. He understood our people. He embraced the North East with a passion that was genuine and unwavering, and in return, he earned his rightful place in the hearts of millions. "Kevin's impact will not be measured by appearances or results. It will live on in the memories he created with club and country."



Jana Nayagan Fails to SPARK IN TELUGU

Vijay has always enjoyed a strong market in Telugu despite being a Tamil superstar. Films like Master and Leo generated excellent pre release buzz in the Telugu states, proving that his popularity extends well beyond Tamil Nadu. Naturally, many expected Jana Nayagan to create a similar wave. The excitement was even higher after Vijay's political entry as he becomes CM, with many believing the film would benefit from the added attention. However, the momentum has gradually faded. The initial hype has not translated into strong excitement as the release approaches, leaving trade circles surprised. One major reason is that Jana Nayagan is a remake. To make matters worse, the original version has already surfaced online, reducing the curiosity factor among a section of the audience. The difference in advance bookings clearly reflects the situation. While the film is recording impressive bookings across Tamil Nadu, the response in the Telugu states has been quite underwhelming. At the moment, there is very little buzz in Telugu compared to Vijay's previous releases. Unless positive word of mouth changes the narrative after release, the film may struggle to deliver the kind of opening many had predicted. Jana Nayagan is expected to dominate in Tamil Nadu, but its Telugu box office prospects remain uncertain. It now depends entirely on the film's content and audience reception after the first shows.



Rasha Glows in Gold

Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha Thadani, who is all set to make her Telugu debut with the action-romance drama Srinivasa Mangapuram, is currently winning hearts among her Tollywood fans with her latest set of pictures. The actress took to social media to share a stunning photoshoot, and the images have quickly gone viral among her growing fanbase in the Telugu states. In the pictures, Rasha looks absolutely resplendent in a shimmering gold metallic saree paired with a matching sequined blouse, striking elegant poses against an ornate, vintage-tiled backdrop. Her sleek, side-swept hairstyle and minimal jewellery complete the glamorous look, further amplifying the anticipation around her Telugu debut. Srinivasa Mangapuram is directed by Ajay Bhupathi and also stars Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, nephew of superstar Mahesh Babu, in the lead role. The film is currently in its shooting stage, and updates from the sets have been keeping fans excited.



All Eyes On Chennai Love Story

Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya are playing the lead roles in the upcoming Telugu film titled Chennai Love Story. Directed by Ravi Namburi, the film is backed by Sai Rajesh and SKN. With Sai Rajesh backing the project and the feelers of his last hit, Baby, already out, there is already a unique buzz surrounding the film. The team recently launched the theatrical trailer, which received a positive response, and everyone is confident that the film will do well at the box office. Although there are other films standing as a competition, Chennai Love Story still has the potential to do well. Vijay's Jana Nayakudu is hitting the screens this week as a surprise entry. Despite the film being the first release of the actor, right after he became the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, the buzz surrounding the film is very minimal in Telugu. Especially, with the film already being a remake of Bhagvanth Kesari, the attention towards it is less. The Telugu version

will be released, but will be limited. We also have Akhil Akkineni's Lenin currently running in theatres. The film already secured a hit talk, but it will not be a big hurdle for Chennai Love Story. Viewership is slowing down, and by the time new releases arrive, Lenin will still be in theatres, attracting fans. Hollywood film Odyssey is performing well too, but it will be limited to some screens and regions only. With the film's trailer already triggering some bold conversations on social media and catching the attention of youth, let us assume that the film gets a good opening. If the content can impress the viewers by gaining a good word of mouth, the film can become unstoppable.

Adivi Sesh Claps For Sumanth Prabhas

Sree Venkateswara Cinemas has unveiled its 10th production venture. Produced by Sri Puskur Ram Mohan Rao and Sri Bharat Narang, the film features Sumanth Prabhas, with Raju Weds Rambai fame Sri Saailu Kaampati directing it. The auspicious launch of the movie took place today with a pooja ceremony at Hyderabad's Ganesh Temple. Director Shekar Kamula switched on the camera for the muhurtham shot, while Adivi Sesh sounded the clapboard. Sadanand formally handed over the script, symbolizing the start of the production. Sri Saailu Kaampati directed the first shot, completing the traditional launch ceremony. With the

event concluded successfully, preparations are now underway to begin the regular shoot shortly. The film is billed to be a wholesome blend of romance, comedy, and family emotions, with an engaging small-town backdrop adding to its charm. Sumanth Prabhas plays a spirited youngster whose vibrant personality drives the narrative. More details regarding this untitled film are awaited.



Where Is Kajal Aggarwal's Second Innings Headed?

For over a decade, Kajal Aggarwal ruled Telugu cinema as one of its most beloved leading ladies. After marrying in 2020, however, her pace in films slowed considerably. While she has continued acting, her second innings hasn't matched the momentum of her peak years. The projects she chose after marriage have largely failed to make a strong impact at the box office. Even her attempts at experimental roles couldn't fully connect with audiences. Industry observers believe that her script choices, along with the glamour boundaries she has set for herself after marriage, may have limited her opportunities in big commercial films. At the same time, Tollywood has changed rapidly. With a new generation of actresses and evolving storytelling, senior stars like Kajal need to reinvent themselves. Character-driven roles could offer her a fresh lease of life, but such opportunities have been limited so far. Despite the slowdown, Kajal's stardom remains intact. She still enjoys a strong fan base and market value. With the right director and a powerful script, she has every chance of making a successful comeback. Many actresses have reinvented themselves after marriage, and fans believe Kajal can do the same by embracing diverse and performance-oriented roles. Though her second innings has been steady rather than spectacular, her journey is far from over. With her experience, talent, and enduring popularity, Kajal Aggarwal still has the potential to reclaim her place among Tollywood's top stars.



National Awards Bring Joy to Naga Babu & Niharika

The 72nd National Film Awards brought a memorable moment for Niharika Konidela as her debut production, Committee Kurrollu, won the award for best telugu film. The success is even more special because it continues a National Award connection in Niharika's family. Not many know but Niharika's father, Naga Babu also won an National Award as a producer years ago for the acclaimed film Rudraveena which is Naga Babu's first production, starring Chiranjeevi. At the 36th National Film Awards, Rudraveena won the prestigious Nargis Dutt Award for best feature film on national integration. However, despite winning critical acclaim and National Awards, Rudraveena did not perform well commercially at the box office. It is still remembered as a classic, but it could not recover its investment during its theatrical run. On the other hand, Committee Kurrollu has achieved both. The film not only won a National Award but also emerged as a profitable venture for Niharika. Made with fresh faces and a relatable rural backdrop, the film directed by Yadhu Vamsi connected strongly with audiences. The success of Committee Kurrollu marks a dream debut for Niharika as a producer. She is now making the biggest film of her career in the form of Bhari. The sports drama features Varun Tej and is about Volleyball set in a rural village of AP. Now that she has won the prestigious award and made the family proud, one needs to see what kind of films she will produce in the days to come.

60 Years of Timeless Grace: Hema Malini

On the occasion of completion of 60 Years of Silver Screen



Veteran Actress Hema Malini is celebrating an extraordinary milestone of completing 60 years in Indian film industry. Malini made her acting debut in 1963 with the Tamil film "Idhu Sathiyam" and played small role in "Pandava Vanavasam" in 1965. This "Dream Girl" transitioned from her Bollywood debut in Raj Kapoor's 1968 classic "Sapno Ka Saudagar" into one of Bollywood's most celebrated and enduring icon. Malini played the lead roles in "JohnnyMara Naam (1970)", "Andaz(1971)", Lal Pathar(1971), Seetha Aur Geetha(1972), and many more successful films in her entire career. Hema and Dharmendra have acted together in 28 films in 1970s and 1980s. Some of the most commercial hit movies are Sholay, Sanyasi, Dus Numbari, Naseeb, Sattu PD Sattu, Seetha Aur Geetha, Andaz, Dream Girl, Razia Sultana, Trishul, Dillagi, Pratigya, Sharafath, Burning Train, Dulhan, Swami, Amir Garibh, Prem Nagar, and many more. After a break from acting, Hema returned in Baghban, Veer-Zaara, Laaga Chunari Mein Daag, Ek Thi Rani Aisi Bhi(2017).

6-Decades of Silver Screen Journey: Her 6-decade silver

The Authorised Biography is a 2007 Indian biographical book written by the film journalist and author Bhawana Somaiya, chronicling the life and career of the Indian Actress Hema Malini. Hema has the hobbies of dancing, driving and doing yoga.

- Hema Malini

screen journey encompasses more than just her on-screen magic. From a talkative and spirited Basanti in Sholay to her epic cinematic comeback as Pooja in 2003 film "Baghban", her roles have permanently shaped the history of Hindi Cinema. Throughout her legendary career spanning six-decades, completed nearly 200 films. She recently celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of her career with a grand charity event in Mumbai. She directed films like "Dil Aashka Hai" in 1992 and "Tell Me O Khurda" in 2011. She focused on dancing and TV work also. She had a on-screen pairing with top Bollywood heroes like Dharmendra, Shashi Kapoor, Dev Anand, Rajesh Khanna, Sanjeev Kumar, Amitabh Bachchan and so on. She was the first actress to wear bell-bottom and shirts in Hindi movies, Hema, who is also called

"Dream Girl" continues to act in movies occasionally. **Multifaceted Iconic Personality:** Hema Malini R. Chakravarthi was born in a Tamil Iyengar Brahmin family on October 16, 1948 in Madras. Her father's name was VS Chakravarthi and mother's name was Jaya Lakshmi Chakravarthi, a producer by herself. She studied upto 11th standard, and entered into acting career. After performing as a dancer in a 1961 regional movie, she was rejected by Tamil Director C V Shridhar on the grounds of very thin to be heroine. Hema Malini is an iconic actress, multifaceted personality, is an actress, director, classical dancer (Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam), producer, and politician who is currently serving as a Lok Sabha BJP MP from UP in 2014 and re-elected to the Lok Sabha in 2019. She was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka in 2011. She did many films pairing with Dharmendra as hero, and married him in 1979 after converted to Islam for the sake of marriage. The couple has two daughters, Esha and Ahana Deol. She established the classical dance centre, Nitya Vihar Kalakendra, Mumbai. In 2000, she was honoured with 4th highest civilian award Padma Shri along with Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award, Filmfare Best Actress Award and honorary doctorate from Sir P S University. Hema has been nominated for Filmfare Award for Best Actress for 11 times. In 2024 she played Sita role in a theatrical presentation staged ahead of the Pranaprathista ceremony of the Ayodhya Rama Mandir.

-Prof:MadhusudhanReddyBurra 9949700037.

