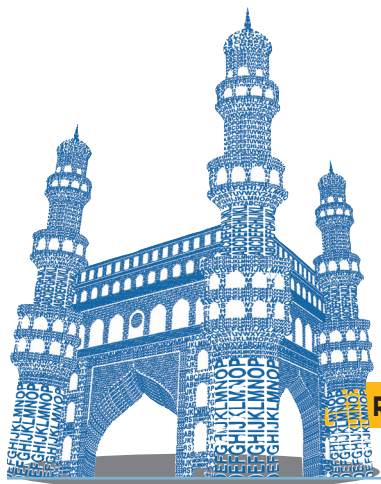




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NeVA
One Nation One Application

21 State Legislatures Go Digital Under NeVA

SPECIAL 02

Keerthy Suresh in Paradise

BOX OFFICE 12



Om Birla Sets 3-Hour Deadline to End Deadlock

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday gave the Centre and the Opposition three hours to resolve their differences and facilitate a discussion on the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, as the ongoing deadlock continued to disrupt proceedings in the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Soon after the House reconvened at 2 p.m., Birla announced that six hours had been earmarked for a debate on the anti-paper leak legislation, adding that more time could be allotted if required. Urging members to allow legislative business to proceed, he reminded them that Parliament was meant for debating Bills and not for raising slogans.

With no breakthrough in sight, the Speaker adjourned the Lok Sabha till 5 p.m., giving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



E20 PETROL: KEJRIWAL'S POLITICAL GAUNTLET TO MODI OVER MILEAGE, MONEY AND TRUST

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

The debate over E20 petrol has moved far beyond fuel chemistry. It has entered the arena of national politics. With a National Townhall against E20 scheduled for August 1, Arvind Kejriwal is attempting to transform motorists' frustrations into a mass political campaign. The Narendra Modi government, however, is refusing to blink, insisting that ethanol blending is a strategic national reform that has already delivered major economic and environmental gains. The question is no longer whether ethanol works. The real question is whether everyday economic discomfort can overpower the larger national interest and become the Opposition's next political weapon.

Arvind Kejriwal has announced a National Townhall Against E20 to be held at the Constitution Club in New Delhi on August 1, while simultaneously opening the doors for online participation across the country. The hybrid format is carefully designed. It allows physical participation, social media amplification and digital mobilisation at the same time. Kejriwal has also declared that an online petition claiming more than two lakh signatures will be submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the event. The messaging is unmistakable. Kejriwal has openly linked this campaign to the recent public mobilisation that culminated in the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. His political argument is simple. If sustained public pressure could influence one national issue, it can influence another.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

ICMR-NIN PROPOSES NEW FOOD REGULATION MODEL TO TACKLE INDIA'S OBESITY CRISIS

HYDERABAD, JULY 27

Scientists from the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) have proposed a dual-axis regulatory framework combining food processing levels and nutrient content to better regulate ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and foods high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) in India.

Published in "The Lancet Regional Health - Southeast Asia", the commentary says India needs regulations that assess both industrial processing and nutritional quality to address rising obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases.

Dr. Subba Rao M. Gavaravarapu, Scientist G & the team lead said, "India's food system is



unique, and so should be its regulatory framework. Foods cannot be judged solely by how much they are processed or only by their nutrient content. A dual-axis approach will provide a scientifically robust and culturally relevant basis for food labelling, consumer awareness and future policy decisions."

Dr. Bharati Kulkarni, Director, ICMR-NIN, said, "As India faces the dual burden of undernutrition and rising obesi-

ty, evidence-based food policies are critical. This commentary provides a practical pathway to strengthen nutrition policy, protect consumers, and support healthier food environments while respecting India's diverse food traditions."

The researchers noted that India lacks a formal definition of ultra-processed foods, limiting effective implementation of front-of-pack nutrition labelling and marketing restrictions. The proposed framework, based on the Dietary guidelines for Indians 2024, aims to strengthen food labelling, curb misleading health claims and support evidence-based nutrition policies while reflecting India's diverse food traditions.



Kishan Reddy Backs SCCL in Coal Block Row

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Monday urged Telangana Genco to withdraw from the auction for the PKOC (Prakasam Khani Open Cast) Dip Side Extension coal block, arguing that the mine should be allotted to Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) to strengthen the state-owned miner.

Reddy accused successive BRS and Congress governments of failing to secure new coal blocks for Singareni and allowing dues of nearly Rs.54,000 crore to accumulate. He said the Centre had consistently supported the PSU, citing the allocation of the Naini and Tadicherla-2 coal blocks and efforts to resolve legal hurdles.

Claiming the PKOC block would significantly boost Singareni's future,

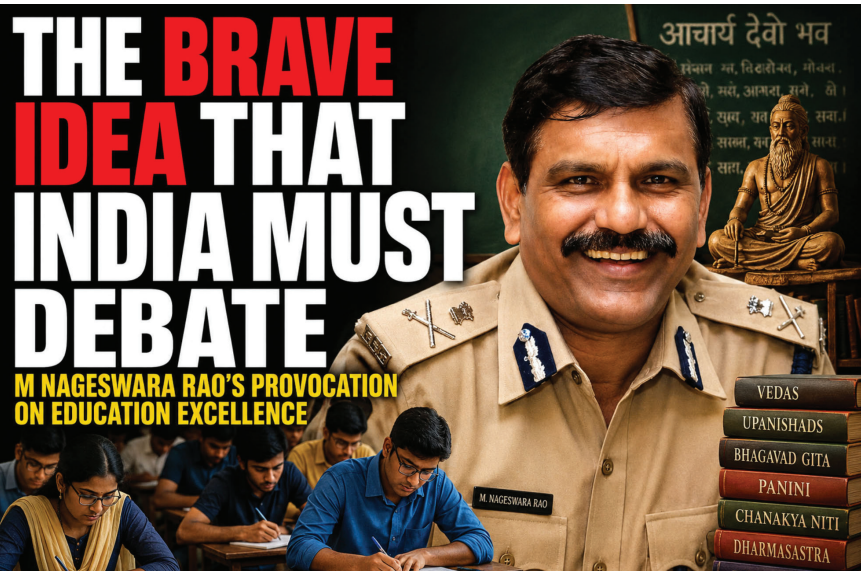
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BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Every few years, India launches a new education policy, rewrites textbooks, creates fresh committees, and promises world-class institutions. Yet one uncomfortable question refuses to disappear: Why does the country that once produced Takshashila, Nalanda, Panini, Chanakya, and Adi Shankaracharya still struggle to produce excellence at scale in modern classrooms?

Former CBI Director M. Nageswara Rao has now stirred that debate with one provocative proposition. Whether one agrees with him or not, his intervention forces India to confront a larger question that policymakers have often avoided. Are we building our education system on proven civilisational strengths or on political convenience? Former IPS officer and ex-CBI Director M. Nageswara Rao narrated a conversation after delivering a lecture on Vision and Strategic Leadership at the Administrative Staff College of India in Hyderabad. A participant posed a hypothetical question: "If you were Education Minister, what is the one policy that would radically improve Indian education?"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



PEDAGOGY OVER POLITICS

When M Nageswara Rao Challenged India's Education Orthodoxy



"Please do whatever you can... SAVE OUR PEDDI."

BRS president KCR pleaded with folded hands before the doctors

"God is there, and the doctors are here. Everything is being done properly. Don't lose heart; stay strong."

KCR reassured Peddi's wife, children, and other family members.

KCR also inquired about the advanced medical treatment being provided to Peddi Sudarshan Reddy.

The doctors at Yashoda Hospital informed him that Peddi is receiving world-class, state-of-the-art treatment.

They added that it would take another 48 hours before they could provide a clearer and more complete assessment of his condition.

Hyderabad, July 27: BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) visited Yashoda Hospital in Secunderabad to check on the health of senior BRS leader and former Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, who is undergoing treatment after suffering a serious medical condition. He spoke with the doctors to understand the course of treatment. KCR visited the ICU where Peddi Sudarshan Reddy is being treated and reviewed the treatment being administered along with the medical team. Seeing his longtime colleague in the ICU moved KCR emotionally. He spent nearly 30 minutes there, carefully discussing Peddi's condition and treatment with the doctors. The doctors informed him that Peddi is receiving the highest level of medical care available, including consultations with specialists from overseas whenever necessary. They explained that his heart, lungs, and other organs are functioning, but brain activity still needs to improve.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

HC Directs CS to Relieve HYDRAA CHIEF RANGANATH

Hyderabad, July 27: In a significant development with potential implications for the functioning of the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA), the Telangana High Court on Monday directed Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao to relieve IPS officer A.V. Ranganath from the post of HYDRAA Commissioner and appoint a suitable replacement.

Justice Anil Kumar Jukanti issued the direction while hearing a batch of contempt petitions alleging that HYDRAA officials violated court orders during an operation on a disputed 40-acre land parcel at Lothkunta.

The petitions were filed by M/s Shan-



ta Sriram Constructions Pvt. Ltd., which claimed ownership of the property. The company alleged that HYDRAA officials entered the land earlier this month with nearly 50 vehicles and around 200 personnel, damaged containers, furniture and office infrastructure, and

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CANCER IS FOR YOUR BODY, NOT YOUR CONFIDENCE

Dasari Rahul Pradeep

Medchal-Malkajgiri, July 27: On World Head and Neck Cancer Day, Dasari Rahul Pradeep, Chief of Maitri Constructions, urged people to stay informed and brave in the face of cancer. He shared a clear message: cancer may affect the body, but it should never weaken a person's confidence. With courage and timely action, the disease can be fought and overcome. Rahul Pradeep highlighted that many cases of head and neck cancer are associated with tobacco and alcohol. He stressed that early detection plays a major role in successful treatment. "If detected at the beginning, treatment becomes easier and recovery is more likely," he said.

He also encouraged everyone not to ignore symptoms such as persistent problems in the mouth or throat, or unusual changes that continue for days. Seeking medical help early can prevent the condition from worsening. This message serves as an important reminder for everyone: awareness saves lives, and courage helps people take the right steps toward health.



21 STATE LEGISLATURES GO DIGITAL UNDER NEVA

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

The National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), the Centre's flagship initiative to digitise legislative functioning across the country, has made significant progress, with 33 out of 37 State and Union Territory Legislatures signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for its implementation. Of these, 21 Legislative Houses have already been transformed into fully digital legislatures, the Union Government informed Parliament on Monday.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. L. Murugan, in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, said the digitisation of the Lok Sabha

and Rajya Sabha is not part of the NeVA project, which is focused on State and UT Legislatures. According to the Minister, NeVA has streamlined legislative business by enabling electronic processing of House proceedings, significantly reducing dependence on paper-based systems. The platform has facilitated faster processing and dissemination of legislative documents, improved public access to legislative information, and generated savings in printing, handling and storage costs.

A mid-term evaluation conducted by NITI Aayog found that the project has substantially reduced paper consumption and enhanced legislative work-

flows. The report also noted that improved coordination among Legislatures and Government Departments has accelerated the processing of legislative business, while the NeVA public portal provides real-time access to legislative documents.

The evaluation further highlighted the role of NeVA Seva Kendras in supporting adoption of the platform through technical assistance and capacity-building programmes for legislators and officials.

Dr. Murugan said the NeVA application is regularly upgraded based on user feedback and operational requirements. To strengthen cybersecurity, the platform has been migrated to the NIC MeghRaj 2.0 cloud in-

Dendi Aravind Reddy Takes Charge

A New Wave of Commitment for Congress Party in 252 Kphb Division"



MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, JULY 27

Newly appointed as the 252 Kphb Division Congress Party President, Dendi Aravind Reddy marked his entry into leadership with a powerful message of loyalty, service, and unwavering dedication to the party and the people of the division.

Speaking on his appointment, Dendi shared a heartfelt commitment toward strengthening Congress at the grassroots level, listening to local concerns, and ensuring that every worker and family in 252 Kphb Division feels the party's presence and support. His rise to the responsibility was welcomed by supporters as a step toward renewed energy and stronger organization.

Dendi Aravind Reddy also emphasized the role of youth as the driving force of political change. He called on young leaders and volunteers to actively participate in public awareness, party-building programs, and community initiatives—stating that youth power combined with Congress values can create real momentum across the division.

With determination to work relentlessly, Aravind Reddy said his presidency will be guided by transparency, discipline, and unity within the party cadre. He assured residents that Congress leadership will focus on development-oriented solutions, addressing neighborhood needs, and strengthening relationships between party leaders and the public.

Party members described the appointment as both encouraging and timely, hoping Dendi's leadership will bring fresh enthusiasm, stronger grassroots involvement, and greater confidence among voters.

As Dendi Aravind Reddy begins his term, supporters believe his heartfelt commitment and focus on youth engagement will help build a more dynamic, people-centered Congress in 252 Kphb Division.

THE NEXT BATTLE..

>FROM PAGE 1

THE CENTRE IS SHOWING NO SIGNS OF RETREAT

The Modi government is standing firmly behind the E2o programme. Its argument is built on long-term national strategy rather than immediate public sentiment. The government points to India's early achievement of the E2o blending target, substantial savings in crude oil imports, stronger income support for sugarcane farmers, improved energy security and lower emissions. It also accepts that some vehicles may experience a modest reduction in mileage but maintains that extensive scientific studies and industry testing have found no evidence of widespread engine damage when E2o is used as recommended.

Most importantly, the Centre has made it abundantly clear that there is no proposal to restore pure petrol or E10 as a parallel nationwide option. That position leaves very little room for compromise.

EVERY LITRE OF PETROL IS NOW A POLITICAL ARGUMENT

This is where the political battle truly begins. The government is asking citizens to think about India's future. The Opposition is asking citizens to think about their monthly fuel expenses.

One side speaks about energy independence. The other speaks about shrinking mileage. One side highlights national gains. The other highlights personal loss.

Politics has always favoured issues that people can experience every day. A reduced reading on the fuel gauge is far easier to understand than a presentation on energy security or foreign exchange savings. Kejriwal is attempting to convert that everyday experience into sustained political momentum.

THE BIGGER RISK FOR BOTH SIDES

The BJP government is unlikely to reverse the policy merely because of political pressure. Doing so would weaken one of its flagship energy initiatives and send a message that

long-term reforms can be rolled back by organised protests. But dismissing public concerns carries its own political cost. Even a relatively small grievance, when shared by millions of motorists, can slowly develop into a larger perception that governments are becoming less responsive to everyday hardships.

AAP faces an equally serious challenge. If the campaign is viewed as a genuine effort to secure consumer choice, it may resonate with urban voters. If it appears to be opposition for the sake of opposition or an attack on a policy that benefits farmers and strengthens India's energy security, the campaign could lose credibility just as quickly as it gathered attention.

THIS IS NO LONGER ABOUT ETHANOL

The chemistry has already been debated by scientists. The engineering has already been debated by automobile manufacturers. The economics has already been debated by policymakers. The politics has only just begun. August 1 will therefore be watched not because it will decide the future of ethanol blending, but because it will reveal whether India's motorists are prepared to transform private frustration into public political pressure.

MY LAST SHOT

E2o petrol has become far more than a fuel policy. It has become the latest battlefield in India's continuing contest over who truly speaks for the common citizen. The Modi government believes national transformation demands difficult transitions. Arvind Kejriwal believes political pressure can force governments to reconsider even their most ambitious reforms. One side is defending a strategic vision for India's future. The other is attempting to convert everyday economic discomfort into a people's movement. The verdict will not be delivered inside laboratories or government files. It will be delivered in the court of public opinion, where every visit to a fuel station has the potential to become a political statement.

“Please do whatever you can...”

>FROM PAGE 1

They said this may take another 48 hours and that it would therefore be too early to provide a definite prognosis.

KCR emphasized that the party would make every possible effort to save Peddi Sudarshan Reddy and that no expense would be spared for his treatment.

After visiting the ICU, KCR met the family members, offering them reassurance and emotional support.

"Please do whatever you can... Save our Peddi," KCR pleaded with folded hands before the doctors.

The doctors at Yashoda Hospital informed him that Peddi is receiving world-class, state-of-the-art treatment. They added that it would take another 48 hours before they could provide a clearer and more complete assessment of his condition.

KCR reassured Peddi's wife, children, and other family members, saying, "God is there, and the doctors are here.

Everything is being done properly. Don't lose heart; stay strong."

He expressed confidence that, with the efforts of the doctors, God's grace, and the blessings of the people, Peddi would recover. He urged the family not to lose hope and assured them that the party would provide any financial assistance they might need.

After spending about 45 minutes reviewing Peddi's condition, KCR again appealed to the doctors, saying, "Please do whatever it takes—but save our Peddi Sudarshan Reddy," while folding his hands before them.

The doctors further explained that they are consulting medical experts from the United States and other countries, using advanced medical technology and the expertise of senior specialists. They said that MRI scans and other necessary tests are being conducted regularly, with the medical team holding frequent review meetings to make

treatment decisions aimed at improving his condition.

Hospital Director Dr. Pavan Gorukanti, along with Managing Directors A.S. Rao and J.S. Rao, assured KCR that the hospital staff are making every possible effort.

KCR also spoke with Peddi Sudarshan Reddy's family members, including his wife Swapna, son Nidarshan Reddy, daughter Dharmishta, brothers Srinivas Reddy and Ravinder Reddy, and sister Swathi, encouraging them to remain strong.

Several senior BRS leaders accompanied KCR during the visit, including former ministers Harish Rao, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Rajaiah, Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Satyavathi Rathod, Padma Rao Goud, Vinod Kumar, former MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar, MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, MLC Pochampally Srinivas Reddy, Dr. Sanjay, and several other party leaders.

Kishan Reddy Backs SCCL in Coal Block Row

>FROM PAGE 1

Reddy said the Naini, Tadicherla-2 and PKOC blocks together would produce about 830 million tonnes of coal, generate 6,500 jobs, create a Rs.1.95 lakh crore turnover, and yield nearly Rs.40,000 crore in profits for the state. He said he would write to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday, requesting that the PKOC block be awarded to Singareni instead of Telangana Genco.

On Parliament proceedings, Reddy defended the Centre's stringent anti-paper leak legislation and criticized the Congress for disrupting the House instead of supporting measures aimed at ensuring fair and transparent public examinations.

Jantar Mantar protest for Women's reservation INTENSIFIES, ENTERS SECOND WEEK

New Delhi, July 27: The National Coalition for Women's Reservation (NCWR) intensified its agitation at Jantar Mantar as its indefinite dharna demanding the immediate implementation of 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies entered its second week. Women, students, youth organisations and representatives of working women's groups from Delhi, Haryana and several other states participated in the protest.

Addressing the protesting women, leaders from AIDWA, NFIW, AIPWA, CITU and other organizations alleged that despite the passage of the Women's Reservation Act, the Union Government continues to delay its implementation by citing the Census and delimitation as preconditions. They described this as a grave injustice to women and an attempt to indefinitely postpone their equal participation in the country's democratic institutions.

They demanded that the reservation be implemented immediately without waiting for these processes, arguing that women's equal political representation cannot be

postponed further.

The speakers also criticised restrictions imposed on the peaceful protest, asserting that democratic rights must be protected. The protesters vowed to continue the agitation and expand the campaign nationwide until the Women's Reservation Act is implemented. P. K. Sreemathi, National President of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) and former Member of Parliament; Annie Raja, senior leader of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW); Shweta Raj, Secretary of AIPWA; Sagarika from ALIFA; Joycia Thorat from ICWM; Bhavana from TFT; Sudha from the CITU Working Women's Coordination Committee; and Sunita from the ASHA Workers' Union were among the speakers who addressed the gathering.

AIDWA General Secretary Kaninika Ghosh, Treasurer Tapasi Praharaj, Vice President Mariam Dhawale, S Punyavathi and Jagmati Sangwan, Asha Sharma and Savita and NFIW leader Deepti are among the prominent leaders who participated in the protest.

THE BRAVE IDEA THAT INDIA MUST DEBATE

>FROM PAGE 1

Rao's answer was immediate: Reserve at least fifty percent of teaching positions, from primary schools to universities, for Brahmanas. Predictably, surprise followed. The participant reminded him that he himself belonged to a Shudra community.

Rao's response shifted the discussion away from identity politics. His argument was simple. The Brahmana tradition, he said, has been associated for centuries with scholarship, learning, and teaching.

A nation serious about educational excellence should not ignore such a vast reservoir of accumulated pedagogical experience merely because modern politics finds the subject uncomfortable.

Whether one agrees with the prescription or not, the reasoning deserves intellectual engagement rather than emotional dismissal.

THE REAL QUESTION

The controversy is not about caste. The controversy is whether India has the courage to identify, preserve, and utilise its deepest intellectual traditions without political hesitation.

INDIA HAS FORGOTTEN TO ASK AN UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTION

Modern India has become remarkably comfortable discussing representation. It has become remarkably uncomfortable discussing specialisation. There is an important distinction.

Every civilisation develops communities, institutions, and traditions that acquire expertise through generations of sustained engagement.

Doctors produce families of doctors. Musicians often emerge from musical lineages. Military traditions survive through generations. Artisans preserve skills across centuries. Nobody considers this surprising. Yet when the same logic is discussed in relation to scholarship and teaching, political alarms begin ringing immediately. That reaction itself deserves scrutiny.

BEYOND THE POLITICS OF LABELS

The strongest point made by M. Nageswara Rao is not his proposal. It is the philosophy behind it. He consciously separated personal identity from institutional thinking. He did not argue from personal

benefit. He argued from what he considers civilisational advantage.

Leadership, in his formulation, is not about satisfying identity groups. Leadership is about recognising national strengths and putting them to productive use. That principle extends far beyond education. Successful nations constantly identify their comparative advantages and strengthen them. They do not weaken excellence simply because excellence has historical roots.

THE CIVILISATIONAL MEMORY WE IGNORE

Ancient India never viewed teaching as merely another government job. It was treated as a sacred public responsibility. Knowledge was expected to shape character before careers. Teachers commanded respect because scholarship demanded discipline, sacrifice, and lifelong learning.

That tradition produced philosophical schools, mathematical breakthroughs, linguistic mastery, astronomical discoveries, and enduring ethical literature.

History records these achievements irrespective of contemporary political preferences. Acknowledging that inheritance does not diminish anyone else. It merely

recognises historical reality.

The challenge before modern India is how to preserve that intellectual capital while ensuring equal opportunity and constitutional fairness. That is the debate worth having.

EXCELLENCE CANNOT BECOME POLITICALLY INCORRECT

India often celebrates merit in science, technology, sports, and entrepreneurship. Why should educational excellence become controversial? If a community, institution, or tradition has preserved expertise over generations, the answer is not exclusion. The answer is inclusion with openness. Teaching should remain accessible to every capable citizen through merit, training, and constitutional equality. At the same time, India should actively preserve and encourage those knowledge traditions that have historically enriched the nation.

Civilisations become poorer when they abandon their intellectual inheritance for fear of political criticism.

"A confident civilisation does not erase its knowledge traditions. It refines them, expands them, and shares them

with every generation."

THE LARGER QUESTION BEFORE INDIA

The debate triggered by M. Nageswara Rao ultimately extends beyond one community or one proposal.

How should India rebuild respect for teachers?

How should scholarship once again become a national aspiration?

How should universities reward intellectual depth instead of bureaucratic conformity?

How should classrooms produce thinkers rather than examination machines?

Those questions matter far more than the headlines generated by one statement.

MY WORD

M. Nageswara Rao has deliberately placed an uncomfortable idea before the nation. His proposal will naturally invite

disagreement and constitutional scrutiny. Many will argue that public employment in India must continue to be governed by equality, merit, and the constitutional framework rather than community-based preferences. That debate is both legitimate and necessary.

Yet dismissing his broader message without engaging its substance would be intellectually lazy. His central challenge is that India cannot aspire to become a global knowledge power while disconnecting itself from the civilisational traditions that once made learning its greatest strength.

The future of Indian education will not be secured by nostalgia alone, nor by political slogans. It will be secured by restoring respect for scholarship, demanding excellence from teachers, nurturing talent across every section of society, and drawing wisely from the country's rich intellectual heritage within the framework of the Constitution.

A nation rises not merely by expanding classrooms. It rises by elevating the quality of those who stand inside them and by ensuring that knowledge, wherever it resides, serves the larger national interest.

Adilabad Airport a Benchmark for the Development of North Telangana

- **BJP MLA Payal Shankar**
- **Joint-User Airport and Industrial Park to Transform Adilabad**
- **Made Possible Through Coordination Between the Central and State Governments**

HYDERABAD

Adilabad MLA Payal Shankar said that the approval of the Adilabad Airport is not merely significant for one district but represents a major opportunity for the comprehensive development of the entire North Telangana region. Addressing a media conference at the BJP state office, he said that even after the formation of Telangana, the negligence of previous governments had confined development, industries, and employment opportunities largely to Hyderabad.

He noted that Adilabad, identified by NITI Aayog as one of the most backward districts in the country, receiving approval for an airport is a welcome development. The state



government has issued a Government Order (GO) allocating ₹2,278 crore for the airport project, while the Ministry of Defence is expected to invest an additional ₹3,000 crore. With a total investment of nearly ₹5,500 crore, the Adilabad Airport will be developed as a Joint User Airport in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and the Airports Authority of India (AAI), marking a major milestone.

Payal Shankar recalled that during the election campaign in

Adilabad, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured the people that if the BJP was elected, the Central Government would take responsibility for the region's development. After BJP candidates won the MP and MLA seats, the party organized a public meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Adilabad, where the district's backwardness and developmental needs were highlighted. He added that Prime Minister Modi also gave clear directions to Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy, who was present on the stage.

He said that despite Adilabad's abundant mineral resources, fertile land, hardworking farmers, tribal communities, and large backward-class population, the district remained underdeveloped because of the negligence of previous governments.

He criticized the former BRS government for failing to act despite then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman writing more than ten letters in 2014-15 regarding the airport project. He also mentioned that he had repeatedly raised the issue in the State Assembly and worked to persuade both the Central Government and the State Government to move the project forward.

Payal Shankar further revealed that the government has decided to establish the state's largest industrial park after Hyderabad in Adilabad. A Government Order has already been issued for the acquisition of 2,200 acres, while the clearance process for another 6,000 acres is progressing rapidly. With both the airport and an industrial corridor coming up, he said Adilabad's landscape

would be transformed, positioning it as a National Logistics Hub and a Tri-Port Cargo Terminal.

He expressed confidence that Adilabad, home to the second-largest cotton market in Asia, would witness significant growth in the textile and agro-processing industries. He also said that the establishment of a Tribal Skill Development Centre and the district's rich forests and rivers would provide a major boost to tourism. According to him, Adilabad stands as an example of the scale of development that can be achieved under the "double-engine government" model.

On the occasion of the airport's approval, Payal Shankar thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Ram Mohan Naidu, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on behalf of the people of Adilabad for their support. He announced that the foundation stone for the Adilabad Airport would soon be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Union Ministers and the Chief Minister.



Key Discussions with Union Ministers for Telangana's Development

- **Speed up the Tadicherla-II project and provide 1,000 jobs to local residents.**
- **Provide a minimum monthly pension of 10,000 to retired Singareni workers.**
- **State Minister Dr. G. Vivek Venkataswamy and Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna submitted representations to Union Ministers on issues concerning Telangana's development.**

expedite the Tadicherla-II coal mine project, which is considered crucial for the Peddapalli parliamentary constituency. They requested that the project be completed without delay and that at least 1,000 jobs be provided to local youth, with priority given to residents of villages affected by the project. They also sought comprehensive rehabilitation and resettlement measures under the Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package for displaced families.

The delegation also requested the Central Government to ensure a minimum monthly pension of ₹10,000 for retired employees of Singareni Collieries. They highlighted the financial difficulties faced by thousands of retired workers receiving low pensions and urged the Centre to address the issue. They further sought Central assistance for the expansion of Singareni, the development of new coal mines, and infrastructure improvements in mining-affected regions. The Union Ministers assured the delegation that the proposals submitted by the Telangana Government would be considered positively. They said the concerned departments would examine measures to expedite the Tadicherla-II project, provide employment opportunities for local people, implement the R&R package effectively, and address the pension issue of retired Singareni workers.

NEW DELHI

Telangana's Minister for Energy (Labour, Training, Employment & Factories) and Mines, Dr. G. Vivek Venkataswamy, along with Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna, met several Union Ministers in New Delhi on Monday to seek the Central Government's support on key development issues concerning Telangana. The leaders held comprehensive discussions on employment generation, skill development, mining sector growth, infrastructure expansion, and labour welfare in the state.

They first met Union Minister for Labour and Employment Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, requesting greater Central support for expanding labour welfare programmes, creating more employment opportunities, and strengthening the implementation of Central schemes in Telangana.

They later met Union Minister for Skill Development Jayant Chaudhary to discuss advanced skill training for youth, the development of advanced technology centres, and expanding training programmes aligned with industry requirements.

Subsequently, they met Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy and urged him to

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. G. Vivek Venkataswamy said:

"We will work in close coordination with the Central Government to promote Telangana's development, expand employment opportunities for youth, improve workers' welfare, and accelerate the development of the mining sector. We remain committed to continuously pursuing every issue related to the state's interests and fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Telangana."



The Eternal Inspiration of APJ Abdul Kalam Life

KARIMNAGAR

APJ Abdul Kalam's life has become a constant source of inspiration for today's youth and a beacon of light for tomorrow's generation, said Lion Captain Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, President of Lead India-2047. Speaking as the chief guest at a special program organized by Lead India and Satavahana Lions Club at Saptagiri Colony Government School on the occasion of the death anniversary of our former President APJ Abdul Kalam today, he said that our Kalam is a great man who not only started with a very simple and humble life but also became a defense scientist, a public president, a

good teacher, a missile designer, and an ISRO scientist, which makes the country proud, but also encouraged young India by saying Lead India.

He said that hard work is necessary to realize our dreams. In this meeting, Satavahana Lions Club President Lion M Mahender, Lead India Secretary Dr. S Manoharachari, Satavahana Vice President Acharya V Srinivas, Past President Lion D Tirupati Reddy, School HM Annapurna and others spoke and revealed the life stories of Kalam. On this occasion, prizes were given to the winners of essay writing, calligraphy and drawing competitions organized on the topic "What is the lesson taught by Kalam's life?"

Students should become job creators, says KU Vice Chancellor

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

WARANGAL

"Students should become job creators rather than job seekers and contribute to the nation's economic growth," said Kakatiya University (KU) Vice Chancellor Prof. K. Pratap Reddy. Speaking at the Entrepreneurship and Startup Induction Programme organized by Kakatiya University K-Hub in association with Telangana's T-Hub under the MoU signed between the two institutions, Prof. Pratap Reddy encouraged students to dream big, utilize government opportunities, and pursue innovation with determination.

He said the initiative would provide nearly 3,000 students with mentoring and startup support through T-Hub, expressing confidence that at least 10 startups would emerge from the programme. Every innovative idea has value, he said, urging students to nurture and develop their ideas into successful ventures. Stating that Kakatiya University is emerging as a major innovation hub in North Telangana, the Vice Chancellor said that the University is exploring academic collaboration with



Reutlingen University, including 4+1 and 3+2 dual-degree programmes and short-term student exposure visits. He further informed that a second incubation centre would be established on the campus under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. Speaking on the occasion, Registrar Prof. V. Ramachandram urged students to leverage the mentoring, innovation, and incubation support offered through K-Hub and T-Hub to transform their ideas into successful startups. T-Hub representative Sraavan Erugula said 400 students were

selected from around 1,700 applicants and would undergo 12-15 training sessions on entrepreneurship and startup development, followed by continuous mentoring. Prof. R. Mallikarjun Reddy, RUSA Nodal Officer, encouraged students to become employers instead of employees. Prof. T. Savita Jyotsna, Director, K-Hub chaired the programme. T-Hub representatives Ashish Sharma and Bharat, K-Hub Joint Directors Siddharth and Bollam Kiran, Prof. N. Raman, Prof. K. Bhikshalu, faculty members, researchers, and students were present.

Students' Future is the State's Future, says Minister Bhatti

- **Free welfare is not charity... it is public investment**
- **Governance is not about power... it is about public welfare**
- **The Indiramma welfare schemes were born from the People's March**
- **Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka**

KHAMMAM

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka asserted that welfare schemes are not "freebies" but investments made by the government in its people. He strongly criticized those who, with half-baked understanding, label welfare initiatives as freebies. Just as governments invest in industries, infrastructure, and development projects, they also invest in the people—especially the poor, Dalits, backward communities, and all sections of society. Such investments, he said, help citizens progress socially and economically.

He inaugurated the Centralized Community Kitchen in Madhira Assembly constituency, which will provide nutritious breakfast to students studying in government schools. Addressing a public meeting, he said that the Congress-led People's Government is committed to ensuring that no child in Telangana goes to school hungry.

Bhatti emphasized that the future of students is the future of the state. Despite financial



constraints, the government has introduced the free breakfast scheme to provide students with hygienic, tasty, and nutritious food every morning, promoting both their physical and mental development. As announced in the State Budget, the scheme has now been launched across all government schools, beginning from Madhira constituency.

He reiterated that under Indiramma Rajyam, no child should attend school on an empty stomach. Every child born in the state represents Telangana's future, and therefore the government is determined to provide them with a healthy start each day.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the scheme was introduced because children who come to school hungry struggle to concentrate, cannot properly understand lessons, and are unable to focus on their education. The government has taken this decision to eliminate such hardships.

Bhatti described human resources as the greatest wealth of the state. While natural resources are essential for devel-

opment, a state or nation can become truly powerful only when it possesses talented and capable human resources. He stressed that Telangana should nurture children into world-class talent, "polishing them like diamonds" so they can guide not only the state and the country but also the world. He called the statewide breakfast programme the beginning of that vision. Serving hot breakfast simultaneously to 2.7 million students across Telangana is a historic decision and, according to him, one that deserves to be recorded in golden letters in the nation's history.

He observed that in today's times, even providing breakfast to two children at home is difficult for many families. Yet the government has undertaken the enormous responsibility of serving hot breakfast every morning to 2 million government school students and 700,000 residential school students, totaling 2.7 million children. Bhatti remarked that no other state or country has implemented such a large-scale breakfast programme.

GREEN INDIA CHALLENGE 9TH EDITION

HYDERABAD

On International Mangrove Day, the Green India Challenge adds 10,000 mangroves to the world's largest tidal forest, planted by 500+ members of the Mangrove Army and the tiger widows of the Sundarbans.

Sundarbans, West Bengal - UNESCO World Heritage Site

On International Mangrove Day, as part of the 9th Edition of the Green India Challenge, 10,000 mangrove saplings were

planted across the Sundarbans, the UNESCO World Heritage tidal forest that shields the Bengal coast from cyclones, stores more carbon per hectare than almost any forest on Earth, and shelters the Royal Bengal Tiger. The drive was led by Green Global Icon Shri Joginipalli Santosh Kumar, Founder of the Green India Challenge.

10,000 mangroves planted - 500+ community guardians - 1 World Heritage forest

Mangrove Army · tiger wid-

ows · on International Mangrove Day

The Guardians of the Tide

This planting carried a meaning deeper than its numbers. Among the 500-plus planters were the tiger widows of the Sundarbans, women who lost husbands to tiger attacks in the mangrove creeks, and who have too often been pushed to the margins of their own villages. Here, they stood not as victims but as guardians of the forest, restoring the very ecosystem that shapes their lives.

They planted alongside the Mangrove Army, the community volunteer force working under the guidance of Shri Umashankar Mandal, widely known as the Mangrove Man of Sundarbans for his years of coastal restoration. Coordinating on behalf of the movement was Shri Krishna Teja Reddy, associate of Igniting Minds Organisation.

A single hectare of mangrove can store up to four times more carbon than tropical rainforest, while buffering storm surges, holding shorelines against erosion, and serving as the

nursery for the fish that feed coastal families.

WHY THE SUNDARBANS, WHY NOW

The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest on Earth and among the most climate-vulnerable landscapes in India. Rising seas, intensifying cyclones and saltwater intrusion threaten both its biodiversity and the communities that depend on it. Every mangrove planted is a stake driven into shifting ground, a defence for the coast, a store for carbon.

BJP demands CM Revanth Reddy's resignation for destroying education sector

HYDERABAD

BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao today alleged that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's proposal to lower the minimum age for contesting elections from 25 to 21 years is a strategy to divert the attention of the public and Gen-Z youth from the Congress government's failures and unfulfilled promises.

Speaking at a press conference at State Office here, Rao alleged that CM Revanth Reddy has mooted an idea out of fear that Gen-Z would question the failure of the Congress government and its unfulfilled promises. "He termed it as a diversion politics".

He clarified that the framers of the Constitution particularly Dr. B.R. Ambedkar fixed the minimum age at 25



years with the foresight that legislators need experience. He asserted that the CM's current move is nothing more than deceptive "diversion politics" from failures of his government.

Challenging the Congress party, BJP state chief stated that if they sincerely intend to empower young leadership, they should first replace Mallikarjun Kharge and appoint a young leader as the Congress National President. He reminded everyone that the

BJP has already given due importance to youth by appointing Nitin Nabin as a national president. Further criticizing the administration, Rao pointed out that even after two and a half years of coming to power, Congress has failed to fulfill even a single promise made to students and youth. He noted that due to the non-release of ₹12,000 crore in fee reimbursement dues affecting nearly 20 lakh students, colleges are withholding original certificates,

causing severe hardship. Similarly, he expressed concern over the severe crisis facing 17 public universities in Telangana due to a acute Fund Crunch and Faculty Crunch. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who promised Rs 1,000 crore to universities, has not released even a single rupee so far. Teachers are deprived of salaries and retirement benefits, leaving the entire education system crippled, he alleged.

He remarked that every pre-election promise such as 2 lakh government jobs for youth, Rs 4,000 monthly unemployment allowance, Vidya Bharosa cards, free scooters for female students, 75 per cent local reservation in private jobs, a Youth Commission, and an Employment Support System has vanished into thin air.

TRS Appoints In-Charges for 19 Assembly Constituencies

HYDERABAD

Telangana Rakshana Sena chief Kalvakuntla Kavitha has appointed in-charges for 19 Assembly constituencies and 9 Lok Sabha constituencies. The announcement was made on Monday. Earlier, Kavitha had appointed in-charges for 23 Assembly constituencies. In the second phase, she has appointed in-charges for another 19 constituencies. As in the first phase, the second phase also gives significant representation to the BC community, with 10 of the 19 Assembly in-charge positions being allotted to BC leaders. The party also announced appointments to several other posts, including presidents of its affiliated organizations.

State-Level Appointments

Telangana Rakshana Sena Women's Wing: State President: Padala Manoja Goud; General Secretary: Kanagala Chaitanya; Vice President: Ayili Kavitha

New Bhogapuram Airport to Spur Regional Development

AMARAVATI

North Andhra is going to witness a major milestone in development with the commissioning of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district on August 1 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Built at a cost of nearly Rs 4,727 crore in a record time of 31 months, the airport is ready to commence commercial operations. Extensive arrangements are underway for the Prime Minister's visit and the inauguration ceremony. The government views Bhogapuram Airport not merely as an infrastructure project, but as a transformational asset for the entire North Andhra region. As part of its vision to position Visakhapatnam among globally developed cities, the government has developed the airport to international standards. Beyond serving as an aviation facility, the airport has been conceived as a catalyst for industrial growth, employment generation, exports, skill development and research. Bhogapuram is among the fastest-completed Greenfield international airports in India completed within 31 months, nearly five months ahead of schedule. The airport has already secured the DGCA aerodrome licence, along with all required safety, fire and

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport on August 1
Rs 4,727-crore Greenfield airport completed in a record time of 31 months
Aviation Hub and Aviation University planned to generate more employment opportunities

environmental clearances. The airport has been designed to handle 6 million passengers annually in the first phase, with a master plan to expand capacity to 40 million passengers annually in the future. The project is expected to play a pivotal role in boosting economic growth, tourism, industrial investments, exports, logistics, aerospace and defence sectors across the erstwhile Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts. The airport has been developed by GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Limited (GVIAL) under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model using the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) framework. The integrated project spans 2,703.26 acres, including: Airport: 2,203.32 acres, Aviation Hub: 500 acres, Aviation University/EduCity: 136.63 acres. The project includes comprehensive aside infrastructure, commercial development, residential zones and approach roads. A key highlight is its 3,800-metre Code-E runway, capable of handling wide-body aircraft such as the Boeing 777, Boeing 787 Dreamliner, Airbus A330 and Airbus A340. The

airport is also equipped with advanced airfield lighting, navigation aids and CNS/ATM infrastructure to support both domestic and international operations. The terminal incorporates advanced passenger processing technologies including: Contact boarding bridges, Common Use Passenger Processing System (CUPPS), Self baggage drop, Self-service passenger processing, Smart surveillance, Access control systems, Security management systems, Integrated Operational Control and Monitoring Centre. These facilities are aimed at enhancing passenger convenience and operational efficiency. Bhogapuram Airport is expected to significantly strengthen North Andhra's export ecosystem through a 25,000 metric tonne annual capacity cargo terminal. It includes temperature-controlled cold chain facilities for transporting pharmaceuticals, marine products and other high-value perishable goods. Integration with Visakhapatnam Port, industrial corridors and logistics networks is expected to establish Bhogapuram as a major air cargo and logistics hub on India's east coast. The air-

port has been designed with sustainability as a key focus, featuring: 5 MW solar power plant, Energy-efficient HVAC systems, LED airfield lighting, Smart Building Management System, Rainwater harvesting, Water recycling, Sewage treatment plants, Integrated waste management systems. Around 30 per cent of the airport's water requirement will be met through recycled water. The airport is being developed to LEED Platinum standards. Architecturally, the terminal reflects Andhra Pradesh's cultural identity. Inspired by the "Flying Fish", symbolising the Bay of Bengal and North Andhra's maritime heritage, the terminal also incorporates traditional Rangoli into its roof and ceiling designs. The airport has obtained all major statutory approvals, including: DGCA Aerodrome Licence, Validation Flight Clearance, BCAS Security Clearance, PESO Approval, Fire Safety Clearances. Comprehensive Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) trials have also been completed with participation from airlines, ground handlers, customs, immigration, security agencies and airport personnel. Aviation

Hub: The State Government plans to develop a 500-acre Aviation Hub adjacent to the airport as a next-generation, net-zero focused aerospace and defence ecosystem. The hub will include: MRO (Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul) facilities, Aerospace and defence manufacturing, Aircraft assembly, Aviation logistics and cargo infrastructure, Design and R&D centres, Aviation training academies, Skill development institutions. The project aims to attract around Rs 20,000 crore in investments and generate over 60,000 direct and 1.2 lakh indirect employment opportunities. Aviation University: An Aviation University/EduCity will be developed over 136.63 acres adjacent to the airport. The institution will focus on aviation, aerospace, defence, drones and emerging technologies through education, research, innovation and skill development. The project is expected to attract Rs 3,000-5,000 crore in investments, accommodate around 9,000 students and train 4,000 executive education participants annually, in collaboration with leading national and international institutions and industry partners. The Andhra

Pradesh Government invested Rs 1,582.97 crore towards enabling infrastructure, including land acquisition - Rs 944.40 crore, Water supply - Rs 75 crore, Power supply - Rs 97.31 crore, Funded works - Rs 134.55 crore, Connectivity roads - Rs 301.46 crore, Road connectivity - Rs 3.25 crore, Irrigation canal works - Rs 27 crore. The government also developed approach roads and supporting infrastructure connecting the airport. This will significantly improve air connectivity across North Andhra, coastal Andhra and neighbouring states. The airport is expected to unlock new opportunities in tourism, hospitality, logistics, warehousing, exports, pharmaceuticals, marine products, IT, aerospace, defence and manufacturing. Tourist destinations such as Araku, Lamasingi, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam are expected to benefit substantially. The planned Aviation Hub, Aviation University, cargo facilities, MRO ecosystem and aerospace industries are expected to transform the Visakhapatnam-Bhogapuram Growth Corridor into one of India's leading economic and industrial corridors.

Anti-nationals active again, nationalist forces must stay united: Bengal CM

JALPAIGURI: (JUL 27)

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Monday alleged that "anti-national gangs" have become active again, trying to weaken the country, and urged "nationalist forces" to counter such attempts unitedly. His remarks at a BJP workers' meeting at Jalpesh in Jalpaiguri district assumed significance against the backdrop of country-wide protests against NEET

question paper leak, with many ruling party leaders alleging the demonstrators being manipulated to push an anti-national agenda. Addressing the meeting after offering prayers at the Jalpesh Shiva Temple, the chief minister used the derogatory "Secu" and "Maku" barbs for secular and Marxist politics to allege that "anti-national 'tukde tukde' gangs" were again attempting to destabilise the country.

Madras HC cancels Vijay govt's jobs order for Karur stampede victims' families

On July 10, Vijay made his first visit to Karur since assuming office and handed over government appointment orders on compassionate grounds to 32 members of the victims' families. Under the package, one eligible member from each affected family was offered a government job. The Chief Minister also met the bereaved families at the District Collectorate before addressing a public gathering in the district. The event was marked by emotional scenes as Vijay broke down while handing over the appointment letters. Dressed entirely in black, the actor-turned-politician struggled to hold back tears as he consoled grieving relatives, describing the tragedy as an "unhealed wound" that continued to weigh heavily on him. Visuals from the ceremony showed Vijay embracing family members of the victims, often lowering his head in silence as he handed over the appointment orders.

The Madras High Court on Monday quashed the Tamil Nadu government's order granting government jobs to the families of those killed in the Karur stampede, while disposing of a batch of PILs challenging the appointments. Observing that the stampede is under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and that the Supreme Court is monitoring the probe, the court said it would refrain from making any observations on the merits of the case. The appointments stemmed from a rehabilitation package unveiled by the Vijay government for families of the 41 people killed in the September 2025 Karur stampede during a TVK

HYDRA Chief Defends Actions, Says Land Mafia Misleading Courts

HYDERABAD, JULY 27:

HYDRA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath on Sunday said his actions over the past two years have been guided by the Constitution, with a focus on protecting government lands, lakes and parks. He claimed HYDRA has safeguarded public assets worth nearly ₹1.5 lakh crore, restored six lakes and is reviving 20 more, besides reclaiming hundreds of encroached lakes, parks and thousands of acres of government land. Responding to recent High

Court proceedings, Ranganath alleged that influential land grabbers were filing contempt cases and misleading the courts. Referring to the Lothukunta case, he claimed a private developer attempted to encroach on government land worth about ₹10,000 crore and damaged heritage rock formations and trees without approvals. He said 63 contempt cases have been filed against him by alleged encroachers, but asserted he would face them through the legal process and expressed full faith in the judiciary.

BJP WELCOMED HIGH COURT VERDICT ON HYDERAA CHIEF

HYDERABAD, JULY 27

Telangana State BJP unit welcomed the historic orders passed by the Telangana High Court directing the immediate removal of HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath from his post. BJP state party president N Ramchander Rao said the verdict is a strong slap in the face to the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government, which has been ruling while trampling upon democracy. He demanded that the government immediately and completely dismantle this entire 'HYDRAA' system, which has become a platform for high-handedness under the guise of removing illegal constructions, spreading terror among the general public and

farmers. Rao said the BJP has maintained from the very beginning that HYDRAA, introduced by the Congress government in the state, should never act against poor people and small farmers. However, under the pretext of protecting the poor, the Revanth government violated democratic principles and resorted to atrocities using HYDRAA, he alleged. In a democracy, the judiciary is a vital pillar. It is a severe offense for officials, who are bound to work within the confines of the Constitution and the law, to repeatedly defy court orders, Rao said adding that fact that as many as 63 contempt petitions were filed clearly shows the extent to which this government and the concerned officials disregarded

the courts. Trespassing into private lands despite existing court orders and failing to follow basic legal procedures resulted in a complete breakdown of the 'Rule of Law'. Asserting that no one is above the law, BJP state chief said the Congress government must open its eyes at least now, implement the court orders in letter and spirit and completely abolish HYDRAA, which has turned into an anti-people organization engaging in atrocities against the poor and farmers. If the government continues to rule by setting the law aside and defying the courts, the BJP will not remain a silent spectator, we will stand by the victims and the public and continue our fight, Rao warned.

Bring awareness among farmers on El Niño Impact:CM

Employees' performance in remote areas must improve to match people's expectations: Chief Minister

AMARAVATI

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to bring awareness among farmers over the impact of El Niño. In view of forecasts indicating a strong El Niño impact throughout the year, the Chief Minister instructed officials to strengthen the measures already in place and intensify awareness efforts among farmers. He said farmers should be informed about the likely consequences of El Niño and encouraged to adopt suitable alternative crops wherever necessary. He also instructed the agriculture department to effectively implement the Crop Insur-

ance action plan.

During a review meeting at Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) Centre in Secretariat on Monday, the Chief Minister assessed the performance of various departments. The Chief Minister observed that there are still gaps in the delivery of government services in remote areas of the State. Referring to feedback received from the public during his recent visit to Alur Assembly constituency, he stressed that government employees' performance must align with the expectations and needs of the people. The Chief Minister also referred to the tragic incident of suicide of Shivani, a meritorious stu-

dent from Rampachodavaram and expressed deep anguish over the incident. Officials informed the Chief Minister that the School Education Department has initiated measures to conduct psychometric assessments to monitor students' mental well-being. The Chief Minister directed officials to engage mental health experts for proper evaluation and ensure that teachers receive adequate training to identify and support students facing psychological stress. Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy, Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad, Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta and senior officials participated in the review meeting.

Farmers Ask Vijay to Reject Mekedatu Talks

Tamil Nadu farmers' groups have urged Vijay to reject Karnataka's invitation for talks on the Mekedatu and Cauvery disputes, arguing that the issues fall solely under the jurisdiction of the Cauvery Water Management Authority.



Representatives of several farmers' organisations in Tamil Nadu on Sunday urged Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay to reject Karnataka's invitation for bilateral talks on the proposed dam across the Cauvery at Mekedatu and other river water issues. They said such discussions should take place only through the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA). The demand came even as Tamil Nadu Agriculture Minister Vinoth stepped back from his earlier statement on the Chief Minister's proposed visit to Bengaluru. After earlier saying Vijay would travel to Bengaluru on August

3, the minister later told reporters to wait for an official announcement. The Mekedatu issue is a long-running dispute in which Karnataka wants to build a balancing reservoir and drinking water project across the Cauvery River at Mekedatu, while Tamil Nadu opposes it, arguing that it could reduce downstream water flows and violate the existing Cauvery water-sharing arrangement, and affecting farmers. Addressing a meeting of district office-bearers of farmers' coordination committee in Mayiladuthurai, farmers'

leader PR Pandian said, "Tamil Nadu Chief Minister must reject the Karnataka Chief Minister's invitation". According to the farmers, direct talks could lead to unrest. "In the past, when such talks were called, contradictions arose, clashes have erupted," Pandian added. He said all water-sharing discussions must be strictly routed through the CWMA. "The Tamil Nadu chief minister going to Karnataka to talk about Karnataka's plan for a dam in Mekedatu and water release is legally invalid. It is invalid as per the Supreme Court order. It is invalid as per the Constitution," Pandian said. Referring to the 2013 Supreme Court directives and the later setting up of the CWMA, he added, "Since the Authority is functioning under the direct supervision of the Supreme Court, there is no use in any state chief ministers meeting to talk."

The farmers' leaders also voiced concern over reports

that Tamil Nadu vehicles were being stopped at the Hosur-Bengaluru border, alleging that this was a deliberate attempt to provoke linguistic sentiments. Speaking to reporters in Thanjavur, Minister Vinoth briefly responded to questions on the proposed Karnataka visit. Asked about conflicting information on the trip, he said, "Official announcements will come from the head office." The minister was in Thanjavur to inaugurate a project to desilt 6 km of drainage canals with Corporate Social Responsibility funds at an estimated cost of Rs 70 lakh, as well as another drive to remove water hyacinth from water bodies. In sum, farmers' groups have opposed any direct talks with Karnataka on Mekedatu and other Cauvery issues, insisting that the matter be handled only through the CWMA, while the state government has said any decision on the chief minister's Bengaluru visit will be announced officially.

Leadership Row: TVK Targets Udhayanidhi

Tamil Nadu Law Minister Nirmal Kumar questioned Udhayanidhi Stalin's role in the NEET paper leak protests in the state and claimed that he is not even fit to lead his party. Kumar said that if a vote were held on who is fit to lead the party, the outcome would already be a foregone conclusion among its workers.



Wondering whether the DMK leaders have truly accepted his leadership, Kumar said, "Udhayanidhi should first call the party office-bearers and ask whether he has the qualification to lead the party. He should hold a vote. To go a step further, the voting should be on who should lead the DMK founded by Anna -- Udhayanidhi or Kanimozhi. There is no need for Udhayanidhi to even release the results, as his partymen already know about his capacity." Last week, Udhayanidhi targeted what he called

the Vijay government's "double standards" in Tamil Nadu for arresting SFI and DYFI members who were protesting against the NEET-UG paper leak in Chennai in solidarity with the Cockroach Janata Party's march in Delhi. "Arresting those protesting in Tamil Nadu in support of the youth fighting in Delhi under the leadership of CJP clearly reveals the ruling party's double standards on the NEET issue." "The government must immediately stop this suppression, which treats protests against the Union BJP government as protests against

itself," he added, demanding the immediate release of the ones arrested. Tamil Nadu Minister R Nirmal Kumar has accused the DMK of trying to hijack and politicise the ongoing student protests against NEET. He alleged that the party was entering student movements for political reasons and said students themselves had chased away DMK workers who arrived wearing party-branded T-shirts. Speaking to reporters in Chennai, Kumar also said a state law by itself could not override NEET regulations. Reiterating the ruling TVK government's opposition to the entrance examination, he said the government's stand had been clear from the beginning and added that legislative steps on the issue would not help students. Kumar said, "The DMK is entering student movements to hijack them, which is a cheap political act. Students themselves chased away DMK workers who turned up wearing party-branded T-shirts.

They must stop such disgraceful activities immediately," he alleged. He also took aim at Udhayanidhi, saying, "First, Udhayanidhi should introspect. Udhayanidhi has doubts, and that is why he is involved in some Gen Z work," he further said. On NEET, the state Minister for Energy Resources and Law said, "The Tamil Nadu government cannot bypass NEET simply by passing a state law, as central laws cannot be overridden that way. Our stand has been clear from the beginning -- we do not want NEET." He dismissed the political rhetoric around the issue and described the government's legislative moves as "eye-wash" that would do little to help students. Kumar's remarks centred on two points: his allegation that the DMK was using the student protests for political purposes, and his assertion that a state law alone could not set aside NEET, even as the ruling TVK government continued to oppose the examination.



EDITORIAL

Reclaiming Trust: Why India's New Exam Task Force Must Be More Than a Committee

The decision to constitute a high-powered task force led by tech pioneer Nandan Nilekani to reform India's entrance examination framework marks a significant opportunity to restore public confidence in one of the country's most critical institutions. For millions of students, examinations such as NEET and JEE are not merely academic tests but life-defining milestones that determine access to higher education and future careers. When these examinations are disrupted by paper leaks, security lapses, or administrative failures, the consequences extend far beyond the cancellation of a single test. They undermine faith in the principle of merit, inflict immense emotional stress on students, impose financial burdens on families, and cast doubt on the fairness of the entire education system. Over the past few years, repeated instances of examination irregularities have highlighted the urgent need for structural reforms rather than temporary fixes. Aspirants often spend years preparing for competitive examinations, sacrificing personal time and investing heavily in coaching, study materials, and travel. A compromised examination not only wastes these efforts but also forces students to endure prolonged uncertainty as authorities investigate, cancel, or reschedule tests. The resulting delays affect admission schedules, academic calendars, and career planning, leaving countless students anxious about their future.

Until now, official responses have largely focused on investigating leaks, arresting those involved, and strengthening legal penalties. While such measures are necessary to punish wrongdoing and deter future offenders, they are inherently reactive. They come into play only after the damage has already been done. What India requires is a system designed to prevent breaches altogether by addressing vulnerabilities at every stage of the examination process.

In this context, the newly constituted task force stands out because of its multidisciplinary composition. Bringing together experts in digital technology, cybersecurity, space science, governance, and education creates an opportunity to rethink examination security comprehensively rather than relying on incremental improvements. Their combined expertise can help develop a framework that is resilient, technology-driven, and capable of adapting to evolving threats.

The reforms under consideration should prioritize prevention over response. Secure digital transmission of question papers through end-to-end encryption, biometric verification of candidates and examination personnel, standardized audits of examination centers, AI-enabled monitoring systems, tamper-evident logistics, and robust cybersecurity protocols can significantly reduce opportunities for human interference. Equally important are transparent accountability mechanisms, independent audits, and real-time monitoring to ensure that every stakeholder adheres to the highest standards of integrity.

Technology, however, cannot succeed in isolation. It must be supported by clear administrative procedures, continuous staff training, periodic security reviews, and strict adherence to standard operating protocols. Public confidence will also depend on transparent communication whenever issues arise, ensuring that students receive timely and accurate information without unnecessary uncertainty.

The formation of this task force is, therefore, a welcome and timely initiative. Yet committees alone do not deliver reform; implementation does. The credibility of India's examination system will ultimately be judged by how quickly and effectively these recommendations are translated into practice. If executed with commitment, transparency, and sustained political will, the reforms can transform India's entrance examinations into a secure, technology-enabled, and trustworthy system where merit alone determines opportunity. Restoring that confidence is not merely an administrative necessity—it is an investment in the aspirations of millions of young Indians and the future of the nation itself.



THAT'S WHY !

That's why — when love is pure and deep,
Two souls their silent promise keep.
With patient steps and hearts aligned,
They walk a path that's gently kind.

When friends rejoice in dreams come true,
And blessings fall like morning dew,
The kiss that waits — not stolen, blind —
But offered when both hearts entwined.

Then comes the child, a gift of grace,
A tender smile, a shining face.
Their tiny feet, their laughing light,
A story born from love done right.

But now — it's rushed, no roots, no name,
A fleeting thrill, a careless game.
A drink, a text, a midnight trace,
No depth, no truth, no steady place.

They kiss before a word is said,
No dreams are shared, no vows are read.
They lie, they hide, they lose the way,
As soul and meaning fade away.

No goal in sight, just urgent pace,
A life once bright — now lost in chase.
From morning parks to shadowed night,
A borrowed joy, a stolen light.

Marriage? "Maybe." Love? "Let's see."
No roots, no wings, no guarantee.
For where there's haste, and trust is thin,
No true beginnings can begin.

Because — when love forgets to grow,
And rushes where it should be slow,
The heart turns blind, the soul grows dim,
And life becomes a hollow hymn.

So love with care — let time be wise,
Let purpose shine in lovers' eyes.
For only those who wait to see,
Shall find love's truest guarantee.



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



Supreme Court's Concern Over Family Traditions and Fraying Relationships

A family is not merely a group of people living under one roof; it is a living institution founded on trust, sacrifice, patience, and values. When the foundation of this institution begins to weaken, the consequences are not confined to a single household—they ripple across society. The concern expressed by the Supreme Court during the hearing of the widely discussed Sonam Raghuvanshi "honey-moon murder" case was not simply a judicial observation on a criminal incident. It was, in fact, a profound commentary on the changing character of Indian society. Justice M. M. Sundresh and Justice P. B. Varale poignantly observed that joint families traditionally nurtured patience, tolerance, resilience, and the spirit of adjustment, whereas the rise of nuclear families has increasingly been accompanied by depression, intolerance, and the disintegration of relationships. Their remarks reflect an uncomfortable yet undeniable truth of our times.

The emotional distance between parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren has been widening steadily. This erosion of familial bonds has now begun to create deep fractures even in marital relationships. The hollowness of relationships has become so alarming that incidents of spouses murdering one another no longer evoke the shock they once did. Such tragedies are occurring with disturbing frequency. Homes have become larger, but hearts have grown smaller. Material comforts have multiplied, yet human sensitivity has diminished. Conversations have become scarce, while screen time has expanded. As a result, relationships are gradually being reduced to mere formalities. The brutal murders that have taken place before marriage or within days of marriage in recent years have shaken the nation. These incidents are not merely failures of law and order; they are manifestations of a deeper moral and social decline. Ironically, many of these families possessed wealth, status, and every material comfort, yet lacked life's greatest treasures—trust and contentment. The timeless words of Saint Kabir resonate today more powerfully than ever: "When the wealth of contentment arrives, all other wealth turns to dust." Material prosperity can never purchase inner peace or the warmth of genuine relationships.

Indian culture has always regarded the family not merely as a social institution but as the first school of life, where values, ethics, and culture are nurtured. In a joint family, grandparents were nev-



er just elderly relatives—they were living universities of wisdom. Through stories and everyday experiences, they imparted lessons of patience, compassion, forgiveness, self-restraint, and sacrifice. Every family member shared one another's joys and sorrows, ensuring that the burden of an individual's suffering was lightened by the collective strength of the family.

Today, this protective shield is rapidly disappearing. In the relentless pursuit of ambition, both husband and wife remain occupied with professional commitments, while children are increasingly raised by mobile phones, tablets, and domestic help. Instead of being comforted in loving arms, a crying child is often handed a digital device. This is not a solution born of convenience; it is the displacement of emotional nurturing. The Supreme Court's observation that "gadgets can never replace emotions" stands as one of the most significant social warnings of our age. The digital revolution has undoubtedly made life easier, but when technology begins to dominate human relationships, it transforms into their greatest adversary. Families now sit together in the same room while remaining emotionally disconnected, each absorbed in a separate digital world. Conversations at the dining table have disappeared. The tradition of looking into each other's eyes while speaking is fading, weakening emotional bonds and intensifying loneliness.

The roots of this crisis lie not in modernity itself but in its unbalanced and uncritical imitation. India embraced Western technology but overlooked the social challenges that accompanied it. Today, the intrusion of a "third person" into marital relationships has become increasingly common, often giving rise to tragic consequences. Illicit relationships have contributed significantly to the growing number of devastating crimes. One of the defining strengths of the Indian family

system was the spirit of "we" before "I." Today, "I" has replaced "we." Rights are passionately asserted, while responsibilities are conveniently forgotten. Rising ego has become another major factor behind the breakdown of relationships. Husbands and wives increasingly treat their own opinions as absolute truth, with neither willing to bend.

Yet Indian tradition has always taught that humility is not defeat—it is the greatest victory in preserving relationships. Forgiveness and dialogue are the first remedies for fractured relationships. Sadly, accusations have replaced dialogue, and revenge has replaced forgiveness. Equally concerning is the growing perception of marriage as a contractual arrangement of convenience rather than a lifelong sacred commitment. Consequently, even minor disagreements frequently escalate into legal disputes. Courts can deliver justice, but they cannot restore love. Laws can protect rights, but they cannot create affection or rebuild emotional intimacy. Therefore, lasting solutions to family conflicts must be found within families themselves, not merely in courtrooms.

India aspires to become a global leader. Its economic growth, scientific achievements, digital innovation, and expanding international influence are undoubtedly sources of national pride. Yet if the country's greatest cultural strength—the joint family system—continues to weaken, this progress will remain incomplete. The world looks to India not only for economic power but also for the timeless values that have sustained its civilization for thousands of years. A nation can truly become a Vishwaguru only when it preserves the strength of its own families. A society where parents are neglected, the elderly live in isolation, children grow up emotionally insecure, and married couples struggle with crises of trust may become

an economic superpower, but it cannot become a cultural superpower.

The time has come to revive the culture of dialogue within families. Every week, families should consciously spend quality time together without mobile phones. Children should receive not only quality education but also strong moral values. Schools must give greater importance to value-based and emotional education. Premarital counselling, family counselling, and mental health awareness should evolve into nationwide social movements. Most importantly, the role of elders must once again be restored with dignity and respect, for they are not merely symbols of the past but guides to the future.

The Supreme Court's remarks are far more than judicial observations—they are a clarion call to society. If we fail to protect our families today, tomorrow we will witness not only a rise in litigation but also the gradual extinction of compassion and human sensitivity. The foundational philosophy of Indian civilization is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the whole world is one family. But a society that cannot preserve its own families can hardly claim to embrace the entire world as one.

Today, the need of the hour is not to construct taller buildings but to rebuild broken homes; not merely to develop newer technologies but to revive fading conversations; not only to make the younger generation successful but to make them compassionate. If India truly wishes to emerge as a Vishwaguru, the journey must begin not in Parliament, the courts, or universities, but in the courtyard of every home. Reviving the spirit of the joint family, restoring the dignity of relationships, nurturing a culture of dialogue, and preserving the legacy of values are among the greatest national imperatives of our time. This is the true message behind the Supreme Court's concern—and perhaps the greatest hope for the future of Indian civilization.



LALIT GARGG
Writer, Journalist,
Columnist

NATURE KEEPS THE SCORE: WHY HUMANITY MUST RESTORE ITS BALANCE WITH THE EARTH

"Prakrto Raksati Raksitah" — Nature protects those who protect it.

"Every forest lost, every river polluted, and every species driven to extinction adds another liability to humanity's ecological balance sheet."

Nature has never declared war on humanity. Yet record-breaking heatwaves, devastating floods, prolonged droughts, melting glaciers, raging wildfires, and collapsing ecosystems all point to a sobering reality: the Earth is responding to ecological imbalances created by human activity. These are not isolated environmental disasters but interconnected signals that the ecological foundations of human civilisation are under unprecedented strain.

Observed every year on July 28, World Nature Conservation Day is far more than a symbolic occasion. It reminds us that conserving nature is no longer merely an environmental aspiration—it is an economic necessity, a public health imperative, and a prerequisite for sustainable development. The ancient Sanskrit maxim Prakṛto Rakṣati Rakṣita captures a truth that modern science increasingly confirms: societies that protect nature ultimately protect themselves.

Nature's Balance Sheet Is Running a Deficit:

The environmental crisis can best be understood through the metaphor of an ecological balance sheet. Nature functions through equilibrium. Every forest cleared, every wetland reclaimed, every river polluted, every aquifer depleted, every mountain blasted for minerals, and every tonne of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere creates an ecological liability. For decades, humanity has continued to withdraw from nature's account without replenishing its assets.

The consequences are now unmistakable. The United Nations Environment Programme identifies climate change, bio-



diversity loss, and pollution as the world's "triple planetary crisis." These are not separate challenges but mutually reinforcing threats. Forests regulate rainfall and absorb carbon dioxide. Wetlands reduce flood risks. Oceans moderate the global climate. Biodiversity strengthens ecosystem resilience. As these natural systems deteriorate, their capacity to sustain human societies weakens.

Scientific evidence reinforces this warning. The Living Planet Report 2024 published by WWF found an average 73% decline in monitored vertebrate wildlife populations since 1970. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) estimates that up to one million plant and animal species face extinction because of human activities. The World Meteorological Organization has also reported unprecedented global temperatures, accel-

erating glacier loss, rising sea levels, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events. According to the United Nations, the global population has already exceeded 8.3 billion and is projected to approach 8.9 billion by 2037, intensifying pressure on already stressed natural resources.

From Protection to Restoration:

Protecting what remains is no longer sufficient. The defining environmental challenge of the twenty-first century is restoring what has already been lost. Preventing deforestation is protection; restoring degraded forests is conservation. Keeping rivers free from pollution is protection; reviving degraded rivers and wetlands is conservation. Both are essential for rebuilding ecological resilience.

Governments must therefore move beyond regulatory approaches and invest in ecological restoration. Renewable energy,

climate-smart agriculture, water conservation, biodiversity protection, ecosystem restoration, and a circular economy should become central pillars of development policy. Technology—from artificial intelligence and satellite monitoring to remote sensing and environmental DNA—is making conservation more effective than ever before. Yet no technological breakthrough can substitute for responsible governance, sustainable consumption, and public participation.

The debate is no longer about choosing between development and conservation. No economy can remain prosperous if forests disappear, rivers run dry, soils lose their fertility, and climate extremes become the norm. Nature is not an obstacle to development; it is the infrastructure that makes development possible.

Nature is not an inheritance from our ancestors but a trust borrowed from future generations. Every generation leaves behind an ecological balance sheet for the next. Whether that balance sheet records abundance or depletion depends on the choices we make today.

The wisdom embedded in Prakrto Raksati Raksitah has endured because it reflects an enduring ecological principle. Humanity may reshape landscapes and exploit resources, but it cannot rewrite the laws that govern the natural world. Nature always keeps the score. The longer we live beyond the planet's ecological means, the greater the costs—not only in environmental degradation but also in economic instability, public health crises, and social inequality. Protecting nature, therefore, is not simply about saving the planet; it is about securing humanity's own future.



K AMARAVATI
MEMBER
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Delhi High Court
gives Gandhis 3
weeks to reply
in ED's National
Herald plea

The Delhi High Court on Monday gave Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other respondents three weeks to file their replies to the Enforcement Directorate's plea against a trial court order in the National Herald-linked money laundering case. The trial court had refused to take cognisance of the ED's charge-sheet. Justice Manoj Jain said the matter would be heard on September 10.

Besides the Gandhis, notices have also been issued to Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, Young Indian, Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd and Sunil Bhandari on the ED's petition. During the hearing, the court said, "We can't hear this today. There are two other time-fixed matters today. The board is heavy." Senior counsel for the respondents sought time to respond to the ED's petition. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, said the trial court had "gone terribly wrong" and pointed out that no reply had been filed even though time had been granted two months ago. "This is only a question of law. The time to file a reply was given two months ago. I can't object to filing a reply. This is a pure question of law," he argued. The court then ordered, "List on September 10 for arguments. Let reply, if not already filed, be filed in three weeks."

HC: Trial Courts
Can't Order CBI
to Seek Sanction

PRAYAGRAJ:

The Allahabad High Court has observed that a trial court cannot direct the investigating agency such as the CBI to secure sanction for the prosecution of a public servant as such a direction virtually amounts to directing the competent authority to grant sanction that is impermissible in law. With this observation, Justice Raj Beer Singh allowed a petition by former Saharanpur DM Pawan Kumar challenging an order of the special judge at Ghaziabad refusing to accept a CBI closure report and directing the agency to obtain prosecution sanction against him in connection with the alleged illegal renewal of sand mining leases. The high court set aside the order of special judge, CBI insofar as it related to petitioner Pawan Kumar who is presently posted as director in the Department of Rural Development, New Delhi.

18 Years On,
EOW Charge
Sheets 8 in
NREGS Scam

RAIPUR: (JUL 27)

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in Chhattisgarh on Monday filed a 6,000-page charge sheet in a case pertaining to an alleged Rs 1.69-crore financial irregularity in the procurement of materials under the NREGS scheme during 2006-07 and 2007-08, an official said.

The EOW named a dismissed CEO of Kanker Zila Panchayat and then CEOs of seven Janpad Panchayats in the case.

Street Fighter: Pradhan
Hits Back at Congress

The brief exchange with Jairam Ramesh was seen by BJP leaders as a signal that Dharmendra Pradhan remains politically confident despite stepping down from the Cabinet and is ready to take on his next assignment.

BJP MP Dharmendra Pradhan used his first appearance in Parliament after resigning as Union Education Minister to send a political message, declaring himself a "street fighter" during a brief but sharp exchange with Congress leader Jairam Ramesh.

NDA MPs gathered at Parliament's Makar Dwar entrance ahead of Pradhan's arrival on Monday and waited to receive him. As he entered the complex, party colleagues greeted him, escorted him inside and presented him with a ceremonial cap in a show of solidarity. Pradhan appeared smiling as his colleagues welcomed him. One BJP MP remarked that it was perhaps the first time a Union minister had resigned without facing any personal allegation. It was amid this reception that Jai



marked that it was perhaps the first time a Union minister had resigned without facing any personal allegation. It was amid this reception that Jai Ram Ramesh approached Pradhan and expressed sympathy over his resignation. "It happens," the Congress leader told him. "Nothing happened," Pradhan immediately replied, before adding: "I am a street fighter. Not an AC room activist." The brief exchange was seen by BJP leaders as a signal that Pradhan remains politically confident despite stepping down from

the Cabinet and is ready to take on his next assignment. It has also fuelled speculation over the role that awaits him within the BJP. Apart from being one of the party's tallest leaders in Odisha, Pradhan has repeatedly been entrusted with key organisational and electoral responsibilities.

Most recently, he served as the BJP's in-charge for the Bihar Assembly elections before playing an important role in its West Bengal campaign, where the party formed its first government in the state in May 2026.

Following the BJP's setback in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Pradhan was appointed in charge of the Haryana Assembly polls, where the party retained power. He had earlier handled key responsibilities in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka, contributing to the BJP's victories in those states. There is now speculation within BJP circles that Pradhan could be given a key organisational position or entrusted with leading the party's campaign in one of the five states headed for Assembly elections. He had earlier served as the BJP's election in-charge for the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. The BJP leadership has also rallied behind Pradhan since his resignation, which came after weeks of nationwide protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party over the alleged NEET 2026 paper leak and other irregularities in India's examination system. Union Home

Minister Amit Shah visited Pradhan's residence, while BJP president Nitin Nabin and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh publicly praised his contribution to the education sector. Party leaders have maintained that his resignation does not signal a decline in his political standing but instead represents "political accountability", "sacrifice" and action in the "national interest".

However, the show of support for Pradhan unfolded alongside an Opposition protest led by Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra over the alleged use of excessive force against students during the nationwide agitation.

The contrasting scenes set the stage for another government-
Opposition confrontation as the Lok Sabha prepared to take up the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, aimed at strengthening India's anti-paper leak law.

Haryana CM Hails Saints,
Announces ₹1.51 Crore for Ujhana

CHANDIGARH, JULY 27:

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said that saints and spiritual leaders have always guided society towards truth, selfless service, patriotism and moral values, adding that their teachings continue to inspire generations and strengthen the nation's cultural foundation. Addressing the Murti Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Shri Shri 1008 Siddh Baba Khak Nath Ji Maharaj at the newly built Samadhi shrine in Ujhana village of Jind district, the Chief Minister said the younger generation must be connected with the ideals of saints to promote harmony, compassion and responsible citizenship. The religious ceremony was attended by Mahant Balak Nath, Head of Math Asthal Bohar in Rohtak and MLA from Tijara in Rajasthan, Haryana Cabinet Minister Krishan Kumar Bedi, Deputy Speaker of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha Dr. Krishan Lal Middha, Mahant Raj Nath of Ujhana Math, Mahant Purn Nath, village Sarpanch Sunil Kumar and a large gathering of devotees.

Development announcements

Responding to the demands raised by villagers, the Chief Minister announced ₹1 crore for the construction of a community centre and ₹51 lakh for various development works in Ujhana village. He also assured residents that the state government would take up several key infrastructure projects, including the construction of village roads, renovation of the village pond,

a permanent drainage solution and the introduction of the Science stream in the local government school.

During his visit, Saini offered prayers at the temple, participated in the concluding rituals of the yajna and hoisted the religious flag.

Saints are guiding lights

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that the consecration of the idol of a great saint is much more than a religious ritual. According to him, it represents a commitment to adopt truth in one's conduct, compassion in one's behaviour and dedication to service and social harmony. He expressed happiness that Ujhana Math has remained a centre of faith for nearly six centuries, attracting devotees from different regions. India's spiritual heritage, he said, remains one of the country's greatest strengths and has consistently united people across communities. Saini observed that saints have always shown society the right path whenever humanity has faced challenges or moral decline. Through their message of devotion, service and social equality, they have strengthened the values that bind society together. He said a strong nation can only be built on the foundation of moral values, and saints continue to play a crucial role in preserving those ideals.

Government promoting teachings of saints

The Chief Minister said the Haryana Government is making continuous efforts to take the teachings and contributions of



saints and great personalities to every section of society. Under the Sant Mahapurush Samman evam Vichar Prasara Yojana, birth anniversaries and memorial days of saints and eminent personalities are being observed on a large scale across the state. Such initiatives, he said, help the younger generation learn about the lives and ideals of great leaders while preserving India's rich cultural traditions.

Cow protection and environmental conservation

Appreciating the gaushala managed by Ujhana Dham, Saini described cow shelters as living symbols of compassion deeply rooted in Indian culture. He said service to cows is not merely an expression of religious faith but also a cultural responsibility. Respect for nature and protection of Gau Mata, he added, are integral to India's civilisational values and will contribute towards realising the vision of making India a Vishwa Guru.

The Chief Minister urged people to actively participate in environmental conservation, cow

protection, social service and humanitarian activities by following the ideals of saints.

Cultural revival under PM Modi

Highlighting the Centre's efforts to preserve India's heritage, Saini said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has witnessed renewed emphasis on protecting and promoting spiritual traditions alongside modern development. He referred to the construction of the Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the Kashi Vishwanath Dham corridor and the Mahakal Lok project as examples of initiatives that have strengthened India's cultural consciousness. At the same time, he said, the country is witnessing rapid expansion of infrastructure and public facilities, ensuring balanced development that combines modern progress with ancient values.

Government welfare initiatives

The Chief Minister also highlighted the achievements of the Haryana Government, stating that 66 of the 217 commitments made before the Assembly elections have already been fulfilled within one and a half years, while work on the remaining promises is progressing steadily. He said Haryana has emerged as the state procuring the highest number of crops at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He also highlighted welfare schemes such as the Lado Lakshmi Yojana, under which eligible women receive ₹2,100 per month, and the subsidised LPG cylinder scheme providing cylinders to poor households at

₹500. He added that free dialysis facilities, renovation of district hospitals and the establishment of new medical colleges are progressing rapidly across the state. Reiterating the government's commitment to inclusive development, Saini said every policy is aimed at ensuring transparent, people-centric governance while taking every section of society along.

Leaders praise Chief Minister

Cabinet Minister Krishan Kumar Bedi described the event as a rare and auspicious occasion, saying the presence of revered saints and the Chief Minister on the same stage symbolised a unique confluence of spirituality and governance. Such occasions, he said, inspire peace, prosperity and development across Haryana. Deputy Speaker Dr. Krishan Lal Middha said the Chief Minister has introduced welfare schemes that benefit every family in the state. He claimed that government jobs are now being provided purely on merit without recommendations or corruption and said the Chief Minister's simple and approachable style of governance is earning appreciation across the country. Mahant Yogi Balak Nath, MLA from Tijara in Rajasthan, said Haryana has witnessed rapid development under Nayab Singh Saini's leadership. He remarked that infrastructure development has reached even rural agricultural areas, with roads being constructed up to farmers' fields. He urged people to spread the teachings of Baba Khak Nath Ji and dedicate themselves to the welfare of society.



NFR Marks Historic First
with Direct Container
Freight Train to Nepal

MALIGAON, 27 JULY, 2026

In a landmark achievement for India-Nepal rail connectivity, the first-ever direct commercial container freight train, comprising 40 wagons carrying a consignment of canola, successfully completed its journey from Kolkata Port to Biratnagar Customs Yard in Nepal recently. The historic movement marks the operationalisation of the revised India-Nepal Rail Transit Protocol and opens a new chapter in cross-border freight transportation.

The train operated seamlessly under the revised transit framework, allowing direct rail movement of bulk cargo from Kolkata Port to Biratnagar without transshipment at the border. This is expected to significantly reduce transit time, logistics costs and cargo handling while improving trade efficiency between the two neighbouring countries.

The achievement builds upon the broad-gauge rail link between Jogbani (India) and Biratnagar (Nepal) inaugurated in June 2023 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the former Prime Minister of Nepal. Following the signing of the revised Letter of Exchange (LoE) in November 2025, direct commercial rail movement to Nepal has now become a reality.

This milestone highlights the growing role of North-east Frontier Railway in strengthening international rail connectivity and facilitating seamless cross-border trade. The initiative is expected to boost bilateral commerce, improve logistics efficiency and further reinforce India's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity through modern railway infrastructure.

Building on this historic achievement, NFR will continue to strengthen cross-border rail connectivity, enhance freight logistics and support the growing trade and economic partnership between India and Nepal through efficient, reliable and customer focused railway services.



Manipur GI Citrus
Showcased at
Nagpur Workshop

NAGPUR, JULY 26, 2026:

In a proud and memorable moment, an organic gift hamper was presented to Shri Nitin Gadkari Ji, Hon'ble Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, and Dr. Dillip Ghosh, Director, ICAR-Central Citrus Research Institute (CCRI), Nagpur, during the National Workshop on the Clean Plant Programme for Citrus held at ICAR-CCRI, Nagpur today. The gift hamper was presented by Dr. K. Devdutta Sharma, Director of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Government of Manipur. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. K. Devdutta Sharma highlighted Manipur's GI-tagged citrus varieties. He emphasized the uniqueness, quality, and market potential of Manipur citrus, and called for greater support for clean planting material and organic practices to boost horticulture in the Northeastern region.

He further stated that no plant would be eligible to be supplied unless they possess certification of Clean Plant SOP, because the quality of planting materials determines productivity, quality, and farmer's income. The event celebrated innovation, collaboration, and sustainable horticultural development, with a special focus on promoting disease-free planting material across the country. Shri Nitin Gadkari addressed the gathering and underlined the importance of clean plant material for improving productivity and farmer income. Dr. Dillip Ghosh spoke about CCRI's role in implementing the Clean Plant Programme and advancing research for citrus health and sustainability. Scientists, researchers, officials, and stakeholders from across the country participated in the workshop.

D Raja terms NEET protest
major success, calls for
broader fight against BJP-RSS

KOCHI: (JUL 27)

CPI General Secretary CD Raja on Monday described the student-led protest against the alleged NEET paper leak as a major success, but stressed that the struggle against the BJP-RSS must continue. Addressing a gathering organised by the CPI here as part of the birth anniversary celebrations of former Kerala Chief Minister late P K Vasudevan

Nair, Raja said the country is passing through a "very critical period" under the BJP-led government. "The young people, the students gathered in Delhi, held a protest, and they forced the Modi government to accept one of the major demands -- the resignation of the concerned minister. It was a big success. It was a big blow to the Modi government. But we have to move forward," he said.



US rebuilding weapons rapidly, says Trump

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday said his administration is rapidly rebuilding America's weapons stockpiles, arguing that military inventories had been depleted by large-scale assistance to Ukraine under former President Joe Biden but insisting the United States remains well prepared for any future conflict.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One while travelling to Michigan, Trump dismissed concerns that the United States could face ammunition shortages if another major conflict were to erupt, including in the Middle East.

"No, we have money. We have a lot of ammunition. Different types," Trump said when asked whether he was concerned about depleted stockpiles. He acknowledged that Washington had transferred substantial quantities of military equipment to Ukraine but said his administration was moving quickly to replenish those inventories.

"You know, Biden gave a lot to Ukraine. And so we're build-

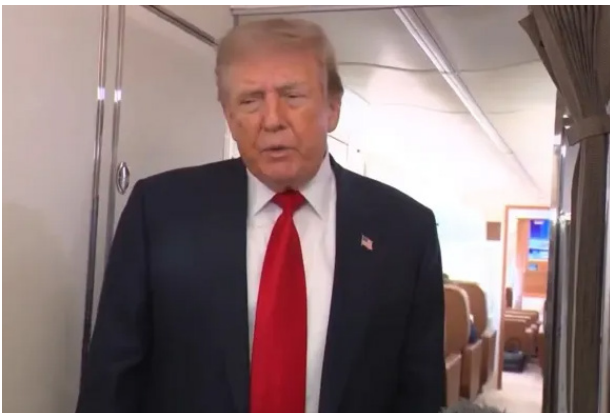
ing that up, but we have a lot," Trump said. "We have a lot of the mid-level stuff too. I mean, more than we could ever use no matter what."

The President contrasted the current situation with his first term, saying he had inherited limited ammunition stocks from the Obama administration before expanding production.

"When I left, the cupboards were full. When I came here with Obama, he didn't buy ammunition. We had very little. And I got it built," Trump said. "Now, as soon as I left, they gave a lot of it to Ukraine. I mean, numbers that nobody's ever seen before."

Trump said the administration has launched a broad effort to expand US defence manufacturing, with multiple new production facilities under construction.

"We're building it very rapidly. Plants are being built. A lot of equipment's being built. The Patriots in particular are being built," he said. "Every one of our contractors is building four to five plants right now." The President said the United



States remains in a strong military position despite the need to replenish some sophisticated weapons.

"We're in very good shape. But, for some of the more sophisticated stuff, we'd certainly like to have more. Biden gave a lot of it away," he said.

His remarks came as the administration continues to emphasise rebuilding America's defence industrial base while responding to multiple security challenges, including the conflict involving Iran and continued support for allies.

Trump also defended Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth,

administration examines whether Chinese AI companies have benefited from American technology through unauthorised model distillation. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Michigan, Trump was asked about remarks by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who said last week that the administration would investigate whether Chinese AI models were being trained using outputs from leading US systems.

Asked whether he believed China was stealing American intellectual property, Trump acknowledged the competitive nature of the technology race while insisting the United States remained well ahead.

"Well, you know, we're, they're looking at us, and we're looking at them. But we're leading now China substantially in AI. And we're gonna keep it that way," Trump said.

"We're gonna keep it that way," he said.

Artificial intelligence has emerged as one of the principal arenas of strategic rivalry between the world's two largest economies, with both

governments investing heavily in advanced computing, semiconductor technology and next-generation AI models.

The latest remarks come as US officials increasingly express concern that Chinese developers may be using "distillation" techniques to train their own models by drawing on the outputs of advanced American AI systems.

The practice has become a growing point of debate within the AI industry because it can allow developers to replicate capabilities without incurring the full cost of training frontier models. Trump's comments also reflect the administration's broader effort to preserve America's technological edge in sectors viewed as critical to national security and economic competitiveness.

In recent months, the administration has continued to tighten restrictions on the export of advanced AI chips and related technologies, arguing that cutting-edge computing capabilities should not be used to strengthen the military or intelligence capabilities of strategic competitors.



Saudi Arabia says air defences intercept drones from Iraq

RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry said on Monday that its air defences had intercepted a number of drones launched from Iraqi territory, which attempted to target oil facilities in the kingdom. The ministry's spokesman Turki Al-Malki said in a statement on social media that Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed several drones over the past hours as they attempted to target oil facilities in the Eastern Province and Riyadh.

Al-Malki said the attempts were launched from Iraqi territory and carried out by what he described as Iranian-backed militias, Xinhua News Agency reported. He affirmed Saudi Arabia's right to defend itself and its resources, adding that the kingdom reserves the right to respond.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry expressed condemnation of the drone attack. No group in Iraq has so far claimed responsibility for the incident.

On May 17, the Saudi Ministry of Defence announced the interception of three drones after they entered the kingdom's airspace from

Iraq. Spokesperson Al-Malki said on X that the ministry reserves the right to respond at the appropriate time and place.

He noted that it will take and implement all necessary operational measures to respond to any attempted attack targeting the kingdom's sovereignty, security, and the safety of its citizens and residents.

On May 18, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it is deeply concerned over reports of three drones having targeted facilities in Saudi Arabia, reaffirming its rejection of any acts that undermine the security of regional states.

On May 20, a special committee was formed to coordinate with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after the drone attacks targeting the two countries.

In a statement, spokesperson Sabah al-Numan said Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief Ali al-Zaidi chaired the first meeting of Iraq's Ministerial Council for National Security, which ordered "all necessary measures" against those responsible if Iraqi territory is confirmed as the launch point.

Chinese diaspora, activists in US face growing transnational repression: Report

ATHENS

Several Chinese communities in the United States that oppose the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) - along with pro-democracy activists and supporters of Taiwan, Tibetan and Uyghur rights - have accused Beijing of using agents to harass, spy on and intimidate them, a report has stated.

A report in the Greek City Times cited US-based human rights group Freedom House documenting that China has been linked to the highest number of transnational repression cases worldwide, with 319 incidents recorded since 2014.

A New York man was convicted in May of acting as an unregistered agent of the Chinese government after US federal prosecutors alleged that he ran a "secret police station" on behalf of Beijing in Manhattan, the report stated.

Last week, the US lawmakers introduced a bipartisan bill to impose tougher penalties on foreign government agents who threaten people on American soil, targeting what they termed growing "transnational repression" by countries such as China.

Introduced by Democratic Senator Adam Schiff and Republican Senator John Curtis, the bill comes after China's ethnic unity law came into force on July 1, with Beijing asserting that it has the right to target certain critics overseas.

Research confirms active tectonic fault under China's dam project on Brahmaputra

NAYPYIDAW

The revelation of an active fault beneath China's Medog hydropower project on the Brahmaputra River should serve as a wake-up call for both Beijing and the wider international community. The key question is no longer about Beijing's technical capacity to construct the dam, but whether it has adequately considered the geological, environmental and geopolitical risks associated with the project, a report has stated.

"For years, India has argued that China's plan to construct the world's largest hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo (the upper course of the Brahmaputra) River was not merely an engineering challenge but a strategic and environmental gamble. Beijing consistently dismissed these concerns, maintaining that the project was scientifically planned and posed no significant downstream risks. Ironically, the strongest validation of those concerns has now come from within China itself," a report in Myanmar's media outlet 'Mizzima News' detailed.

The report cited findings from a recent study conducted by researchers from Chengdu University of Technology and the China Geological Survey, which has confirmed that the Paizhen Fault, an active tectonic fault, runs directly beneath the Medog hydropower project. "The geological team



describes the surrounding rock formations as loose, weakly bonded and vulnerable to slope failures under prolonged water immersion and continued tectonic activity. They also note that the fault has remained active since the Pleistocene epoch and continues to generate seismic activity, including the magnitude 6.9 earthquake that struck its northern edge in 2017," it mentioned.

According to the report, concerns are not based on external speculation but from Chinese geologists associated with a Beijing-backed study. Their assessment, it said, has prompted questions over the structural resilience of the estimated USD 137 billion project, located around 50 kilometres from the Indian border.

"The Medog project has often been framed as another milestone in China's remarkable infrastructure story. It is intended to generate more than three times the electricity of the Three Gorges Dam and support Beijing's twin ambitions of energy security and carbon neutrality. Yet reducing the project to a renewable energy success story misses a much larger point. This is not simply a dam but an attempt to reshape one of Asia's most strategically significant river systems through an engineering intervention of unprecedented scale," it detailed.

China has consistently maintained that transboundary rivers fall within its sovereign jurisdiction rather than treating them as shared resources requiring joint governance. Unlike many international river basins managed through legally binding agreements, the Brahmaputra has no comprehensive water-sharing or basin management

framework between China and downstream states, the 'Mizzima News' report noted.

It highlighted that the hydrological data sharing remained limited, largely seasonal and vulnerable to disruptions, leaving downstream countries dependent on assurances rather than institutional guarantees.

"The confirmation of an active fault beneath the project only amplifies those concerns. If Chinese researchers themselves acknowledge significant geological vulnerabilities, neighbouring countries are justified in asking what contingency planning exists should those risks materialise. To date, Beijing has offered little insight into independent safety assessments, emergency preparedness mechanisms or long-term monitoring arrangements," the report stated.

Qatar condemns drone attack on Saudi oil facilities

DOHA

The State of Qatar on Monday strongly condemned the attacks that attempted to target oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. "The State of Qatar strongly condemns the attacks that attempted to target oil facilities in the Eastern Province and Riyadh regions in the sisterly Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with drones launched from Iraqi territory. These are a flagrant violation of Saudi sovereignty, a threat to its security and stability, and a blatant breach of international law, the United Nations Charter and the principles of good neighbourliness," Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on X.

The Ministry affirmed Qatar's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for all legitimate measures taken to preserve sovereignty, security and the safety of its lands. Earlier in the day, Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry said that its air defences had intercepted several drones launched from Iraqi territory, which attempted to target oil facilities in the kingdom.

The ministry's spokesman Turki Al-Malki said in a statement on social media that Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed several drones over the past hours as they attempted to target oil facilities in the Eastern Province and Riyadh. Al-Malki said the attempts were launched from Iraqi territory and carried out by what he described as Iranian-backed militias, Xinhua News Agency reported.

India-Hungary reaffirm warm and friendly relations

BUDAPEST

India's Ambassador to Hungary Anshuman Gaur and Gyorgy Laszlo Velkey, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, met on Monday, reaffirming the warm and friendly relations between India and Hungary, and the two sides reviewed initiatives set to deepen their partnership in the months ahead. India's growing strategic and commercial weight opens immense opportunities for Hungarian businesses and institutions," the Embassy of India in Budapest wrote on X.

"Our cultural bonds — the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore at Balatonfured, the art of Amrita Sher-Gil, the pioneering scholarship of Sándor Csoma de Koros, and the Brunners'

luminous paintings of India — remain the strongest pillar of this relationship. Our past connects us. Our future, we build together," it added. Last month, the Ambassador met Klara Breuer, State Secretary for Bilateral Affairs at the Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and discussed ways to deepen and expand the India-Hungary partnership.

"A meeting to deepen our wonderful, warm ties with Hungary. Ambassador had an excellent meeting with H.E. Klara Breuer, the newly appointed State Secretary for Bilateral Affairs at the Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs," the Embassy of India, Budapest wrote on X. "We discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and ways to deepen and expand our partnership that is built on mutual respect and shared democratic values. We wish her all the very best for this assignment and look forward to energising our relationship for mutual benefits under her leadership," it added.

DR Congo's confirmed Ebola cases top 3,200 as outbreak remains in sustained transmission



KINSHASA

The number of confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has reached 3,200, with the death toll rising to 1,405, according to the latest situation report released by the country's health authorities late Sunday. The report, covering data through Saturday, said the country had recorded 3,200 confirmed cases, including 1,405 deaths and 571 recoveries. A total of 773 patients re-

mained in isolation, while 125 new confirmed cases and 51 confirmed deaths were reported over the previous 24 hours.

The report said Ituri Province remained the epicentre of the outbreak, accounting for 89 per cent of all confirmed cases, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The epidemic continues to be driven by population movements, insecurity, artisanal mining activities, and cross-border travel with Uganda and South Sudan, according

to the report. Authorities said they would continue strengthening surveillance, scaling up response measures, and limiting further spread of the virus.

The report said the outbreak remained in a phase of sustained transmission, with a high level of virus circulation.

Treatment capacity also remained under pressure. North Kivu Province had 171 patients in isolation despite a capacity of 141 beds, corresponding to an occupancy rate of 121.3 per

cent, while nationwide bed occupancy stood at 82.1 percent.

Declared on May 15, the ongoing Ebola outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus and has spread from the north-eastern province of Ituri to five provinces. DR Congo Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka warned on Friday that the outbreak could further aggravate the humanitarian crisis in the eastern DRC.

Speaking on Friday in Bunia, the capital of the eastern Ituri Province and the epicentre of the outbreak, Suminwa said the government has disbursed 50 million US dollars for the response, in addition to funds mobilised by international partners. The prime minister also said researchers were working to develop a treatment and a vaccine against the Bundibugyo ebolavirus, the virus strain responsible for the current outbreak in the DRC. There is currently no approved vaccine or specifically licensed treatment for the Bundibugyo ebolavirus. Several experimental vaccines and therapeutics are undergoing clinical evaluation.

Pakistani forces escalate operations in Balochistan's Khuzdar district

QUETTA

As Pakistani security forces continued ground and air operations across several parts of Balochistan's Khuzdar district, shelling in the Wadh area killed another person, local media reported on Monday, citing sources.

Military helicopters carried out strikes in multiple locations in the Surgarh area of Ornach in Khuzdar, while aerial surveillance and flights over the region continued. Ground and aerial operations have been ongoing in Wadh, Ornach and Zehri over the past few days, The Balochistan Post reported.

The developments come amid intensified military operations in several parts of Balochistan targeting civilian areas. Last week, one person was killed, and several others, including women and children, were injured in Khuzdar during shelling by Pakistani forces.

Following the incident in the Drakhalaw-Gaslaiti area of Wadh in Khuzdar, local



residents staged a sit-in protest on a highway, placing the body of the deceased, identified as Abdul Qadir, at the protest site. Addressing the demonstration, protesters alleged that the shelling carried out by the Pakistani forces began on the morning of July 23 and reportedly hit a civilian area in Wadh locality.

Highlighting the atrocities against civilians in Balochistan, human rights body Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) revealed that a 14-year-old student, Shehzad, resident of Paroom re-

gion in Panjgur district, was extrajudicially killed by Pakistan-backed death squads on July 25, after more than a year of being subjected to enforced disappearance.

"For more than a year, his family waited in anguish, hoping he would return home safely. Instead, they were met with the devastating news of his killing by death squads that operate with complete impunity, backed by the Pakistani army," the BYC stated.

The rights body alleged that the Pakistani authorities, along with their agencies and

state-backed death squads, "have crossed every limit of violation", targeting women, children, and every individual of the Baloch community.

"They have abandoned the rules, the laws, and even the constitution of their own country, which they instead weaponise against peaceful political activists who raise their voices against state brutality," it added.

Furthermore, the Baloch Voice for Justice (BVJ) mentioned that another student activist, Younas Baloch, was taken from his home in provincial capital Quetta by Pakistani security forces on July 25 and transferred to an unknown location.

Since then, it said, his family has established no contact with him, and his whereabouts remain unknown. "Reports that an 8-year-old child from his family has been placed on the Fourth Schedule are deeply concerning and raise serious concerns regarding the protection of fundamental rights," the BVJ stated.



RBI Gets Nod to Test Polymer ₹10, ₹20 Notes

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

The Finance Ministry informed Parliament on Monday that the government has approved the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) proposal to conduct field trials of polymer currency notes in the Rs 10 and Rs 20 denominations. The approval was confirmed by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. The government, however, clarified that the move does not signal the end of paper currency. Polymer banknotes are proposed to circulate alongside existing paper notes, and there is no proposal to phase out paper-based banknotes in favour of polymer currency. The Reserve Bank will issue billion pieces each of Rs 10 and Rs 20 polymer currency notes as part of the field trials to be carried out in the country. The RBI has proposed introducing the polymer notes on a trial basis to evaluate their performance under Indian conditions.

Sensex ends 776 points higher, Nifty nears 24,000; IT stocks rally

Benchmark indices snapped a five-session losing streak on Monday, with the Sensex surging over 770 points and the Nifty ending just shy of the 24,000 mark, as a sharp plunge in crude oil prices after the US and Iran paused strikes boosted investor sentiment.

The BSE Sensex climbed 776.01 points, or 1.02%, to close at 76,835.78, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 228.50 points, or 0.96%, to settle at 23,995.95. The rally was broad-based, with IT, media, realty, auto and healthcare stocks leading the gains. Broader markets also outperformed, while India VIX, the market's fear gauge, plunged nearly 10%, reflecting easing volatility.

OIL PRICE PLUNGE LIFTS SENTIMENT

The biggest trigger for Monday's rally was the sharp fall in crude oil prices after the United



States and Iran paused military strikes over the weekend, easing fears of a prolonged conflict in West Asia. Brent crude tumbled 9.44% to \$87.64 per barrel, while WTI crude fell 7.93% to \$82.23. Lower crude prices are positive for India, which imports the bulk of its oil requirements, as they help reduce inflationary pressures, improve the fiscal outlook and lower input costs for businesses.

IT, REALTY AND MEDIA SHINE

Sectorally, Nifty Media emerged as the top performer, rising 2.39%, followed by Nifty IT, up 2.34%, and Nifty Realty, which gained 2.28%. Auto stocks also witnessed strong buying, with the Nifty Auto index advancing 1.60%. Healthcare, FMCG and financial services indices also ended firmly in the green, signalling broad-based participation in the rally. Among Sensex stocks, Eternal soared 5.63%, followed by InterGlobe Aviation (IndiGo), Infosys,

Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv and HCLTech. HDFC Bank, Power Grid and Axis Bank were among the few laggards. Broader markets remained upbeat as well. The Nifty Midcap 50 rose 1.28%, Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 1.31%, while the Nifty 500 advanced 1.05%.

FALLING VIX SIGNALS LOWER MARKET FEAR

Investor confidence also improved sharply, with India VIX declining 9.76%. The drop in the volatility index suggests traders expect relatively lower near-term market turbulence after geopolitical tensions eased. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said the easing geopolitical situation has significantly improved market sentiment. "A pause in strikes in West Asia has eased concerns over rising import costs and inflation, triggering a relief rally in markets. The sharp correction in crude oil prices, along with a decline

in long-term bond yields, has also raised hopes of a durable resolution, supported by signs of long unwinding," he added.

INVESTORS AWAIT CENTRAL BANK MEETINGS

"Key central bank policy meetings this week, led by the Fed, BoE, and BoJ, may provide greater flexibility to maintain the status quo on interest rates. On the domestic front, a narrowing rainfall deficit is adding comfort to the inflation outlook, supported by better-than-expected Q1 earnings and a positive business outlook," said Vijaykumar. With geopolitical concerns easing for now, investors will shift their focus to this week's monetary policy meetings of the US Federal Reserve, Bank of England and Bank of Japan for cues on the global interest rate outlook.

Domestic earnings announcements and trends in crude oil prices are also expected to remain key drivers of market sentiment in the coming sessions.

MD, MRDCL Reviews Progress of Mir Alam Tank Bridge and Allied Works

HYDERABAD, 27 JULY 2026

on Sewerage and Storm Water Management

Sri. E.V. Narsimha Reddy IAS, Managing Director, Musi River Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL), today conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing works at Mir Alam Tank, with a focus on the bridge under construction across the lake and lake cleaning. The review meeting was attended by senior officials from MRDCL including Smt. P. Gouthami IAS, Joint Managing Director (JMD) MRDCL, Sri. Satyanarayana, Executive Director (Technical), Sri. K.Suresh Kumar, Chief Engineer (CE), Sri. S. Srinivas Reddy, Zonal Commissioner, GHMC and Executive Director MRDCL and Sri B. Harinatha Reddy, Director, Project Coordination. Officials from the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) led by Smt Padmaja, Chief General Manager also participated in the review, along with representatives of the Project Management Consultant (PMC) and the contractor's execution team.

Officials of the Water Board were instructed to prepare a comprehensive study plan for optimal utilisation of the existing sewerage conveyance infrastructure, the two Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) serving the catchment, and the associated pumping capacities. The objective set out by the MD is to achieve zero untreated discharge into Mir Alam Tank. As part of this exercise, storm water drains are to be segregated from sewer nalas, and the study is also to factor in new sewer and storm water lines that are either under execution or under consideration in the upstream and downstream catchment of Mir Alam Tank.

Lake Cleaning and Island Development

Lake cleaning works have been directed to commence immediately, to be carried out in tandem with the bridge construction, with the target of completing the cleaning of the lake by the time the bridge works are finished. Similarly, it has been directed to take up development of the two islands within the lake at a matching pace, with completion aligned to the bridge completion timeline.

The MD reiterated MRDCL's commitment to the timely and holistic development of Mir Alam Tank, encompassing infrastructure, environmental restoration, and tourism potential, in coordination with all stakeholder departments.

Bridge Works Progress

The MD reviewed the physical progress of the bridge works. The piles work crossed 40% mark and piles caps, piers and pier caps works are progressing well. The contractor was directed to accelerate the pace of construction by deploying additional machinery and man-hours, if required.

Comprehensive Study

Nearly 1.11 crore candidates certified under PMKVY 1.0-3.0: Minister

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

A total of 1.11 crore candidates were certified under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 1.0 to PMKVY 3.0, out of which 24.38 lakh were reported placed under the short-term training component, the government informed on Monday. Further, PMKVY 4.0 shifted focus to empowering trainees to choose varied career paths and hence does not monitor placements, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary, said in the Lok Sabha. The government's 'Skill India Mission' delivers skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling through schemes

including PMKVY, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme and the Craftsman Training Scheme via Industrial Training Institutes, the minister said outlining major programmes to make Indian youth ready for job market. These schemes aim to equip youth with industry-relevant and emerging technology skills, said an official statement. The PMKVY 4.0, implemented since FY23, gives special emphasis to future skills such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, cloud computing, Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics, cyber security and green technologies.

Govt to invest Rs 3.49 lakh crore to expand Battery Energy Storage System

NEW DELHI, JULY 27



The Ministry of Power informed Parliament on Monday that the government plans to invest Rs 3.49 lakh crore by 2031-32 for setting up a projected Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) installed capacity requirement of 8.68 Giga Watt (GW)/34 Giga Watt hour (GWh) by the year 2026-27 and 47.24GW/236 GWh by 2031-32. Similarly, another Rs 1.29 lakh crore will be invested in the projected Pumped Storage Plant (PSP) installed capacity requirement of 7.45 GW/47 GWh by the year 2026-27 and 26.69 GW/175 GWh by 2031-32. NITI Aayog, in its report, has mentioned that energy storage is going to emerge as a critical requirement for managing the variability associated with renewable energy integration. The Government has already undertaken a series of coordinated policy, regulatory, demand-side, and supply-side measures to promote the development and deployment of Energy Storage Systems (ESS), including BESS, Minister of State for Power Shripad Naik said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha. These measures include a 100 per cent waiver of Inter-State Transmis-

sion System (ISTS) charges for BESS projects that have been commissioned by June 2025, with a 25 per cent annual reduction in waiver thereafter and Hydro Pumped Storage Projects (PSP) projects wherein construction work is awarded by June 2028. For Co-located Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) projects, 100 per cent ISTS charges waiver has been extended for the projects commissioned up to June 2028. For Co-located PSP projects, 100 per cent ISTS charges waiver has also been extended for the projects for which construction work is awarded by June 2028.

Besides, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) has allowed storage-based resources to provide ancillary services, including secondary and tertiary reserves, enabling ESS to support real-time grid balancing alongside conventional generators.

Pepsi, Red Bull Told to Drop 'Energy Drink' Label

India's energy drinks market has grown rapidly over the past few years, especially after Pepsi introduced Sting in 2017. The affordable drink became popular among teenagers and young adults, as well as consumers in rural areas.

India's food safety regulator has asked companies to stop using the term "energy drink" on the labels of high-caffeine beverages, despite objections from leading brands including Pepsi, Red Bull, Monster Beverage, Reliance and Hell Energy, reported Reuters. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said earlier this month that there are no Indian standards for products marketed as "energy drinks". It also said claims such as "vitalises body and mind" or "helps in general weakness" could mislead consumers.

COMPANIES GIVEN 90 DAYS TO CHANGE LABELS

The food regulator has in-

structed companies to remove the words "energy drink" and similar descriptions from product labels, mentioned the report. At a meeting with industry representatives on Friday, FSSAI Chief Executive Rajit Punhani reportedly rejected concerns that the move could hurt businesses. He also told companies they were free to challenge the decision in court if they wished.

A government source said the companies later agreed to follow the new rule and have been given 90 days to make the required changes.

INDUSTRY SAYS THE MOVE COULD AFFECT BUSINESSES

The Indian Beverage Association, which represents several major companies, has

urged the regulator to adopt a more consultative approach.

In a letter sent to FSSAI on July 6, the association said making such notices public could damage company reputations, disrupt business operations and confuse consumers. It also called for regular discussions with industry before making major changes to regulations.

The association said it remains committed to following government rules and working with regulators on science-based policies.

FAST-GROWING MARKET FACES FRESH SCRUTINY

India's energy drinks market has grown rapidly over the past few years, especially after Pepsi introduced Sting in

2017. The affordable drink became popular among teenagers and young adults, as well as consumers in rural areas.

According to Euromonitor, the market is expected to reach 1.6 billion US dollars by 2028, growing by 12.6 per cent each year. Sales volumes nearly doubled every year between 2018 and 2023. Some consumers say they frequently consume these beverages as they believe the drinks help them stay energetic and continue working. A few also admit they feel addicted to them. Meanwhile, the crackdown has already started in Rajasthan, where authorities have seized thousands of bottles of Sting, Campa Energy and Red Bull as part of an enforcement drive.

On July 8, the state government also directed e-commerce platforms, including Amazon, Flipkart, Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart, to ensure that products were not promoted as "energy drinks". The companies did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Why IDFC First Bank shares are soaring over 5% today

Shares of IDFC First Bank jumped more than 5% after the private sector lender reported its highest-ever quarterly profit, giving investors plenty of reasons to cheer.

At the time of writing, the stock was trading at Rs 85.22, up 5.48%. The rally came after the bank announced a sharp rise in profit for the April-June quarter of FY27, along with healthy loan growth, improving asset quality and stronger margins.

RECORD PROFIT BOOSTS CONFIDENCE

IDFC First Bank reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 1,075 crore for the June quarter, its highest-ever quarterly profit. This was a 132.4% jump from Rs 463 crore reported in the same period last year. The strong earnings performance suggests that the bank's business momentum remains intact even as it continues to invest in expanding its operations.

LOAN BOOK AND CUSTOMER BUSINESS CONTINUE TO GROW

The bank also reported



healthy growth across its core business. Loans and advances rose 20.6% year-on-year to Rs 3,05,370 crore as of 30 June 2026, compared with Rs 2,53,233 crore a year earlier. Meanwhile, total customer business, which includes deposits and loans, grew 18.6% to Rs 6,04,776 crore from Rs 5,10,031 crore in the year-ago period. The steady rise in lending and customer business indicates that the bank continues to attract both borrowers and depositors.

ASSET QUALITY SHOWS FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

One of the biggest positives in the quarterly results was the improvement in asset quality. Gross non-performing assets (Gross NPA) declined to 1.51% from 1.97% a year ago, while net NPA improved to 0.44%

from 0.55%. The bank's net interest margin (NIM), a key measure of profitability, also improved to 5.96% during the quarter from 5.71% in the corresponding quarter last year. These numbers suggest that the bank is earning more from its lending business while keeping bad loans under control. Commenting on the results, Managing Director and CEO V. Vaidyanathan said the bank is focused on building a high-quality institution with strong governance standards.

He said the bank continues to witness strong business momentum, while asset quality has improved further with lower gross and net NPAs. He added that provisions as a percentage of loans have also declined. According to Vaidyanathan, the bank received a CGFMU (Credit Guarantee Fund for Mi-

cro Units) claim of Rs 515 crore during the quarter. At the same time, it created a contingency provision of Rs 515 crore as a precaution against any possible impact from an uncertain monsoon or volatility in fuel prices. He also said the investments made over the past few years are now beginning to deliver results, helping improve operating leverage and pushing quarterly profit to a record Rs 1,075 crore. He added that the bank's return on assets (RoA) has crossed the 1% mark.

WHY THE STOCK IS GAINING

Investors appeared to welcome the overall improvement in the bank's financial performance. The combination of record quarterly profit, strong loan growth, healthier margins, lower bad loans and prudent provisioning has strengthened market confidence. The improvement in profitability, despite setting aside additional contingency provisions, also signalled resilience in the bank's balance sheet. These factors together helped lift investor sentiment, sending IDFC First Bank shares more than 5% higher in early trade.

₹3,000 Crore Claim Rejected Against NHAI

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

The NHAI has successfully defended a major arbitration case to safeguard public funds in National Highway projects against claims of Rs. 3,177 crore raised by the concessionaire of the Bareilly-Sitapur toll project, with the Arbitral Tribunal awarding only Rs 46 crore plus applicable interest to settle the case, according to an official statement issued on Monday. The arbitration proceedings pertained to Bareilly Highways Project Limited (BHPL), a concessionaire promoted by M/s Era Infra Engineering Limited for the 151-km-long Bareilly-Sitapur BOT (Toll) project in Uttar Pradesh, which was terminated by the NHAI in May 2019. The Arbitral Tribunal substantially upheld the position of the NHAI, thereby safeguarding public resources and reaffirming the contractual framework governing National Highway projects. The three-member Arbitral Tribunal examined claims and counterclaims arising out of the concession agreement for the project. The concessionaire had raised 30



claims aggregating to around Rs 3,177 crore. After detailed consideration, the Tribunal allowed only three claims amounting to Rs 46 crore plus applicable interest, while rejecting the majority of the claims. The Tribunal upheld the Supplementary Agreement dated March 30, 2015 and decided that project delays were concurrent and the majority of the concessionaire's claims were rejected. The NHAI also filed counterclaims, including claims relating to financial losses and public inconvenience. While these counterclaims were not allowed by the tribunal, the NHAI successfully defended itself against the overwhelming financial claims raised by the concessionaire, resulting in substantial protection of public funds, the statement said. In a series of recent notable legal wins, the NHAI has success-

fully defended various arbitration cases. In June 2026, an arbitration case related to the Tumkur-Chitradurga 6-laning Project in Karnataka was awarded in favour of the NHAI for Rs 1,202 crore. Also in April 2026, two arbitration cases in the Panipat-Jalandhar Highway Project involving concessionaire's claims of around Rs. 8,375 crore and counterclaims of the NHAI for Rs 2,888.64 crore were settled for Rs 819.96 crore in favour of NHAI. Similarly, in May 2026, an arbitration case related to the 6-laning of the Kamrej-Chalthan section of NH-48 in Gujarat, in which claims of Rs 174.49 crore were raised by the contractor, was settled for only Rs 54 lakh by the Arbitral Tribunal. The successful outcome of arbitration cases underscores the NHAI's focus on robust contractual management and effective legal strategy. It also reinforces the NHAI's resolve to ensure effective utilisation of public funds while maintaining transparency and contractual discipline in the development and management of National Highway infrastructure, the statement added.

Air India Partners Tourism Ministry to Boost Tourism

NEW DELHI, JULY 27

Air India announced on Monday that it entered a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Tourism to jointly promote India as a premier global tourism destination and to strengthen the country's position as a key aviation and transit hub. The MoU establishes a framework for coordinated initiatives across tourism marketing, trade engagement, transit tourism and visitor-experience enhancement, the statement from Air India said. It will leverage Air India's expanding global network and the Ministry's Incredible India branding to boost inbound tourism and global visibility. Under the agreement, Air India and the Ministry of Tourism will collaborate on co-branded global marketing campaigns and tourism promotion across digital, social media, in-flight branding, and other consumer-facing platforms. The partnership will also explore opportunities to extend Incredible India branding across Air India's touchpoints.



Planning a Vaishno Devi Yatra?

The Journey Begins At Katra

Every Vaishno Devi pilgrimage begins at Katra, a bustling pilgrimage town located at the foothills of the Trikuta Mountains. Katra serves as the official base camp for the yatra and offers every facility a pilgrim may require before beginning the trek. The town is filled with hotels, guest houses, restaurants, medical centres, shopping complexes and registration counters. Pilgrims usually spend a few hours or even a night in Katra before starting the sacred climb. The atmosphere itself is deeply spiritual, with chants of "Jai Mata Di" echoing throughout the streets as thousands of devotees prepare for the journey. From Katra, devotees undertake a trek of approximately 13 kilometres to reach the Bhawan, where the Holy Cave is located.

How To Reach Vaishno Devi

Reaching Katra has become increasingly convenient over the years due to improved connectivity by air, rail and road. Travellers arriving by air can land at Jammu Airport, the nearest airport to the shrine. Located roughly 50 kilometres from Katra, the airport is well connected with Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and several other major Indian cities. Taxis and buses are readily available outside the airport to transport pilgrims to Katra. Those travelling by train have the convenience of arriving directly at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Railway Station, which is connected with numerous cities across India through direct trains. Even if passengers arrive at Jammu Tawi Railway Station, they can easily continue their journey to Katra using taxis, buses or local trains. Road travellers also enjoy excellent connectivity. Regular government buses, luxury coaches and private taxis operate throughout the day between Jammu and Katra, ensuring smooth access for pilgrims coming from different parts of North India.

Registration Is Mandatory Before The Trek

Before beginning the pilgrimage, every devotee must complete the mandatory registration process. The registration is conducted free of cost by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and is compulsory for every pilgrim. Once regis-

tered, pilgrims receive an RFID Yatra Access Card, which serves as the official permission to undertake the pilgrimage. This smart card helps authorities monitor pilgrim movement and ensures better crowd management and safety throughout the route. An important regulation requires every pilgrim to cross the Banganga Check Post within six hours of receiving the RFID card. If this deadline is missed, the card becomes invalid, and the devotee must complete the registration process again. To avoid delays during peak seasons, many pilgrims choose to complete their registration online before arriving in Katra.

The Sacred Trek To The Holy Cave

The trek from Katra to the Bhawan is approximately 13 kilometres long and is considered an integral part of the spiritual experience. Thousands of devotees prefer walking the entire distance while chanting devotional hymns and prayers. The path is well paved, illuminated and maintained throughout the year. Along the route, pilgrims find frequent resting places, food outlets, drinking water stations, washrooms and medical centres, making the climb manageable even for elderly devotees. For those unable to walk the entire distance, several alternatives are available. Ponies are commonly hired for the uphill journey, while palkis carried by trained bearers offer another option for elderly pilgrims and people with mobility issues. Pithu services are available for carrying children or luggage, allowing families to travel more comfortably.

Helicopter services also operate between Katra and Sanji Chhat, significantly reducing the trekking distance for those who prefer a faster journey. From the Bhawan, a ropeway service connects devotees to the Bhairav Nath Temple, making the final uphill stretch much easier.

Banganga: The First Sacred Halt

Banganga is the first major stop after leaving Katra and holds immense religious significance. It also serves as the first checkpoint where the RFID Yatra Access Card is scanned and verified.

According to mythology, Mata Vaishno Devi created the sacred stream by shooting an arrow into the ground to provide

water for her devotee Hanuman during the journey. Many pilgrims offer prayers here before continuing the climb, believing the holy waters purify both body and mind. The area also provides basic amenities, refreshments and resting spaces for devotees preparing for the longer ascent.

Sanji Chhat: The Highest Point On The Route

Sanji Chhat marks the highest point of the pilgrimage route and rewards devotees with breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Pilgrims arriving by helicopter also land here before proceeding to the Bhawan. The location serves as an important resting point with medical facilities, refreshment stalls, drinking water and shelters for tired travellers.

The relatively flatter terrain after Sanji Chhat provides some relief following the

steeper portions of the climb.

Bhawan: The Divine Destination

The Bhawan is the spiritual heart of the pilgrimage and the ultimate destination for every devotee. After hours of climbing and patiently waiting in queues, pilgrims finally enter the sacred cave to seek darshan of the three Holy Pindis representing Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati. The atmosphere inside the shrine is filled with devotion and reverence. Despite the large crowds, many devotees describe the experience as deeply emotional and spiritually uplifting.

The Bhawan complex is equipped with cloakrooms, blanket facilities, accommodation, food courts, medical centres, washrooms and other essential amenities, allowing pilgrims to rest before beginning their return journey.

Bhairav Nath Temple Completes

passage symbolises spiritual rebirth. Many devotees consider visiting Ardhkuwari almost as important as reaching the Bhawan itself. During peak seasons, waiting times for entering the cave can be lengthy due to the large number of pilgrims seeking blessings. The area also offers accommodation, food facilities, medical assistance and resting places for travellers.



For millions of devotees across India and abroad, a pilgrimage to Mata Vaishno Devi is more than just a religious journey—it is an act of faith, devotion and spiritual fulfilment. Nestled amidst the picturesque Trikuta Hills in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the revered shrine attracts millions of pilgrims every year, making it one of the busiest and most sacred pilgrimage destinations in the country. Devotees believe that no one reaches the holy cave unless Mata Vaishno Devi herself grants the divine invitation. This belief has inspired generations of pilgrims to undertake the challenging yet rewarding uphill journey from Katra to the Bhawan, where the Goddess resides in the form of three sacred natural rock formations known as the Holy Pindis. The pilgrimage is not merely about reaching the shrine. Every stage of the yatra, from registering for the journey and climbing the mountain trails to visiting the Bhairav Nath Temple after darshan, carries deep spiritual significance. With modern facilities, improved infrastructure and efficient management by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, the yatra has become much more comfortable while retaining its sacred essence. Whether you are planning your first pilgrimage or returning once again to seek Mata's bless-

ings, understanding the registration process, travel routes, accommodation options, weather conditions and available facilities can make your journey smoother and more memorable.

Why Vaishno Devi Is One Of India's Most Sacred Shrines

Mata Vaishno Devi is worshipped as the combined manifestation of three powerful Hindu goddesses—Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati. Unlike most temples where devotees worship an idol, the sanctum inside the holy cave houses three naturally formed rock formations, popularly known as the Holy Pindis. These sacred pindis symbolise the three divine energies and have been worshipped for centuries. According to Hindu mythology, Mata Vaishno Devi undertook severe penance in the Trikuta Hills while protecting herself from the demon Bhairav Nath. Eventually, she revealed her divine form, defeated Bhairav Nath and granted him salvation. Before leaving the earthly world, she declared that every devotee visiting her shrine must also visit Bhairav Nath Temple for the pilgrimage to be considered complete. This spiritual tradition continues even today, with pilgrims climbing beyond the Bhawan to seek blessings at the Bhairav Nath Temple after completing the main darshan.

The Pilgrimage

Following the main darshan, devotees traditionally continue their journey to the Bhairav Nath Temple, located approximately two kilometres above the Bhawan. According to legend, after defeating Bhairav Nath, Mata Vaishno Devi forgave him and granted him salvation. She declared that every pilgrimage to her shrine would remain incomplete unless devotees also visited Bhairav Nath Temple. Today, pilgrims can either walk this final stretch or use the ropeway service, which has made the climb considerably easier for visitors of all age groups.

Accommodation Options For Every Budget

One of the greatest conveniences for pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi is the wide range of accommodation options available at Katra and along the pilgrimage route. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board manages several affordable accommodations, including Niharika Yatri Niwas, Trikuta Bhawan, Ardhkuwari and Bhawan. These facilities offer clean rooms, suites, huts and dormitories at subsidised rates. Dormitory accommodation is among the most economical choices and generally begins at around ₹150 per bed. Pilgrims seeking free accommodation can utilise the dormitory halls available at Ardhkuwari, Sanji Chhat and the Bhawan. Apart from Shrine Board facilities, Katra is home to hundreds of private hotels, guest houses and luxury properties catering to every budget. From economical lodges for backpackers to premium hotels with modern amenities, visitors can easily find accommodation according to their preferences. Booking accommodation in advance is highly recommended during festivals, Navratri and holiday seasons when demand is exceptionally high.

Best Time To Visit Mata Vaishno Devi

The shrine remains open throughout the year, allowing devotees to undertake the pilgrimage in every season. Summer months from May to July witness one of the highest footfalls because of school holidays and favourable weather. Navratri celebrations during both Chaitra and Sharad Navratri attract enormous

crowds, while the New Year holiday period also sees a significant rise in pilgrim numbers. During these peak seasons, waiting times for darshan may extend from 12 to 20 hours or even longer. Many experienced pilgrims prefer visiting during the monsoon or winter months, when crowds are comparatively smaller. The weather during winter offers a serene atmosphere, with the surrounding hills often covered in snow. However, those planning a visit during the rainy season should closely monitor weather forecasts, as heavy rainfall may occasionally trigger landslides or temporary disruptions along the route.

What To Carry During The Yatra

Preparing wisely can make the pilgrimage significantly more comfortable. Comfortable walking shoes with good grip are essential because the entire journey involves climbing mountain paths. Clothing should be chosen according to the season, with light woollens suitable for summer evenings and heavy winter wear necessary during colder months. Raincoats or waterproof jackets are useful during the monsoon. Pilgrims should also carry drinking water, light snacks, prescribed medicines, valid identity proof and their RFID Yatra Access Card throughout the journey. Travelling with minimal luggage allows devotees to move more comfortably during the climb.

Health And Safety During The Pilgrimage

Although the pilgrimage route has become much safer and more organised over the years, basic precautions remain important. Mountain weather can change rapidly, making it advisable to check weather forecasts and Shrine Board advisories before starting the trek. Staying hydrated, taking short breaks and avoiding unnecessary shortcuts can help prevent fatigue and accidents. Senior citizens, young children and pilgrims suffering from heart disease, respiratory illnesses or other medical conditions should consult their doctors before undertaking the journey. Medical centres staffed with qualified doctors operate round the clock at Katra, Banganga, Ardhkuwari, Sanji Chhat and the Bhawan, ensuring prompt medical assistance whenever required.



Football

Osasuna land Dubasin
as Alaves add Rodriguez



MADRID: Osasuna completed their first signing of the summer on Monday, confirming the arrival of forward Jonathan Dubasin from Sporting Gijon for a reported fee of around 4 million euros. The 25-year-old joined the La Liga club after an impressive campaign in Spain's second division, where he scored 17 goals and provided four assists for Sporting. Dubasin has signed a four-year contract that includes a reported release clause of 40 million euros. He is expected to help fill the void left by Spain international winger Victor Munoz, who joined Liverpool during the FIFA World Cup. Capable of playing on either flank or in a deeper attacking role, Dubasin offers versatility across the front line. Although he lacks Munoz's pace, he established himself as a reliable finisher last season. Elsewhere, Deportivo Alaves continued to strengthen its squad by signing forward Miguel Rodriguez from Dutch club Utrecht.

Jr Women Academy Hockey

Roundglass Academy sets new record with 41-0 win



GWALIOR: Roundglass Hockey Academy girls rewrote the record book on Monday by registering a staggering 41-0 victory over the Tamil Nadu Hockey Academy at the 4th Hockey India Sub Junior Women Academy Championship 2026 - Zone A & B. The scoreline in the Pool C encounter, held in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, now stands as the biggest victory in the history of the tournament. In other matches on the second day of competitions, Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy emerged victorious in the Sub-junior competition, while Raja Karan Hockey Academy and Pritam Siwach Hockey Academy Sonapat secured wins in the Junior competition in the 4th Hockey India.

Babar accepted Test captaincy on condition of getting reins

MUMBAI

When Babar Azam was offered the role of Pakistan's Test captain, he accepted it only on the condition that he would get all-format leadership, a news report said on Monday. Babar, who was dethroned because of poor batting a couple of years back, accepted Test captaincy after the incumbent Shan Masood had some poor results in red-ball cricket, said a report in Telecom Asia Sport on Monday. "Two selectors met Babar before the announcement of the Test captain on July 5 as they had no option other than Babar for red-ball captaincy and Babar accepted the role on condition of getting the captaincy in the other two formats as well," sources told www.telecomasia.net on Monday. "Babar had always wanted to be sole captain of Pakistan in all three formats, and when he put that condition, the selectors told him that if the team does well in the West Indies and England over five Tests, then he will get the all-format cap-



taincy," sources were quoted as saying in the report. Fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi is currently captain of the one-day international format. "Shaheen too had a bitter experience as captain as the current Board sacked him as T20i captain after just one series in 2024 when he lost in New Zealand early that year," a source said. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) waited for two months to take a final decision after Shan Masood failed in the role, losing 12 of the 16 Tests he captained since December 2023. The selectors first approached Salman Agha, who politely refused to accept the role as he did not want a team embroiled in a lack of cohesion and performance.

2026 Commonwealth Games: Gyanehswari Yadav wins silver in women's 53kg weightlifting

GLASGOW

India continued its impressive run in the weightlifting competitions at the Commonwealth Games 2026 as Gyanehswari Yadav clinched the silver medal in the women's 53kg event on Monday. The Indian lifter produced a strong overall performance, registering a total lift of 199kg, comprising 88kg in the snatch and 111kg in the clean and jerk, to finish second on the podium. This is her personal best in Total and C&J performance.

Nigeria's Didih Onome Omolola claimed the gold medal with a commanding 206kg total (93kg snatch +113kg clean and jerk), while Canada's Rebeka Groulx secured the bronze with a total of 178kg. Yadav was consistent throughout the competition. After lifting 88kg in the snatch, she successfully cleared 103kg, 107kg and 111kg in the clean and jerk, ensuring India another medal in the weightlifting competition. Omolola, however, proved too strong, matching the Common-



wealth and Games record in the clean and jerk with a successful lift of 113kg to comfortably seal the gold medal. South Africa's Johanni Taljaard finished fourth with 175kg, while Solomon Islands' Jenly Tegu Wini ended fifth with 172kg. Gyanehswari's silver adds another significant medal to India's campaign in Glasgow, un-



derlining the country's continued strength in weightlifting on the Commonwealth stage. She is the third weightlifter to win a medal for India in Glasgow, joining Mirabai Chanu (gold) and Raja Muthupandi (silver). The 23-year-old weightlifter from Chhattisgarh took to the sport at a young age and rose

through the state's sports development system before earning a place in the national setup. Her consistent performances at junior and senior national championships established her as one of India's top female lifters in her weight category. Gyanehswari trains at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of

Sports (NIS), Patiala, under the national coaching program and has represented India at major international competitions, including the Commonwealth Championships, Asian Championships, and the World Weightlifting Championships.

Mandaviya felicitates bronze medallist Jhandu Kumar with Rs 10 lakh reward

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday met Commonwealth Games 2026 bronze medallist para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar and felicitated him with a cash reward of Rs 10, 00,000. Jhandu Kumar got India off the mark on the medals table by winning a bronze in the men's heavy-weight para-powerlifting with 130.9 points and a best lift of 190 kg. Competing in a two-group field, Jhandu topped Group B with a best result of 130.9 points, comfortably finishing ahead of Uganda's Dennis Mbaziira (114.1) and Australia's Ben Wright (110.9) to advance into medal contention. In the combined standings,

however, Nigeria's Riluanw Idris produced the best overall lift of 132.8 to clinch the gold medal, while England's Matthew Harding claimed silver with 131.0. Jhandu's effort of 130.9 was enough to secure the bronze medal, finishing just 0.1 behind Harding in a closely contested battle for silver.

"Delighted to meet para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar, who made Bharat proud by winning the Bronze medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026. His achievement is a testament to PM @narendramodi Ji's vision of mainstreaming para-sports and ensuring that our para-athletes receive the same priority, support, and opportunities as every other athlete," the sports minister shared the glimpses from the on X. Born in Harnaut, Nalanda district, Bihar, Jhandu was affected by polio since birth. The son of a vegetable vendor, he began his sporting career in 2017 as a para athletics athlete, competing in the F55 shot put and discus throw events, where he won several district and state-level medals.

Diksha stays in top-15 hunt with steady third-round 70 at Women's Scottish Open

DUNDONALD LINKS (SCOTLAND)

India's Diksha Dagar remained on course for another strong finish on the Ladies European Tour after carding a composed two-under 70 in the third round of the ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open on Saturday. The Hero-backed golfer climbed into a share of 11th place at one-over-par, leaving herself within striking distance of a top-10 finish heading into the final round. Playing in challenging links conditions that featured gusty winds, intermittent rain and brief spells of sunshine, Diksha once again showcased the consistency that has marked her 2026 campaign.

The two-time Ladies European Tour winner made a measured start with three consecutive pars before registering her first birdie of the day at the fourth hole. A bogey at the ninth saw her make the turn at even par, but she quickly regained momentum on the back nine.

Diksha produced her best golf of the round with successive birdies on the 13th and 14th holes to move up the leaderboard. She then negotiated the closing stretch without any further blemishes, paring each of the final four holes. A birdie putt on the 18th narrowly missed, but her round of 70 was enough to move her



closer to the top 10 with one day remaining before next week's AIG Women's Open.

The latest performance continues an encouraging season for the Indian, who has been among the most consistent performers on the Ladies European Tour in 2026 and is once again in contention for a high finish.

India's other two representatives, Avani Prashanth and Pranavi Urs, were unable to make the weekend after both missed the cut following the second round.

At the top of the leaderboard, South Korea's Jenny Shin maintained her grip on the tournament despite a quieter day. Shin carded a one-under 71 to reach 12-under overall and will take a commanding five-shot lead into the final round.

Shin, who has led the tournament since the opening round, mixed two birdies with a bogey to preserve her sizeable advantage. It marks the first time in her LPGA career that she has carried a five-shot lead into

the final day of an event. Thailand's Pajaree Ananruekarn occupies solo second at seven-under after a three-under 69, while Japan's Erika Hara and Germany's Esther Henseleit share third place at five-under. With the final round still to come, Diksha will look to finish strongly as she chases another top-10 result and carries momentum into the season's final major, the AIG Women's Open.

Australia beat Canada in overtime in 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball



GLASGOW

Australia's Georgia Munro-Cook scored the winning points to seal an epic Women's 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball win over Canada, serving up a stunning finish to a Commonwealth Games classic with an overtime victory over the defending champions at Glasgow 2026. In a tit-for-tat encounter, Canada hit back from 10-7 down to draw level with a last-gasp basket from Elo-die Tessier just before the buzzer. But

Munro-Cook, who had scored six of Australia's 10 points in regular time, nailed both the extra points required to seal a 12-10 overtime win. "That was one of the most exciting games I've ever played in," the 32-year-old was quoted as saying on the official website. "They just kept coming back and coming back, but we kept extending our lead, which was incredible. "Canada's one of the best teams here, and we really showed what we could do today. We will take so much confidence from that. I think we can

compete with anyone here and we really showed that." The clash between the silver and gold medallists from Birmingham 2022 decided who finished runners-up in Pool A, after England, who had beaten both sides in the first two pool rounds, earned a third straight win by getting the better of South Africa. Crowd favourites A similar scenario played out in the Men's 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball, where defending champions Austra-

Canada dominates individual apparatus finals, wins three gold

GLASGOW

Canada dominated the individual apparatus finals in the Artistic Gymnastics competitions at the 2026 Commonwealth Games by winning three of the five gold medals decided at Glasgow on Monday. The gold medals for Canada were won by Felix Dolco (Men's Rings), Jordan Carroll (Pommel Horse) and Lia-Monica Fontaine (Women's Vault) won the gold medals for Canada while Kate McDonald (AUS) in Women's Uneven Bars and Luke Whitehouse (ENG) in Men's Floor were the other gold medal winners on Monday. The top performer for Canada on Monday was Felix Dolci in the Men's Rings, who turned his bronze medal in Birmingham 2022 into gold at Glasgow 2026. Dolci soared to 13,766 to win the final title of a frenetic day at the Artistic Gymnastics. William Emard, who had posted the biggest score in qualifying, was piped to the gold by his Canadian team-mate. Both were part of Canada's Men's Team gold medallists earlier in the Games.

Aadarsha Kutumbam: Chittibabu STEALS HEARTS



The makers of Aadarsha Kutumbam have unveiled a charming character introduction video, giving audiences their first look at Venkatesh Daggubati as Chittibabu—a lovable man who forms the emotional backbone of an ideal family.

The promotional glimpse begins with Chittibabu stepping into a grand mansion, where Srinidhi Shetty's character enthusiastically showcases the modern kitchen equipped with an air conditioner, assuring him that cooking will now be much easier. She then proudly points to the washing machine, believing it will finally lighten his household responsibilities.

Adding a humorous twist, Raghu Babu playfully re-

veals that she has no idea how the household actually functions, as Chittibabu single-handedly takes care of every chore himself. With his trademark warmth and simplicity, Chittibabu smiles and says he enjoys doing all his work on his own.

The lighthearted exchange perfectly establishes the film's wholesome family vibe before Nara Rohith aptly describes them as an "Aadarsha Kutumbam"—an ideal family. The glimpse wraps up on a heartwarming note with Venkatesh and his family standing together at the doorway of a moving train, leaving behind an emotional and feel-good impression.

Filled with humor, warmth, and relatable family moments, the character video hints at a complete family entertainer that blends Trivikram Srinivas' signature writing with Venkatesh's effortless screen presence. Directed by Trivikram Srinivas, Aadarsha Kutumbam is produced by S. Radha Krishna (China Babu) under the Haarika & Hassine Creations banner. The much-awaited family drama is all set to arrive in theatres on October 2, 2026.

POOJA BRINGS THE HEAT WITH COCOA-CHIC GLAMOUR

Pooja Hegde is serving effortless style once again. The actress stunned in a sleek brown strapless ensemble as she posed against a rustic stone wall, pairing the elegant look with a statement gold chain that added just the right touch of boldness. Radiating confidence and charm, Pooja perfectly blended sophistication with a hint of sass.

Adding her signature wit to the glamorous photos, she captioned the post, "70% cocoa + a dash of spice ☐☐," a playful line that beautifully captured the mood of the look. With her fashion game consistently on point, Pooja continues to make every appearance a style statement, leaving fans swooning over her chic and radiant vibe.

'Irumudi' On August 21

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's upcoming family entertainer Irumudi is right on schedule. Putting an end to rumours about a possible delay, the makers have officially confirmed that the film will hit theatres worldwide on August 21 as announced earlier. Directed by Shiva Nirvana and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Irumudi has already generated strong buzz with its intriguing first glimpse and the chartbuster devotional track "Irumudi Kattu."

Along with the release confirmation, the team unveiled a heartwarming "25 Days to Go" poster featuring Ravi Teja and child artiste Baby Nakshatra. The adorable father-daughter moment, with the little girl affectionately hugging Ravi Teja as he plays cards, beautifully captures the emotional essence of the film. With the countdown officially underway, the makers are expected to intensify promotions by unveiling more songs, trailers and special updates in the days leading up to the release. Irumudi is shaping up to be an emotional family entertainer that promises to showcase Ravi Teja in a refreshing avatar.



Kangana Announces Digital Detox

Actress and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut has lashed out at viral videos of Gen Z-led protest demonstrations, saying the visuals and language used in the clips left her "scarred" and prompted her to take a "digital detox." Sharing her views on social media, Kangana described the protest reels as "puke inducing" and questioned the behaviour of the young protesters. "Never in my life have I seen so much ugliness in one place... the way they speak and the kind of language they are using is so jarring and crass. Ewwwww... who is birthing and raising them?" she wrote.

The actress further said that India is known for its cultural elegance and sophistication, adding that the protest videos reflected the opposite. "India is a place of diversely beautiful people, draped in elegance and rooted in cultural sophistication... I am scarred from these reels, need some healing, digital detox," she added. This is not the first time Kangana has spoken about the ongoing youth-led protests. Earlier, she questioned the methods adopted by the demonstrators and criticised attempts to pressure the government through street protests.

The protests, spearheaded largely by students and young people, initially began over allegations surrounding the NEET paper leak before expanding to broader demands for transparency, accountability, and improved opportunities for the youth.



Keerthy Suresh in Paradise

Actress Keerthy Suresh is set to reunite with Natural Star Nani for a special appearance in his much-awaited pan-India film The Paradise. After delivering memorable performances together in Nenu Local and the blockbuster Dasara, the popular on-screen pair will once again share screen space, this time for a grand special song in director Srikanth Odela's action drama. The lavish song will reportedly be shot from July 28 on a specially constructed set in Hyderabad. Sources reveal that the sequence will feature nearly 1,000 junior artists and dancers, making it one of the biggest musical spectacles in the film. Renowned choreographer Aata Sandeep is overseeing the dance moves, while Anirudh Ravichander has composed the high-energy track.

Nani and Keerthy also share a warm friendship off-screen. Nani was among the few celebrities who attended Keerthy's wedding, and their close bond is said to have played a key role in bringing her on board for the special number. Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri, The Paradise is being mounted on a massive scale and is touted as Nani's biggest pan-India venture. The film is currently under production and is eyeing a September 2026 theatrical release.

Keerthy Busy with Telugu Films

Meanwhile, Keerthy Suresh has a packed Telugu slate. She is currently starring opposite Vijay Deverakonda in Rowdy Janardhana and will also be seen alongside Venkatesh in director Anil Ravipudi's upcoming multi-starrer.



THE ODYSSEY BECOMES NOLAN'S BIGGEST HIT IN INDIA

Christopher Nolan's latest epic, The Odyssey, has turned into a blockbuster at the Indian box office. Released on July 17, the film has completed two successful weekends and continues to attract audiences across the country. Directed by Christopher Nolan, the film features an ensemble cast including Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Zendaya, and Charlize Theron. A bold reimagining of Homer's classic epic, The Odyssey blends psychological drama with spectacular action, featuring Cyclops battles and Nolan's signature non-linear storytelling.

Powered by Nolan's immense popularity and strong word of mouth, the film has grossed around \$639 million worldwide. In India, it has collected approximately Rs 140 crore gross, or Rs 120 crore net, by the end of its second Sunday.

The film now ranks as the eighth highest-grossing Hollywood release in India. More significantly, it has become Christopher Nolan's biggest blockbuster in the Indian market, surpassing the lifetime collections of "Oppenheimer" in just 11 days.

With steady occupancy and no major slowdown yet, "The Odyssey" is expected to continue its successful theatrical run in the coming days.