HYDERABAD HEADLINES

RNI NO.APENG/2010/33328 | VOL NO. 17 | ISSUE NO.: 110 | RANGAREDDY (HYDERABAD) | PAGES: 12 | RS. 1/-

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2026 | WWW.HYDERABADHEADLINES.COM





A New Freedom: The Promise of a Poverty-Free India

OPINION 06

Students are architects of INDIA'S FUTURE: MURMU

NEW DELHI, AUG 14



President Droupadi Murmu on Friday described students as the "architects of India's future" and youth as India's "most valuable asset". She said the government was undertaking comprehensive reforms to make public examinations transparent, secure and trustworthy, and to curb paper leaks and unfair practices.

She said India's young population was its greatest strength, with youth increasingly moving beyond seeking jobs to entrepreneurship and job creation. She also highlighted the importance of their physical and mental well-being and the role of sports in nation-building.

The President praised the armed forces and cited Operation Sindoor as a demonstration of India's strength against terrorism. She also highlighted women's empowerment, digital infrastructure, poverty reduction and financial inclusion.

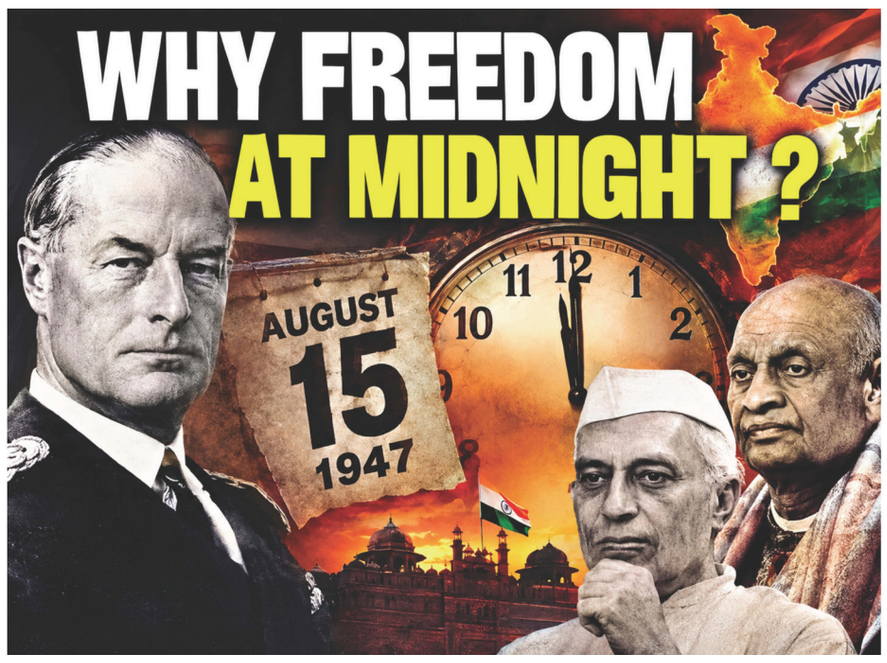
Calling for greater participation in nation-building, she said India's progress towards Viksit Bharat by 2047 would be driven by economic resilience, youth and women's empowerment, and sustainable development.

SHORT TAKES

Jharkhand Students Plan Tiranga Yatra Amid Recruitment Stir

Students protesting alleged irregularities in Jharkhand recruitment exams will take out a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ranchi on Independence Day to promote unity and patriotism. The march will begin at 9.30 a.m. from Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium and pass through key parts of the city before returning to the protest site.

The indefinite agitation has entered its 21st day. Protest leader Devendra Kumar Mahto, undergoing treatment at Ranchi Sadar Hospital after the August 10 lathicharge, urged students to continue the agitation. He demanded an inquiry into the incident and reforms in the recruitment process.



BY BP ACHARYA, IAS (RETD)

On the occasion of the 79th anniversary celebrations of our Independence, inevitably, one is reminded of the celebrations during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations. One tends to remember the many midnight functions organised then to mark our 'Freedom at Midnight' and the concomitant inconveniences one had to go through groggy-eyed! Mercifully, this time around, we are spared of such nocturnal celebrations, but the question that continues to be asked, why on earth did we choose to be free at an unearthly hour? Was it by choice or by compulsion? What was special about that midnight hour for our "tryst with destiny"? Have you ever wondered? And thereby hangs a little tale, not widely known, that I will recount below.

To answer these questions, I need to jog my memories back to 1980s, when as a research scholar in JNU, I had a gap year. Having completed the course work for MPhil with a high grade point, I was eligible for direct PhD (for which I registered, though not a priority for me then), but was underage to appear for the Civil Services Exam. As I was relatively free, my Professor and guide asked me to help the internationally celebrated authors Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (of 'Freedom at Midnight' fame) to edit the personal papers and private

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

₹ 2,400 Cr Fee Reimbursement DEPOSITED IN ADVANCE

Fee reimbursement amount will be deposited in students' bank accounts within one month

Telangana is the first state conducted BC census in the country: CM

BRS leaders promoted sheep, goat and cattle farming to prevent BCs from emerging as future leaders

Ready to work 18 hours a day for a brighter future of Telangana state

CM Revanth Reddy unveiled the statues of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Smt. Savitribai Phule in Hyderabad today.



Hyderabad , August 14: Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy has announced that the state government would deposit Rs 2400 crore towards fee reimbursement directly into bank accounts in advance from this academic year. Ensuring transparency in the fee reimbursement process, the Chief Minister said that Rs 250 crore was already made available for payments. Addressing a public meeting after unveiling the statues of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Smt. Savitribai Phule in Hyderabad today , the CM said that the fee reimbursement amount will be credited to the students' bank accounts in a month if they apply online. The new payment system was introduced to stop the colleges from not issuing certificates to the students citing non-release of fee reimbursement.

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Smart Ration Cards, EV Autos Get Cabinet Nod

02

Caste Census 2027: Full List of Questions in Population Enumeration

NEW DELHI:

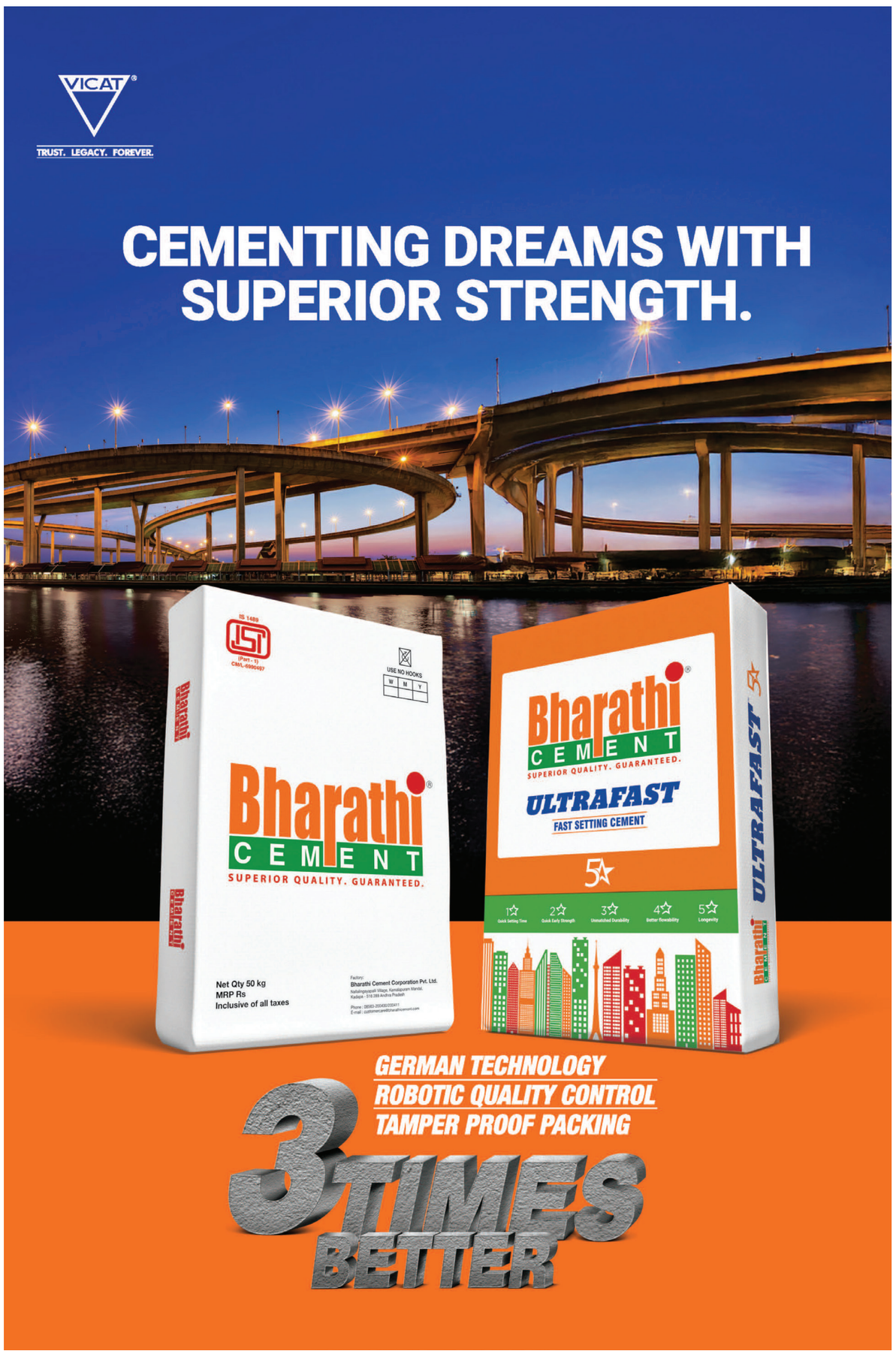
The second phase of Census 2027, known as Population Enumeration (PE), will be conducted in February 2027 and will record the caste identities of all residents. This will be the first Census in independent India to enumerate caste across all communities. So far, Census exercises have recorded only Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The 16th Census of India and the eighth since Independence was approved by the Cabinet Committee in April 2025. It will also be the country's first fully digital Census.

The Census is being conducted in two phases — Housing Listing Operations (HLO) and Population Enumeration. The HLO phase, which began on April 1, 2026, is scheduled to conclude on September 30.

A rehearsal of the PE phase was conducted from July 1 to 20 in 16 States and Union Territories. During the exercise, caste details were recorded as declared by residents. About 30 lakh field functionaries will be involved in the nationwide Census operations.

Questions in Population Enumeration

1. Name of the person
2. Relationship to head of household
3. Sex
4. Date of birth and age
5. Current marital status
6. Age at marriage
7. Spouse's name
8. Nationality 9. Religion
10. SC/ST/Caste
11. Father's particulars
12. Mother's particulars
13. Disability
14. Mother tongue and other languages known
15. Literacy and digital literacy
16. Attendance at educational institution
17. Highest educational level and stream
18. Worked during the last year
19. Category of economic activity
20. Occupation
21. Nature of industry, trade or service
22. Class of worker
23. Non-economic activity
24. Whether seeking or available for work
25. Travel to place of work
26. Place of birth
27. Place of last residence
28. Reason for migration
29. Duration of stay since last migration
30. Permanent residential address
31. Number of surviving children
32. Number of children ever born alive
33. Children born alive during the last year
34. Place of COVID-19 vaccination
35. Total bank accounts
36. Mobile number, if available
37. Aadhaar number
38. Voter ID, if available
39. Passport number, for Indian passport holders
40. Availability of driving licence



GOVERNOR CALLS FOR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO BUILD VIKSIT BHARAT



HYDERABAD, AUG.14

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla extended his warm greetings to the people of Telangana and the nation on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day on August 15. In a statement here on Friday, the Governor called upon people to remember with gratitude the sacrifices of the freedom fighters who fought with courage and dedication for the country's independence.

The freedom enjoyed today was the result of the sacrifices and valour of the freedom fighters, Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla said. He urged every citizen to discharge their responsibility towards safeguarding the country's independence, sovereignty and unity. The Governor called for collective efforts to build a stronger and self-reliant Atmanirbhar Bharat. He emphasised the need to ensure that the benefits of development reach all sections of society and called for greater focus on peace, fraternity and inclusive development.

Shiv pratap Shukla said that every citizen should contribute to the building of a prosperous and progressive India based on the values of unity, integrity and development. He called upon youth, women, farmers, workers, students and people from all sections of society to play an active role in the nation's progress. The Governor expressed the hope that the Tricolour would always fly high with pride and that its three colours would continue to symbolise courage, peace and faith among the people. He called upon the people to draw inspiration from the ideals of the freedom fighters and rededicate themselves to the task of building a Viksit Bharat.

Reliance, Rolls-Royce Partner on AMCA Engine



LONDON / MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Limited and aerospace giant Rolls-Royce have announced a strategic partnership to design, develop, and manufacture an indigenous combat engine for India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program.

As part of the agreement, the two companies plan to explore establishing a dedicated Aerospace Gas Turbine Complex in India. The facility is intended to serve as a center of excellence for power and propulsion technology, covering the full spectrum of engine development—from initial design and testing to manufacturing and through-life support. The initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, aiming to bridge a long-standing gap in India's defense ecosystem by establishing sovereign capabilities in military aero-engine manufacturing.

"India's strategic autonomy requires sovereign capability

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

Students Salute India's Freedom Heroes

GDC (W), Hussainialam Hosts Har Ghar Tiranga Drawings & Poster Exhibition and Rally"

HYDERABAD, 14 AUGUST

Government Degree College for Women (GDC) at Hussainialam marked Independence Day celebrations with pride and purpose through a Drawing & Poster Exhibition and the Har Ghar Tiranga rally, organized by the college's NSS Units I, II & III. Conducted as part of the Independence Day Celebrations – 2026, Viksit Bharat 2047, and the Har Ghar Tiranga initiative, the events took place at the Khursheed Jah Seminar Hall at 11:30 AM today. Around 80 students participated enthusiastically, presenting creative drawings and posters themed "Great Freedom Fighters of India." The artworks showcased not only the students' imagination and artistic skills, but also their understanding of India's freedom struggle and their commitment to patriotic values.

Following the exhibition, NSS volunteers from the three units carried the Tricolour in a spirited patriotic rally that began from the college. The rally brought a message of national pride, unity, and civic responsibility to the public, reinforcing the essence of Har Ghar Tiranga across the community. The programmes were conducted under the guidance of Incharge Principal Dr. M. Pranitha and IQAC Coordinator Dr. K. Sreedevi. NSS Programme Officers Dr. P. Latha, Sr. Anitha Monga, and Dr. Geetha Rani coordinated the activities, ensuring smooth and meaningful execution of both events.

The Drawing and Poster Competition was evaluated by Dr. P. Manjula, S. Anitha, Dr. Jesse, and Shailaja, who commended the students for their creativity, presentation, and strong patriotic spirit.

The exhibition was visited by all faculty members and students of the college. Together, the events created a valuable platform for young learners to celebrate the legacy of India's freedom fighters, express their talents through art, and strengthen the spirit of patriotism, unity, and responsible citizenship. The celebrations concluded successfully with active participation and widespread appreciation for the efforts of the NSS units in promoting national pride and civic awareness.

CR Railway Protection Force Personnel Bestowed with Prestigious Medal for Meritorious Services

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 14



Shri Nagarikanti Guru Prasad, Sub Inspector/Railway Protection Force, South Central Railway, has been awarded the Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Service on the occasion of 80th Independence Day 2026 in recognition of his meritorious service.

On this occasion, Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, SCR congratulated the awardee and expressed happiness for the recognition received at the National level. He stated that it is a proud moment not just for the Railway Protection Force but for the entire SCR zone and appreciated the efforts of Shri N. Guru Prasad in ensuring safety and security of Rail passengers and property.

Sri Nagarikanti Guru Prasad, Sub Inspector, Railway Protection Force, South Central Railway has been awarded the Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Service in recognition of his distinguished career spanning over 25 years, including more than 08 years in the Special Intelligence Branch, marked by significant contributions in intelligence gathering, crime prevention, passenger security, child rescue operations, and administrative work. His notable achievements include providing crucial intelligence during the Tuni Train Arson incident, apprehending inter state gangs, handling sensitive passenger agitations, contributing to anti touting and railway property crime detection, and actively participating in Operation Muskaan. He is a recipient of Minister for Railways' Award 2019 with a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and also received awards at Divisional Railway Manager and Director General/RPF Levels. Shri N. Guru Prasad is the participant in the President's Colour Parade 2006 and major national events,making this medal a fitting recognition of his sustained professional competence, integrity, and commitment to duty.

KBR PARK TO GO ONE-WAY FROM AUG 18

Hyderabad, Aug.14: The Hyderabad Traffic Police will implement a one-way traffic system around KBR Park from August 18 as part of measures to ease congestion, improve road safety and ensure smoother vehicle movement. Joint commissioner of police (traffic) Joel Davis and DCP (Traffic-II) Kajal held a stakeholder meeting with the representatives of hospitals, commercial establishments and other key institutions in and around KBR Park to discuss the proposed traffic changes.

Officials explained the revised traffic movement, diversions and access arrangements, while seeking feedback from stakeholders on potential challenges. Hospitals and commercial establishments were specifically advised to ensure uninterrupted emergency access and smooth movement of patients, staff, customers and essential services.

The Traffic Police urged establishments to inform their employees, visitors, customers and service providers about the revised arrangements. Motorists were also advised to plan their routes in advance, follow prescribed directions and cooperate with traffic personnel, particularly during the initial days.

Cabinet gives green signal to SMART RATION CARDS, EV AUTO SCHEME

Hyderabad, Aug.14: The Telangana Cabinet has decided to organise a grand event on Independence Day to distribute smart cards to ration cardholders across the State.



Speaking to the media after the Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat here on Friday, Revenue, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Social Welfare Minister Adluri Lakshman Kumar and Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, said officials had been directed to make necessary arrangements across all districts.

Ponguleti said the number of ration card beneficiaries in the State had increased from 2.81 crore to 3.42 crore, with the Congress government extending benefits to an additional 62 lakh people. The Cabinet also decided to organise the 'Telangana Rising Global Summit 2.0' this year, similar to last year's event. Tentative dates for the summit have been fixed for December 7, 8 and 9. A sub-committee headed by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and comprising Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Uttam Kumar Reddy and Vivek Venkataswamy, along with other special committees, will oversee arrangements for the summit.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that, following the unveiling of the 'Telangana Rising 2047' vision last year, the upcoming summit would be organised around the theme 'Invest Telangana'.

The Cabinet also decided to promote the cultivation of seven specified fine-grain paddy varieties and create awareness among farmers to encourage their cultivation. It approved a bonus of ₹500 per quintal for these seven varieties from this year. The Cabinet also approved the auction of the remaining 17.54 lakh metric tonnes of paddy. The Cabinet approved bringing the State's Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) and polytechnic colleges under the ambit of Young India Skills University (YISU). At present, these institutions are under the Technical Education department.

The Cabinet approved removing the institutions from the purview of the Telangana Education Act and bringing them under YISU. It also decided to merge the institutions currently under the Industries Department into the Shakti department, the Minister said.

The Cabinet further approved the construction of 'Young India' Integrated Residential Schools in the Adilabad, Nirmal, Mudhol, Boath, Sirpur, Gajwel and Dubbak constituencies.

As part of the first phase, the State government plans to establish 'Young India' Integrated Residential School complexes in 113 constituencies.

With Wednesday's approval of seven additional schools, permissions have now been granted for 86 such complexes. The Cabinet also directed officials to expedite land acquisition and begin construction in the remaining constituencies at the earliest.

In another key decision aimed at transforming Hyderabad into a 'Green City', the Cabinet approved a special scheme to reduce pollution from petrol and diesel auto-rickshaws in the core urban region.

There are currently 18,766 petrol and diesel auto-rickshaws in Hyderabad. The 'Telangana Auto-rickshaw Electric Conversion Scheme', with an outlay of ₹200 crore, will facilitate their conversion to electric vehicles.

Under the scheme, eligible auto-rickshaw drivers will receive a subsidy of up to ₹1.5 lakh per vehicle. They can either retrofit their existing auto-rickshaws with electric kits or scrap the old vehicles and purchase new electric auto-rickshaws, Ponguleti said.

The Cabinet also decided to extend the application deadline for the HILT policy, aimed at relocating polluting industries from Hyderabad city limits to the outskirts, by three months. In response to requests from applicants, the deadline has been extended to October 31.

The Cabinet approved an estimated expenditure of ₹2,100 crore for Phase-II works of the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme. The project is expected to provide irrigation water to around one lakh acres besides meeting drinking water and industrial requirements in the region.

The Cabinet also approved increasing the capacity of the Gudem Doddi Pumped Storage Project from 1.19 TMC to 15 TMC. It further sanctioned the appointment of a consultant to conduct a study on solar power generation, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said.

Reliance, Rolls-Royce..

➢FROM PAGE 1

in critical technologies," said Anant Ambani, Executive Director at Reliance Industries. He noted that combining Rolls-Royce's propulsion expertise with Reliance's manufacturing scale aims to create an enduring national capability that could eventually become globally competitive. Tufan Erginbilgiç, CEO of Rolls-Royce plc, called the alliance a major milestone toward a self-reliant aerospace ecosystem, pointing to the combination of Rolls-Royce's engineering heritage with Reliance's industrial base in India. Beyond the AMCA fighter jet initiative, the proposed complex could open doors for broader cooperation across defense, civil aerospace, and emerging propulsion systems.

180-day traffic Diversions on nh-65 as Miyapur-Allwyn flyover works begin

Hyderabad, Aug.14 (NSS): Traffic congestion is expected for the next 180 days on the Old Mumbai Highway (NH-65) due to the construction of a six-lane bi-directional flyover between Miyapur X Road and Allwyn X Road, along with underpass works at Hafeezpet. The project is being executed by the Project-II Wing of the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation within the limits of Miyapur Traffic Police Station. Construction activities commenced on August 14, 2026, and motorists are advised to use alternate routes, especially during peak hours.

Constable Named as Main Accused in COUPLE'S MURDER CASE

Suryapet, August 14: Police have identified Sharif, a constable working at Mothe Police Station, as the main accused in the case involving the murder and burial of a husband and wife within the jurisdiction of Mothe Police Station in Suryapet district.

The police cracked the case within 24 hours and took two accused into custody. Addressing a press conference at the District Police Office on Friday, SP K. Narsimha disclosed the details of the double murder case.

He said special teams were formed under the supervision of Kodad DSP Srinivas Reddy and Munagala CI Ramakrishna Reddy to crack the case, which had posed a major challenge to the police.

According to the police, Mothe Police Station constable Sharif and another accused, Sundar, allegedly committed the murders following a dispute over money. The victims were reportedly lured to a field on the pretext of arranging a loan for purchasing sheep. They were then allegedly attacked and killed.

The accused were identified with the help of technical evidence and CCTV footage, arrested, and subsequently remanded to judicial custody, the SP said. SP K. Narsimha appreciated Suryapet DSP Prasanna Kumar, CCS Inspector Shiva Kumar, SI Lachi Reddy, and CCS SIs Sai Ram and Hari Krishna for their outstanding work in solving the case.

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Why Freedom At Midnight?

➢FROM PAGE 1

documents of Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, which they had collected for their best seller publication. That's how I was swamped by huge loads of material which I had to ferret out for new publications, later brought out in two separate volumes, viz. 'Mountbatten and the Partition of India' and 'Mountbatten and Independent India'.

That is when I stumbled upon an interesting interview of Lord Mountbatten by the authors of the book during their course of research for the international best seller, Freedom at Midnight. The recorded interview was published in the first part of the new publication Mountbatten and the Partition of India. Let's hear from the horse's mouth, as it were, as Mountbatten recollects in these excerpts from his interview, characterised by his trademark arrogance and insouciance:

"Q. The ceremony of August 15 had no precedent. Who invented it, engineered it?

A. Well, I discussed it with Nehru. The first and most amusing thing, of course, is that I had selected August 15 because it was the date of the Japanese surrender (to me as the Commander of Allied forces at Singapore) — which had only taken place, don't forget two years ago — but I hadn't consulted the astrologers.

As you know, the Indians are riddled with astrology. I didn't realize it. On an inauspicious day one could do nothing. Well, Nehru didn't believe in astrology but, he said, so many people did, and that I'd chosen an unpropitious day. I suppose it was silly of me not to consult the astrologers, but I had forgotten.

He said, 'Never mind. If you agree that we can have a midnight meeting and just before the midnight strikes, we'll transfer power, that'll be all the more auspicious.'

And I thought — what a marvellous, dramatic idea, having a midnight meeting while the rest of the world sleeps — and you'll remember ... This was done, not because we wanted a dramatic moment, but because I'd chosen the wrong day! Because the astrologers said it wasn't propitious!"

So there you are... That is how we were saddled forever by freedom at Midnight, as an uncomfortable compromise between Viceregal arrogance and astrological adjustment or upay, as it's often called. While the date was fixed arbitrarily by an egotistical Viceroy, what is surprising is that the Indian leaders rather meekly submitted to his whims and fancies! When Nehru broached it with other leaders, apparently there was stiff resistance particularly from Sardar Patel and JB Kripalani who wanted to avoid the inauspicious day. Eventually, it was left to an ingenious astrological subterfuge to resolve this conundrum. This is how it was done.

As per the Hindu calendar of tithis (days as per solar/lunar cycle) begin at the sunrise, while as per the Western (Gregorian) calendar the date begins at midnight. This crucial difference afforded a slim window of opportunity to work out an astrological solution (upay) to this difficult dilemma. As per the astrologers, the 15th Aug, 1947, which fell on the 14th day (chaturdashi) of dark fortnight (krishna paksha), with the most inauspicious new moon day (amavasya) setting in too had to be avoided by all means. Thus, as per the innovative compromise formula this could be achieved by avoiding the sunrise of the 15th Aug, thereby avoiding the inauspicious dark chaturdashi/amavasya. But as per the Gregorian calendar the 15th would begin after midnight. So it was an ingenious tightrope walk that necessitated this midnight ceremony and the rest is history.

This apparently win-win formula was actually a difficult compromise that was more out of compulsion than choice. We had no choice when confronted by a supercilious Viceroy's arbitrary choice of date, which smacked of scant disregard of people's sentiments. But what was indeed disappointing was the meek submission of Indian leaders to his whims and fancies and going out of the way to adjust to his peccadilloes.

Thus, Freedom at Midnight became our "tryst with destiny", and over time, became a symbol of dramatic transfer of power emulated in some other colonial countries like Hong Kong. For us, however, it remains a story of queer compromise that defined the dilemma of our country during the initial years after independence, that lingers on in more ways than one.

— Author is a retired Special Chief Secretary of Government of Telangana and the views are his personal. He can be reached at bpacharya@gmail.com

₹ 2,400 Cr Fee Reimbursement DEPOSITED IN ADVANCE

➢FROM PAGE 1

In a bid to promote skill development from the school level, CM Revanth Reddy also announced that a new course of imparting skills alongside academics to students from nursery through Class 12 will be introduced. We are already providing comprehensive facilities, including breakfast, starting from the nursery level. Possessing a certificate is not enough these days , the Chief Minister emphasised that everyone should acquire technical skills to get jobs in the competitive world. Even IT professionals were losing their jobs and returning home, the CM said that as many as 2 lakh nursing jobs are available in Germany and Japan.

CM Revanth Reddy highlighted that Advanced Technical Centers (ATCs)were established in 119 constituencies in collaboration with the Tata Group in 2024 and providing a monthly stipend of ₹2,000 to students enrolled in the ATCs. The main objective of the ATCs is to impart technical skills alongside formal education.

Further, the Chief Minister said that in Group-1 recruitment, 60 percent of the selected candidates belong to the Backward Classes (BC). With 90 per cent of students scoring full marks (100 per cent), competition in the field of education has intensified significantly; the CM said that the Young India Sports University was established and also provides government jobs to those who excel in sports. Cricketer Siraj, world boxing champion Nikhat and Deepti were given government jobs for excelling in sports. " It is my responsibility to provide cash rewards and jobs to those who excel in sports and win medals", CM Revanth Reddy said that opportunities arise only through education and one must seize them.

CM Revanth Reddy highlighted the importance of the BC census, which helped to create jobs for the weaker sections and resolved every issue. The Chief Minister appealed to the youth to draw inspiration from Jyotirao Phule and enter legislative bodies and become doctors and engineers. The Madiga community fought for decades for SC categorisation. Your 'Revanth-anna' resolved the issue by implementing SC categorisation, and Telangana became the first in the country.

The CM reiterated that he is taking the responsibility of providing quality education and also nutritious food to every student. " I will work 18 hours a day for your golden future. Such a great opportunity will not come again, and this government must continue ."

The Chief Minister said it is a delightful moment that we unveiled the statue of Jyotiba Phule. We are already seeing Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar, Indira Gandhi and PV Narasimha Rao statues. The Necklace Road junction has now been transformed into a magnificent junction.

CM Revanth Reddy remembered the services rendered by Jyotirao Phule to the country 150 years ago. Phule set an inspiring example by recognizing that education is the only path forward and he not only educated himself but also ensured his wife received an education. Our government is carrying forward the ideals of Jyotirao Phule.

The CM asserted that the eradication of the caste system and the fostering of social consciousness can only be achieved when everyone learns and lives together in unity. Towards this , the government introduced integrated residential schools and completely overhauled the education system. The government was taking revolutionary decisions driven by social consciousness.

TGSPDCL Sets 10-Day Deadline to Remove Power INFRASTRUCTURE HURDLES

CMD Jitesh V. Patil calls for coordinated action among Electricity, Police, Municipal, HYDRAA and other departments to improve public safety, traffic flow and festival-season services.



MALKAJGIRI, AUGUST 14

TGSPDCL CMD Jitesh V. Patil on Friday directed officials to expedite the shifting of electric poles, power lines, transformers and cables obstructing development works at 21 key traffic junctions in Malkajgiri.

The directions were issued at an MMC Convergence Meeting at the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate Office, attended by senior officials from TGSPDCL, Police, Traffic Police, Municipal Administration, Water Works, HYDRAA and other departments. The meeting reviewed monsoon preparedness, traffic management, public grievances, emergency response and arrangements for the upcoming festival season.

Mr. Patil stressed the need for better coordination among departments to resolve public issues quickly. He directed officials to identify and shift electrical infrastructure obstructing road development and traffic management works at the 21 junctions within 10 days, in coordination with the concerned departments.

He also instructed officials to remove unused electric poles and dismantled electrical structures from roads by August 30, noting that they could obstruct traffic and pose safety risks. With Vinayaka Chavithi and other festivals approaching, Mr. Patil said TGSPDCL would coordinate with the Police, Municipal Corporation, HYDRAA and other agencies to ensure uninterrupted power supply and quick emergency response.

The meeting also reviewed tree-trimming works undertaken to prevent monsoon-related power interruptions. Mr. Patil said removed branches were being cleared within two to three days and that TGSPDCL was exploring bio-chipping of tree branches for use in nurseries. Malkajgiri Police Commissioner B. Sumathi assured full cooperation in traffic management, public safety and joint field inspections. Municipal Commissioner T. Vinay Krishna Reddy suggested that convergence meetings be held every month to review pending works and improve inter-departmental coordination.

Senior officials from TGSPDCL and other participating departments attended the meeting and agreed to strengthen coordination and undertake joint field inspections for faster execution of civic and utility works.

Golconda traffic restrictions for Independence Day

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Traffic Police has announced extensive traffic restrictions and parking arrangements around Golconda Fort for the Independence Day celebrations on August 15 at Rani Mahal Lawns, Golconda Fort.

The road from Ramdevguda to Golconda Fort will remain closed to general vehicular traffic from 6 am to 12 noon. Different routes and parking locations have been designated according to the colour-coded vehicle passes issued to invitees and the general public.

Gold-pass vehicles will park near the Fort's main gate, while Cream and Blue pass holders will use the designated Golconda bus-stop parking area. Green-pass holders will park at the Owaisi/GHMC playground, while Red-pass holders will use the Area Hospital premises.

General public vehicles with Black/E passes will be directed to designated parking areas near the Government Primary School, Seven Tombs, Deccan Park and the Football Ground near Golconda Law & Order Police Station. After the celebrations, vehicles will be released through designated exit routes to ensure smooth movement of invitees. Traffic diversions will also be imposed between 10.30 am and noon to facilitate the movement of invitees.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(TIRUCHCHIRAPPALLI DIVISION)

E-TENDER NOTICE No. T-SG-36-I-5,6,7-2026-2027
Dated: 11.08.2026

For and on behalf of The President of India, Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli invites online tender for the following work up to 14:00 hrs on 03.09.2026

Item No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of the Works
1	T-SG-36-I-5-2026-2027	Provision of CCTV cameras at RPF posts/out post over TPJ division.
2	T-SG-36-I-6-2026-2027	Replacement of over aged/defective S&T gears (Relays, LEDs, VDUs, EKTs, cables etc.) over ADSTE/MV Jurisdiction of TPJ Division
3	T-SG-36-I-7-2026-2027	Replacement of over aged / defective S&T gears (Relays, LEDs, VDUs, EKTs, cables etc.) over ADSTE/VM Jurisdiction of TPJ Division

Item No.	Cash Value in Lakhs of ₹	Earnest Money Deposit ₹	Validity Offer	Date and Time of Closing	Period of Completion in Months
1	8516686.31	170300.00	60 Days	03.09.2026 & 14:00 Hrs	6 Months
2	60770368.48	1215400.00	60 Days	03.09.2026 & 14:00 Hrs	9 Months
3	61988139.75	1239800.00	60 Days	03.09.2026 & 14:00 Hrs	9 Months

If the date of opening of tenders happens to be a declared holiday at a later date, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at the stipulated time.

The detailed Tender Notice, Tender document along with terms & conditions and if any corrigendum to tender is issued can be accessed through **https://www.ireps.gov.in.** GST will apply as per extent norms of GOI.

Tender document along with terms & conditions and if any corrigendum to tender is issued.

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Tiruchchirappalli

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(Electrical (General), Construction, Egmore, Chennai)

For and on behalf of the President of India, The Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer / General / Construction / Southern Railway / Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites E-Tender for the following Works.

Sl. No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of the Work
1	E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT05-2026-27	PTJ/Podanur: Electrical and Power supply Arrangements for proposed Sick line Shed, Trip Shed, Store Shed, Pit lines, Service buildings, Yard, Approach Road and etc., at Podanur (PTJ) Railway Station.
2	E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT11-2026-27	PTJ/Podanur: Provision of Electrical Arrangements for construction of Staff Quarters Type II (63 units) and Type III (39 units) at Podanur (PTJ) Railway Station.
3	E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT-16-2026-27	PH-16 and PH-53: Electrical Power Supply and Lighting arrangements for 1). Proposed Goods yard (720m) and Goods PF (720m) at AJJ / Arakkonam Junction (PH-16), 2). Proposed Pitlines (2Nos), Goods PF 740m, Island PF Extension x 2Nos (100m) and Yard Lighting for Stabling Line (2 Nos) at GPD / Gummidipoondi Railway station (PH-16), 3). Utility shifting at JTJ / Jolarpettai Junction (PH-16), 4). Proposed PF with shelters (580m) at PDY / Puducherry Railway station (PH-16), 5). Proposed Pitline1 (596m), Pitline-2 (524m), Yard for 9Nos of stabling line (600m), Service buildings (300sqft), Approach road for station (100m), FOB (50m) at SO /Salt Cotaurs Railway station (PH-16), 6). Yard Lighting for 5Nos of stabling line (350m) and Utility shifting at AJJ / Arakkonam Junction (PH-16), 7). Proposed PF-1 Extension (100m), PF-2 Extension (120m) and Utility shifting at MAS Station Yard (PH-53).

Sl. No.	Period of Completion	Approximate Cost of Work	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time	Tender Type
1	12 Months	₹ 13,51,65,934/-	₹ 27,03,300/-	07.09.2026 & 11.00 hrs	07.09.2026 & 11.30 hrs	Two Packet
2	6 Months	₹ 2,20,11,735/-	₹ 4,40,200/-	07.09.2026 & 11.00 hrs	07.09.2026 & 11.30 hrs	Single Packet
3	18 Months	₹ 6,64,95,978/-	₹ 13,29,900/-	07.09.2026 & 11.00 hrs	07.09.2026 & 11.30 hrs	Single Packet

Complete details can be viewed on **www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer / Construction / Chennai Egmore - 600008

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(Electrical (General), Construction, Egmore, Chennai)

For and on behalf of the President of India, The Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer / General / Construction / Southern Railway / Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites E-Tender for the following Works.

Sl. No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of the Works
1	E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT-17-2026-27	RMM / Rameswaram: Provision of Electrical Arrangements for Proposed new platform PF & Shelters (Road-5), New Pitline (602m), Yard, S&T service buildings & Huts at RMM Railway Station.
2	E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT-18-2026-27	GDN / Gangaikondan: Provision of Electrical arrangements for proposed new Goods Platform and Yard modification at Gangaikondan (GDN) Railway Station.

Sl. No.	Period of Completion	Approximate Cost of Work	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1	6 Months	₹ 2,45,05,393/-	₹ 4,90,100/-	08.09.2026 & 11.00 hrs	08.09.2026 & 11.30 hrs
2	4 Months	₹ 1,45,62,467/-	₹ 2,91,300/-	08.09.2026 & 11.00 hrs	08.09.2026 & 11.30 hrs

Complete details can be viewed on **www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer / Construction / Chennai Egmore - 600008

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

CARRIAGE & WAGON WORKS

Tender Notice No: CWPERDOORMODIFICATION0826

For and on behalf of the President of India, Chief Workshop Manager, Carriage & Wagon Works, Southern Railway, Perambur, Chennai - 23 invites e-tender for the following work as per the tender notice given in e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

Name of work: - Blocking & Reduction in height of doors of BOXN wagons & its variants at the premises of Carriage & Wagon Workshop, Perambur.

Approximate Cash Value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Bidding start date	Tender closing date and time	Cost of tender form (₹)	Period of Completion in months
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
₹ 3,19,98,923.04	₹ 6,40,000.00	24.08.2026	07.09.2026 at 15.00 hrs	Nil	24 Months

Similar Nature of Work:
"Manufacturing / Rebuilding / Rehabilitation / Renewal / Corrosion Repair attention / Modification / Fabrication work of Railway Rolling Stock (Coach / Wagon / DEMU / MEMU / SPART / Locamotive / Metro Coach) in
(a) Any Unit of Indian Railways (or)
(b) Any Unit of Central Govt. / State Govt. / Public Sector Undertaking units (or)
(c) Public listed companies / Private companies / Trusts having annual turnover of ₹ 500 crores and above, subject to the certificate being issued from their Head Office by a person of the company duly enclosing the authorization by the management for issuing such credentials."

Website Address: **www.ireps.gov.in**

Office Address: Chief Workshop Manager, Carriage & Wagon Works, Southern Railway, Ayanavaram, Chennai - 600 023

Chief Workshop Manager, Carriage & Wagon Works

SOUTH COAST RAILWAY

VISAKHAPATNAM
Follow us on @SCoRailway
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Corrigendum No.E-02-BZA-2026 dated 13.08.2026

The following modification has been made for the tender No.E-19-East-BZA-2026 invited under e-Tender Notice No.DRM/Works/BZA/26/2026 dt 24.07.2026 and the details are indicated below.

Existing date of closing : 11.08.2026

Date of Closing now read as 25.08.2026

Please note other terms and conditions of the above Tender notice remain unaltered
Visit our web site at **"www.ireps.gov.in"**

Divisional Railway Manager, (Works), Vijayawada

TENDER NOTICE No:GNT/E. 04&05/TrD/2026-27

E-Tenders from the Contractors for the following works are invited by the undersigned up to 15.30 hrs on 07-09-2026

1. Tender Ref No: : GNT/E.04/TrD/2026-27 **Tender Title :** GNT Division-1.Replacement of Leaning/critical and less contact wire height OHE structures due to raising of track with new OHE structure and 2. Replacement of rusted cantilevers, over-aged insulators and composite insulators. **Approx.value(₹):** 4,20,18,463/- **Earnest money deposit (₹) :**8,40,400/- **Cost of Tender form (non-refundable)** : Nil

2. Tender Ref No: : GNT/E.05/TrD/2026-27 **Tender Title :** GNT-KCC section: Construction of 4-lane ROB in lieu of LC No.03 at Km 3/25-27 between Guntur- Nambur stations 25Kv OHE modification works. **Approx.value(₹):** 44,67,842.56/- **Earnest money deposit (₹) :** 89,400/- **Cost of Tender form (non-refundable)** : Nil

Last Date and time for online submission of E-bids : 07-09-2026 up to 15.30 hrs

If the due date of tender opening is declared as holiday at a later date the tenders will be opened on the next working day

For any detailed information log on to website **www.ireps.gov.in** on or after **12-08-2026** up to15-30 hrs on **07-09-2026**. Any further Communication/Corrigendum shall only be intimated through-portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRD/Guntur

Tender Notice No. VSKP-SnT -26-27- WORKS-03

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tender for the following works.

Tender No: VSKP-SnT-26-27-WORKS-03 **Name of work :** Provision of Earth Leakage Detectors over VSKP Division. **Quantity :** As mentioned in Tender Document **Period of Completion :** 06 months **Tender Value (₹) :** 1,31,69,592/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty One Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Ninety Two only). **Bid Security/Earnest Money to be deposited : (₹)** 2,63,400/- (Rupees Two Lakh Sixty Three Thousand and Four Hundred Only). **Cost of tender document: (₹)** 0/- (Nil) **Offer validity** : 60 Days from the date of opening **Type of tender :** Works Tender governed by GCC-2022 for works **System of Tendering :** Open Tender -Single Packet

Time & Date of tender closing : 15:00 Hrs of 04/09/2026

Tender document and corrigendum : Visit website http://www.ireps.gov.in

Postal address for correspondence : O/o of Sr.DSTE/VSKP, DRM Office Building, Dondaparthy, Visakhapatnam-530004, Andhra Pradesh.

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom. Engineer, Visakhapatnam

Tender No.GTL-EM-35&36-2026-27 Date:14.08.2026

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Maintenance/Guntakal, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Tender No.: GTL-EM-35-26-27 **Name of work :** GTL Div: Provision of Power Quality Restorer in Electrical Installations and improvements to IGEA Recommendations (Phase-II). **Approximate Value (₹)** 2,17,60,119.20/

Closing date and time: 04-09-2026 at 15:00 hrs

Tender No.: GTL-EM-36-26-27 **Name of work :** Guntakal Division-Replacement of OH Line with LTUG Cables Covering Service Buildings/Colonies in Guntakal Section for Improving the Power Supply Reliability. **Approximate Value (₹)** 5,81,86,756.42/

Closing date and time: 04-09-2026 at 15:00 hrs

For bidding the tender and other details, log in to **http://www.ireps.gov.in.** Corrigendum of tender, if any, will be issued online only.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Maintenance,Guntakal

SCoRA217

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at https://www.ireps.gov.in www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

RPF SI Guru Prasad honoured with Indian Police Medal

HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) Railway Protection Force (RPF) Sub-Inspector N. Guru Prasad has been awarded the Indian Police medal for meritorious service on the occasion of 80th Independence Day, recognising his distinguished career spanning more than 25 years.

Guru Prasad, who served for over eight years in the Special Intelligence Branch, has made significant contributions to intelligence gathering, crime prevention, passenger security, child rescue operations and railway property crime detection. His service included providing crucial intelligence during the Tuni train arson incident, cracking interstate gangs, handling sensitive passenger agitations and participating in Operation Muskaan.

He is also a recipient of the Minister for Railways' award - 2019, carrying a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh, besides awards from the Divisional Railway Manager and Director General/RPF. He participated in the President's Colour Parade-2006 and several major national events.

SCR General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava congratulated Guru Prasad and said the recognition was a matter of pride for the entire zone. He appreciated his sustained commitment to the safety and security of railway passengers and property.

BJP panel for Telangana Vimochana Utsav

HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president N Ramchander Rao has appointed a committee to oversee the organisation of "Telangana Vimochana Utsav" celebrations on September 17 across the State.

Former MP Dr Boora Narsaiah Goud has been appointed chairman, while BJP district in-charge Nelli Srivardhan Reddy will serve as convenor. The committee includes Bangaru Shruthi, Dr. S. Prakash Reddy, Kappara Prasada Rao, Sandeep Sai, A. Bhanu Prakash, B. Shyamsunder Goud and senior BJP leader Ravinder Rao. (NSS)

EASTERN RAILWAY

Detailed Tender No: 01-WT-CAO-C-RSP-ER-26-27(Open) e-tendering, Date: 13.08.2026, Tender for e-tendering is invited by Chief Administrative Officer/Con/RSP/ Eastern Railway, New Koilaghat Building, 12A Floor, 14, Strand Road, Kolkata - 700001 for the following work: **Name of Work:** Preparation of Detailed design and drawing for Construction of ROBs, FOBs and Sheds under CAO/CON/ RSP/Eastern Railway; **Approx Value (Rs.):** ₹ 7,55,48,165.00; **Cost of Tender Document (Rs.) :** 0.00, **Earnest Money (Rs.):** ₹ 15,11,000.00; **Completion Period :** 12 (Twelve) Months; **Date of Closing :** 30.09.2026 at 15.00 hrs. The tender documents and other details can be obtained from the website **www.irpes.gov.in** The bidding for the tender is to be submitted through the e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer, if received, shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.

CON-32/2026-27

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

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Changing Forms, Yet Unfading Tradition:

The Existence of Telangana Handicrafts and the Crisis of Forest Wealth

* The Faltering Flames of Wooden Art on Telangana Soil

Telangana holds a special place in India's cultural glory. From the sculptural brilliance of the Kakatiya rulers to the royal patronage of the Nizam Nawabs, this region has flourished as the birthplace of many exquisite handicrafts. Rooted in forests since ancient times, countless grassroots artisans whose lives depended on forest wealth breathed life into lifeless trees with their bare hands in Telangana's rural life. Nirmal wooden toys, Cheriyal scroll paintings, ritualistic statues in tribal areas, and the making of musical instruments—all these are art forms that spread the fragrance of Telangana's soil to the world.

However, today these wonderful traditions are facing a severe survival crisis. Currently, no 'wood banks' that specifically provide timber for such handicrafts are officially available in Telangana. On one side, exploitation by some, reduction of forest wealth on another, and lack of proper raw materials are pushing Telangana artisans into a dire state. In this context, the 'Craft Wood Bank' model recently implemented in the neighboring state of Andhra Pradesh can be said to be a perfect fit for Telangana. It would be beneficial to examine the conditions where the Andhra model can work like a protective shield for the state of wood crafts in Telangana.

The Dire State of Wood Handicrafts in Telangana

Artisan families making wooden toys and handicrafts have lived across various regions of Telangana for centuries. Examining which kinds of artisans are in which region and their current state:

Nirmal Region (Nirmal District): The globally famous 'Nirmal toys' and painting tradition are the hallmark of this region. Lightweight 'poniki' wood is primarily needed to make these toys featuring birds, animals, and mythological forms. But today, artisans in Nirmal lack this raw material. Due to shrinking forest areas and being unable to buy timber at high prices from private traders, Nirmal toy makers are facing severe hardships.

Cheriyal Region (Siddipet District): Siddipet district's Cheriyal is famous for making 'Cheriyal masks' and painting panels that reflect Telangana's rural culture. Although this art using lightweight wood along with special mixtures has popularity, younger generations are stepping back from entering this profession because quality wood is not available.

Adilabad and Bhadradri Kothagudem Tribal Areas: In the tribal areas of north and east Telangana, tribals belonging to the Gond and Kolam tribes make ritual-related wooden pillars, drums, and household items. Due to forest regulations, they also face hardships as they cannot legally gather the timber required for their needs.

The Immense Need for 'Wood Banks' in Telangana

When we ask the question of whether there are any such wood craft banks in Telangana now, the information remains disappointing. Not a single 'craft wood bank' is available at the government level specifically for handicraft artisans in Telangana.

Artisans have to depend entirely on the open market or private sawmills for the timber they need. This leads to various problems:

High Prices: Logs required for making small handicrafts have to be purchased at exorbitant prices in the market.

Lack of Quality: Using timber without proper season drying causes cracks to appear or the toys made by artisans to bend within a few days.

Involvement of Middlemen: Relying on intermediaries for raw materials causes even the small profit earned by artisans to end up with middlemen.

To change this state, a robust policy is needed for Telangana. This is where the model being followed by the state of Andhra Pradesh fits Telangana perfectly.

The Andhra Model: An Excellent System Perfectly Suited for Telangana

Elders say that wherever something good is found, it should be learned from there. The Andhra Pradesh government, under the auspices of the Forest Department, has embarked on a magnificent program to establish 'Craft Wood Banks' near major handicraft clusters in the state. Examining the Andhra model—it transforms the Forest Department not merely into a punitive regulatory body, but into a friend that simplifies livelihoods.

Just as Andhra Pradesh provides 'Poniki' wood for Kondapalli toys, 'Ankudu' wood for Etikoppaka lacquer toys, and 'Panasa' (jackfruit) wood for Bobbili veena without any profit motive, legally, and transparently... wood banks like these should be established near major clusters like Nirmal and Cheriyal in Telangana as well.



Dr Chityala Ravinder,
7798891795

Under this model

Timber useful from trees felled for development works in forests is gathered without waste and provided to artisans at lower prices.

Special nurseries are established under the Forest Department to extensively grow trees required for handicrafts (Poniki, Neem, and others).

Maintaining transparency through digital apps, details of how much timber is given to which artisan are recorded.

Benefits of Implementing the 'Wood Bank' Model in Telangana

If the Andhra model is fully applied and implemented in Telangana, it will bring new life to the handicraft sector of the state:

Permanent Solution to Raw Material Scarcity: Without needing to depend on others in the market, artisans get quality timber directly at lower prices through wood banks.

Environmental Balance & Regeneration: Rather than just cutting trees, planting saplings on a large scale is done under the Forest Department following the principle of "giving wood to the artisan today while growing trees needed for tomorrow."

Improvement in Product Quality: If processing facilities like drying and cutting timber are provided within the wood banks themselves, the physical labor of artisans will decrease.

The handicrafts that stand as symbols of Telangana's culture and the artisans who depend on them are currently in a severe plight. They are constantly struggling with raw material problems precisely because such wood craft banks have not been available in the state until now. To check this problem, the Andhra model wood craft bank system successfully implemented in the neighboring state is now extremely necessary for Telangana. If the government responds and establishes special wood banks in art centers like Nirmal and Cheriyal in Telangana, the wonderful heritage of wooden art coming down from our ancestors will safely reach future generations.

GI Tag Status for Telangana Wood Crafts

Some of the wood and handicrafts of Telangana that hold a special recognition in India's cultural heritage have already gained international recognition. A Geographical Indication (GI Tag) helps immensely in protecting the authenticity and uniqueness of those arts.

Nirmal Wooden Toys and Paintings: Regarding Nirmal handicrafts, particularly the making of Nirmal paintings and toys, a GI Tag has been received from the Central Government. This gives legal protection to the antiquity, quality, and the style unique to the Nirmal region itself.

Cheriyal Scroll Paintings & Masks: The Cheriyal painting style and masks belonging to Siddipet district have also received GI Tag recognition. With the GI Tag coming to this art which visually captures Telangana folk culture and epics, special global respect has been attained for it.

Domestic Marketing and Export Opportunities

Telangana wood crafts have immense opportunities not only in the local market but also domestically and internationally. However, with proper planning and raw material availability, this sector can achieve wonderful growth.

Domestic Marketing Opportunities

Handicraft Exhibitions & Melas: Through craft exhibitions of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts (DC-Handicrafts), Shilparamam venues, and the All India Industrial Exhibition (Numaish) organized by central and state governments, Nirmal and Cheriyal artisans have great opportunities to sell their products directly to art lovers across the country.

E-Commerce Platforms: By adding technology, Telangana handicrafts can be easily delivered to any corner of the country through public and private online marketplaces (for example: public sector 'TRIFED' or other prominent e-commerce platforms).

Interior Designing & Home Decor: Traditional wooden art pieces, Cheriyal wall hangings, and Nirmal paintings have good demand for interior decoration in modern urban lifestyles. Marketing strategies can be formulated so that corporate companies purchase them on a large scale for corporate gifting.

Export Opportunities

International Art Lovers: There is tremendous demand for traditional Indian arts and handicraft products abroad. Especially Nirmal toys made with eco-friendly natural colors and lightweight wood deeply attract foreigners.

Export Promotion Councils: Artisans have the opportunity to export their products to countries in America and Europe with advice and subsidies provided by the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts and Export Promotion Councils. Global Gifting & Tourism: Foreign tourists visiting Telangana purchase these handicrafts as souvenirs. To increase exports, improving packing quality and providing financial assistance by the government for artisans to participate in international trade fairs are necessary.

Conclusion

Although the glory of Telangana wood handicrafts has secured legal recognition through GI tags, raw material shortage has become a major hurdle for artisans at the ground level. If quality timber is made accessible through the establishment of 'Craft Wood Banks' under the auspices of the Forest Department, production costs will decrease and financial security will be attained by artisans. Along with this, by adopting improved domestic marketing, digital promotion, and export opportunities, these exquisite arts steeped in the fragrance of Telangana's soil will shine even brighter on the global stage.

GITAM Welcomes Freshers with 'CELESTIA 2026'



HYDERABAD

GITAM School of Technology, Hyderabad hosted its much-awaited Fresher's Party, 'CLELESTIA 2026', on August 14, welcoming the 2026-27 batch engineering students with a vibrant celebration filled with music, dance, entertainment, and camaraderie.

The event provided a lively platform for the freshers to interact with their seniors and peers, build new friendships, and become part of the GITAM community. The campus came alive with energetic cultural performances, engaging games, music, and a host of fun-filled activities, creating a festive and carnival-like atmosphere.

A major highlight of the celebration was the glamorous ramp walk, where the freshers showcased their confidence, poise, personality, and style. The enthusiastic participation and spirited performances captivated the audience. The celebrations reached their grand finale with the much-awaited crowning of Mr. Fresher and Ms. Fresher, who were felicitated by GITAM leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries appreciated the efforts of the student organizers for creating an engaging and welcoming platform for the new students. They noted that 'CELESTIA 2026' not only provided an opportunity for the freshers to showcase their talents but also fostered team spirit, friendship, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging to the GITAM community. The celebrations concluded on a joyful note, with the freshers expressing their gratitude to their seniors and the organisers for giving them a memorable beginning to their academic journey at GITAM.

79th Independence Day March Begins to "Statue of Equality" in Muchintal

HYDERABAD



Marking the spirit of the 79th Independence Day and ushering in the 80th Independence Day, a special walkathon commenced near the 125-foot Dr. Ambedkar statue at NTR Marg, Central Secretariat, Khairtabad, Hyderabad. The event began with auspicious blessings under the guidance of Sri Sri Sri Tridandi Chinna Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, setting a devotional and patriotic tone for the journey ahead.

The walkathon was flagged off from the Ambedkar statue and led by participants including Sriman Phanindra Kumar and Vikasa Tarangini. The team has planned to reach the much-awaited destination—the "Statue of Equality" (Ramanuja statue)—on 15 August at 7:30 AM at Muchintal Road.

As part of the preparations for the 80th Independence Day celebrations, the program will be held at the statue location under the supervision of Sri Sri Sri Ramanuja Chinna Jeeyar Swami. People from diverse communities joined the march with immense enthusiasm, expressing solidarity, unity, and respect.

This year's walkathon reflects a meaningful milestone: on completion of 79 years of Independence and entry into the 80th Independence Day, a total of 79 kilometres walkathon was undertaken—a testament to endurance, devotion, and national pride.

Prominent dignitaries, freedom-activist members, and community participants took part in the march, including Bhailur Yoghesh Prabhu, Vishwanath Raju, Srinivasa Reddy, Raghunandan Rao, Anand, Krishna, Srinivas, and the Laxman Brothers (film actors). Media support was also present, with coverage by 92.7 FM Radio RJ Krish.

Guests Smt. Praveena and Jyothi attended the event, adding to the grandeur of the occasion. Students participated actively, with around 2,000 students participating from Little Scholar School (Sanath Nagar), Panchasheela School (Moosapet), Khairatabad Saraswati Educational Institutions, and several other schools.

The walkathon stands as a powerful reminder of patriotism, unity, and the shared commitment to celebrate the nation's journey, as the celebrations move step by step toward the "Statue of Equality" in Muchintal.

Leadership is Not a Power but a Great Responsibility



- Lions Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy

KARIMNAGAR

Leading intellectuals and multi-talented people, from the head of the family, village, town, district, state, country and the world as a whole, have stood before us as the charioteers of progress, using the leadership qualities hidden within them as the foundation, said renowned personality development expert Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy and President of Lead India. Today, at the investiture ceremony of the democratically elected class, block and school representatives at Johnson Global School, he lit the lamp as the chief guest and garlanded the image of Goddess Saraswati. Speaking on this occasion he said that leadership is not just a position, it is a great responsibility coupled with challenges. He said that to excel as a leader, there should be some special qualities and those with unique ideas are recognized as good leaders. He advised that leaders should be ready to answer the questions of why, where, what, who and how to face every challenge. Johnson Global School - SVJC Junior College management Ootkuri Mahipal Reddy, Vangala Santosh Reddy, Kantala Ram Reddy, Simhachalam Hari Krishna, Meda Venkata Varaprasad participated in this program.

In this program, badges and dharimpas were presented to the elected students and flags were handed over to the block leaders. Later, the elected student leaders presented a salute in front of the chief guest with parades. In this, cultural programs performed by the students were entertaining. In this program, in which 700 students participated, the oath was administered by the elected students. Later, the chief guest was felicitated by the management.

Godavari Pushkaralu works to begin in first week of Sept: Sridhar Babu

HYDERABAD



Works for the Godavari Pushkaralu–2027 are to commence in the first week of September, State IT and Industries Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Sub-Committee Duddilla Sridhar Babu has directed officials.

Chairing a meeting of the Godavari Pushkaralu–2027 Cabinet Sub-Committee at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat here on Friday, Mr. Sridhar Babu directed officials to complete the tendering process by the end of August to ensure that the works begin as scheduled.

The State government has allocated ₹1,000 crore for the conduct of the Godavari Pushkaralu, Mr. Sridhar Babu said. He directed the officials to appoint special officers for Tier-I locations expected to witness heavy pilgrim footfall and establish dedicated command and control centres at key locations.

Stressing the need to adhere to the prescribed timelines, the Minister said there should be no compromise on the quality of works. Senior officials of the concerned departments should undertake regular field inspections and closely monitor the progress of works, he said.

He also directed the Endowments Department to introduce a dedicated dashboard for daily monitoring of the progress of works, enabling the government to track implementation against the prescribed timelines.

Emphasising the need for effective inter-departmental coordination, Mr. Sridhar Babu said all departments should work in close coordination to ensure that devotees do not face inconvenience during the Pushkaralu. Senior officials were asked to take proactive measures to resolve coordination issues.

The Minister directed officials to ensure seamless road connectivity to all major Pushkaralu locations. Any gaps in connectivity should be identified immediately and necessary works taken up using local funds, he said.

He also stressed the involvement of local public representatives, Collectors, Superintendents of Police, senior district officials and priests in the preparations. Voluntary and private organisations willing to provide services to devotees should also be identified in advance, he said.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee reviewed the preparedness and progress of arrangements department-wise and considered suggestions from its members. Mr. Sridhar Babu directed officials to take the recommendations of the committee into consideration while implementing the arrangements. He warned that lapses or negligence in the preparations would invite action.

Ministers Konda Surekha, Tummala Nageswara Rao, Ponnam Prabhakar, Seethakka, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Vivek Venkataswamy and Adluri Laxman Kumar, and State Government Adviser P. Sudarshan Reddy participated in the meeting.

BJP has been Conducting "Tiranga Flag Rallies"





HYDERABAD

On 14 August 2026, the BJP has been conducting "Tiranga Flag Rallies" across the state since last week. As part of this initiative, BJP leaders and supporters held a grand rally today at Tank Bund in Hyderabad.

Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar participated in the rally. Geetha Murthy, former state president of the BJP Mahila Morcha and a member of the National Council, also took part.

BJP leaders from various areas, including Neredmet leaders Mallikarjun and Rajireddy, Banjara Hills leader Dr. Chandra, Cantonment senior leader Vijaya Rama Raju, Gopi Shetty Pramod, along with other party leaders and members of the public, participated in the rally. Geetha Murthy stated that the BJP organized a large rally along Tank Bund to mark the 80th Independence Day, which will be celebrated tomorrow. She also recalled that the BJP has been conducting the "Har Ghar Tiranga" programme across the state for the past three days.

MASSIVE TIRANGA YATRA BY BJP

HYDERABAD, AUG 14 :

A massive " Tiranga Yatra" organized by Telangana state BJP unit from B R Ambedkar statue Tank Bund with a large number of party cadre, youth and general public participated filled with patriotic spirit. Tiranga Yatra was organized as per call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Tank Bund to Swami Vivekananda statue. Addressing the gathering BJP state president N Ramchander Rao wished people of Telangana on eve of 80th Independence day tomorrow and thanked everyone who participated in this Tiranga Yatra with such enthusiasm and discipline. Seeing so many young people instills confidence that our nation is safe and that the youth stand firmly with and for the country. Every individual should nurture the spirit of making sacrifices for the nation whenever needed. We must work unitedly for patriotism, national unity, and the integrity of the country, Rao said. Union minister G Kishan Reddy said following the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, our national flag has been fluttering proudly on crores of homes across the country as part of Har Ghar Tiranga for the past five years. Recalling the sacrifice of Sama Jagan Mohan Reddy, ABVP worker from Kakatiya University, Reddy said he sacrificed his life for the national flag. When Naxalites burned the national flag at Kakatiya University, he courageously questioned them, stating that it was not merely an insult to the national flag, but an insult to 140 crore Indians. He was shot dead for opposing the atrocity committed by the Naxalites. His sacrifice serves as an inspiration for our respect toward the national flag and our patriotism, the union minister said. Criticising the behavior of opposition parties , he said it is not just foreign forces, but also some within our own country are conspiring against the nation. Efforts are being made to hinder India's progress and creating hurdles in development of the country, he alleged. While the Central Government working



to lift 25 crore people out of poverty and takes measures to curb terrorism, these actions have become an eyesore for the leader of the opposition, Kishan Reddy said adding that certain opposition parties wish for bloodshed and an increase in terrorism in the country. Just as countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh view India's growth with envy and anxiety, certain opposition forces within our own country are similarly troubled by India's progress. Some miscreants are conspiring for attacks on Parliament and the Supreme Court, seeking to create conditions in India similar to the developments seen in countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, Kishan Reddy said. The people of the country must thwart the evil politics of those who carry the Constitution book merely for show while engaging in anti-national conspiracies, the union minister said. Recently, the song Vande Mataram was introduced as the national anthem in Parliament. However, leaders of the Majlis party in Telangana are speaking against Vande Mataram.

Union minister Kishan Reddy challenged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. If you have the guts and courage, and if you have faith in the law passed by Parliament, you must take action against the Majlis party leaders who opposed Vande Mataram. Do you have the courage to ensure they do not stay in Darussalam and are instead sent to the Cherlapalli Jail, Reddy asked and sought answer from CM Revanth Reddy whether or not he will take action in this matter.

In his speech Rajya Sabha MP and OBC national president Dr K Laxman said India is the world's largest democracy. Standing as the mother of democracy, this country symbolizes unity in diversity. Despite different languages, religions, regions, cultures, and tastes, we remain one. This unity is possible only because of the shared sentiment that we are working for the country. With the blessings of over 140 crore people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assumed office as the Prime Minister for the third time. Under his leadership, India is rapidly advancing on the path of development. We must all work with the resolve of 'Viksit Bharat' to build a developed India, he exhorted. There are instances where foreign forces, as well as certain internal forces, conspire to divide India. We must unitedly thwart attempts to divide people in the name of caste, religion, or the North-South divide. We must proclaim to the world that we are all one, and no force can ever divide India. everyone must remain vigilant regarding the nation. Protecting the country's integrity and security is our collective responsibility, Dr Laxman said.

Union minister of state for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar said Prime Minister Modi is a great leader who showed what true development means through actions."

On the issue raised by CM Revanth Reddy reducing age limits of youth for voting from 25 to 21, Sanjay asked If Congress has genuine sincerity, it should offer Cabinet seats to Gen Z in the state and Priority must be given to Gen Z in allocating MLC and MLA tickets." Former governor Bandaru Dattatreya and MP Etala Rajender and other leaders also spoke on the occasion.

Blanket restriction on NALSAR law graduates' enrolment was inappropriate

decisions affecting students' future must not be taken in haste: ABVP
Regulatory bodies must assess facts, individual roles and potential impact before taking action: Dr. Virendra Singh Solanki

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 14

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has termed the Bar Council of India's decision to temporarily restrict the enrolment of 2026 law graduates of NALSAR as advocates, followed by its withdrawal, inappropriate and a matter of concern. A blanket restriction affecting an entire graduating batch, without establishing the individual role of each student, can adversely affect the academic and professional future of those who have no connection with the alleged incident. ABVP stated that action in any such matter should be based on verified facts, an individual's established role and due inquiry. If allegations have been raised against particular individuals, their roles should be examined separately and action, if required, should be taken accordingly. Collective action against an entire batch without establishing individual responsibility is neither fair nor justified. Regulatory institutions must ensure due process, fairness and adherence to the principles of natural justice while exercising their powers.

ABVP National General Secretary Virendra Singh Solanki said,

"The initial decision to restrict the enrolment of NALSAR's 2026 law graduates was not appropriate.

Its subsequent withdrawal highlights the importance of carefully examining the facts, justification and potential consequences before taking any decision affecting students' future. If there are concerns regarding certain individuals, inquiry and action should be based on their individual roles and verified facts. Students whose involvement has not been established should not be made to suffer collectively. Regulatory institutions, including the Bar Council of India, must ensure due process, fairness and natural justice and avoid broad directions that may unnecessarily affect the future of a large number of students."

Six arrested in Kumbh work order cheating case

NASHIK: The city police have arrested six persons so far for allegedly cheating some persons of Rs 3.05 crore by promising to arrange contracts for the 2027-2028 Nashik Kumbh Mela works for them. The arrested persons were identified as Tanay Anant Mahajan (32), Narendra Totaram Mahajan (51), Shoaib Ahmed Abdul Sattar Sheikh (36), Abdul Rais Abdul Munaf Sheikh (43), Saleemuddin Sheikh (42) and Waseem Abdul Gaffar (42).

Addanki Dayakar Earns Harvard Opportunity

HYDERABAD:

Telangana Government Whip and Legislative Council Member Dr. Addanki Dayakar has secured a rare opportunity to study at the world-renowned Harvard University Kennedy School in America. Under the leadership of distinguished faculty member Prof. Marshall Ganz, and organized by the Executive Education department and the Faculty of Public Narrative at the Harvard Kennedy School, he will pursue a course on "Leadership, Storytelling, and Action" from August 31 to December 18, 2026. Starting August 31st, leaders from various countries will analyze leadership challenges across different sectors.

Key Study Areas:

Discussing leadership challenges with individuals coming from diverse regions and with varied perspectives around the world. Discussing public policy and the problems faced by leaders from multiple angles and with a broad outlook. Conducting classroom analysis on the actions required to build strong leadership. Detailed study on other crucial subjects.



Educational Background of Dr. Addanki Dayakar:

Obtained a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Commerce from Osmania University. Completed his Master of Computer Applications (MCA), Master of Commerce (M.Com.), and Bachelor of Law (LLB) from Osmania University itself.

Political Journey:

Actively worked in T-JAC during the Telangana statehood movement. Served as a prominent leader in the Telangana Congress. Currently elected as a Member of Legislative Council (MLC) and serves as the Government Whip (with Minister of State rank) in the Telangana Legislative Council. People have expressed immense joy that Dr. Addanki Dayakar, who hails from Nimmikal village in Suryapet district and comes from a modest rural family, has received this rare opportunity at Harvard University.

Kerala schools told to sing national anthem, not Vande Mataram on Independence Day

Kerala's Education Department has told schools to hoist the flag and sing the national anthem on Independence Day. The omission of Vande Mataram has intensified a political row over the Centre's guidance.



Amid a controversy in Kerala over the singing of the full version of Vande Mataram, the state General Education Department has issued a directive for Independence Day celebrations asking schools to hoist the national flag and sing the national anthem, Jana Gana Mana. The directive does not ask schools to sing Vande Mataram, the national song.

The guidelines, issued by the Director of Public Education for schools and other educational institutions, say the head of the institution should hoist the national flag at 9 am or later and conduct the national anthem. The instructions were issued on the basis of a circular from the Protocol Officer. The absence of any direction on Vande Mataram comes amid a row over an earlier communication from the Chief Secretary to the Local Self Government Department, forwarding the Centre's instructions on the national song. The opposition CPI(M) sharply criticised the Congress-led government over the issue and accused it of trying to implement the RSS agenda. V D Satheesan said on Thursday that the Chief Secretary had not issued any circular and had only forwarded the instructions received from the Centre. "The letter does not contain the policy or stand of the state government," he said, adding that the state government would decide the Independence Day programmes in Kerala and had a clear policy on the matter. "There are just a few days for August 15. You will see then," he said, while noting that the Congress and the UDF had a clear policy on the singing of Vande Mataram. Earlier on Friday, the BJP said the state government had a moral obligation to implement the law in the country concerning the rendition of Vande Mataram. The party also alleged that the Congress-led government was being controlled by the Indian Union Muslim League, a key UDF ally, and was therefore unable to take a firm stand on the issue. In a July 9 communication, the Centre directed that the official version of the national song be played along with mass singing during the unfurling of the national flag and at cultural or ceremonial functions other than parades.

Red Fort Security Tightened with AI, 1,000+ CCTV Cameras

Delhi Police has intensified security at the Red Fort ahead of Independence Day celebrations. AI surveillance, mock drills and multi-agency coordination are meant to deter threats and ease movement.





Security agencies have also carried out mock drills and held advance liaison with various stakeholders to improve coordination during the event. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Raja Banthia said the arrangements were aimed at ensuring security while causing minimum inconvenience to people attending the celebrations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will unfurl the national flag and address the nation at the Red Fort on Saturday.

"Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place in view of incidents reported in the national capital last year, with a focus on ensuring that people attending the celebrations face minimum inconvenience," Banthia told PTI. He added, "We have elaborate security arrangements this time, keeping in mind the incidents witnessed in the national capital last year." The plan includes multiple layers of checking and screening at and around the Red Fort, along with an anti-terror response plan to deal with any possible threat or emergency situation, he said. "Advance liaison, mock drills and advance intimation have been carried out so that all agencies are prepared and there is a coordinated response in case of any emergency," the DCP said. More than 1,000 CCTV cameras have been deployed inside and outside the Red Fort, and these are linked to systems equipped with AI-based video analytics. Live feeds are being monitored from a dedicated control room. Banthia said the surveillance system would help security personnel detect suspicious activity, crowd-related issues and any other law and order situation and respond immediately. "Whatever law and order situation is noticed, we will immediately respond. Response teams will be ready and deployed at strategic locations," he said. Police have also made arrangements to regulate the movement of people and vehicles around the Red Fort while trying to ensure that security checks do not cause unnecessary inconvenience to visitors.

Karimnagar Additional DCP Venkata Ramana Gets Police Medal

KARIMNAGAR, AUGUST 14, 2026:

In recognition of his outstanding service, dedication, discipline and efficient discharge of duties in the police department, Karimnagar Commissionerate Additional DCP (Admin) P. Venkata Ramana has been selected for the prestigious President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service. The award is part of the Police Medals announced by the Government of India on the occasion of Independence Day. Venkata Ramana began his police career as a Sub-Inspector in 1991. During his service in the Hyderabad Twin Cities, he worked in several key and communally sensitive areas as well as in the Task Force, earning appreciation from senior officers. He was promoted as an Inspector in 2005 and served in the Intelligence Department. He also worked as an SHO at Chatrinaka, Musheerabad, Amberpet and Jadcherla Town Police Stations. Promoted as an ACP in 2017, he served efficiently



in various assignments, including the Hyderabad Traffic Branch, Gopalapuram, North Zone, Telangana Vigilance and S.R. Nagar West Zone.

Key Role in Solving Major Cases

During his tenure as a Sub-Inspector, Venkata Ramana played a key role in solving several important cases involving Mandrakes (NDPS), illegal arms, North Indian gangs, counterfeit stamps, fake Indira Vikas Patras, ganja and fake certificates. As SHO of Jadcherla, he effectively investigated and solved cases involving murders, highway robberies and gang-rape incidents, ensuring that the accused were brought to justice.

Recipient of Several Prestigious Awards

Venkata Ramana has previously received several prestigious recognitions, including the Telangana Police Service Medal–2010, Telangana Police Best Service Medal–2018, and Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation–2022. His distinguished service record includes 107 cash rewards, one advance increment, seven commendation certificates, four appreciations, 15 MSEs and 162 GSEs. He was promoted as an Additional Superintendent of Police on May 22, 2025, and has been serving as Additional DCP (Admin), Karimnagar Commissionerate, since June 2, 2025. Karimnagar Police Commissionerate officers and personnel expressed their happiness over Venkata Ramana being conferred the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service, appreciating his discipline, dedication, effective investigation skills and commitment to public safety throughout his distinguished career.

PMFME–Streenidhi: A New Scheme for AP DWCRA Members

- New opportunities in the food-processing sector
- Establishment of units with a project cost of up to ₹3 lakh
- PMFME subsidy along with a Streenidhi loan
- DWCRA members should rise from being wage earners to becoming job creators
- Minister Kondapalli Srinivas



AMARAVATI, AUGUST 14

The State Government's objective is to make DWCRA women financially self-reliant and transform them from people seeking employment into entrepreneurs who create employment opportunities, State Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Poverty Alleviation, and Non-Resident Andhra Affairs Kondapalli Srinivas said in a statement on Friday.

He said the State Government has taken a key decision to link the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme with the Streenidhi Credit Cooperative Federation Limited to promote food-processing industries in rural areas. Under this initiative, eligible DWCRA women can establish food-processing units with a project cost of up to ₹3 lakh using Streenidhi loans. They will also be eligible for the credit-linked subsidy available under the PMFME Scheme, the Minister said. Women can establish units for processing and producing local food products such as fruits and vegetables, millets, pulses, spices, pickles, flour-based products, snacks, and other food items. The Minister said that the district federations in every district will be treated as District Resource Organisations (DROs), through which DWCRA women with interest and the necessary capabilities will be identified. The Government will also provide selected women with support for procurement of raw materials, packaging, branding, and marketing facilities, he said. The Government's support will not be limited to providing loans; assistance will continue until the women's businesses become successful. Minister Srinivas said that the vision of Hon'ble Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is to enable rural women across the State to become entrepreneurs and ultimately ensure that every family has an entrepreneur. He urged all eligible DWCRA women to make the best use of this opportunity, develop themselves economically, and grow into entrepreneurs who can create employment opportunities for others as well.

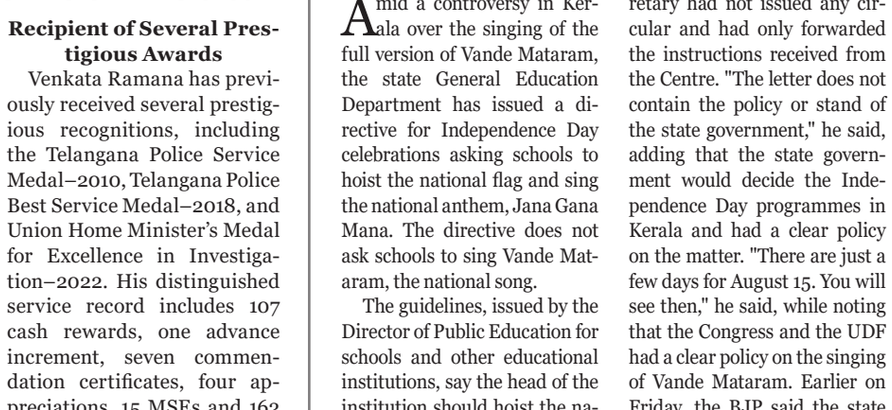
Pub Worker Killed by Colleague in Jabalpur

JABALPUR:

A 20-year-old woman working at a bar in Jabalpur district was stabbed to death allegedly by her male colleague following an argument at the workplace on Friday, police said.

The incident occurred at 'Mahfil Bar' near Deendayal Chowk under Gohalpur police station limits and the deceased was identified as Muskan Chaudhary, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ayush Jakhar told reporters.

The accused, identified as Pawan Verma, worked as a cook at the pub and was later nabbed, he said.



Environmental Protection: A Key Step Toward Sustainable Development

BENGALURU, 13:

The website of the Environmental Andolana Seva Foundation was officially launched with the aim of creating awareness about the environment and further strengthening the work of nature conservation. Renowned robotics expert B.N. Kishore Kumar opined that the foundation has started its journey with the resolve to increase environmental awareness in the society, conserve natural resources and build a green and sustainable future for the next generation. Speaking on the web portal, Dame Munni Iron from California, United States said that our future will be preserved only if nature is preserved, let us all join hands in this important campaign of environmental conservation.

The founder of the Environmental Andolana Seva Foundation C Prakash, N Manjunath Rao, Dhanuja.P, Agni, Mr. Kishore Kumar and others were present at the program.

EDITORIAL

India's Jobs Challenge: Turning Demographic Strength into Economic

India enters its next phase of development with one of its greatest advantages: its people. A large and relatively young population gives the country an opportunity that few major economies possess. But demographics, by themselves, do not create prosperity. The real advantage emerges when a young population is educated, skilled, healthy and productively employed. This makes jobs one of the most important economic priorities for India in the years ahead.

The country has made significant progress in expanding its economy and building physical and digital infrastructure. The next challenge is to ensure that economic expansion translates into enough productive and sustainable employment opportunities. Growth must increasingly become employment-intensive, allowing more people to participate meaningfully in the formal economy.

Manufacturing will have an important role in this transition. India has the potential to become a larger global production base in sectors ranging from electronics and semiconductors to automobiles, pharmaceuticals, textiles and renewable-energy equipment. A strong manufacturing ecosystem can generate jobs not only in factories but also across logistics, design, maintenance, services and supply chains.

At the same time, India cannot depend on manufacturing alone. Services, tourism, healthcare, education, financial services, technology and the rapidly expanding digital economy can provide millions of opportunities. Artificial intelligence may transform the nature of many occupations, but it can also create entirely new areas of work. The objective should therefore be to prepare workers to work alongside technology rather than view technology only through the lens of job displacement.

This makes skilling particularly important. Education and employment must become more closely connected. Young people need opportunities to acquire practical skills, apprenticeships and industry experience alongside conventional academic qualifications. Vocational education should be treated as a mainstream pathway to a successful career, not as a second choice.

India's millions of micro, small and medium enterprises will also remain central to employment generation. Easier access to finance, technology, markets and skilled workers can help small enterprises grow into larger businesses. As firms expand, their capacity to create stable and better-paying jobs also increases.

The quality of employment matters as much as the number of jobs. Workers need safer workplaces, opportunities for advancement and rising productivity that translates into higher incomes. A growing economy should gradually enable workers to move from low-productivity activities to more productive occupations.

India's demographic opportunity therefore calls for a coordinated approach. Education, skilling, infrastructure, industrial policy, entrepreneurship and labour-market institutions must reinforce one another. States, businesses, educational institutions and governments all have a role in building this ecosystem.

The coming decades offer India a rare window. If the country can convert its demographic strength into human capital and human capital into productive employment, its young population can become the foundation of sustained economic growth. The measure of India's next economic transformation will not simply be how fast the economy grows, but how widely the opportunities created by that growth are shared. Turning young Indians into skilled, confident and productive participants in the economy will be one of the defining tasks of the nation's journey towards a more prosperous future.

WHY NOT DO IT?

Oh Mortal, crowned with cogent thought,
Yet oft in webs of falsehood caught!
Thou wieldest reason, proud and grand,
Yet falterest when Truth makes her stand.

Thou marchest forth with slogans proud,
Yet barterest virtue in the crowd.
With avarice thy fingers clenched,
From wells of greed, thy thirst unquenched.

Peace thou proclaimest "One are we!"
Yet fracturest hearts with enmity.
Oh leaf unmoored from rooted tree,
Thou driftest blind in liberty

You scorn the caste once carved in clay,
Yet bow to brands in new array.
In ashes of the chewed deceit,
New dogmas rise on every street

In liquid myths and fizzy lies,
Do idols not in neon rise?
A toast to gods in bottled flame
Is not this too a caste by name?

Our dreams are hung in ruthless light,
Where justice fades before sheer might.
The koel sings in dulcet strain,
Yet crows usurp her sky and grain.

For power kneels to raucous noise,
Not to the hymn that heart enjoys.
Oh Man, you breathe but dost thou live?
What end does all this striving give?

Why not, while breathing, truly be?
Why not, though perishing, live free?
Let love outlast the mortal frame,
Let selfless acts outshine all fame

Within Bharata's sacred soil,
Some souls still rise through righteous toil.
To eat to live, or live to eat
Let conscience render judgment sweet

Expand thy soul like azure skies,
Where noble thoughts as stars arise
A narrow creed, a selfish plea
Obscures the truth of unity

Behold the trees their generous shade,
Their silent service, humbly paid
See how the ant with tireless pace
Sustains the world in silent grace

So rise, Oh Man! Awake! Pursue!
Let starlight pierce the self in you.
If beasts can ser[illegible]d roots commit...
Art thou not b[illegible] why not do it?

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

THE FRUITS OF INDEPENDENCE MUST REACH THE MARGINALISED SECTIONS



India will celebrate its 80th Independence Day on August 15, 2026. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation from the Red Fort. Viksit Bharat @2047 is a vision to transform India into a developed country by 2047, the centenary year of India's independence. It encompasses various dimensions of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance. On this occasion, while remembering the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, we must also ask ourselves how far we are working to fulfil their aspirations. To what extent have we achieved the dreams of the freedom fighters for freedom, equality, and fraternity? The well-being of any nation ultimately depends on the standard of living of its citizens. Has India succeeded in improving the quality of life of its people? More importantly, have the fruits of independence and development reached the poorest and most marginalised sections of society?

By mid-2026, India is the world's sixth-largest economy, with a nominal GDP of approximately $3.92 trillion for the financial year 2025–26. According to official Indian estimates, the per capita income at current prices for 2025–26 is around ₹2.43 lakh per year, equivalent to approximately $2,700–$2,900. According to NITI Aayog estimates, India's multidimensional poverty rate was 11.28% which means that approximately 156 million (15.6 crore) people were living in poverty. According to the 2025 Global Hunger Index, India ranked 102nd out of 123 countries, with a GHI score of 25.8, placing the country in the "Serious" hunger category.According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), India's unemployment t rate stood at 6.20% in July 2026. At the same time, CMIE reported that both the labour-force participation rate and the employment rate declined during July. With regard to income and wealth inequality, the latest World Inequality Report 2026 indicates that the top 1% of Indians own approximately 40.1% of total personal wealth, while the top 10% own around 65%. In contrast, the bottom 50% own less than 6% of the country's wealth. In terms of income, the top 10% receive about 58% of national income, while the bottom 50% receive only 15%. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025, released in February 2026, India ranked 91st out of 182 countries, with a score of 39 out of 100.

As of the latest information available on August 13, 2026, the 6% of GDP target for education envisaged under theNational Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has still not been achieved. According to the latest UNESCO 2026 4thSustainable Development Goal data, India allocates approximately 4.1% of its GDP to public education expenditure. In the health sector, the allocation to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the Union Budget 2026–27has increased by approximately 10%. With regard to red tape and business regulations, the government has taken steps through reforms such as Jan Vishwas to reduce the compliance burden. However, industry representatives told aparliamentary committee in 2026 that the large number of compliance requirements continues to remain a major friction point for businesses. Regarding social evils, the latest NCRB Crime in India 2024 report recorded 4.41 lakh crimes against women. The same report recorded 5,737 dowry deaths, amounting to nearly 16 deaths every day. With regard togender inequality, India ranked 131st out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, with a gender-parity score of 64.4%.

Despite facing numerous challenges, India has made significant progress across various sectors. India ranks first in the world in terms of population, representing a vast human-resource base. In the 2025 Human Development Index (HDI), India currently ranks 130th out of 193 countries. India is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and jute. It is the second-largest producer of rice, wheat, sugarcane, groundnuts, vegetables, fruits, and cotton. India is also a leading producer of spices, fish, poultry, livestock, and horticultural crops. India now ranks third in the world in terms of the number of billionaires, after the United States and China. India is also a major player in global trade, ranking as the world's eighth-largest importer and 18th-largest exporter. In 2024, India ranked 16th globally in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). According to the 2026 UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report, FDI inflows into India increased by 44%, reaching approximately US$39 billion. India ranks fifth globally in manufacturing output and fifth in the space sector. It also ranks fifth worldwide in the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. India accounts for approximately 17% of the global IT services market. It also contributes around 9.4% of global telecommunications and IT services imports. In the Global Innovation Index, India ranks 38th. Among the fastest-growing sectors in the country are fintech, renewable energy, biotechnology, and digital transactions.

In the era of liberalisation, globalisation, and privatisation, we must carry forward the spirit of Independence Day through sustained economic development and diverse welfare programmes, while protecting ourselves from the policies being pursued by the United States under President Trump and from the devastating consequences of wars around the world. Citizens must be aware of the variousplatforms and legal mechanisms available to protect their rights, such as human rights organisations, Public Interest Litigations (PILs), the Fourth Estate (the media), and the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Equality and fraternity can be achieved only when the economic conditions of citizens improve. The vision and spirit of our freedom fighters can be truly realised only through the active participation of informed citizens who are aware of government and private initiatives relating to development and welfare.



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A NEW FREEDOM: THE PROMISE OF A POVERTY-FREE INDIA



As India marks its 80th Independence Day, its next great national mission should be to make poverty a problem of the past. The country has made significant progress in reducing multidimensional poverty, but the unfinished challenge is to ensure that families do not slip back into deprivation. The next decade must therefore move beyond poverty reduction towards lasting economic security through productive jobs, quality education, accessible healthcare, stronger rural incomes and effective social protection.

India's next great national mission should be to make poverty a problem of the past. As the country marks its 80th Independence Day, the question is no longer whether India has progressed—it clearly has. The more urgent question is whether that progress can ensure that no family remains trapped in deprivation from one generation to the next.

India has made substantial gains. NITI Aayog estimates that multidimensional poverty fell from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21. It further estimates, through projections, that the rate declined to 11.28% in 2022-23, with about 24.82 crore people moving out of multidimensional poverty between 2013-14 and 2022-23. These gains reflect the combined effect of economic growth, improved public services and targeted welfare interventions. The achievement should provide the confidence to pursue the next step: moving from poverty reduction to poverty eradication.

From Survival to Security:

Poverty cannot be understood through an income threshold alone. A family may rise above a statistical poverty line yet remain vulnerable to a serious illness, job loss, crop failure or an unexpected financial shock. Multidimensional poverty therefore offers a broader picture by considering deprivation in health, education and living standards.

The World Bank has revised its international extreme-poverty line to $3 a day in 2021 purchasing-power-parity terms. Such global benchmarks are useful for comparison, but India's policy must focus on its own patterns of deprivation and vulnerability. The real objective should be to ensure that those who escape poverty have enough economic security to remain above it.

The most durable route out of poverty is productive employment. India's growth story must increasingly be judged by its capacity to create stable, reasonably paid work. Manufacturing can generate large-scale employment; services can provide higher-value opportunities; agriculture can yield better incomes through productivity, irrigation, storage, processing and stronger market links.

Small businesses are equally important. Millions depend on tiny enterprises, shops, workshops and informal activities. Affordable credit matters, but so do technology, infrastructure, market access, digital capabilities and business skills. The objective should be to move people from low-productivity work to higher-productivity livelihoods.

Build Capabilities, Not Dependence:

Education, healthcare and nutrition must be treated as economic foundations. School enrolment has expanded, but the next priority must be learning outcomes. Young people need skills that translate into employment rather than certificates that end with training. Healthcare must protect families from being pushed back into poverty by medical emergencies, while good nutrition must prevent deprivation from being transmitted to the next generation.

Rural prosperity also deserves a sharper focus. Better irrigation, climate-resilient agriculture, storage, food processing and market access can raise farm incomes, while rural manufacturing, tourism, logistics and services can create non-farm opportunities. The aim should be to give rural households multiple routes to higher incomes rather than making migration the default escape from poverty.

India's poverty challenge also varies enormously across regions. The needs of an agricultural district are different from those of an industrial belt or a rapidly growing city. The next phase of poverty policy should therefore be increasingly district-specific: identify the particular source of deprivation, direct resources towards it and measure outcomes transparently.

Social protection will remain necessary. Food security, pensions, employment support, housing assistance and healthcare protection provide an essential floor for vulnerable households. But that floor should also become a ladder. Support must be connected, wherever possible, to skills, employment, enterprise and financial security so that families can move towards self-sustaining incomes.

The Freedom That Remains:

India should recognise its progress without becoming complacent about what remains unfinished. The country has demonstrated that difficult development challenges can be overcome. Its next historic task is to ensure that poverty is not an inherited condition.

This will require sustained economic growth, productive jobs, quality education, accessible healthcare, stronger rural incomes, greater participation of women in the economy and responsive social protection. It will also require close cooperation between government, businesses, financial institutions and local communities.

The goal should be larger than simply reducing the number of people below a poverty threshold. It should be to create an economy in which families have the capabilities and security to stay out of poverty.

Political freedom gave Indians the power to determine their collective destiny. The next stage of freedom must give every Indian the economic capacity to pursue it with dignity. India's 80th Independence Day should mark the beginning of that ambition: a determined national effort to make poverty eradication the defining development mission of the next decade.



K AMARAVATI
MEMBER
PLUS NGO

Rahul Gandhi gets Privileges Committee notice over remarks against HM Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, AUG 14



The Lok Sabha Privileges Committee on Friday issued a notice to Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, seeking his response to a breach of privilege complaint over remarks he allegedly made against Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a debate in the House. Gandhi has been asked to submit his response by August 28. The notice follows complaints by BJP members alleging that Gandhi used unparliamentary and derogatory expressions against the Union Home Minister and levelled serious allegations without providing the advance notice required under Rule 353 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.

The matter relates to Gandhi's remarks during the Lok Sabha debate on the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026.

BJP MP Anurag Thakur submitted a breach of privilege complaint to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on July 30, alleging that Gandhi made objectionable remarks against the Home Minister during the debate. Thakur sought action over what he described as a violation of parliamentary rules and procedures.

The issue had also been raised in a separate communication dated July 29 by BJP MP Dr Sanjay Jaiswal, who urged the Speaker to take cognisance of Gandhi's alleged use of unparliamentary expressions against Shah during the same debate. Jaiswal also requested that appropriate action be initiated under the relevant parliamentary rules.

The notice from the Lok Sabha Secretariat now gives Gandhi an opportunity to respond to the allegations before the matter proceeds further. His response by the August 28 deadline is expected to form part of the committee's consideration of the complaints.

The development comes amid continuing political friction between the government and the Opposition. Parliament Monsoon session repeatedly witnessed sharp exchanges between the Opposition and the government over certain contentious issues.

CJI Surya Kant Warns Against Social Media Misleading Youth

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has raised concerns over the growing misuse of judicial proceedings on social media, saying remarks made during court hearings are sometimes taken out of context, distorted and circulated with misleading narratives. In an interview with DD News, the CJI said such practices could mislead young people and urged the media, social media users and citizens to act responsibly while reporting or sharing court proceedings.



CJI Surya Kant said his oral remarks during a Supreme Court hearing had been misquoted and subsequently circulated online with what he described as "malicious intent". He clarified that statements that were never made were being presented as though they had been spoken by him. According to the CJI, this kind of selective editing and circulation can create an inaccurate impression about judicial proceedings and undermine public understanding of the law. The remarks came amid a wider debate over the availability and circulation of videos and audio recordings from court proceedings. The Supreme Court has taken steps towards greater transparency, including the live-streaming of its proceedings. CJI Kant said transparency remains an important principle for the judiciary, but access to judicial proceedings should not become an opportunity for their misuse or commercial exploitation. He specifically expressed concern over short clips from court hearings being circulated on social media without the surrounding context. Such clips, he said, can be used for personal publicity, financial gain or to create misleading narratives. Referring to a recent order, he said unauthorised dissemination, reposting, uploading and monetisation of audio and video recordings of judicial proceedings on social media and other digital platforms should not be permitted. The issue gained attention following remarks made by the CJI during a Supreme Court hearing on May 15, 2026. During the hearing, he used a controversial comparison involving individuals accused of holding fraudulent degrees and later becoming social media or RTI activists. The remarks triggered significant criticism online and contributed to the emergence of a satirical online movement known as the "Cockroach Janta Party" or CJP. CJI Kant later said the controversy was unfortunate and maintained that his words had been misunderstood and misrepresented. He said the original remarks were presented differently after being circulated online, creating a narrative that did not accurately reflect what had been said during the hearing.

The CJI emphasised that responsible reporting of judicial proceedings was essential. He appealed to journalists and citizens to consider the wider consequences of what they publish or share. In his view, freedom of expression and other constitutional rights also come with corresponding responsibilities. He said every citizen, whether active on social media, working in the traditional media or simply participating in public discourse, has a role in maintaining social harmony. He stressed that rights must be accompanied by an understanding of constitutional duties and responsibilities. The CJI's comments also come against the backdrop of growing reliance on social media as a source of information about courts and public institutions. Short videos, edited clips and headlines can reach large audiences within minutes, but without adequate context, they can sometimes lead to misunderstandings about complex legal proceedings. CJI Kant said the judiciary would continue to support transparency and public access to its proceedings. However, he drew a distinction between legitimate public access and the unauthorised commercial or misleading use of court footage. Live-streaming, he said, was introduced to strengthen openness in the judicial system and should not be turned into a tool for personal or commercial exploitation. The controversy has highlighted the challenges faced by institutions in the digital age. While social media provides an important platform for public awareness and discussion, the rapid circulation of incomplete or misleading information can also influence public opinion before the full facts are understood. CJI Surya Kant therefore called for greater responsibility in the way judicial proceedings are reported and shared. His message was that transparency and accountability should continue, but they must be balanced with respect for context, accuracy and responsible communication. The CJI's remarks underline the need for media organisations, digital platforms and individual users to verify information before sharing it. At a time when court proceedings can reach millions through social media within minutes, responsible reporting and informed public discussion remain essential to preserving trust in the judiciary and maintaining harmony in society.

SC issues notice to Centre over mandatory reporting of CSEAM as per POCSO Act

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 14

The Supreme Court of India today issued notice to the Union of India through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Ministry of Law and Justice on an application seeking implementation of its directions on the mandatory reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Material (CSEAM) by social media intermediaries.

The matter was heard by a bench comprising Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Vinod Chandran. The Court also permitted the petitioner Just Rights for Children Alliance (JRCA) to move an application seeking impleadment of the concerned intermediaries in the proceedings, to further ensure implementation of the directions issued by the Court in its judgment dated September 23, 2024, in Just Rights for Children Alliance & Anr. vs. S Harish & Ors. JRCA is India's largest civil society network with over 250 NGOs against child sexual exploitation, child trafficking and child marriage.

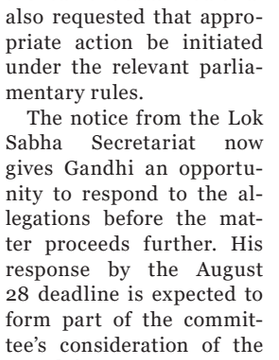
The application was filed by JRCA in the wake of a media (BBC) report alleging that Instagram carried paid advertisements promoting CSEAM, raising serious concerns over compliance with the Supreme Court's earlier directions and the statutory obligations of intermediaries. In its September 2024 judgment, acting on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by JRCA, the Supreme Court held that intermediaries are required to comply with their statutory obligations relating to the reporting of CSEAM to law-enforcement agencies, including under Sections 19-21 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Rule 11 of the POCSO Rules. The judgment also addressed the obligations of intermediaries in the context of the safe-harbour protection under Section 79 of the Information Technology (IT) Act.

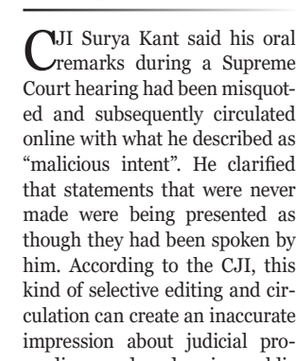
In its application, JRCA has sought a comprehensive mechanism to ensure effective implementation of these obligations and prevent the online circulation and exploitation of children. The application seeks, among other measures, the formulation and notification of a uniform Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for intermediaries covering detection and mandatory reporting of CSEAM, preservation of evidence and inter-agency coordination among relevant agencies.

It also seeks measures to ensure the prompt uploading of offenders' particulars to the National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO), timely action by law-enforcement agencies on every report received from an intermediary, and initiation of criminal proceedings against intermediaries that fail to comply with mandatory reporting obligations, in accordance with law. JRCA has further sought the establishment of a centralised online reporting portal to facilitate reporting of CSEAM by intermediaries. Rachna Tyagi, General Counsel of JRCA, said, "Behind every image or video shared, there lies a real child, one who has either been sexually exploited and abused, or whose abuse has been digitally constructed in a deeply violating manner. CSEAM is not just pornography. It is crime scene evidence, a trauma frozen in time, where each download or view reinforces that exploitation."

NFR Tightens Security Ahead of Independence Day

MALIGAON, 14 AUGUST, 2026:





Ahead of the celebration of the 80th Independence Day of the nation, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has further strengthened security arrangements across the zone to ensure the safety and security of passengers, trains and railway property. Heightened vigil is being maintained at its railway stations, on-board trains and across railway premises, with RPF personnel undertaking extensive patrolling and surveillance. Additional attention is being accorded to sensitive and vulnerable locations to prevent any untoward incident and ensure a safe and secure travel environment during the Independence Day period. As part of the intensified security measures, comprehensive checking and frisking drives are being conducted at railway stations and on-board trains, covering passenger areas, waiting halls, platforms, circulating areas and other strategic locations. RPF teams, assisted by trained sniffer dogs, are carrying out thorough checks of passenger luggage, unattended articles and sensitive areas. Security personnel have been strategically deployed at important locations, while regular public announcements are being made to sensitise passengers and urge them to immediately report any suspicious person, object or activity to railway authorities. NFR remains committed towards ensuring the highest standards of passenger safety and security, particularly during an occasion of national importance such as the Independence Day. RPF personnel across the zone have been directed to remain on heightened alert and maintain close coordination with other security and law-enforcement agencies wherever required. Passengers are also requested to remain vigilant, refrain from accepting articles from unknown persons and extend full cooperation to security personnel during checking, thereby contributing towards safe, secure and hassle-free railway journeys.

Manipur Horticulture Department Joins Bharatiya Vyapar Mahotsav

NEW DELHI, 13 AUGUST 2026



The Horticulture Department, Manipur is participating in the Bharatiya Vyapar Mahotsav (BVM) being held at Pragati Maidan, Hall No. 3, New Delhi from 12th to 15th August 2026. The Department has set up a stall to showcase Thangjing/Makhana of Manipur and its value-added products. Around 600 stalls from across the country are participating in this Expo. In the Manipur stall, the state's large-scale Makhana cultivation, locally called Thangjing, and its different varieties along with huge market potential are being showcased. Makhana is mainly grown in the Loktak Lake range, which provides ideal agro-climatic conditions for its growth. The stall has drawn significant public attention. A large number of visitors and potential buyers have visited the stall, where different varieties and value-added products of Thangjing/Makhana are on display. Many serious buyers have shown interest in purchasing Thangjing/Makhana products and other processed food items. There is strong hope that Thangjing/Makhana can play a major role in strengthening Manipur's rural economy and farmers' livelihood. The participation is supported with funding from the Makhana Development Scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India. The objective is to create awareness among consumers and explore new marketing and export opportunities for Manipur's Makhana.

Dr. K. Debdutta Sharma, Director of Horticulture and Soil Conservation, Manipur said:

"In the valley of Manipur, the wetlands, large water bodies, community village ponds and Loktak Lake can be effectively utilized for this project by the farmers. This will help in expanding Makhana cultivation and increasing income for our farmers."

Officials including Chungong Pamei, Mission Director, MIDH, and other department officials attended the function.

Haryana Completes Mega Drive with 15 Lakh Trees Planted

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 14



Under the leadership Justice Deepak Sibal, Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court and Executive Chairman, Haryana State Legal Services Authority (HALSA), a State-wide Mega Tree Plantation Drive undertaken by this Authority, in collaboration with the Forest Department, Haryana, concluded successfully with the plantation of an impressive 15,17,985 trees across the State The plantation drive was launched on the occasion of World Environment Day by Justice Deepak Sibal with the objective of promoting environmental conservation and strengthening public participation in the protection of the environment. The campaign had initially envisaged plantation of approximately 15 lakh trees across Haryana during the monsoon season. The target was not only achieved but surpassed, with 15,17,985 trees planted across the State. Justice Sibal emphasized the vital importance of environmental conservation and highlighted the collective responsibility of all stakeholders in creating a greener, healthier and more sustainable future for generations to come. He underscored that the success of a plantation drive cannot be measured merely by the number of saplings planted; rather, their protection, maintenance and nurturing are equally essential to ensure their healthy growth and long-term survival. It was further emphasized that the plantation targets fixed by the District Legal Services Authorities should be realistic, achievable and commensurate with the availability of adequate arrangements for the protection, maintenance and regular care of the planted saplings, so as to ensure that the plantation efforts translate into sustainable and lasting environmental benefits.

Under the initiative, all the District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) of Haryana undertook plantation activities in Court Complexes, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centres, Judicial Residential Complexes and other suitable public places, in coordination with the Forest Department and other stakeholders. Emphasis was laid on planting indigenous, medicinal, fruit-bearing and shade-giving species, along with ensuring proper care, protection and maintenance of the saplings for their long-term survival.

The successful completion of the drive reflects the concerted efforts of the DLSAs, judicial officers, staff, Forest Department officials, volunteers and other stakeholders who contributed towards making the campaign a State-wide environmental movement.

The achievement of planting 15,17,985 trees across Haryana marks a significant milestone in HALSA's commitment towards environmental protection and demonstrates the potential of coordinated institutional efforts in addressing issues of ecological sustainability and public welfare.

Four-Tier System in Haryana to Curb Drug Abuse and Strengthen Rehabilitation

Committees formed at the state, district, sub-divisional, village and urban ward levels will monitor prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 14



The Haryana Government has constituted four-tier committees to strengthen the system for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abuse and to increase community participation. These committees have been formed at the state, district, sub-divisional, and Gram Panchayat/urban ward levels.\ At the state level, a State-Level Steering and Monitoring Committee has been constituted, headed by Chief Secretary Shri Anurag Rastogi. The Additional Chief Secretaries of the Home, Health, Social Justice and Empowerment, Medical Education and Research, Development and Panchayats, School Education, Higher Education, and Women and Child Development Departments will be members, along with the Director General of Police, Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau, Principal Secretary of the Sports Department, and Commissioner and Secretary of the Urban Local Bodies Department. The Director of the Social Justice and Empowerment Department will serve as the Member Secretary. Two representatives from civil society, empanelled non-governmental organisations, or relevant experts will be included as special invitees.

The committee will monitor the state's action plan under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction and the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan. It will review annual and quarterly targets related to awareness, treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and training, while ensuring coordination among the concerned departments and social organisations.

The committee will also review the availability and functioning of de-addiction and rehabilitation centres. In addition, it will identify districts vulnerable to drug abuse and prepare special action plans for them, evaluate work being carried out at the district level, and issue directions for necessary improvements. The committee will meet once every three months. At the district level, committees will be constituted under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioners. These committees will prepare district-level drug prevention action plans, identify vulnerable areas and at-risk groups, and monitor awareness programmes in schools, workplaces and communities. The district committees will also review the functioning of de-addiction and rehabilitation centres and ensure quarterly inspections of schools and centres involved in drug prevention activities. At the sub-divisional level, committees will function under the chairmanship of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Civil). These committees will identify vulnerable areas, monitor the progress of drug-prevention activities, and ensure monthly inspections of de-addiction and treatment centres. At the local level, a Village-Level Drug De-Addiction Task Force will be constituted in every Gram Panchayat, while Ward-Level Task Forces will be formed in urban areas. These task forces will include representatives from the local administration, police, education and health departments, along with representatives of youth, senior citizens and community organisations. The main responsibility of these task forces will be to identify locations where drug use or trafficking may be taking place and report them to the concerned authorities. Individuals showing signs of drug addiction will be connected with government-approved treatment, counselling and rehabilitation services within 72 hours. During this process, special care will be taken to protect the individual's confidentiality and dignity.

Village- and ward-level task forces will also organise awareness programmes through Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas. The objective will be to eliminate the social stigma associated with drug abuse, encourage people to come forward for treatment, and create a drug-free environment within the community.

Israel's Prez congratulates President Murmu, PM Modi on 80th I-Day

JERUSALEM



Israel's President Isaac Herzog on Friday congratulated President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India on the 80th Independence Day.

"On behalf of the State of Israel, I warmly congratulate President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the wonderful people of India on your 80th Independence Day! May we continue to strengthen the beautiful friendship between Israel and India," President Herzog wrote on X.

In a warm gesture, the Israeli President also posted the wishes in Hindi on X.

Last week, PM Modi received a phone call from his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, during which both leaders not only reviewed progress on various aspects of the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership, but also discussed the current situation in West Asia.

"Received a phone call from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. We reviewed progress on various aspects of the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership, which continues to grow from strength to strength. We also exchanged views on the current situation in West Asia," PM Modi posted on X after the phone call.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), during their conversation, the two leaders reviewed sustained progress in the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation across various sectors for the mutual benefit of the two countries. "The two leaders agreed to remain in touch," the PMO stated.

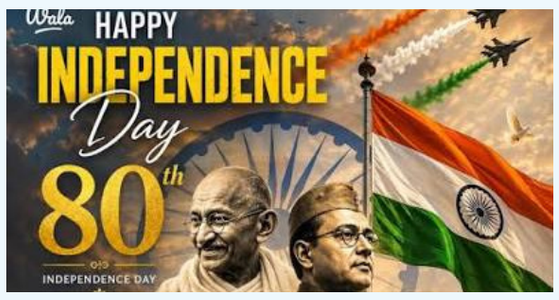
In February, Prime Minister Modi, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior ministers and officials, paid a two-day State Visit to Israel on the invitation of Netanyahu.

During the visit, both leaders recalled PM Modi's historic visit to Israel in 2017 and Netanyahu's visit to India in 2018, which together laid the foundation for a new era of partnership and collaboration.

They noted the "immense progress" made in the India-Israel bilateral relationship across diverse domains, including emerging technologies, cyber, agriculture, water management, health, entrepreneurship, defence, security, and more. PM Modi and Netanyahu also agreed and decided to elevate the Strategic Partnership to a new level – 'A Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity'.

Independent India @ 80

(On the occasion of "Indian Independence Day" on 15th August)



India is the land of the Vedas. India is the country that taught civilization to the world. India is a vast country of unity in diversity. The Indian philosophy of life is built on the foundations of ancient legends. India is the address of the largest democracy. The largest population of 145 crores is my country. India is the seat of peace, tolerance, brotherhood and harmony. My motherland has stood firm no matter how many challenges. While the chariot of economic progress is running, my motherland is increasing its prestige at the international level. India, which is moving forward with the goal of sustainable development, is plagued by many problems such as poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, inequalities, ignorance and illness. Despite achieving sustainable development for the last 79 years, hunger, health problems and illiteracy continue to be the curse of the country. India, which has the largest youth power, is working tirelessly to stand as a beacon for the world of tomorrow.

International Poverty Line

According to global poverty studies, 44 Indians are being lifted out of poverty every minute. It is heartening that the country has been experiencing a technological revolution and economic development in the last two decades, and that poverty has come down from 56 percent to 28 percent. While 5.3 percent of the population is below the poverty line, poverty is recorded at less than 21.9 percent. We call people who do not have the shelter, nest, and clothes needed to live with dignity poor. According to the World Bank, those who do not have the minimum financial resources, education, dignity, health security, safe drinking water, environmental cleanliness, and job opportunities are being identified as poor. When a person spends less than 3.00 US dollars a day, they are classified as below the international poverty line. Even today, unemployment is chasing after them. Corruption is rampant. Human values are becoming orphans. Exam paper leaks are causing impatience among the youth. Bribery is unleashing its venomous fangs. Development is progressing at a snail's pace.

Poverty is a Uultifaceted Symptom

If poverty increases, conditions like illiteracy, unsanitary conditions, illness, economic inequality, malnutrition, starvation, housing shortage, unemployment, and child labor increase. That is, poverty should be understood as a multifaceted symptom that afflicts the society. According to the NITI Aayog, if the minimum monthly expenditure per capita in urban areas is less than Rs 1,407/- and in rural areas, the monthly expenditure per capita is less than Rs 972/-, then they are classified as poor. According to the Tendulkar Committee study, if every citizen spends less than Rs 62/- per day, they should be considered poor. The main causes of poverty include overpopulation, declining agricultural production, under utilization of resources, rising prices, unemployment, lack of skills among youth, exploitation of labor, outdated traditions, slow industrial growth, corruption, gender inequality, social unrest, illiteracy, caste-religious conflicts, demonic politics, and vote bank regimes.

Challenges Before Mother India - Achievements

The slogan of "Garibi Hatao" or "Poverty Eradication" program still continuing. Corruption and irregularities are rampant. Politics has become corrupt. Human relations are chanting money. The goddess of justice is blindfolded. Words like ethics and justice are being considered as slogans of the incompetent and are being ridiculed. Public money is flowing into the pockets of the corrupt. No matter how many schemes are implemented, the results are falling into the abyss. Man is forgetting humanity and embracing monstrosity. As an antidote to poverty, if multifaceted measures such as free education, creation of jobs suitable to one's qualifications, provision of medical and health facilities, housing, environmental cleanliness, creation of basic resources, utilization of nutrition, profitable agriculture, quality education with skills for the youth, strengthening of local institutions, transparency in the implementation of government schemes, accountability of employees, and elimination of corruption and bribery are implemented, poverty will be driven beyond the borders of India.

A large youth population is unique to Mother India. Our youth should grow up to be responsible, skilled, educated and virtuous in the service of Mother India. We should become the fuel for the wheels of the chariot of progress so that the country can grow and progress. By 2047, we should stand proudly before the world as a developed India.

- Prof : Burra Madhusudhan Reddy
9949700037.

Jinnah's obstinacy now echoes in Munir's ambition: Report

TEL AVIV



Pakistan may celebrate its independence and new found glory, but August 14 remains a day of mourning for unnamed millions of Indians — Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike — who perished as united India was torn apart, a tragedy born of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's obstinacy and now echoed in Pakistani Army Chief Asim Munir's ambition, a report has stated. Pakistan came into existence on August 14, 1947. In India, the day is observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, remembering the immense suffering, mass displacement and countless lives lost during the Partition of 1947.

Highlighting the human catastrophe that followed the partition, Vas Shenoy, a political researcher, consultant and entrepreneur, said, "Trains arrived at stations carrying corpses instead of passengers. Women were abducted, raped and forcibly converted to Islam. Families that had lived beside one another for generations suddenly found themselves on opposite sides of an international frontier."

"The precise number of dead will probably never be known. Modern estimates have now grown to around two million. Six million Jews died in the Holocaust in over five years, two million Indians in the partition in a few months, the two-state solution. Somewhere between ten and fifteen million people were uprooted," he wrote in 'The Times of Israel'.

According to the expert, Pakistan survived, but not intact, as East Pakistan broke away in 1971 after years of political discrimination, repression and ultimately war, becoming Bangladesh.

US calls India 'critical power' after PACOM shift

WASHINGTON



The United States sees India as a "critical power" and wants a stronger partnership with New Delhi, a senior Pentagon official has said, rejecting suggestions that restoring the name Pacific Command signals diminished US attention to India or the Indian Ocean. Under Secretary of War for Policy, Elbridge A. Colby, said the change from INDOPACOM to PACOM reflected Washington's military focus on the Western Pacific and the first island chain.

The US did not downgrade India's strategic importance, he added. "This is not in any way a sort of denigration of the importance of the Indian Ocean area or of India itself," Colby told an on-the-record virtual briefing organised by the State Department's Asia Pacific Media Hub.

He cited his March visit to India and visits by other senior US administration officials as evidence of continuing engagement.

"We really see India as a critical power, and the Indian Ocean, of course, is very important," he said. "There are multiple important relationships we have there."

He said that the United States viewed India as a vital relationship with the potential for a natural partnership, even though the two countries would not always agree. "If anything, we really see India as a vital relationship where there's a natural partnership," Colby said. "Let's look where our interests align. We're going to have areas where we don't always agree. But we're looking for a stronger India."

INS Sudarshini enters Portugal, marking another trans-Atlantic milestone

LISBON



Indian Navy's sail training ship INS Sudarshini entered Portugal on Friday following a 19-day trans-Atlantic passage from the United States, marking yet another milestone in the Lokayan 26 deployment, the Indian Navy stated on Friday.

"INS Sudarshini entered Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal, on 13 Aug 26, following a 19-day trans-Atlantic passage from Boston, marking another milestone in the Lokayan 26 deployment and reinforcing the enduring maritime partnership between India and Portugal," the Indian Navy stated on X.

"The Commanding Officer, INS Sudarshini, called on Comodoro Luis Nicholson Lavrador, Commander of the Azores Maritime Zone (COM CZMA). Planned interactions during the ship's stay are centred on professional engagements with the Portuguese Navy and cultural exchanges, enhancing professional exchange and camaraderie between the two navies," it added. According to the Ministry of Defence, the arrival marked the successful completion of a challenging 19-day transoceanic passage across the Atlantic Ocean, originating from Boston, USA.

"This is INS Sudarshini's second Atlantic crossing, highlighting the endurance, grit and seamanship skills of her crew," the ministry stated. It mentioned that the ship received a warm welcome from the Portuguese Navy on its arrival.

As people suffer, Pakistani authorities continue to enforce rinse-and-repeat project: Report

ISLAMABAD



Even though Pakistan became an independent nation on August 14, 1947, basic contradictions around Pakistan's national identity, resources, representation and ties with neighbouring nations remain acute as they were in 1947 even after 79 years, a report has said.

Pakistan virtually has no representative institutions operational, and its unelected state apparatuses use resources in peripheral regions. Regime ideologues make plans to replace existing provinces with new administrative units while making rhetorical statements regarding sardars and nawabs who deprive their people, political activist Aasim Sajjad Akhtar wrote in leading Pakistani daily Dawn.

He mentioned that, in Pakistan, a militarised ruling class does not share power with even the elites of the historical peripheries and faces problems in keeping a pliant regime in power for a few years before ousting the incumbent government and replacing it with another.

Pakistani authorities have enforced a rinse-and-repeat project on the peripheries and people who have been suffering in the country. The authorities use oppression and exploitation under the guise of ending foreign conspiracy. However, the 'enemies' within Pakistan have increased over time, demonstrating a decrepit system kept functional by small-minded rulers who only want to have power and wealth while young people in the country are deprived of basic human needs and liberties.

"What, then, are the prospects for resolution of Pakistan's tortured national question? Not high, but there are still many in our midst who continue the struggle for genuine decolonisation. It will be a tall order to create the conditions for it, but we need a plurinational social contract that treats all of Pakistan's constituent peoples as equals. Resources bequeathed to us by nature must be used to meet the needs of all, including future generations. And there must be peace with our neighbours," Akhtar wrote in Dawn.

Last month, Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the country's current governance system has collapsed and is unable to resolve the issues faced by the country, local media reported. In his address at the Pakistan Economic Summit, Naqvi called for talks among political parties to introduce reforms in the current governance system and proposed the creation of new provinces and bringing administrative reforms.



China suspected of providing funds for pro-Palestine marches in UK: Report

LONDON

China has been suspected of providing funds for the pro-Palestine marches in the United Kingdom (UK) with the US lawmakers carrying out a probe into alleged secret Chinese backing of 'Code Pink' analysing its activities as part of an inquiry into foreign interference, a report has said.

Code Pink, a far-Left feminist protest group set up in the US, has organised protests in the UK against Britain's involvement in what it describes as the "genocide in Gaza" and urged its activists to hold protests outside Royal Air Force (RAF) bases and released statements that UK lawmakers have been "bought by Zionism," leading UK daily 'The Telegraph' reported.

The probe comes amid concern that China wants to exploit divisive causes in the West to create social tensions and spark what critics term as "political warfare" against its adversaries. The US investigation has been analysing £250,000 in alleged payments made to a firm related to Code Pink in the UK from companies associated with Neville Roy Singham, a tech tycoon accused of funding Chinese propaganda around the world, the UK daily reported. "It's clear from the Ways and Means Committee investigation that Singham's money and influence does not stop at America's borders," The Telegraph quoted the US Congress Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith as saying. Smith said that the committee knows that Singham's funding has been backing pro-Hamas and pro-communist causes not only in the US, but other nations, including in the UK. A congressional source revealed that investigators were aware of China allegedly funding groups in the UK and that it was part of their probe.

"We are aware that China is funding pro-Hamas and leftists in the UK and the US," The Telegraph quoted the source as saying. The source further stated, "That is why we are investigating it and will continue to do so." According to the newspaper, Singham, who has been facing several investigations over allegations that his network was creating pro-China propaganda on behalf of the communist regime in Beijing, has provided millions of dollars to Code Pink in the US.

A firm based in Britain with connections to Code Pink received over USD 250,000 from groups which were allegedly part of Singham's network in 2020 and 2021. People's Support Foundation, another organisation suspected of being part of Singham's network for "consulting services", provided USD 94,950 to the company.

Bangladesh: LNG disruption deepens energy crisis, hits industry

DHAKA



As Bangladesh's energy crisis entered its fourth week, the situation worsened further after one of the country's floating Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals ran out of gas, local media reported on Friday.

Following the disruption on Thursday evening, LNG supplies to the national grid plunged below 300 mmcfd, from the usual 1,000 mmcfd supplied by the two Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRUs), Petrobangla officials said.

The total gas supply has consequently fallen to around 1,930 mmcfd, against daily demand of approximately 3,800 mmcfd. The resulting shortage has severely disrupted major industrial zones, CNG-based transport and household cooking, while sharply curtailing gas-fired power generation across Bangladesh.

Thirty of Narayanganj's 33 CNG filling stations have halted vehicle refuelling, while CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers blocked a highway in Jamalpur on Thursday, demanding regular gas supplies. In several districts, residents are struggling to cook amid nearly zero gas pressure, leading Bangladeshi newspaper 'The Daily Star' reported.

The deepening gas crisis has begun taking a toll on electricity supply, with load shedding reported in parts of Dhaka from Thursday midnight. Officials from Dhaka Power Distribution Company and DESCO said that power generation came under mounting pressure due to the gas shortage.

Reports suggest that rural communities in Bangladesh have been hit hardest, with some areas enduring as long as 12 hours of load shedding a day.

As the energy crisis intensifies, nearly 80 per cent of textile, dyeing and printing mills in Narsingdi and Madhabdi have shut down, with the industrial area reportedly suffering losses of Bangladeshi Taka 400–500 crore each day, according to industry representatives.

Abdullah Al Mamun, spokesperson for the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association and Managing Director of Abed Textile Processing Mills, said that factory owners would face difficulties in paying workers' wages, utility bills and loan repayments. He warned that the situation could trigger labour unrest.

"Our garment, textile, and dyeing industries are being pushed towards a standstill. Excessive load shedding is now adding fuel to the fire." The Daily Star quoted Rashedul Hasan Rintu, President of the Narsingdi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as saying.

On Thursday, Bangladesh's Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Iqbal Hassan Mahmud noted the government's limited capacity, saying that there is no other option to manage the load shedding.

Furthermore, Bangladesh's Awami League accused the ruling BNP government of pushing the country into an unprecedented energy crisis, saying it has continued the "fatal policy inertia" of the previous interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus. The party claimed that daily power outages lasting between six and 12 hours have made life increasingly difficult for people across the country.



HAL strengthens industry partnership for LCH Prachand production

BENGALURU: HAL on Friday said it has entered into partnerships with the Indian industry—Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Ltd and BEML—for manufacturing fuselage structures for the 'Prachand' Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), further expanding India's indigenous helicopter production ecosystem. Under the agreements, Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and Adani Defence will manufacture 48 and 42 fuselage structures, respectively.

Tushar Ranjan Behera, General Manager, Helicopter Division, signed the agreement with Cmde (Retd.) R. G. K. Rao, ED, Aerospace & Maritime for BEML and Prasanna Karthik, Vice President, ADSTL, for Adani Defence in the presence of the senior leadership of HAL, BEML and ADSTL, the company said in a release.

Sensex, Nifty End Lower on Oil, Middle East Risks

Stock markets ended lower on Friday as elevated crude oil prices and continued uncertainty over the Middle East kept investors cautious. The benchmark indices recovered from the day's lows but remained in negative territory, with broader markets also seeing pressure.



The BSE Sensex closed at 78,009.25, down 70.71 points or 0.09%, while the Nifty 50 settled at 24,366, lower by 29.85 points or 0.12%. The Sensex had touched an intraday low of 77,684.37, while the Nifty fell to 24,296.80 during the session. Crude oil prices remained elevated, keeping pressure on investor sentiment. WTI crude was trading at $81.87 a barrel, up 0.76%, while Brent crude stood at $87.22, gaining 0.17%.

For India, which is a major crude importer, higher oil prices remain a concern as they can increase import costs and add pressure on inflation and the rupee. The uncertainty around the Middle East has also kept investors cautious about the direction of energy prices. The rupee was flat against the US dollar at 95.4250, with frequent dollar-selling intervention by the Reserve Bank of India helping limit pressure on the currency.

CONSUMER STOCKS OFFER SOME SUPPORT

The market saw some buying in consumer-facing stocks, helping the benchmarks recover from their intraday lows. Among the Sensex stocks, Bharti Airtel was the top gainer, rising 2.53%, followed by Adani Ports, which gained 1.82%. ICICI Bank rose 0.57%, Titan added 0.56%, M&M gained 0.35% and HDFC Bank edged up 0.05%.

On the other hand, Asian Paints was the biggest loser, falling 1.69%. Indigo declined 1.39%, while NTPC fell 1.19%. Tech Mahindra dropped 0.93%, Reliance Industries lost 0.64%, Power Grid declined 1.08% and Infosys fell 0.07%. The broader market ended mixed, with mid-cap and small-cap stocks seeing some selling pressure. The Nifty 100 fell 0.16%, while the Nifty 200 declined 0.23% and the Nifty 500 lost 0.27%.

The Nifty Midcap 50 fell 0.74%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 declined 0.53%. The Nifty Smallcap 100 was down 0.69%. The India VIX, a measure of market volatility, fell 0.41% to 11.37.

FINANCIAL, METAL AND PHARMA STOCKS UNDER PRESSURE

Most sectoral indices ended in the red. The Nifty Financial Services 25/50 index fell 0.46%, while the Nifty Metal index declined 0.71%. The Nifty Pharma index dropped 0.90%, Nifty Auto fell 0.63% and Nifty Oil & Gas declined 0.47%.

The Nifty Private Bank index slipped 0.05%, while the Nifty PSU Bank index fell 0.57%. The Nifty Healthcare index declined 0.46% and Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank lost 1.02%. There were a few pockets of strength. The Nifty Media index rose 0.96%, while Nifty Consumer Durables gained 0.76%. The Nifty MidSmall IT & Telecom index also rose 0.39%.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said the market remained sideways as investors waited for greater clarity on energy prices and global bond yields. "A sideways trend persisted in the market as investors awaited greater clarity on the outlook for energy prices and global bond yields. However, the market witnessed a recovery from the day's lows, led by consumer durables and discretionary consumption stocks, supported by improving demand trends," Nair said.

He added that better-than-expected corporate earnings during the quarter, along with supportive domestic factors that could lead to upward revisions to FY27 earnings estimates, continue to create opportunities for stock-specific buying.

"Additionally, the stability in the rupee, moderation in India's 10-year bond yield, and a gradual improvement in FII participation are providing support to the domestic macro-environment and supporting the inflation trajectory," he said.

Overall, the market continues to balance strong domestic fundamentals and corporate earnings against the pressure from elevated crude prices and uncertainty around the Middle East.



Uttam Kumar Reddy Backs Green Mobility in Telangana

Says Govt is actively encouraging electric vehicles
Unveils New Tata Sierra

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 14

Telangana Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy unveiled the new Tata Sierra EV at a programme in Hyderabad on Friday and reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to promoting electric vehicles and environmentally sustainable mobility. Congratulating Tata Motors on the launch, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Tata was among India's most trusted and respected brands, with a longstanding reputation for reliability, innovation, safety and quality.

Recalling his own association with the brand, the Minister said he had used a Tata Safari for several years and was personally familiar with the reliability of Tata vehicles. "The new Sierra is another proud addition to the Tata family," he said, wishing the company success with the latest addition to its automobile portfolio.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the automobile industry was undergoing a major transformation, with electric and sustainable mobility increasingly shaping its future. He appreciated Tata Motors for playing an important role in expanding the electric vehicle ecosystem in India. "Electric mobility will help reduce pollution, protect the environment and contribute towards a cleaner and more sustainable future," he said.

The Minister pointed out that the Telangana Government was actively encouraging electric mobility, including through incentives such as the waiver of life tax on electric vehicles.

"We look forward to working with the automobile industry towards a greener and sustainable future for Telangana," he said. Uttam Kumar Reddy congratulated Tata Motors, its management and employees and Jasper Tata, on the launch and wished the new Tata Sierra great success in the Indian automobile market.

Senior representatives of Tata Motors and other dignitaries attended the launch programme. The organisers felicitated Uttam Kumar Reddy on the occasion and thanked him for participating in the event.

SEBI allows online bond platforms to offer GIFT City IFSC products

MUMBAI, AUG 14

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Friday expanded the scope of products that can be offered by online bond platform providers (OBPPs), allowing them to provide securities and investment products regulated by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) in GIFT City. The move is aimed at easing business operations and widening investment options available through online bond platforms. Under the revised regulatory framework, OBPPs will now be permitted to offer products and securities regulated by various financial sector regulators, including SEBI, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), and IFSCA.

Sebi has also approved the offering of specified tax-saving bonds issued under Section 54EC of the Income-tax Act, 1961, and Section 85 of the Income-tax Act, 2025, through these platforms.

The market regulator said products, securities and services regulated by IFSCA must be offered in accordance with the framework applicable to Sebi-registered stock brokers operating in GIFT-IFSC. Such offerings will also need to comply with Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) regulations, including overseas investment rules and limits prescribed under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). To avoid confusion between domestic and overseas investment products, SEBI has mandated that IFSCA-regulated offerings be clearly labelled as international or overseas instruments on online bond platforms.

National and State Vendors' Meet held under PMSG:MBY at Kolkata West Bengal

to Boost Rooftop Solar Adoption under PM-Surya Ghar in West Bengal

KOLKATA:



A National Vendor Meet under the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGY) was jointly conducted by West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL) and REC Ltd. on August 13, 2026, at Hotel Taj Bengal, New Alipore, Kolkata, with an aim to strengthen the implementation of the scheme and accelerate rooftop solar installations across West Bengal.

The meeting was Chaired by Shri Santanu Basu, IAS, Principal Secretary, Power Department, Government of West Bengal. Officials from REC Ltd, CESC, the Government of West Bengal, State and National Vendors, and Training Partners also participated in the meeting.

Addressing the gathering, the Principal Secretary, Power Department, Government of West Bengal, emphasised that the implementation of PMSG:MBY in the state would be further strengthened through the active participation and coordinated efforts of both State and National Vendors. He affirmed the collective commitment of the Government of West Bengal, REC Limited, WBSEDCL, Vendors, DISCOMs, financial institutions and other stakeholders towards accelerating rooftop solar adoption and strengthening the implementation of PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana in West Bengal.

REC Ltd (PMSG:MBY team) headed by Smt. S. Jayanthi, ED presented the perspective of the scheme as Nodal Agency for implementation of PMSG:MBY. She urged National Vendors to deploy adequate manpower and requested Brand Owners to expand their channel partner network across West Bengal to facilitate faster installation of rooftop solar systems. She assured the stakeholders that REC, as the Nodal Agency for the implementation of PMSG:MBY, would extend all necessary support to expedite rooftop solar installations in the state, including addressing the issues faced by vendors, consumers and DISCOMs.

Also, during the meeting, Shri Devinder, DGM REC and Shri Raman Garg, DGM, REC delivered a presentation focused on increasing vendor participation, ensuring the quality of RTS plants, vendor rating and also outlined the provisions of training & capacity building for vendors under PMSGY in West Bengal.

The National Vendor Meet at Kolkata, West Bengal provided an important platform for stakeholders to deliberate on implementation-related issues, strengthen coordination and identify measures to improve the pace of rooftop solar installations under the scheme.

Liberty General Insurance Marks Independence Day

MUMBAI, AUGUST 14, 2026

Liberty General Insurance, on the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day, has unveiled a new brand film that reflects on how everyday actions can influence the values passed on to the next generation. Built on the insight that today's generation learn as much from what they observe as from what they are taught, the film serves as a reminder that the way adults respond, particularly in difficult moments, can leave a lasting impression. Set against a familiar moment of conflict on the road, the film captures the shift from impulse to reflection when a child's intervention changes the course of an escalating situation. A visual reference to Mahatma Gandhi brings the contrast between aggression and restraint into focus, with the emotional transition conveyed through music, expressions and imagery rather than dialogue.

As India marks this milestone, the film extends the conversation around independence to the responsibility that accompanies it, encouraging audiences to consider how values are carried forward through everyday conduct. It also finds resonance with Liberty General Insurance's belief in preparedness, as insurance provides an important financial safety net that helps individuals and families manage unforeseen events and protect what they have worked to build. Speaking on the launch, Mr. Jayesh Khatri, President & Head – Retail Distribution & Marketing, Liberty General Insurance, said, "India's 80th Independence Day is a time to celebrate how far we have come as a nation and reflect on the future we are creating for the next generation. Children learn by observing those closest to them, and even the simplest everyday actions can shape their values and choices for years to come. At Liberty, we believe that being prepared for the future is an important part of our responsibility. Insurance helps people protect what matters most and stay financially secure when unexpected challenges arise. Through this film, we hope to encourage people to think carefully about their actions and be mindful of the example they set for those who follow them."

The brand film has been created in partnership with White Rivers Media.

DDA clears Delhi Master Plan 2047: New homes, faster construction, metro expansion on the cards

The Delhi Development Authority has approved the Master Plan for Delhi-2047 and sent it on for final clearance. The proposal maps changes in housing, transport, construction approvals, green infrastructure and land use across the capital.

The DDA meeting was chaired by Lieutenant Governor Sardar Taranjit Singh Sandhu where the plan got initial approval. It will now be sent to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for final approval and notification. The proposed plan arrives at a time when the national capital saw a storm of agitated protesting youth during July.

The MPD-2047 focuses on Delhi's overall development, with provisions covering housing, transport, infrastructure, economic activity, environmental concerns, heritage conservation and urban regeneration. The following are the points of approval covered by the proposed plan and the authority's final call on them.

FOCUS ON DELHI'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

MPD-2047 aims to link economic growth with better infrastructure, transport and mobility. The plan proposes boosting economic growth by developing new growth centres and improving connectivity to emerging areas of the city. Binitha Dalal, Founder & Managing Partner at Mt. K Kapital said, "The plan's emphasis on new growth centres and improved connectivity could change the prospects of less-connected areas such as Alipur, Kanjhawala and the Mundka belt. Better road and public transport links can bring these locations closer to employment and economic centres and make them more viable for organised residential and commercial development." She mentioned that the opportunity will develop them as complete urban centres, with employment, social infrastructure and services, rather than simply as extensions of the existing city.

INCREASED HOUSING

Given that the population of Delhi is projected to grow sharply by 2047, MPD-2047 seeks to meet rising housing needs while also unlocking



the potential of areas that are already developed. The DDA has separately cleared a policy for the rebuilding and redevelopment of older two-storey housing units constructed on individual plots. This will cover schemes such as Naraina Vihar, along with other similar DDA housing colonies across the city. Many these properties date back to MPD-1962 and have been in use for over five decades. Under the suggested policy, property owners will be able to rebuild or redevelop their homes, provided that the projects meet the prescribed norms for FAR, ground coverage, building height, fire safety and structural safety.

MORE CONVENIENCE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The DDA has approved a land-use change for a 19.63-hectare metro depot in Narela, prioritizing mobility in the Master Plan for Delhi-2047. This initiative thereby supports the new Rithala-Kundli metro corridor, which is designed to link residential areas such as North West Delhi, Rohini, Narela and adjoining areas of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, with influential economic hubs. Mohit Goel, Managing Director at Omaxe Ltd said, "The implications will extend beyond Delhi's boundaries as well. As the capital faces increasing pressure on land and infrastructure, well-connected markets such as Faridabad, Noida and Greater Noida will have a larger role in accommodating future residential and economic growth. Better road, metro and regional connectivity is already making these markets increasingly integrated with Delhi, and this integration will become an important driver of real estate demand."

EASIER CONSTRUCTION APPROVALS

In a massive win for city builders, the authority has approved changes to the Unified Building Bye-Laws (UBBL)-2016. It aims to cut down on compliance burdens and eliminate unnecessary paperwork for construction projects. Under the new rules, builders will no longer need to chase down early No-Objection Certificates (NOCs) to secure a basic building permit from a laundry list of government bodies, including the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, Chief Inspector of Factories, Delhi Jal Board, and the Forest Department. By bypassing these initial bureaucratic hurdles, the DDA aims to clear out major procedural delays and fast-track project approvals across the capital.

A GREENER AND CLEANER DELHI

Among other focus areas, environmental sustainability stands at the heart of the proposed master plan. The DDA cleared a land-use conversion at Pocket-C, IFC, Gazipur. The plot will shift from a commercial Freight Complex to a Utility zone to make way for an advanced Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plant. According to the DDA, this strategic facility is specifically designed to reduce city pollution, boost waste management, and anchor a cleaner, greener capital. To balance the industrial footprint, the authority simultaneously repurposed 752.51 square metres of nearby land at Pocket-B, IFC, Gazipur. Shifting from public and semi-public utility to a recreational classification, the Authority wishes to create the space as a compensatory neighbourhood park.

'Will wait for the right time': Mahindra Group in no rush to introduce heavy electric trucks

MUMBAI: (AUG 14)

The Mahindra Group will hit the market with its heavy-duty electric trucks for long-haul transportation at the "right time" as the existing infrastructure in the country does not support such fleet, a top group official has said.

With the launch of new generation BLAZO i-TRK, the immediate goal of the company is to recoup the 5 per cent market share in the heavy truck segment, which it used to command earlier.

Purpose-built as a complete business solution rather than just a truck, the BLAZO i-TRK combines best-in-class fuel efficiency, high-performance powertrain, intelligent connected technologies and an industry-leading uptime guarantee.

SHORT NEWS

GOLF

Jaibir Singh Kang clinches A&B title at IGU Jr. Boys Championship



CHANDIGARH: Continuing Roundglass Golf Academy's (RGGA) highly successful run, Jaibir Singh Kang showcased unmatched endurance and skill to win the combined Boys Category A & B title at the IGU Northern India Junior Boys Golf Championship, hosted at the Chandigarh Golf Club, in Chandigarh on Friday. The RGGA standout was a force to be reckoned with throughout the 72-hole event, cruising to a clear four-stroke win. After an opening under-par 71, Kang separated himself from the pack on day two with a breathtaking, tournament-best round of 66. He maintained his firm grip on the leaderboard with a steady 74 in the third round and safely sealed the championship with a clinical 71 on the final day.

FOOTBALL

'Anything can happen': Maresca refuses to rule out Rodri exit from Man City



CARDIFF: Manchester City manager Enzo Maresca refused to rule out Rodri's departure from the club, insisting that 'anything can happen' with the transfer window still open as Barcelona prepare a third bid for the midfielder. City have already rejected two offers from Barcelona for Rodri, who has entered the final year of his contract. The Spanish giants are expected to return with an improved proposal as they look to prise the midfielder away from the Premier League champions. After an injury-disrupted spell over the past two seasons, the Spanish midfielder returned to top form on the international stage at the FIFA World Cup earlier this year. He was instrumental in Spain's title-winning campaign, controlling matches from midfield with his composure, distribution and defensive work.

CRICKET

Jemimah ruled out of Asia Cup and Asian Games due to hamstring injury



NEW DELHI: In a major blow to the Indian team, star right-handed batter Jemimah Rodrigues has been ruled out of the upcoming ACC Women's Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Asian Games in Japan after sustaining a high-grade right hamstring tear. Jemimah, 25, picked up the injury on August 3 while representing Southern Brave in The Hundred in England and was ruled out of the remainder of the tournament. "Jemimah Rodrigues sustained a right hamstring injury on 3rd August while playing in The Hundred in England."The BCCI Medical Team clinically assessed her at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, and the assessment confirmed a high-grade tear. Consequently, she has been ruled out of the upcoming ACC Women's Asia Cup.

CRICKET FEVER TO GRIP UTTARKASHI
T20 LEAGUE AS SIX TEAMS TAKE THE FIELD

- **Rawain Royals, Taknor Tigers, Someshwar Warriors, Baukh Night Riders, Baragaddi Kings and Bhagirathi Giants Set for a High-Intensity Contest**
- **League to Provide a Platform for Emerging Cricket Talent**

By Sunil Thapliyal





UTTARKASHI, UTTARAKHAND

The much-awaited Uttarkashi T20 League, being organized by the Uttarkashi Cricket Association under the direction of the Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU), is set to bring an exciting dose of competitive cricket to the fore. The league will be held on August 22 in Haridwar, with six teams from Uttarkashi district participating in the tournament.

The participating teams are Rawain Royals, Taknor Tigers, Someshwar Warriors, Baukh Night Riders, Baragaddi Kings and Bhagirathi Giants. The announcement has generated considerable enthusiasm among local cricketers and cricket fans, with attention now focused on the performances of the participating players.

Six Teams to Battle for Supremacy

The six franchises will feature local cricketing talent from across the district, promising intense competition and exciting T20 action. The tournament is also expected to provide an opportunity for promising players to showcase their skills in a competitive environment. Uttarkashi Cricket Association Secretary Ajay Bhatt said the Uttarkashi T20 League would prove to be an important platform for talented cricketers from the border district. He said the league would allow local players to demonstrate their abilities while gaining valuable experience in competitive cricket.

He pointed out that Uttarkashi has considerable cricketing talent, but many young players do not get adequate opportunities to progress. According to him, the T20 league will provide players with exposure to competitive cricket and could open new avenues for those who perform consistently well.

A Platform Beyond Just Cricket

CAU Secretary Kiran Verma Rautela extended her best wishes for the Uttarkashi T20 League and said the objective of the competition was not merely to organize cricket matches but also to identify talent from the districts and provide young players with a strong platform to move forward.

She expressed hope that the Uttarkashi T20 League would become the foundation for organizing larger and more competitive cricket tournaments in the future.

She further said that participation in the league would help young cricketers develop sportsmanship, discipline and a competitive spirit. It would also give them an opportunity to play alongside experienced players, learn from them and work on areas requiring improvement.

Who Will Make Their Mark?

With six teams set to compete, all eyes will be on the players who can make a difference with their batting, bowling and all-round performances. The tournament could prove particularly significant for emerging players hoping to attract attention through their performances.

The Uttarkashi Cricket Association has appealed to cricket lovers and sports enthusiasts to extend their support for the successful organization of the league.

Meanwhile, Gangotri MLA Suresh Chauhan, Yamunotri MLA Sanjay Dobhal, Purola MLA Durgeshwar Lal, former MLA Kedar Singh Rawat, Vijaypal Sajwan, Malchand, Rajkumar, former District Panchayat President Deepak Bijlwan, Jashoda Rana, Dunda Block Pramukh Rajdeep Parmar, Naugaon Block Pramukh Saroj Panwar, along with block pramukhs from Bhatwari, Chinyalisaur, Purola and Mori, have extended their best wishes to the participating players from the district.

The stage is now set for an exciting T20 contest, with fans eagerly waiting to see which of the six teams lifts the trophy and which young players emerge as the standout performers of the Uttarkashi T20 League.

MCC clarifies the dead-ball rule after different decisions in The Hundred



LONDON

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the custodians of the cricket laws, on Friday clarified the dead-ball rule after the law was applied in two different ways by the umpires in the ongoing 'The Hundred' in England.

The MCC, which is authorised to make, change and interpret cricket laws, defined what 'attempting to play the ball' means while adjudging dead-ball decisions by the umpires during two different games in the 100-ball competition. The first instance occurred in the August 6 game between MI London and London Spirit. MI's Nicholas Pooran and Spirit captain Liam Livingstone had a bit of a cat-and-mouse when the English international stopped just before delivering a ball twice. Pooran then indicated he was not ready to face a ball as Livingstone aborted his run-up.

However, Pooran again seemed to have thought that Livingstone was not going to send down the ball as he moved his bat away from the line of the ball. The ball hit the stumps, but the umpire, Mike Burns, deemed it a dead ball.

The other incident involved London Spirit's Marizanne Kapp and Birmingham Phoenix's Linsey Smith and occurred three days later. Kapp looked up as Smith sent down a ball with the Spirit batter clearly appearing not ready to face it.

However, Kapp half-heartedly waved her bat at the ball and made contact with it. The contact, it seemed, was not to score runs or defend the ball, but it looked an instinctive one. On this occasion, umpire Mark Newell called it a fair ball or one of the over.

With the two incidents confusing fans, MCC cleared the air and detailed the dead-ball rule. According to it, "either umpire shall call and signal Dead-ball when the striker is not ready for the delivery of the ball and, if the ball is delivered, does not attempt to play it. Provided the umpire is satisfied that the striker had adequate reason for not being ready, the ball shall not count as one of the over."

It further stressed the two crucial aspects in the law -- whether there is an attempt to play the ball and, secondly, whether the batter not being ready to face it is justified.

In Pooran's case, it said that "Pooran, perhaps knowing the Law, actively withdrew his bat from the line of the ball". But in Kapp's case, "instinctively prodded at the ball and made contact with it. As soon as she attempted to hit the ball – and note the Law talks about "attempting" to play the ball rather than actually making contact with it – the ball would not be Dead, and the ball will count in the over, as correctly identified by umpire Newell."

Meanwhile, the MCC added that if the batter did not attempt to play the ball, the umpire should decide whether there is significant reason to affirm that he/she was not ready to face it.

As per Law 41.10.1, "It is unfair for a batter to waste time. In normal circumstances, the striker should always be ready to take strike when the bowler is ready to start his/her run-up." At times, the batter is justifiably not ready to play the ball. He/she can be hampered by the bowler shortening their normal run-up, turning after walking back and immediately beginning to run, or having a bit of a pause. In all of this, it is the role of the umpire to judge whether there is enough reason.

Four Telugu Players Earn Spot in Hyderabad Black Hawks

- **Black Hawks Make Winning Start in Goa Guardians Trophy**



GOA

Hyderabad Black Hawks, a franchise of the Prime Volleyball League (PVL), recently identified talented Telugu volleyball players during the Under-21 trials held in Vijayawada.

Around 180 players registered for the trials, while 105 players participated in the selection process. Following the trials, 12 promising players were selected for the final squad, including four talented players from Telugu-speaking states.

Karthik from Guntur, Dheeman from Visakhapatnam, Srunik from Peddapalli and Akshith from Warangal have earned a place in the Hyderabad Black Hawks squad.

Along with them, Shubham Yadav (Uttar Pradesh), Deepak (Haryana), Ayaz Ahmed (Jammu & Kashmir), Sarthak (Madhya Pradesh), Pratik (Karnataka), Suresh Kumar (Tamil Nadu), Rizwan (Tamil Nadu) and Shankar (Tamil Nadu) also impressed during the trials and secured their places in the team.

Meanwhile, the Hyderabad Black Hawks made a winning start to the u-21 Goa Guardians Trophy, which began in Goa on Friday. In their opening match against Bengaluru, Hyderabad registered a convincing 3–0 victory.

Hyderabad won the three sets 15–8, 15–13 and 16–14 to complete a straight-set victory.

A total of 10 teams from the Prime Volleyball League, including the Hyderabad Black Hawks, are participating in the tournament. The Goa Guardians Trophy is expected to provide an excellent platform for young volleyball players to showcase their talent and gain valuable competitive experience.

National Racing Challenge 2W: Chiranth Vishwanath, Kamal Navas snatch pole positions

CHENNAI

Two teenagers and Petronas TVS Racing teammates Chiranth Vishwanath from Bengaluru and Pune's Sarthak Chavan showcased their pace and talent to qualify for the top two spots on the grid in the premier Super Sport 301-400cc class to provide a rousing start to the inaugural round of the Indian National Racing Challenge 2W – 2026, at the Madras International Circuit in Chennai on Friday.

Completing the front row behind Chiranth and Sarthak, who have shed weight and appear sharper on the track following his recent stint in Europe, was Hyderabad's Rahil Pillarisetty (RACR Castrol Power1), a result that was to be expected.

Less than a second separated the three riders, thus promising thrilling battles in the double-header to be run over the next two days. Incidentally, Sarthak had clocked the fastest time, but it was deleted due to an infringement, thus pushing him to P2 and elevating Chiranth to P1.

Chennai's Kamal Navas of Team Rockers Racing took the pole position in the Super Stock 301-400cc category ahead of RACR Castrol Power1 duo of Allwin Xavier (Thrissur) and 16-year-old Kabilesh Rajini Krishnan (Chennai), the son of 11-time National champion Rajini Krishnan, with less than a second separating the trio.

Former National women's champion Ann Jennifer (Motul Sparks Racing) from Chennai comfortably outpaced the field for pole position in the Super Stock 165cc Intermediate class, ahead of the Ipone Yakuza Racing India pair of Ajai Xavier M and Anand Kumar S.

Faruk Ali Sohtun (Motul Sparks Racing), who has made the long haul from East Khasi, Meghalaya, topped the qualifying session in the Stock 165cc (Novice) class.

Esports World Cup 2026: Arjun Erigaisi, Nihal Sarin finish in top 8 as India's campaign in chess

PARIS



India's challenge in the Chess tournament at the Esports World Cup (EWC) 2026 came to an end in the quarterfinals, with Gen.G Esports' Arjun Erigaisi and S8UL Esports' Nihal Sarin both losing their respective matches and finishing among the tournament's top eight players. Erigaisi was edged out by Team Falcons' Hikaru Nakamura in an armageddon tiebreaker, while defending champion Magnus Carlsen of Team Liquid defeated Sarin 2.5-0.5.

Erigaisi's quarterfinal against Nakamura was a repeat of last year's third-place match, which the American Grandmaster had won. The two players were closely matched throughout the regulation games, with all four ending in draws as neither could establish an advantage. The deadlock sent the match to Armageddon, where Hikaru, playing with the White pieces, sealed the victory with a checkmate to secure his place in the semifinals.

The other Indian in the quarterfinals, Sarin, faced Carlsen in a rematch of last year's knockout encounter, which the Norwegian Grandmaster had won. On that occasion, the opening game ended in a draw before Carlsen claimed the next two. This time, the Norwegian won the first two games, while the third ended in a draw to secure a 2.5-0.5 victory and a place in the semifinals.

The remaining quarterfinals saw AG.AL's Denis Lazavik defeated Natus Vincere's Nodirbek Abdusattorov in an Armageddon tiebreaker, while Team Falcons' Alireza Firouzja.

India's 600th Test: A look back at 5 greatest wins of the Indian team

NEW DELHI

A new milestone beckons Shubman Gill's Indian cricket team as the Men in Blue are set to turn up for their 600th Test match, becoming just the third Test-playing nation to have ever achieved the mark. The upcoming first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle from Saturday onwards is not just a game crucial for India's World Test Championship chances, but a match that will enable them to join Australia and England in an elite list of nations that have won 600 or more Test matches.

The start of the Test on August 15 is in itself a historic occasion for India as the nation celebrates its 80th Independence Day. India's current Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill has been left overwhelmed by the occasion, admitting that leading the side in the 600th Test "is an honour and doing so on Independence Day is an even bigger honour." As the Indian team gears up for its 600th red-ball game, IANS takes a look at five of the country's five greatest wins in Test cricket's history.



The marathon Port of Spain chase of 1976

Chasing a target of 403 in that time against West Indies in their own backyard is surely a dream. Only once before had a team hunted down a target of over 400, and that was by the invincible Australian side in 1948 against England.

Even the great Sunil Gavaskar had never thought that India could win it. In his autobiography, Sunny Days, Gavaskar wrote, "I was confident that we could save the game, because the wicket was still good, but the thought of winning never entered my mind."

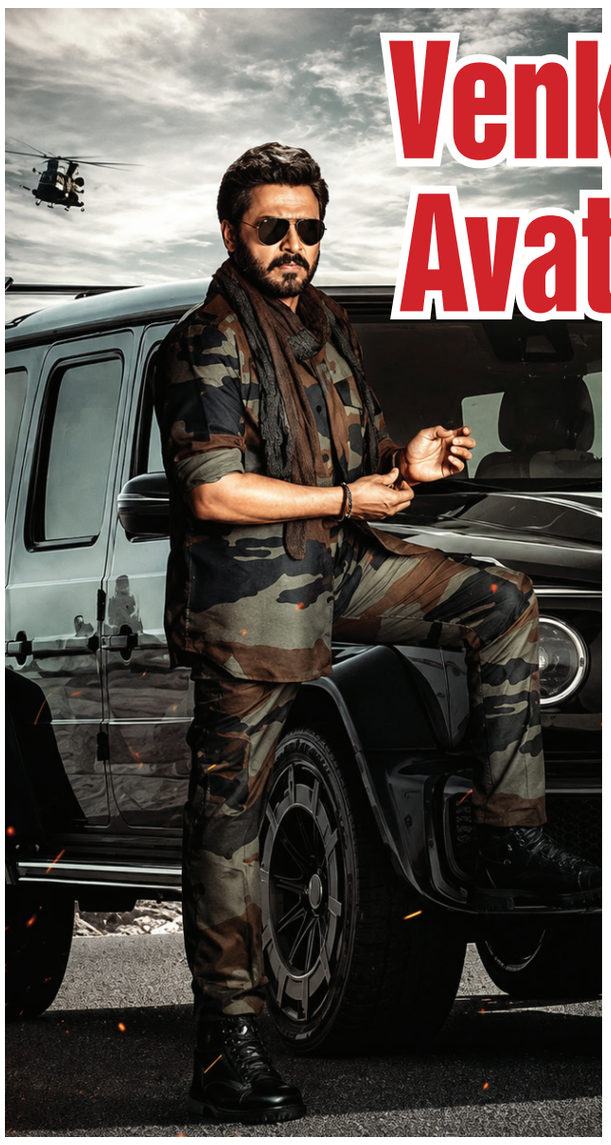
But India defied the logic. Needing 269 more to win on the last day of the match, the Little Master scored a sublime century (102), while Gundappa Viswanath made 112 as Bishan Singh Bedi's team chased down the huge target in a marathon chase. The next day, the Trinidad Express had the headline, "India defy history, whip West Indies." Indeed, it was a logic-defying victory.

The Kolkata follow-on magic

If the marathon chase at Port of Spain was a historic one, India's victory over Australia in the Kolkata 2001 Test was one of the greatest wins in Test cricket history by any team too. Bundled out for 171 in the first innings after the Aussies had piled up 445 in their first innings, India needed more than magic. First to shrug off a mammoth 271-run deficit and then hoped to pile a target that they could defend.

Then came an epic partnership between VVS Laxman and Rahul Dravid, a picture frame of the two walking off the field that remains so close to Indian fans' hearts. A 376-run partnership for the fifth wicket that powered India to 657/7d. Australia were suddenly in choppy waters as a rampant Harbhajan Singh, who claimed a hat-trick on the first day, ran through the visitors' batting line-up on the fifth day to hand the hosts a 171-run come-from-behind win. A win that still gives goosebumps to the die-hard fans.

Venky's Military Avatar Unveiled



The makers of VenkyAnil5 / NKRAR2 have added a fresh dimension to the film's growing buzz by revealing Victory Venkatesh's first look. Co-starring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram and directed by Anil Ravipudi, the film is progressing swiftly, with its shoot in Hyderabad. Venkatesh appears in a completely new avatar in the poster, stepping into the shoes of Lt. Colonel Venkat Reddy, an Indian Army officer with expertise in counter-terrorism and hostage negotiation. Wearing combat camouflage and accompanied by sunglasses and a scarf, the actor carries a calm but unmistakably authoritative expression. His placement beside a luxurious car further strengthens the action-oriented military mood. The backdrop is equally striking. The Army insignia and crossed-swords symbol reinforce the identity of the character. The rugged surroundings give the first look a gritty quality, making Venkatesh's military avatar stand out. The reveal comes after Kalyan Ram's traditional first look, which was unveiled on his birthday and met with an enthusiastic response. With the two actors introduced in distinctly contrasting styles, expectations are naturally building around the combination they will share on screen.

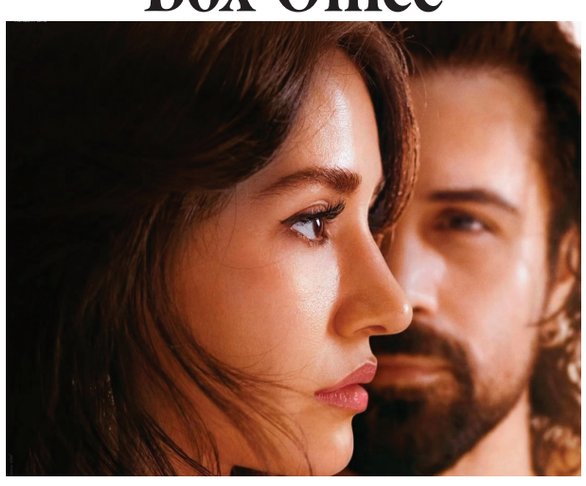
The film is backed by Sahu Garapati under the Shine Screens banner and presented by Suresh Productions, Smt. Archana, and Zee Studios. Keerthy Suresh and Krithi Shetty are the heroines.

Golden Glow For Sonal



Sonal Chauhan, who won hearts with her performances in movies like Legend, Dictator and F3, may not have had a major release on the big screen lately, but the actress continues to stay in the spotlight. While her film appearances have been limited in recent times, Sonal has hardly disappeared from the public eye, thanks to her glamorous social media presence and frequent modelling appearances. The actress recently treated her followers to a stunning set of pictures, dressed in an elegant white and gold saree. Looking every bit regal, Sonal opted for traditional jewellery and subtle makeup, while the warm golden backdrop added an effortlessly dreamy touch to the photoshoot. Her graceful poses and striking appearance once again proved why she remains a favourite among fashion enthusiasts and social media followers.

Sequel to a Disaster Now Shaking the Box Office



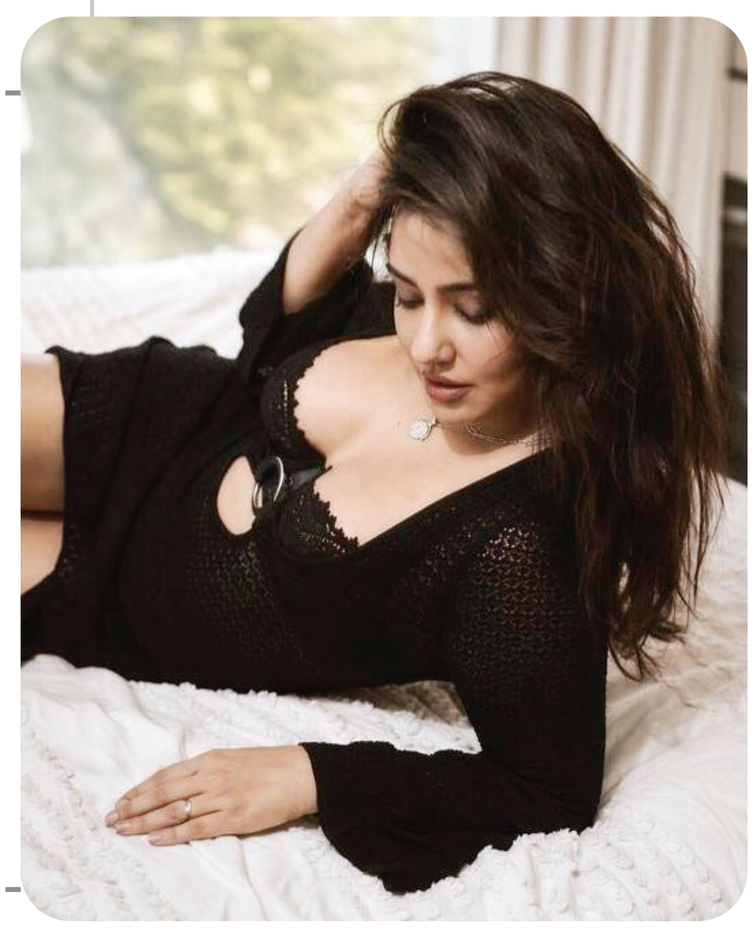
Emraan Hasmi starrer Awarapan 2 is creating a surprising buzz even before its theatrical release. The sequel to the 2007 film is witnessing strong advance bookings, leaving the industry surprised by the level of interest surrounding the film. The biggest twist is that Awarapan was actually a box office disaster when it arrived in theatres. The Emraan Hashmi starrer reportedly earned only around 7 crore in its entire theatrical run. However, the film slowly developed a cult following over the years. Its popularity on television, home media and streaming platforms completely changed the perception surrounding the film. That newfound popularity is now translating into strong demand for Awarapan 2. The sequel has already sold more than 1.5 lakh tickets for its opening day, according to the latest tracking.The advance bookings have reportedly crossed 5 crore for Day 1, while the opening weekend bookings are said to have crossed 10 crore gross. This is already higher than the lifetime business of the original. The sequel is now tracking towards a massive opening, with trade estimates suggesting a possible 15 crore to 20 crore Day 1. If that happens, it would be a remarkable turnaround for the franchise. From a theatrical disaster to a cult favourite and now a potential blockbuster opener, Awarapan has witnessed an unbelievable transformation. All eyes are now on whether Awarapan 2 can convert this pre relea se craze into strong theatrical numbers.

What's Next For Peddi Director?



Director Buchi Babu was one of the most talked-about makers before the release of Peddi. Thanks to the massive buzz around Ram Charan's film, he enjoyed tremendous popularity among movie lovers. Many believed Peddi would take his career to the next level. While the film performed well in several areas, a section pointed out certain flaws in the story and screenplay. Adding to that, the controversy involving Janhvi Kapoor became a major talking point and indirectly affected the film. But Buchi Babu handled the criticism maturely and openly apologized, earning appreciation from many. Now, attention has shifted towards his next project. Interestingly, there is plenty of buzz but no official announcement yet. Before Peddi was released, reports suggested that Buchi Babu was in talks to direct Mahesh Babu. Later, another report claimed that he would once again team up with Ram Charan. However, neither of those films has materialized so far. The latest speculation is that Buchi Babu is developing a script for Megastar Chiranjeevi. While the news has generated excitement among fans, there has been no official confirmation from either side. At a time when young directors are lining up back-to-back projects, many feel Buchi Babu should speed things up and announce his next film soon. His talent is unquestionable, but now fans are eagerly waiting for concrete updates rather than rumors.

Neha Sharma Looks Every Bit The Glam Queen



Neha Sharma, who made her Tollywood debut with Chirutha, has come a long way since her early days in Telugu cinema. While she has been away from the Telugu big screen for quite some time, the actress continues to stay busy with modelling assignments, fashion shoots and social media promotions. Her glamorous appearances have ensured that she remains a familiar face among fans. Now in her late 30s, Neha Sharma is showing that age is hardly a factor when it comes to owning the fashion game. In her latest monochrome pictures, the actress opted for a striking black outfit and posed effortlessly on a bed, creating an elegant yet bold aesthetic. With her flowing hair, minimal accessories and confident poses, Neha once again proves that she can effortlessly nail a sophisticated photoshoot.

Sharwa's Sankranti Special



Charming Star Sharwa collaborates for the first time with director Sreenu Vaitla, who is known for making wholesome entertainers. Presented by ATV and backed by Ramabrahmam Sunkara under Anil Sunkara's AK Entertainments, with Ajay Sunkara as co-producer, the project was launched spectacularly today with a pooja ceremony. The movie is intriguingly titled George Krish and is slated for a Sankranti release on January 14 next year. The poster looks colourful, with traditional patterns and a stylised hourglass coming together to create a distinctive identity. The title itself is designed like handwritten artwork, surrounded by bold black brush strokes. A miniature romantic silhouette of Sharwa and the heroine has also been cleverly embedded into the design. Sharwa has already enjoyed memorable festive outings with Shatamanam Bhavati, Express Raja, and Nari Nari Naduma Murari, making the Sankranti window a familiar territory for the actor. The film brings together an experienced technical crew. KV Guhan is behind the camera, Anup Rubens is composing the music, and Avinash Kolla is designing the production. Amar Reddy Kudumula is the editor, while Nandu Savirigana and Gopi Mohan are the writers. The worldwide theatrical distributors have also been revealed, adding an interesting surprise, as such an announcement has never been made before on the same day the film was launched.

VISA: Love, Fun & Chaos



Ashok Galla's VISA – Vintara Saradaga has released its second teaser, offering a fun glimpse into a quirky romantic journey. Told from Ashok Galla's character's point of view, the teaser blends love, humour and chaos, with a clever reference to Mahesh Babu's Khaleja standing out. Set against an American backdrop, the film follows an unexpected romance filled with youthful fun and emotional moments. Sri Gouri Priya, Rahul Vijay, Shivathmika Rajasekhar and Harsha Chemudu add to the entertaining ensemble. Directed by Udbhav Raghu, VISA is produced by Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas. The film releases worldwide on October 17th.

Printed, Published, Edited and Owned by Pisati Janga Reddy, Printed at : Jayadurga Printers, Plot No.48, H.No.24114/ 3/1, Survey.No.551, Laxmi Narayana Nagar, Uppal, Medchal District, Telangana State.
Published at : Flat No.303A, Prajay Alakapuri Apartments, Road No.2, Green Hills Colony, Kothapet, Hyderabad 500035,Ranga Reddy District, Telangana State.
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India's Real Estate Boom

Rising Demand, Prices and the Affordability Challenge

India's real estate sector is no longer simply a story of rising property prices and rapid urbanisation. In 2026, the market is entering a more mature and differentiated phase, where demand remains strong but buyers, developers and investors are behaving very differently from a decade ago. The broad picture is positive. Residential demand remains resilient, organised developers are expanding their market share, commercial real estate continues to benefit from office and business expansion, and infrastructure development is opening new investment corridors. At the same time, the market is becoming increasingly divided between premium housing and affordable housing. The latest data underline this transformation. JLL reported that residential sales across India's major markets reached 70,631 units in the first quarter of 2026, an 8% year-on-year increase. However, the growth was concentrated in higher-priced homes: sales of properties priced above ₹1 crore increased 30%, while the sub-₹1 crore segment contracted 24%. This does not mean the Indian housing market is weakening. Rather, it means the composition of demand is changing.

Housing Demand Remains Strong

The most important feature of the current market is that genuine end-user demand has remained relatively healthy.

India's expanding urban population, rising household incomes, improving employment opportunities and greater preference for better-quality housing continue to support residential demand. Buyers are increasingly looking for homes that provide better connectivity, security, amenities, parking, open spaces and access to schools and workplaces.

This is particularly visible in major metropolitan areas such as Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Chennai. CBRE's Q1 2026 assessment described the residential market as resilient, with steady end-user demand and increased project launches. Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad were among the major contributors to new supply.

The important change is that buyers are becoming more selective. They are not simply purchasing because property prices are expected to rise. Reputation of the developer, construction quality, delivery record, location, infrastructure and future resale potential have become increasingly important. This is benefiting established and financially stronger developers.

The Rise of Premium and Luxury Housing

Perhaps the biggest structural change in Indian real estate is the extraordinary growth of premium and luxury housing. For years, India's housing market was dominated by the aspiration to purchase a reasonably priced apartment. Today, a growing section of urban households is willing to pay substantially more for larger homes, superior amenities and better locations.

JLL's Q1 2026 data show how dramatic this change has become. Sales in the ₹1.5 crore to ₹3 crore segment increased 67% year-on-year, while premium housing above ₹1 crore recorded a 30% increase. Property values in major urban markets have also recorded significant annual increases.

This trend is being supported by rising wealth, successful entrepreneurs, professionals, business owners, NRIs and high-income households.

Luxury housing is also becoming an investment and lifestyle product. Buyers increasingly expect private elevators, large terraces, clubhouses, concierge services, smart-home technology, wellness facilities and premium community infrastructure.

The extreme end of this market demonstrates how much India's wealthier consumers are willing to spend. Recent transactions in Mumbai and Gurugram have involved residences worth hundreds of crores, reflecting the emergence of a genuine ultra-luxury housing market.

However, this boom also raises an important question: is India's real estate industry moving too far away from the needs of ordinary homebuyers?



The Affordable Housing Problem

The biggest weakness in the current market is affordability. While premium housing is booming, affordable housing supply is becoming increasingly difficult for developers to deliver. Land prices have increased substantially in many urban areas. Construction materials, labour, financing and compliance costs have also risen. At the same time, developers generally earn better margins from premium projects. This creates a commercial incentive to concentrate on larger and more expensive homes. KPMG's assessment of India's housing sector highlights the problem: rising land prices, construction costs, restrictive development norms and delays in approvals are making affordable housing projects increasingly difficult to execute.Recent market data point in the same direction. A report published in August 2026 found that inventory of homes below ₹1 crore had declined, while premium housing inventory increased sharply. This creates a paradox. India needs millions of homes for its growing urban population, but the market is increasingly producing homes that are unaffordable for a large section of that population. The challenge for policymakers is therefore not simply to increase the number of houses. It is to ensure that sufficient housing is available at prices that middle-income and lower-income households can actually afford.

Prices Are Rising, But the Market Is Not Uniform

One of the biggest mistakes in analysing Indian real estate is treating the country as one single market. Property prices are moving differently across cities, suburbs and individual neighbourhoods. A premium project close to an established business district can behave very differently from an apartment development on the outskirts of the same city. Infrastructure, employment, population growth, road connectivity, metro expansion and availability of commercial activity can dramatically change the investment potential of a location. Mumbai continues to command exceptionally high prices because of land scarcity, employment concentration and strong wealth creation. Delhi-NCR has benefited from expanding infrastructure and corporate activity. Bengaluru remains supported by the technology sector. Hyderabad has developed into a major technology, office and residential market. Pune and Chennai continue to benefit from manufacturing, IT and services growth. Beyond the major metropolitan areas, new growth corridors are also emerging as highways, airports, metro systems, industrial parks and business districts expand. This means that the future of Indian real estate will increasingly be determined by connectivity.

Infrastructure Is Reshaping Property Markets

Infrastructure has become one of the strongest forces influencing property values. A new metro line, expressway, airport, ring road or commercial district can transform the economics of an entire locality. Areas that were once considered peripheral can become attractive residential markets when travel times to employment centres fall.

Developers are therefore increasingly acquiring land in areas where future infrastructure is expected to improve connectivity. JLL reported that developers acquired more than 3,000 acres through over 149 transactions during 2025, with the land valued at more than ₹54,000 crore and estimated development potential exceeding 200 million square feet across 20 major cities. This indicates that developers are preparing for continued expansion.

But infrastructure-led appreciation comes with a warning. Investors should distinguish between infrastructure that is actually funded and under construction and projects that exist mainly as announcements. Property markets can rise rapidly on expectations, but prices can also disappoint if promised infrastructure is delayed. The Organised Developer Is Becoming More Important

The Indian real estate industry is gradually becoming more organised. Consumers have become more cautious about purchasing property, particularly after years in which delayed projects and financially stressed developers created uncertainty for homebuyers. Buyers today increasingly prefer companies with strong balance sheets, established brands and a proven record of completing projects. This shift is strengthening the position of listed and large organised developers. A recent industry estimate projects that leading listed residential developers could record combined pre-sales of about ₹1.82 lakh crore in FY27, compared with ₹1.49 lakh crore in FY26, representing growth of approximately 22%. The growth of organised developers has wider implications. Larger companies have better access to institutional capital, can acquire land more systematically and are generally better positioned to withstand fluctuations in the property cycle. For consumers, consolidation can also improve transparency and execution, although it does not eliminate project-specific risks. Commercial Real Estate Is Adding Another Layer of Strength India's real estate story is not limited to residential housing. Commercial real estate, particularly office space, remains an important pillar of the sector. India's growing services economy, global capability centres, technology companies, financial services and multinational businesses are supporting demand for quality office space.

The country's office market has also become increasingly important to global investors. During the first half of 2026, India's office sector was among the major contributors to the recovery of Asia-Pacific real estate investment activity, according to a Colliers-based market assessment. The expansion of commercial districts also supports residential markets. When offices, retail centres, schools, hospitals and entertainment facilities develop together, surrounding residential areas become more attractive. This is why integrated urban development is becoming a major theme in Indian real estate.



Interest Rates Remain an Important Factor

The cost of borrowing remains critical for the housing market. Homebuyers often make their purchasing decision based not only on the property price but also on the monthly EMI. A change in interest rates can therefore influence housing affordability and demand. In August 2026, the Reserve Bank of India kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25%, while maintaining a cautious approach because of inflation and global uncertainties. At the same time, the RBI retained a relatively positive assessment of domestic economic growth. Stable interest rates provide some predictability to homebuyers. However, property prices themselves have increased significantly in many urban markets. Therefore, even when financing conditions are relatively supportive, affordability can remain difficult. The future direction of interest rates will remain important, particularly for first-time buyers who depend heavily on housing loans.

The New Real Estate Investor Is More Selective

Property remains deeply embedded in Indian investment culture, but the nature of property investment is changing. Earlier, many investors purchased land or apartments primarily because they expected prices to increase. Today, sophisticated investors increasingly consider rental income, location quality, infrastructure, developer credibility, liquidity and long-term demand. This is particularly important because high property prices can reduce rental yields. An apartment purchased at a very high valuation may appreciate over time but generate relatively modest rental income. Therefore, investors should not assume that every expensive property is automatically a good investment. The distinction between an attractive home and an attractive investment has become increasingly important.

Tier-II Cities Could Become the Next Growth Engine

India's next major real estate opportunity may not come entirely from the largest metropolitan cities. As housing prices rise in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR and other major markets, businesses and households are increasingly looking toward Tier-II and emerging cities. Improving highways, airports, digital connectivity, industrial development and remote or hybrid work arrangements can support this transition. Cities with expanding manufacturing, logistics, education, healthcare and technology ecosystems could see sustained property demand. However, the success of Tier-II markets will depend on whether employment growth accompanies residential development. Building large numbers of apartments without creating sufficient economic activity can lead to oversupply.

Therefore, the strongest emerging markets will be those where jobs, infrastructure and housing develop together.

Technology Is Changing the Way Property Is Bought and Managed

Technology is also reshaping Indian real estate. Homebuyers can now compare projects, examine floor plans, calculate EMIs, evaluate locations and conduct virtual property visits without physically visiting every project. Developers are using data analytics to understand buyer preferences and determine where new projects should be launched. Property management is becoming increasingly digital, while smart-home systems are becoming more common in premium developments. Artificial intelligence could further change the sector by improving property valuation, demand forecasting, customer engagement and project management. However, technology cannot eliminate the fundamental importance of location and physical infrastructure. A sophisticated digital experience cannot compensate for poor connectivity, weak construction quality or inadequate civic services.