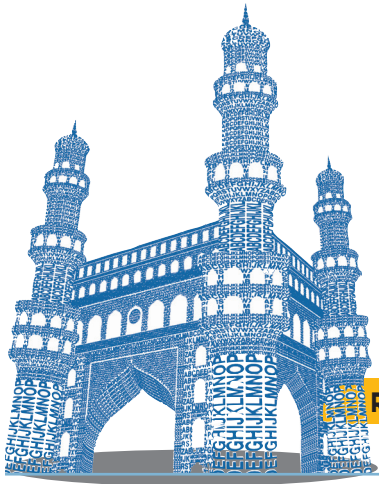




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A New BJP Team Built for the Road Ahead

OPINION 06

Nidhhi's Next Is A Mythical THRILLER

BOX OFFICE 12



SHORT

TAKES

Jharkhand Cancels 44 Recruitment Exams

The Jharkhand government has cancelled 44 recruitment exams conducted by the JPSC and TSR Data Processing Pvt Ltd since 2014 over alleged irregularities. The cancelled exams include recruitment for drug inspectors, assistant professors, deputy collectors, engineers, civil judges and forest officers.

Trump Approval Hits Presidency Low

US President Donald Trump's approval rating has fallen to 33%, its lowest level of his current presidency, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll. The survey found 64% disapprove of his performance, while 80% expect US involvement in the Iran conflict to continue for an extended period. Only one in five Americans believe the war has been worth the cost, while rising fuel prices and economic concerns are putting pressure on Republicans ahead of the November elections.

Kharge Hits Back at Amit Shah

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hit back at Home Minister Amit Shah over the Vande Mataram row, saying Shah was a child when he first became an MLA and questioning his right to lecture Congress leaders on patriotism. The remarks came after Shah accused Sonia of stopping Vande Mataram mid way during an Independence Day event.

FOREST OFFICIALS CAUGHT IN ACB NET OVER Rs.50K BRIBE

Nagarkurnool, Aug.18:

Two forest officials attached to the Lingala Forest Office in Nagarkurnool district have landed in the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) net for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe from a person transporting wood from the Nallamala Forest. The accused were identified as Ram Babu (A1), forest section officer, and Murali Krishna (A2), forest beat officer. According to the ACB, the accused officers intercepted the complainant and others on July 23, 2026, while they were transporting wood and allegedly threatened to register a forest case and seize their bullock carts unless a bribe was paid.

The officials initially demanded Rs.1.20 lakh, which was later reduced to Rs.50,000. The complainant allegedly paid Rs.28,000 through PhonePe and Rs.22,000 in cash.



The officials subsequently demanded another Rs.6,000 for issuing an official receipt, the ACB said. The ACB alleged that the officials acted improperly and dishonestly in the discharge of their official duties to obtain undue advantage for themselves.

Both the accused are being produced before the Additional Special Judge for SPE & ACB cases, Nampally, for judicial remand. The case is under investigation. The identity of the complainant has been withheld for security reasons. The public can contact the ACB on 1064 to report demands for bribes by public servants.

Harish Rao demands Ponguleti's resignation over section 22A land list

HYDERABAD, AUG.18

Former minister and BRS deputy floor leader T. Harish Rao on Tuesday demanded that Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy resign on moral grounds over the large-scale inclusion of private properties in the Section 22A prohibited properties list across Telangana.

Addressing a protest in Malkajgiri demanding the immediate cancellation of the 22A prohibited lands list, Harish Rao said the Congress government had created widespread confusion and anxiety among lakhs of property owners by adding entire colonies and large numbers of properties to the prohibited list without proper verification.

“Revanth Reddy’s government has become like a stone in the hands of a madman. A government that is supposed to solve people’s problems is creating new problems. If entire colo-



nies are suddenly placed under Section 22A, where should ordinary people go? Should citizens be made to run around

government offices and wear out their footwear to correct mistakes made by the Government?” he asked.

Harish Rao recalled that the Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) Act was repealed by the then Congress government in 2008 and that several lands subsequently became regular patta properties, with families living on them for decades. He questioned why an issue that had not existed for nearly 20 years was suddenly being created by the present Government.

Harish Rao alleged that lands covered by exemptions issued through various Government Orders, including around 7,500 lands in Rangareddy district and more than 6,000 properties in Medchal, along with HMDA and HUDA lands, had also been included in the prohibited list.

He said the government’s actions had created serious uncertainty for people across Rangareddy, Medchal and other parts of the State.

“People often do not even know that their property has been placed under the prohibited list until they approach the Sub-Registrar’s office to sell it. One does not know how many lakhs of houses and plots have been included in this list,” Harish Rao said.

He also alleged that there were serious complaints that landowners were being asked for a substantial share of land or development rights in order to have properties removed from the prohibited list.

“If such allegations are true, it is an extremely serious matter. The Government must immediately order an independent investigation and establish who included these properties in the prohibited list, on whose instructions they were included and who is now removing them,” he said.

Harish Rao strongly criticised Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy for attempting to shift responsibility onto officials.

Too Many Inspections, Zero Results Public Demands Immediate Solution

Medchal-Malkajgiri,

August 18: BJP senior leader Kanchi Mahender has strongly criticized local authorities for ignoring a dangerous bridge between Netaji Colony and Shobhana Colony, after it collapsed and became a risk to the public.

According to Mahender, the bridge has weakened and the area around it has become heavily affected by piled-up garbage. Because of this, residents are facing serious difficulties in daily life.

He said that nearly ten days ago, former corporator and AE officials visited the spot, inspected the situation, and left without taking any action so far. He accused the officials of failing to respond despite the ongoing danger.

Mahender warned that with both the damaged bridge and the garbage accumulation,



an accident could happen at any time. He demanded that authorities act immediately before anyone’s life is put in danger.

“Officials came, inspected the site, and left, but the problem remains unresolved. Mere inspections and assurances will not solve this issue; officials must provide an immedi-

ate and permanent solution for the people,” he said.

He urged the administration to respond right away in Fateh Nagar by repairing the collapsed bridge and clearing the garbage piled in the area. “Is this the condition of our Fateh Nagar?” he questioned, calling for urgent steps to protect public safety.

ELECTRICITY EMPLOYEES TO HOLD MAHA DHARNA TODAY

HYDERABAD, AUG.18

Electricity employees, artisans and pensioners across Telangana will stage a 'Maha Dharna' at Vidyt Soudha here on August 19 to press for resolution of their long-pending demands. The Telangana electricity employees' JAC leaders, including Chairman Saibaba, Convener Ratnakar Rao, Secretary General Sridhar, Co-Convener B.C. Reddy and Vice-Chairmen Mahesh and Vazir, appealed to employees and pensioners to participate in large numbers.

The JAC leaders said the decision to hold the protest was taken after the managements of Transco, Genco and Discoms failed to respond to their

request for a joint meeting submitted on June 18.

They said the protest could be withdrawn if the managements extend an unconditional invitation for talks and assure the employees of resolving their grievances. The leaders also appealed to employees to participate unitedly without being deterred by alleged pressure or intimidation.

Several JAC representatives, including Medi Ramesh, Sadanandam, Tajuddin Baba, Bhupal Reddy, Eshwar Goud, Srinivas Reddy, Suresh Kumar, Vidyasagar, Venkateswarlu, Bhaskara Rao, Venkatesh, Yugandhar, Ashok Kumar, Rajendra Prasad, Anil Kumar and Srikanth, were also present.

FAKE IDs USED TO GRAB TIRUMALA ROOMS BROKER GANG BUSTED

TIRUMALA, AUG.18

TTD Vigilance officials have foiled an alleged broker racket involving the procurement of Tirumala accommodation using fake identity documents and its subsequent sale to devotees at higher prices.

The racket came to light on August 16 when CRO staff noticed a man who had already secured a room returning to the queue under another identity. He was apprehended and

identified as Ashiq Ali P.M. (32) of Malappuram, Kerala. Vigilance officials seized two fake Aadhaar cards, a room registration slip, Rs.800 in cash and a mobile phone from him. During questioning, Ashiq Ali reportedly revealed that he was working for a broker identified as Ranjith and was paid Rs. 1,000 for each room secured using fake documents. The investigation is underway to identify other members of the alleged gang.

Telangana has a regime of ROBBERY' IN THE STATE: AALETI

HYDERABAD, AUG 18

BJP Legislature Party Leader Aaleti Maheshwar Reddy today lashed out at the Congress government in Telangana, stating that instead of protecting public assets, it was acting like a broker and had paved the way for a land scam worth lakhs of crores of rupees. He slammed state Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy—who is supposed to safeguard the people's assets—for turning into a "Robbery Minister" and looting the state exchequer and public property.

Maheshwar Reddy criticized the Congress government for acting in direct contradiction to the government's constitutional obligation—under Article 300A—to protect citizens' right to property. He stated that even small plots of 60 or 100 square yards, purchased by the poor and added that the middle class through hard-earned savings, were being included in the section '22A Prohibited List,' causing them severe fear and anxiety. He stated that including properties—which had obtained all requisite approvals from GHMC, HMDA, and RERA and secured bank loan sanctions—under the '22A' list (prohibited list) was a tes-



tament to the government's malicious administration. He alleged that by dragging these properties into disputes, officials were extorting huge sums from builders and the public, demanding a 30% to 40% share to remove them from that list.

Maheshwar Reddy challenged the state government to immediately release a white paper detailing the state Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy's assets prior to assuming office versus those acquired after becoming a minister. He alleged that the 'Phoenix' group, which acted as a benami (proxy) and broker for the previous government, was now playing a pivotal

role as an intermediary under the Congress government as well. He presented evidence showing the transfer of the assets worth approximately ₹15,000 crore from the Phoenix group to Raghava Constructions, a company owned by Ponguleti's family. He said that Seven acres of land (valued at approximately ₹1,200 crore) were transferred from 'Phoenix Spaces Private Limited' in the Financial District to the 'Raghava Nova' project and added that the Seven acres of land were transferred from 'Phoenix Embassy Tech Zone Private Limited' in the Financial District to 'Raghava Sync'. Projects such as the massive 61-story complex under construction in Kokapet and the 12-acre commercial tower sites in Hitech City also passed from Phoenix into the hands of the Raghava Group. He claimed that the Lands originally allocated by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC) were also transferred to their companies through coercive tactics and added that In the process of converting the zoning of approximately 400 acres along the Srisailem Highway (Kandukur area), they not only secured a 30% share but also appropriated the land for themselves.

NHAI expands digital FASTag Local Pass facility to 121 toll plazas nationwide

HYDERABAD, AUG 19

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has expanded its online FASTag Local Pass facility to 121 toll plazas across the country, allowing eligible commuters to apply for monthly passes digitally through the Rajmargayatra mobile app.

The initiative is aimed at making National Highway travel more convenient by eliminating the need for eligible local commuters to visit toll plazas and submit physical documents for obtaining a Local Pass.

Under the digital system, residents living within a 20-km radius of an eligible toll plaza can apply for the pass online. The Local Pass allows eligible commuters to make unlimited trips through the respective toll plaza during the month, subject to applicable provisions.

The first digital Local Pass facility was launched in July 2026 at the Mundka-Bakkarwala Toll Plaza on Delhi's Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II). Following the rollout, NHAI has now extended the facility to more than 120 toll



plazas across the country and plans to cover additional toll plazas in the coming months.

Digital verification replaces physical documentation

Previously, commuters seeking a Local Pass had to visit the concerned toll plaza and submit documents to establish their residential address and other eligibility requirements.

The new system uses consent-based integration with government digital platforms, including DigiLocker and VAHAN, to retrieve and verify information such as the applicant's residential address, vehicle details and linked FASTag.

Eligibility is further determined through GIS-based verification, which checks

whether the applicant's registered address falls within the prescribed 20-km radius of the relevant toll plaza.

NHAI said the integration of verified digital information with GIS-based validation eliminates the requirement for manual documentation and physical verification. It is also expected to improve consistency and accuracy in determining eligibility while reducing manual intervention.

The authority said the digitalisation of Local Pass services is part of the government's broader Digital India and Ease of Living initiatives and is intended to make tolling operations more transparent, efficient and citizen-centric.

CM ANNOUNCES PENSION FOR ALL ELIGIBLE TODDY TAPPERS

FROM PAGE 1

media platforms against the government. It was the KCR government which encouraged people to practice their traditional occupations like rearing buffaloes and sheep, stitch footwear and fishing by ignoring their children's education. After the People's Government assumed power, the CM said that children from these communities were encouraged to pursue education, become doctors, lawyers, and IAS officers, and participate in the rebuilding of Telangana. “ This is a Telangana of the Bahujans. We have proven that social justice and the freedom to live are hallmarks of the 'Indiramma' administration” . The Chief Minister appealed to all communities to continue traditional occupation and also ensure the children get education. The Government is ready to allocate adequate funds for students and also provide quality food .

Demarcating KCR's ' Family justice' and his ' social justice ' formula in the state administration , CM Revanth Reddy said that he appointed Mahesh Goud as the Congress party president. When KCR was Chief Minister, Harish Rao and KTR became key figures (acting like Chief Ministers). BC leaders Ponnamm Prabhakar , Vak- iti Srihari, Seethakka, and Konda Surekha became ministers in his government. KCR appointed Santosh Kumar as Rajya Sabha MP. The People's Government nominated Anil Kumar Yadav and Vem Narendar Reddy as MPs. Vinod Kumar was appointed as the Plan-

ning Commission Chairman after his defeat and KCR's daughter was made MLC after she lost MP elections. We appointed Kodandaram as an MLC, granddaughter of the heroic woman Chakali Ailamma and Srikanthachari's mother, Shankaramma, as members of the Telangana State Women's Commission. “ This government does not belong to me alone. It is a government dedicated to social justice and welfare. It belongs to everyone.”

The Chief Minister took a broadside at the opposition leaders for performing ' Kshudra pooja ' against the wellbeing of the Telangana state. The BRS leader ‘ Aghora Rao' went to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and performed occult rituals praying for drought and wishing for farmers to suffer losses. Those who practice black magic should be tied to trees and beaten, the CM charged.

The CM listed out the measures taken to strengthen the education system. In the past, quality meals were not served in welfare hostels. The People's government was serving meals made with fine-quality rice, nutritious breakfasts, as well as Milk and Ragi malt to the children. The Chief minister stressed that education is the only way for our children to rise to positions of power and leadership. Even if it involves hardship or financial strain, children must be sent to school and the government will take the responsibility for their education. The Government was already providing a monthly stipend of Rs

2,000 to those enrolling in ATCs (Advanced Training Centres).

Affirming that the Congress will win 117 seats and retain power for the second time, the CM said that TPCC President Mahesh Goud and he as Chief Minister, will bring the government back to power. We will return to power. The CM urged the Gouda community to extend their full support .

CM Revanth Reddy alleged that KCR, KTR, Harish Rao, and Kavitha have built farmhouses spanning hundreds of acres. We are constructing 7 lakh 'Indiramma' houses . Had KCR built houses during his 10 -year tenure, 20 lakh homes could have been constructed. However, the BRS leader showed no concern for the poor man's housing needs.

The Chief minister also came down heavily on KCR for not allowing people into Pragathi Bhavan or the Secretariat . We liberated Ande Sri's song and ensured Gaddar's name is immortalized. We conducted a BC caste census and implemented SC categorization; we are constantly working for the people. A debt burden of ₹8.11 lakh crore has become a major threat to us and paying ₹75,000 crore annually as interest on the loans borrowed during KCR rule. We provided ₹36,000 crore under the 'Rythu Bharaosa' scheme and procured Paddy worth ₹95,000 crore. The People's Government facilitated bank-linked loans worth ₹60,000 crore for women's self-help groups and established 'Young India' integrated schools in every constituency at

a cost of ₹200 crore each. We also launched the 'Young India' Sports University and Sports Academy.

Remembering the services of Sardar Papanna Goud, the CM said that Papanna Goud was a hero who emerged from the Bahujans and did not work solely for his own caste or family. Goud led a campaign alongside the Bahujans and hoisted the flag atop the Golconda Fort. His inspiring legacy must always remain with the people of Telangana, CM Revanth Reddy said that he visited Necklace Road and suggested installing statues of Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule there. It was also proposed to demolish the tourism office located on Tank Bund to make way for the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud.

Stating that Shivaji holds great significance in Maharashtra, the Bahujans of Telangana accord equal importance to the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud, the Chief minister ordered the officials to ensure proper lighting and all other necessary arrangements are made at the statue site. The details regarding Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud are preserved in the British Library and it was from there that we learned about his history. It is the responsibility of the Gowda community to safeguard this magnificent statue. It must be carefully maintained and kept accessible to the public so that it continues to inspire them.

The CM mentioned that leaders like Bala Goud and Mallikarjun Goud rose to prominence within the Congress party.

TELANGANA TARGETS GLOBAL HUB FOR CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES: BHATTI

FROM PAGE 1

As part of its endeavour, Telangana aims to expand solar power capacity to 20,000 MW by 2030 and over 26,000 MW by 2035, he said. Bhatti Vikramarka also highlighted the importance of energy storage for renewable energy integration, stating that through battery energy storage and pumped storage projects, the state plans to achieve 3,800 MW storage capacity by 2030 and 8,000 MW by 2035.

“Hyderabad’s strengths in IT and AI are being leveraged to transform the future power

grid into a digital network. A dedicated 100 MW renewable energy plant is being planned to support an AI data center in the proposed 'Bharat Future City,' he said. The Deputy Chief Minister further stated that the state has set targets of producing 400,000 tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030 and establishing 12,000 EV charging stations by 2035. He stated that this energy transformation is only possible through strong government-private partnerships and invited industrialists to join hands with Telangana in this journey.

NIPHM TRAINS AGRI EXPERTS IN SAFE PESTICIDE USE

FROM PAGE 1

Rajendranagar, where participants gained hands-on insights into soil fertility management and sustainable approaches to improving crop productivity. NIPHM, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, said the programme aimed to strengthen technical skills, promote responsible pesticide use and contribute to safer farming and sustainable agricultural development.

Revanth Takes Key Call on 22-A Lands

FROM PAGE 1

District Collectors were ordered to examine the lands on the '22-A' list thoroughly and prepare an accurate list to ensure a permanent resolution ensuring no errors in the process . The entire process should be completed expeditiously. The Chief Minister appealed to people not to worry about their land rights. The state government is committed to safeguarding citizens' property rights. The government will not allow any issues or controversy to arise regarding even a single inch of private land.

People have been requested not to approach brokers or middlemen regarding '22-A' lands. Do not believe any rumors or fabricated stories.

Ponguleti urges cement companies to partner with Indiramma Indlu scheme

FROM PAGE 1

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy further stated that the State government has also set a target of constructing one lakh houses within the CURE limits and has experimentally launched the Indiramma Towers project in 16 Assembly constituencies. The Minister said Telangana was the only State in the country providing financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh with 100 per cent subsidy for the construction of houses for the poor.

“Telangana is setting an example for the entire country in this regard. Irrespective of the financial burden on the government, there will be no compromise in providing houses to the poor. Funds are being released transparently every Monday in instalments to each beneficiary based on the progress of construction,” Srinivasa Reddy said. He said the government would discharge its responsibility with full commitment until every poor family was able to live in its own house.

TG Post Offers Special Festive Services

Hyderabad, Aug.18: The Telangana Postal Circle has introduced special products and services for the ongoing festive season, including Gangajal from Gangotri and dedicated Rakhi envelopes. During the Shravanamasa season, sacred Gangajal sourced directly from Gangotri is available in 250-ml bottles at Rs.30 each. The product can be purchased at all district headquarters Head Post Offices, select post offices across Telangana and through the India Post online portal at www.epostoffice.gov.in.

For Raksha Bandhan, special Rakhi Post envelopes priced at Rs.15 each have been made available at selected post offices to facilitate safe mailing of Rakhis. The Postal Circle is also offering a 10 percent discount on Speed Post postage charges for Rakhi Mail from August 12, 2026, across the postal network.

Your Toilet Is Not a Dustbin: HMWSSB Launches Sewer Cleanup Drive in KPHB

■ Residents urged to stop flushing diapers, sanitary pads and plastics as officials warn that improper disposal is causing repeated sewer blockages, health risks and sanitation problems in KPHB Colony.

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

Sewage cleaning operations were carried out in KPHB Colony 7th Phase after residents reported persistent blockages and drainage problems. The HMWSSB Sewerage Cops conducted the cleanup under the supervision of the Sewerage Supervisor and with the guidance of Mamatha, Manager of the KPHB Colony and Vasanth Nagar wards.

Members of the KPHB Colony 7th Phase Residents Welfare Society supported the HMWSSB team by identifying the sewer stretches where repeated blockages and drainage disruptions had been observed. Their assistance enabled the department to locate the affected sections and undertake cleaning on a priority basis.

During the operation, officials found that the sewer lines had been obstructed by improperly discarded items, including di-



apers, sanitary pads and polythene covers. These materials do not break down easily in sewage systems and can accumulate inside pipelines, restrict the flow of wastewater and cause repeated overflows and sanitation problems.

HMWSSB Kukatpally Zone General Manager Harishankar appealed to residents to treat the sewerage network as essential public infrastructure and to protect it through responsible household practices. He stated that

flushing non-degradable waste not only damages the sewer system but also creates health hazards, unpleasant surroundings and additional maintenance costs for the community.

HMWSSB Kukatpally Circle Deputy General Manager Trinadha Rao urged residents to act responsibly and cooperate with sanitation teams. He said that sewer blockages cannot be prevented through departmental cleaning alone, stressing that every household must ensure that diapers,

sanitary pads, plastic covers, wipes and other solid waste are wrapped and disposed of through the proper garbage-collection system.

As part of the awareness campaign, HMWSSB officials urged residents to follow responsible waste-disposal practices. Mamatha emphasized that diapers, sanitary pads, plastics and other solid waste must never be flushed into toilets or discarded into sewer lines.

The officials warned that careless disposal affects the entire neighbourhood, causing wastewater backups, foul odours, mosquito breeding and potential contamination of the local environment. They appealed to residents, domestic workers, shopkeepers and apartment associations to spread awareness and ensure that no solid waste enters toilets, drains or sewer lines.

The cleanup drive combined technical maintenance with community participation and public awareness. HMWSSB requested residents of KPHB Colony and surrounding areas to cooperate with the department and the Residents Welfare Society to keep the sewer network clear, protect public health and prevent such blockages from recurring.



Workshop on Fire Service No Objection Certificate Held at ESCI

HYDERABAD

Telangana Fire Services Director General VikramSingh Mann said that obtaining a Provisional Fire Service No Objection Certificate (NOC) issued by the Fire Services Department is mandatory before commencing the construction of buildings. He said the provisional approval ensures that the proposed building design complies with prescribed fire safety standards. The Final Fire Safety Certificate will be issued only after completion of the building and physical inspection of the fire safety systems and facilities.

Vikram Singh Mann, along with senior officials, inaugurated the "Workshop on Simplified Provisional NOC and Adoption of New Technologies", jointly organised by CREDAI,

National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), Telangana Fire Services and the Fire and Security Association of India (FSAI).

The workshop was held on Tuesday, 18 August 2026, at the Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI). Structural engineers from various real estate agencies, fire safety officials and representatives of several industries participated in the workshop.

He said that the Fire Services Department has moved the building approval process to a fully online system, enabling applicants to complete processes such as uploading building design plans, paying fees and downloading provisional certificates online, without the need for physical visits to offices.

He further said that the Fire Services Department is adopting mod-

ern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), sensors, drones and digital monitoring systems. These technologies help in identifying potential fire and safety hazards in real time, enabling faster response and improved fire safety.

ESCI Director Col. Harpal Singh Grewal, Fire Services Additional Director Prasanna Kumar, CREDAI President N. Jayadev Reddy, NAREDCO President K. Sridhar Reddy, Fire and Security Association of India representative Manoj Vahi, and other senior officials participated in the workshop. 10 Officials from the Centre for Good Governancemade a presentation on the Single Provisional NOC, while Dr. Andrews made a presentation on IoT sensors and their applications in fire safety.

"CM Revanth has become a real estate broker": MP Eatala

HYDERABAD

BJP MP Eatala Rajender on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government in Telangana, accusing Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of turning the state administration into a "real estate brokerage" and alleging a massive land scam targeting the poor and farmers.

Addressing a press conference here at the BJP state office, Rajender alleged that although the Dharani land records system had

been scrapped, the government's approach remained unchanged under Bhu-Bharathi. He described Bhu-Bharathi as "Bhu-Harathi" for the poor, alleging that it was causing serious hardship to farmers and landowners. Further, the BJP MP alleged that the lands belonging to poor people were being fenced overnight under the protection of HYDRAA and the police, with an alleged plan to auction or transfer them. He warned that the BJP would approach central investigative agencies if the lands of poor

people and farmers were allegedly taken away. He also alleged irregularities in the proposed transfer of IDL / Gulf Oil lands in Kukatpally, which he claimed were valued at around Rs.20,000 crore, and alleged that Phoenix was behind the deal. Criticising both the previous Dharani system and the present Bhu-Bharathi framework, Rajender said the removal of possession and cultivation-related columns from Pahan records had adversely affected Dalits, tribals and BC farmers who had cultivated lands for

decades. He further alleged that the Revanth Reddy government was planning to mobilise nearly Rs.10 lakh crore through land auctions and claimed that thousands of acres belonging to poor people in the expanding urban areas of the Malkajgiri parliamentary constituency were being targeted.

Rajender said the BJP would not remain silent on attempts to deprive poor farmers of their lands and vowed to take the alleged irregularities to central investigative agencies.

COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT
Tender Notice No.: RN-ST-20-2026-27, Date: 14-08-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Tender No.: RN-ST-20-2026-27; Name of Work : Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of GG Tronics make HASSDAC for a period of 02 (Two) years in Rangly Division. Tender Value: ₹1,79,35,706.88/-; Earnest Money: ₹3,58,700/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 11-09-2026. For complete information with the tender document are available in the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> DRM (S&T), Rangly
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Course	Total Intake	Seats for CAT-B Admission
MBA	300	90

Interested candidates can obtain application form from college office/download from the college website: www.nrcmec.org. Filled in application along with necessary documents is to be submitted in the college office on or before 24.08.2026 by 4:00 PM. College Tuition Fee Rs. 44,000/- per annum. The admissions will be made as per the guidelines issued by TGCHE/TGICET-2026.

Date:18-08-2026 Sd/- Chairman
Maisammaguda (V), Kompally - 500100, Secunderabad, Telangana State, India
Phone : 9951688777
For Further details, Visit : www.nrcmec.org

GITAM Hosts PsyCon '26, Bringing Diverse Perspectives to Psychology in Times of Uncertainty

HYDERABAD

GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, hosted PsyCon '26, a two-day conference on 'Psychology in Times of Uncertainty: Interdisciplinary, Innovation, and Impact', on 17-18 August 2026. Organized by the Department of Applied Psychology, GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences (GSHS), the conference was conducted in a hybrid format and brought together researchers, academicians, practitioners, and students from psychology and allied disciplines.

With uncertainty increasingly shaping individual lives, workplaces, education, health, technology, and society, PsyCon '26 sought to examine how psychology can respond to these rapidly changing realities. The conference created a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue, bringing together diverse perspectives on contemporary psychological research, teaching, and practice.

The conference featured research presentations spanning a wide range of areas, including Clinical Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Organizational Psychol-



gy, Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, Legal and Forensic Psychology, Cognitive and Experimental Psychology, Environmental Psychology, Health Psychology, and Psychology, Technology & AI. The breadth of themes reflected the expanding scope of psychological inquiry and the need to engage with complex human and societal challenges through interdisciplinary perspectives.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. GerdGigerenzer, Director Emeritus, Centre for Adaptive Behaviorand Cognition (ABC), Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin. His participation brought an international perspective to the conference and set the tone for discussions on psychology, decision-making, and human

behaviour in uncertain environments.

The conference also featured distinguished speakers from diverse areas of psychology and allied practice. Dr. MallikaBanerjee, Psychologist and Director, Pradeep Centre for Autism Management, Kolkata; Dr. Anindita Chaudhuri, Professor, Department of Psychology, The University of Calcutta; Dr. Vivek Belhekar, Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, The University of Mumbai; and Ms. Sujata Ameya, Clinical Psychologist and Founder of Inner Horizons, contributed to the programme through scholarly sessions and discussions that encouraged participants to engage with contemporary questions in psychology.

PsyCon '26 provided students

and researchers with opportunities to present their work, interact with established scholars and practitioners, and engage with perspectives extending beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. The conference particularly highlighted the importance of connecting psychological knowledge with emerging challenges and innovations across academic, professional, technological, and social contexts.

Dr. Ranita Basu and Dr. SriSnigdha Dittakavi led the organization of the conference with the support of the faculty members of the Department of Applied Psychology. Their collective efforts contributed to the successful organization of PsyCon '26 and to creating a platform for meaningful academic exchange within the discipline.

Sheri Satish Reddy Pays Tribute on Sardar Pappann Goud's 376th Birth Anniversary

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

On the occasion of Sardar Pappann Goud's 376th Birth Anniversary, a heartfelt tribute was paid at the KPHB Temple Bus Stop area in Balaji Nagar Division, within the Kukatpally constituency. Congress Party former presidents of the Kukatpally constituency, Sheri Satish Reddy, took part in the programme and offered his respects to the revered leader.

At the invitation of members of the KPHB and Balaji Nagar Goud community, Sheri Satish Reddy attended the event and paid tributes to Sardar Pappann Goud. Speaking on the occasion, Satish Reddy remembered the historical moments and the



significant contributions made by Sardar Pappann Goud for the community. He highlighted that Pappanna Goud fought against injustice and stood for equality. He described his life as truly inspirational and said Pappanna

Goud displayed immense courage, self-respect and commitment to social justice.

The programme witnessed strong participation from party leaders, community members, and well-wishers. TPCC mem-

bers and senior Congress leaders including Satyam Srirangam, along with Balaji Nagar Division President Rajesha Goud, KPHB Division President Aravind Reddy, Market Committee Director Phanindra, senior Congress leader Koppisetty Dinesh kumar and other prominent attendees such as Nagamalleswara Rao, Rangammohan, Nitish Goud, Manee Goud, Sridhar Chari, Giri Naidu, and Ramakrishna Reddy also participated.

Youth Congress President Kalyan Babu, along with Durga Prasad, Swaroopa Goud, Ponnam Rajitha Goud, and a large number of Goud community members and fans attended and expressed their respect and support in big numbers.

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SHORT
TAKES

IAF Band Enthral's Secun-
derabad With Patriotic
Musical Tribute

HYDERABAD: In a stirring celebration of patriotism and musical excellence, No. 3 Band of the Indian Air Force delivered a stirring musical performance at Bison Polo Ground, Secunderabad, on August 15 as part of the celebrations marking India's 80th Independence Day. Organised by Air Force Station Hakimpet, the event attracted a large audience from across the city. The band presented a vibrant mix of patriotic tunes, martial compositions and popular melodies, combining traditional military band elements with contemporary arrangements. Senior Air Force officers, civil dignitaries and local residents attended the programme, which aimed to strengthen the bond between the armed forces and the people. The performance concluded to a standing ovation, with the audience applauding the Air Warriors for a musical tribute that celebrated patriotism, national unity and the spirit of a self-reliant India.

Bandi Pallavi
takes charge as
Hanumakonda DPRO



DR SRINIVAS VOORADI

HANUMAKONDA: Bandi Pallavi took charge as the Information and Public Relations Officer of Hanumakonda District on Monday. Bandi Pallavi after taking the charge as the DPRO at the Hanumakonda District Collectorate called on District Collector Chahat Bajpai and presented her with a bouquet. Several officials and office staff congratulated Bandi Pallavi on the occasion.

Dr Sudha Kiran Hon-
oured With 'Guardian
of Life Award'

HYDERABAD: Dr. Natchiaraji Menkata Sudha Kiran, Founder... and CEO of the P. V. Narasimha Rao Memorial Charitable Trust, has been conferred the prestigious 'Guardian of Life Award' by the Indian Book of Records for his humanitarian leadership and sustained contribution to voluntary blood donation, safe blood banking and community healthcare. The award recognises his efforts through the Trust to improve access to safe and timely blood across Telangana, particularly through its blood centres in Hyderabad and Gajwel. His initiatives have supported thousands of patients while promoting voluntary blood donation, donor awareness and responsible blood banking. The honour was formally presented to Dr. Sudha Kiran at the Trust headquarters in Himayatnagar, Hyderabad.

Governor Shiv Pratap hails ISKCON Abids' contribution to spirituality, social welfare



HYDERABAD

The five-decade journey of Sri Sri Radha Madanmohan Mandir at Abids, Hyderabad, has been a spiritual journey rooted in devotion, service, compassion and human welfare, Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said.

The Governor, along with his wife Janaki Shukla, participated in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Sri Sri Radha Madanmohan Mandir, Abids, on Tues-

day. The ISKCON organisers and devotees accorded a warm welcome to the Governor and his wife. The Governor and Janaki Shukla offered prayers and had darshan of Sri Sri Radha Madanmohan Swamy. Speaking on the occasion, Shiv Pratap Shukla congratulated the saints, devotees, volunteers and well-wishers of ISKCON Abids on behalf of the people of Telangana. He said the completion of 50 years was not merely a milestone in time, but a celebration of a sustained tradition

of devotion, service, spiritual discipline, compassion and dedication to the welfare of society.

The Governor recalled the contribution of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1966, and said the movement had carried the message of Krishna consciousness and spiritual awareness across the world. Srila Prabhupada, he said, had introduced millions to the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita and shown the path of self-realisation, divine love and selfless service.

The Governor observed that, located in the midst of the busy commercial hub of Abids, the temple had remained a centre of spiritual peace, harmony, values and service for five decades.

He appreciated ISKCON's efforts through Harinam Sankirtan, remembrance of the divine name, prasadam distribution, cultural programmes and various service initiatives to nurture compassion and human values in society.

Calling upon the youth to reconnect with India's spiritual heritage, the Governor urged them to read the Bhagavad Gita and imbibe its timeless values in their daily lives.

Indiramma governance belongs to everyone: Revanth

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy declared that the state belongs to the Bahujan communities, asserting that his government's "Indiramma governance" model has successfully proven that social justice and living with dignity are achievable for all sections of society.

Speaking on Tuesday after unveiling the statue of historical icon Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud on Tank Bund, the Chief Minister praised the warrior as a

transformative leader who rallied Bahujan communities against oppressive feudal forces to capture the Golconda Fort.

"Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud did not work merely for his caste or family. He led a campaign along with the Bahujans and hoisted his flag over Golconda Fort. His inspiration should remain with the people of Telangana forever," Revanth Reddy said.

Highlighting the historic figure's legacy, the Chief Minister confirmed that the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna

Goud will receive official prominence on par with the iconic Telangana Martyrs' Memorial. Reaffirming his administration's commitment to inclusive welfare, Revanth Reddy remarked: "This is not a government that belongs to me alone. It is a government working for social justice and welfare. This government belongs to everyone". The Chief Minister expressed strong political confidence, reiterating that the Congress government is positioned to win 17 seats to secure a second consecutive term in office.

Revanth Reddy's UK-US
Tour Schedule Finalised

HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's tour of the UK and the US has been finalised. The Chief Minister will visit the two countries from August 20 to 30. Revanth Reddy will travel to Delhi tonight to attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting. He is scheduled to leave Delhi for London tomorrow night, with his flight expected to depart at 12:30 a.m.

During the tour, the Chief Minister will visit leading universities and hold meetings with university delegations.

London Schedule

August 21
Visit to the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford
Participation in a football presentation at Emirates Stadium
August 22
Meeting with a Cambridge University delegation
11:30 a.m.: Visit to Senate House, University of London
4:00 p.m.: Visit to London Business School
August 23
Departure from London for Boston, USA
US Schedule
August 24 – Boston
10:30 a.m.: Visit to Harvard Univer-



sity campus
4:00 p.m.: Visit to MIT campus
August 25 – Boston
10:30 a.m.: Visit to Northeastern University campus
4:00 p.m.: Meeting with a Virginia Tech University delegation
7:00 p.m.: Departure from Boston for New York
August 26 – New York
7:00 p.m.: Participation in a Meet and Greet organised by the Indian Overseas Congress
August 29
Departure from New York for Hyderabad
August 30
Scheduled arrival in Hyderabad

Telangana photography contest to spotlight hidden tourism gems

HYDERABAD

The Tourism Committee of the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) has announced "Telangana Through the Lens - 2026", an open photography contest to mark World Photography Day and showcase the State's diverse and lesser-known tourism attractions.

Themed "Explore, Experience and Exhibit the Spirit of Telangana Tourism", the contest invites photography enthusiasts to capture Telangana's culture, heritage, landscapes, architecture, festivals, wildlife, cuisine, traditions and people, with special focus on hidden and unexplored destinations.

Announcing the contest, FTCCI Tourism committee chairman Prakash Ammanabolu, co-chair-



man D Ramchandram and director Sangeetha Parisaboina said the initiative aims to encourage people to discover the State's lesser-known tourism treasures and bring them into the public spotlight.

Open to participants of all ages and professions, the contest carries no entry fee, and participants

can submit multiple entries. Photographs must be original, in JPEG format and not exceed 1 MB size. Filters and artificial image enhancements are not permitted.

The first prize is Rs.15,000, followed by Rs.10,500 for second prize and Rs.7,500 for third prize. Five consolation prizes of Rs.1,500 each

will also be awarded.

Entries will be judged by a jury of photographers, tourism professionals and artists based on creativity, composition, originality, relevance to the theme and visual impact. Selected photographs may also feature in FTCCI publications, exhibitions and digital platforms.

The last date for submissions is September 10, 2026. Entries can be submitted through the designated online form <https://tally.so/r/Y57G8d>, along with the participant's name, contact details and a brief description of the photograph, including its location and context.

FTCCI has urged photography enthusiasts to move beyond popular tourist destinations and use their lenses to discover and promote Telangana's hidden tourism potential.

German Doner Kebab Makes India Debut With Hyd Outlet

HYDERABAD

Global quick-service restaurant brand German Doner Kebab (GDK) has entered the Indian market with its first outlet at Film Nagar, Tollywood Lane here in Jubilee Hills.

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnann Prabhakar inaugurated the outlet and welcomed the international brand to the State. He

said Hyderabad has emerged as a preferred destination for global brands and stressed the importance of quality, taste and hygiene in the food sector.

Founded in Berlin and headquartered in the UK, GDK operates across several international markets, including the UK, US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Sweden and Ireland. The brand specialises in flame-grilled don-

er served with fresh ingredients, signature sauces and toasted waffle bread. GDK India, launched in partnership with GBC India, plans to expand into markets including Mohali, Chandigarh and other Tier-I and Tier-II cities through company-owned and franchise outlets. The company has set a long-term target of more than 450 outlets across India.

Vikrant Tomer, CEO of GDK In-

dia, said the company aimed not merely to establish a restaurant chain but to develop the Doner category in India.

Musician, actor and filmmaker Parmish Verma has been appointed as the brand's Cultural Partner to strengthen its connect with younger consumers. The Hyderabad outlet is expected to serve as the launchpad for GDK's nationwide expansion.

High-Powered Committee Reviews Open Prison Reforms at Cherlapally

HYDERABAD

A High-Powered Committee, constituted pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court of India in Suhas Chakma vs. Union of India and others, visited the Prisoners Agricultural Colony (PAC) at Cherlapally here on Tuesday to review the functioning of Open Correctional Institutions and the reformative measures undertaken by the Telangana Prisons Department.

The committee, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Ravindra Bhat Shripathi, also included senior officials from the Bureau of Police Research & Development, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and other experts. The visit was aimed at studying Open Correctional Institutions and evolving common minimum standards for their effective governance, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society.

The committee first inspected Central Prison, Cherlapally, where it reviewed prison industries and



factories, hospital facilities and the Nivrutti De-Addiction Centre.

At PAC Cherlapally, Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services Dr. Soumya Mishra briefed the committee on the open prison's rehabilitation-oriented approach and livelihood initiatives. She said Telangana has two exclusive Prisoners Agricultural Colonies - PAC Cherlapally, established in 1954 across 129 acres, and PAC Warangal, established in 2022 across 101 acres. Semi-open prisons are also

functioning in four Central Prisons and six District Jails. PAC Cherlapally has a sanctioned capacity of 150 prisoners, with 51 inmates currently housed there. Admission is based on good conduct, reliability, physical and mental fitness, emotional stability, family ties and willingness to work. Habitual offenders, escapees, prisoners with pending cases and certain other categories are excluded.

Unlike conventional closed prisons, Open Correctional Institutions focus on rehabilitation by allowing

eligible prisoners to work with minimal supervision while developing skills and taking greater responsibility.

The facilities undertake activities including organic and vegetable farming, dairy, poultry, nursery management, aquaculture, beekeeping, steel furniture manufacturing, retail fuel outlets, weighbridge operations and car washing.

Dr. Soumya Mishra said the Telangana Government enhanced prisoner incentives from October 1, 2024, to Rs.200 per day for highly skilled work, Rs.150 for skilled, Rs.125 for semi-skilled and Rs.100 for unskilled work. Prisoners in Open Correctional Institutions are also eligible for eight days of remission every month, higher than the remission available to prisoners in closed jails. IG Prisons N. Murali Babu, DIG Prisons, Warangal Range M. Sampath, PAC Cherlapally Superintendent D. Bharath and Central Prison Cherlapally Superintendent G. Pramod were present during the visit.

Telangana NRI Advisory Committee on Migration Policy Study Tour in Philippines



HYDERABAD

A delegation of the Telangana NRI Advisory Committee, led by Government Whip Aadi Srinivas, MLA Dr. R. Bhoopathi Reddy, Committee Chairman Dr. B.M. Vinod Kumar, Vice-Chairman Mandha Bheem Reddy and other members, is undertaking a three-day study tour of the Philippines to understand its successful migration policy and overseas-worker welfare mechanisms.

During a high-level meeting in Manila, the delegation studied the Philippines' labour migration governance, migrant welfare systems, civil society participation, trade union role and international migration practices.

The delegation said the Philippines has one of the best migration policies in the world and that Telangana intends to adopt suitable best practices while formulating its own Gulf and Overseas Workers Welfare Policy. The study tour

is being undertaken in line with Chief Minister Sri A. Revanth Reddy's vision of developing a dedicated Telangana Gulf NRI Policy and establishing a "Gulf and Other Overseas Workers Welfare Board."

The experiences gained during the visit will be incorporated into a comprehensive report aimed at strengthening the welfare, protection and support systems for nearly 15 lakh Telangana workers employed in Gulf countries and other overseas destinations.

Vijay Govt Grants 365-Day Maternity Leave for Third Child

Under the existing framework, married women government employees with fewer than two surviving children are entitled to 365 days of maternity leave. Those with two or more children receive up to 12 weeks, or 84 days, of leave with full pay.

The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday announced that women government employees would receive 365 days of maternity leave for the birth of their third child, up from the existing 12 weeks. The change brings the benefit for a third child on par with the one-year leave available for the first two children. Human Resources Management Minister D Sarathkumar announced the decision in the state Assembly during the debate on his department's demand for grants. "As the Tamil Nadu government is a welfare-oriented administration that prioritises social welfare and women's empowerment, the maternity leave currently provided to women government employees for their third child will be increased from



12 weeks to 365 days," Sarathkumar said. Under the existing framework, women government employees with fewer than two surviving children are entitled to 365 days of maternity leave. Those with two or more children receive up to 12 weeks, or 84 days, of leave with full pay. The 12-week provision for government employees with two or more children was introduced in line with the Supreme Court's interpretation that maternity benefits cannot be denied for a third child.

FIRST-TIME MLA BRINGS NEWBORN TO ASSEMBLY

The announcement came as first-time TVK MLA R Pallavi drew attention by bringing her newborn to the ongoing Assembly session. Pallavi brought the baby to the Assembly premises and left the child with a

caregiver before entering the main hall to participate in the proceedings, official sources said. The caregiver looked after the newborn in a room near the Assembly hall until Pallavi returned. Responding to social media criticism that she was "creating a scene" by carrying her baby with her, the MLA said she could not leave a newborn at home. "Please think before making a comment. It is fine even if you do not understand another person's pain, but do not troll," she told a YouTube channel.

TAMIL NADU'S FERTILITY RATE BELOW 1.4

The expansion of maternity leave also comes amid growing concern over Tamil Nadu's demographic transition. Addressing a workshop of the Obstetrics and Gynaecological Society



of South India on Sunday, Health Minister KG Arunraj said the state's Total Fertility Rate had fallen below 1.4, considerably lower than the replacement level of 2.1. With nearly 16 per cent of Tamil Nadu's population aged above 60, the minister described the demographic shift as a major public health challenge. Arunraj said the government could consider policies similar to those reportedly followed in Andhra Pradesh, where couples are offered incentives to have a third child.

"We were told that in places like Andhra Pradesh, there are government schemes providing incentives for couples to have a third child. Therefore, in the future, there could definitely be such measures here too," he said.

AP Raises BC Quota in Local Bodies to 34%

AMARAVATI, AUG 18

The TDP-led NDA government in Andhra Pradesh has decided to provide 34 per cent reservation for Backward Classes (BCs) in local bodies, fulfilling a key promise made in the 2024 elections.

The State Cabinet on Tuesday approved 34 per cent reservation for BCs in rural local bodies and 33.33 per cent in urban local bodies.

Currently, BCs enjoy 24.15 per cent reservation in local bodies. The decision also cleared the way for the upcoming local body elections.

Announcing the decision in the State Assembly, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said they have once again proved their commitment to the welfare and development of BCs.

Stating that the coalition government stands firmly with the BCs, he said this decision will go down in history. A 34 per cent reservation signifies a share in decision-making power and reflects the NDA government's commitment to social justice and fairness.



The Chief Minister said the Cabinet approved three major measures aimed at socio-political upliftment of the BCs. Naidu said it was also decided to conduct direct elections for the posts of Mayors and Municipal Chairpersons in urban local bodies. He stated that this will foster stable governance and prevent the "Aaya Ram Gaya Ram" (frequent political defections) culture.

The Cabinet also decided to establish 28 District Praja Parishads across the State.

CM Naidu alleged that the previous government of YSR-RCP mocked democracy and failed to safeguard BC reservations.

"We had promised during the elections to provide reservations for BCs in nom-

inated posts. Now we are turning that promise into reality," he said.

He claimed that it is the BC communities that have sustained Andhra Pradesh's economy, rural infrastructure, agriculture, and traditional artisan sectors.

"It was the TDP back then, and now the coalition government, that has truly supported the BC communities," he said.

Naidu recalled that after founding the TDP, NTR (N. T. Rama Rao) had decided to empower the BC communities with political authority.

All NDA parties are working together for the welfare of BCs; there is an inseparable bond between the BC communities and the Telugu Desam Party.

He stated that the credit for introducing reservations for BCs in local bodies in 1984 goes entirely to NTR. Reservations and seats were allocated to BCs in the Mandal Praja Parishads and Zilla Praja Parishads.

Chandrababu Naidu said in 1995, as the then Chief Minister, he implemented 34% reservation for BCs.

"Adhering to this quota, we implemented 34% reservation in local body elections held in 1995, 2001, 2006, and 2013. The previous government did a great injustice to BCs in 2019," he said.

He said the BC reservation was reduced to 24.15 per cent, depriving BCs of around 16,800 elected positions.

"Previous rulers held a grudge against the BC community, causing them trouble out of political animosity or the perception that they did not support them. They harassed BC leaders like Atchannaidu, Kollu Ravindra, Ayyanna Patrudu, Palla Srinivasa Rao and Koonaraavikumar by filing cases against them," he said.

SC collegium approves proposal for appointment of four advocates as Orissa HC judges

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court collegium on Tuesday approved the proposal for appointment of four advocates as judges of the Orissa High Court. The collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant also recommended the appointment of an advocate and a judicial officer as judges of the Gauhati High Court. "The Supreme Court collegium in its meeting held on August 18, 2026 has approved the proposal for appointment of the following advocates as judges of the High Court of Orissa: Sammita Tripathy, Aditya Narayan Das, Rajjeet Roy and Gautam Misra," said a statement uploaded on the apex court website.

Labourer Arrested for Harassing Two MBBS Interns

CHANDIGARH: A labourer allegedly sexually harassed and assaulted two MBBS interns at Bhagat Phool Singh Government Medical College for Women in Khanpur Kalan, triggering a protest by students who demanded adequate security on campus, police said on Tuesday. In two separate incidents inside the college campus last week, two female MBBS interns were allegedly assaulted, an official of the Women Police Station, Khanpur Kalan, said over the phone. She said police have registered a case on the complaint of the MBBS interns and arrested the labourer.

Karnataka HC Quashes KPSC Chairman's Suspension

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court has quashed the suspension of KPSC Chairperson Shivashankarappa S Sahukar and directed authorities to reinstate him within seven days. Justice Suraj Govindaraj ruled that the Governor could not independently suspend Sahukar under Article 317(2) without prior aid and advice from the Council of Ministers.

Bengal BJP to take 100-day report card to four crore voters, seeks public feedback

BJP leaders said the exercise is meant to combine accountability with political communication, as the BJP tries to turn its electoral mandate into sustained grassroots engagement.

The outreach plan was finalised by the state BJP at a training camp in New Town near Kolkata on Monday. Leaders said there would be no formal celebrations to mark the 100-day point.

The BJP government in West Bengal has completed 100 days in office and has begun a statewide outreach drive to take its report card directly to the people. Over the next seven to 10 days, the party plans to reach at least four crore voters, with workers distributing a 41-page booklet on the government's first 100 days and seeking feedback on its performance.

Party leaders said the exercise is meant to combine accountability with political communication, as the BJP tries to turn its



electoral mandate into sustained grassroots engagement. Rather than hold a formal celebration for the milestone, the party has decided to focus on direct public contact, saying the more important test will come when people assess the government's work after a year in office.

From Tuesday, BJP workers and functionaries started visiting neighbourhoods with the booklet, titled 'West Bengal Government's Resolution and 100 Days of Success'. It details what the party describes as the administration's first 100 days of policy changes and administrative action.

"We had reached out to these people before the assembly polls and sought their support. We are answerable to them," a BJP leader said.

The outreach plan was finalised by the state BJP at a training camp in New Town near Kolkata on Monday. Leaders said there would be no formal celebrations to mark the 100-day point.

The booklet gives a comparison between promises made in the BJP's election manifesto and steps taken by the Suvendu Adhikari government. It also includes details on welfare delivery, investment, administrative reforms, and measures

linked to women's safety and economic empowerment.

Among the achievements highlighted by the party are the implementation of Ayushman Bharat in West Bengal and the transfer of land to the BSF for border fencing, a decision taken at the government's first cabinet meeting.

The government has also raised the upper age limit for state government recruitment, with effect from May 11, and launched the Annapurna Yojana, under which it claims more than one crore women are receiving Rs 3,000 each.

On law and order, the government has introduced the Anti-Goonda Bill and started four dedicated help-lines for reporting extortion, illegal toll collection, syndicate-related crimes and illicit liquor. It has also proposed large-scale police recruitment and measures aimed at reducing political interference in policing.

For a government that came to power promising to overhaul an administra-

tion that the BJP had long described as politicised and corruption-ridden during the Trinamool Congress's 15-year rule, these steps now form the core of its early political message.

At the same time, the government is seeking to move the focus beyond announcements. It has stepped up engagement with NITI Aayog to attract central investment and address the migration of skilled workers from the state, while infrastructure and industrialisation remain among its stated priorities.

"The first 100 days are only the beginning. The larger test will be how these decisions are implemented and whether they lead to visible changes in the daily lives of people," a BJP functionary said.

With the door-to-door campaign, the BJP is presenting its first 100 days not just as a list of schemes and cabinet decisions, but as the opening phase of its wider promise to change Bengal's administrative and political culture.

Jagan calls for intensified operations to trace missing fishermen

AMARAVATI, AUG 18

YSR Congress Party President and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday expressed concern over the disappearance of a fishing boat carrying eight fishermen and urged the government to intensify search operations and use all available resources to bring them back safely. The fishermen hail from Odalarevu, Dummalapeta, and Vasalattippa villages of Allavaram mandal in Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district. Jagan Mohan Reddy said the families of the fishermen are deeply worried as there has been no information from them for several days. He urged the government to conduct search operations on a war footing to trace the missing fishermen and their boat. He urged the government to involve the Coast Guard, Navy, Fisheries Department and district administration in the search operation. He said all available technology and communication systems at sea should be used to expand the search.

Jagan Mohan Reddy also called for the cooperation of fishing boats and other vessels operating along the coast, including in the areas of Kakinada, Visakhapat-



nam, and Paradip. He said continuous efforts should be made until the missing boat and fishermen are traced.

He said he is praying for the safe return of all eight fishermen. He appealed to all departments to work in coordination and ensure that there is no slackening of search operations until their whereabouts are known.

He also urged the government to stand by the families of the missing fishermen during this difficult time.

Meanwhile, Konaseema district Collector Mahesh Kumar said search operations were in full swing.

The fishermen had set out for fishing from the Odalarevu jetty on August 3, but there was no communication from them thereafter.

The Collector said a search operation was launched with the coordination of Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Police. He assured the families of missing fishermen that the search operation would continue till they are traced.

Tripura to use space technology for border security, agriculture and development

AGARTALA, AU 18

Tripura Science, Technology and Environment Minister Animesh Debbarma on Tuesday said space technology would be used on a larger scale to monitor security along the India-Bangladesh border and support agricultural and development activities in the state. Ahead of National Space Day on August 23, a seminar was organised at Pragna Bhawan to create awareness among the younger generation about the importance and applications of space science and technology. Addressing the seminar, Debbarma said India created history on August 23, 2023, by successfully landing a spacecraft on the Moon through the

Chandrayaan-3 mission, and the day is observed as National Space Day to commemorate the achievement. The successful landing of the Vikram lander marked a new chapter in India's space research, he said. Debbarma, who also holds the Forest and Environment portfolio, urged students to develop a scientific temperament, saying new ideas, curiosity and imagination form the foundation of progress in science and technology. He also highlighted the contribution of Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma to India's space research. The Minister said satellites play a major role in state development, with applications in sectors such as weather forecasting, agriculture and disaster management.

EDITORIAL.

The Collateral Damage of Clean-Up: When Exam Can-

In the complex ecosystem of public recruitment in India, few events are as emotionally and socially devastating as the blanket cancellation of competitive examinations. The recent decision by the Jharkhand government to scrap major competitive examinations, including the JSSC-CGL and tests conducted by third-party testing agencies following persistent allegations of irregularities and paper leaks, has been hailed by protesting student groups as a victory for transparency. Yet, this executive hammer drop highlights a haunting institutional paradox: in the desperate rush to scrub systemic corruption clean, the state frequently ends up sacrificing the legitimate triumphs of thousands who cleared these rigorous assessments purely on merit. Public recruitment in states like Jharkhand is not merely an avenue for employment; it represents a primary mechanism for socio-economic mobility. For candidates coming from rural hinterlands, marginalized communities, or economically fragile households, preparing for tests like the JPSC or JSSC-CGL involves years of agonizing sacrifice. Aspirants routinely give up private-sector jobs, take on high-interest loans for coaching, and endure prolonged isolation, carrying the heavy burden of family expectations. When a competitive exam is abruptly invalidated, the narrative usually centers on the triumph of reform and anti-corruption mandates. Rarely discussed, however, is the devastating human cost borne by those who earned their selection through sheer grit. The state's sweeping cancellation plunges hundreds of legitimately selected candidates back into a abyss of uncertainty. Many of these individuals had already resigned from their previous employment, relocated, or reached the upper age limits for government recruitment. In an instant, their hard-won achievement is revoked, leaving them legally stranded and financially vulnerable. Scrapping an entire selection process to fix corrupt elements is an administrative failure disguised as policy enforcement. While zero tolerance for paper leaks and testing fraud is essential to restore public trust, blunt wholesale cancellations unfairly punish the innocent along with the guilty. A robust governance apparatus should possess the investigative precision required to isolate corrupt networks, invalidate tainted scores, and penalize rogue actors without throwing out the entire merit pool. When state agencies rely on blanket cancellations as their default remedy, they signal an alarming admission: that their auditing systems are too feeble to distinguish an honest candidate from a fraudulent one. This practice inflicts severe psychological trauma on aspirants and breeds deep cynicism toward public institutions. Why should young citizens invest years of honest toil when the final finish line can be erased overnight by administrative convenience? If Jharkhand is to rebuild a credible recruitment architecture, executive decisions must balance structural integrity with basic fairness. Establishing high-level reform committees and enacting stricter anti-unfair-means laws are welcome steps toward long-term deterrence. However, immediate policy relief—such as age-relaxation provisions, accelerated re-examination schedules, and targeted forensic isolation of corrupt nodes—must be granted to safeguard candidates who acted in good faith. Systemic reform should not require the collateral damage of honest ambition. Justice in public examinations is only true justice when it protects the merit of the innocent as fiercely as it punishes the wrongdoing of the corrupt.

TRUE OR DREAM?

They said —
In black, there is no beauty.
In black, there is no light.

But O blind world, listen close —
in the blackest soil,
the golden grains are born.
From the darkest clouds,
the purest waters fall.
Upon the blackboard,
dreams are drawn in white chalk.

Is not the crow, black as night,
the master of wisdom and song?
Is not the coal, dark as shadow,
the giver of endless flame?

Fools are they, who judge by shade.
Fools are they, who call night a curse —
for in the cradle of darkness,
the stars are born!

She, with the color of the sacred earth,
is no less a goddess —
Her laughter, her spirit, her dreams,
light up the heavens brighter than any sun!

Black is not the absence of beauty,
it is the beginning of wonder.
Black is not the absence of light,
it is the mother of all colors.

Remember —
The pearl hides in a rough shell.
The diamond sleeps in a dark mine.
The soul shines brightest, unseen by the eye.

Walk proud, O child of the storm.
Carry the night in your skin,
carry the sun in your heart.

For you are not less —
You are the dream they forgot to dream.
You are the truth they are afraid to see.
You are beauty, wild and free!

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

OPINION

06

BJP’S NEW TEAM: A BLEND OF FRESH ENERGY, EXPERIENCE AND STRATEGIC BALANCE

With the announcement of his new national team, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President Nitin Nabin has signalled that the party is moving towards reshaping its organisation in accordance with the requirements of the emerging political landscape, rather than merely rearranging positions. The new team, announced on August 17, 2026, includes 13 National Vice Presidents, 8 National General Secretaries and 16 National Secretaries, along with wide-ranging changes at various levels of the organisation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also described the new team as a blend of organisational experience, energy and grassroots connect. To understand this team, it would not be enough to view it merely through the lens of “who has come and who has gone.” It is more important to understand the long-term organisational strategy of the BJP, its reading of social equations and the political challenges it is likely to face in the elections ahead.

The biggest message of Nitin Nabin's team is that youthful energy has not been brought in at the cost of experience; rather, new energy has been combined with experience. The return of Ram Madhav as National Vice President is particularly significant in this context. His understanding of organisation-building, ideological dialogue and strategic politics could prove valuable for the BJP. By assigning important responsibilities to senior leaders such as Vasundhara Raje Scindia, D. Purandeshwari, Baijyant Panda, Tirath Singh Rawat and others, it is clear that Nitin Nabin has not sidelined seniority and experience.

On the other hand, assigning Smriti Irani the responsibility of National General Secretary is not merely a matter of bringing back an individual leader. Smriti Irani's political persona has been associated with an assertive style of communication, strong outreach to women voters and effective political communication at the national level. Alongside her, leaders with considerable organisational experience, such as Vinod Tawde and Sunil Bansal, have been given the responsibility of General Secretaries. The appointment of Piyush Goyal as National Treasurer is also noteworthy. The continuation of B. L. Santosh as National General Secretary (Organisation) ensures organisational continuity. In other words, Nitin Nabin has not adopted a simplistic policy of “remove the old

The BJP's new national team under President Nitin Nabin signals more than a routine reshuffle—it reflects an organisational recalibration aimed at balancing experience with youthful energy, expanding social and regional representation, and preparing the party for the electoral challenges ahead. With senior leaders retaining key roles alongside fresh faces and greater emphasis on women and younger voters, the new team appears designed not merely for the 2026–27 elections but as a longer-term foundation for the BJP's 2029 Lok Sabha campaign and its broader organisational ambitions.

and bring in the new.” Wherever continuity was essential, it has been retained, while sufficient space has been created for change.

Another important aspect of the new team is social and regional representation. For the BJP, politics is no longer limited merely to winning elections; expanding the organisation's acceptance and reach among different sections of society is equally important. The new team gives representation to women and various social communities, as well as regions ranging from North India to the Northeast and South India. The changes made particularly at the levels of the Yuva Morcha and Mahila Morcha indicate that the organisation wants to engage with the voters of the future from today itself.

It would be a mistake to view Generation Z merely as a social-media generation. This generation has distinct expectations regarding employment, technology, entrepreneurship, transpar-

ency, nationalism, individual freedom and opportunities. The biggest political test for the new team, however, will come in Uttar Pradesh and other electoral states. The strength of the organisation in a large state like Uttar Pradesh has a direct bearing on national politics. With the forthcoming elections in view, the BJP faces not only the challenge of countering anti-incumbency sentiments but also the need to navigate changing opposition alliances, caste equations, aspirations of young people and local issues. Therefore, giving adequate representation to Uttar Pradesh and various other states in the national team is a natural electoral strategy.

It is also important to note that the purpose of the new team cannot be confined to the elections of 2026–27. The BJP's vision certainly extends to the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and beyond. The goal of Viksit Bharat 2047—a developed India by 2047—can acquire a sus-

“Experience + youth: Senior leaders have been retained while younger and energetic faces have been given greater space.”

tainable political and social foundation only when the party organisation continues to bring successive generations into its fold. From this perspective, Nitin Nabin's team can also be viewed as part of the preparation for 2029 and as an organisational and political foundation for the journey towards 2047.

In reality, the biggest message of Nitin Nabin's new team is not a “reset” but a “recalibration”—that is, not completely transforming the organisation, but re-balancing its direction and momentum according to the changing political environment. The effort appears to be to bring together the experience of senior leaders, the energy of youth, the growing role of women, regional representation, social diversity and professional competence on a common platform. The real challenge now is not for those who have received positions, but for those who can deliver results. The new team will ultimately be judged on how effectively it strengthens the organisation at the grassroots, how robustly it builds communication between workers and leadership, how deeply it understands people's real concerns beyond the noise of social media, and how successfully it earns the trust of new social groups, including young people and women.

Overall, the team presents a picture of a BJP that seeks to make experience its legacy, youthful energy its future and social diversity a means of expanding its reach. If Nitin Nabin succeeds in transforming the capabilities of this team into a shared organisational mission, the change will go beyond merely altering the list of BJP office-bearers. The forthcoming elections will be the first test of this experiment, while 2029 will provide a much larger assessment. For now, it can be said that the BJP has attempted to give a new direction to its organisation. The responsibility of transforming that direction into public trust now rests on the shoulders of Nitin Nabin and his new team.

LALIT GARGG
Writer, Journalist, Columnist

(On the Occasion of World Humanitarian Day - August 19)

BE A HUMAN BEING, NOT A ‘MONEY’ BEING

According to the laws of biological science, a human being is essentially an animal. Both animals and humans possess consciousness, instinct, and thought. What, then, sets humanity apart from the rest of the animal kingdom? Are humans merely highly evolved primates, or does being “human” entail something far deeper? For thousands of years, philosophers have grappled with these enduring questions, and each of us has pondered them at some point in our lives. The timeless answer boils down to a single virtue: humanity. Our ancestors lived by unselfish coexistence and stepped up to support one another in times of crisis—a reflection of true humanity. Today, however, such solidarity is increasingly rare; the concrete walls separating modern apartments have turned into emotional barriers dividing our hearts.

Humanity is the very bedrock of our survival. In this fast-paced world, we have made extraordinary technological strides and built comfortable lives, but we must ask ourselves whether we are losing our defining virtue along the way. Humanity is a profound gift unique to us. Among all living species, human beings alone possess the conscious capacity to extend love, empathy, and kindness to others. While the natural trait of beasts is primal instinct, the defining nature of humanity is compassion. No philosophy or creed in the world stands taller than the virtue of human kindness, and no religion is greater than humanity itself.

Humanity means harboring empathy, compassion, kindness, and love toward our fellow beings. It dismantles selfishness and elevates a person to their true potential. Achieving high social standing is admirable, but living as a person of true empathy is far greater; a life stripped of honesty and moral integrity is devoid of genuine value. However, merely feeling love in our hearts is not enough; it must be translated into tangible action. Wealth and social status may divide the rich and the poor, but the pangs of hunger feel identical to both. Therefore, the warmth of our compassion must spread like sunlight and a gentle breeze across the human land-

scape without discrimination.

Humanity is not a rigid dogma; it is an evolving, progressive worldview. It is a broad philosophical outlook that continuously synthesizes uplifting, humanitarian ideals to move civilization forward, and it requires absolute freedom to foster human progress. Another vital pillar of humanity is reason. It serves as an indispensable tool in our pursuit of truth and knowledge, enabling us to understand our potential, acknowledge our limitations, decipher society, and discern right from wrong. For any society to thrive, ethical values are essential. True ethics do not rely on supernatural fear, religious dogma, or punitive laws; they are rooted in rational conscience

and human nature itself. Alongside reason, tolerance is the crowning virtue of humanity. In a world shaped by diverse beliefs and contrasting viewpoints, tolerance is the only bridge to lasting harmony. Where tolerance prevails, peace flourishes; where intolerance takes root, chaos follows.

Telugu literary pioneers have long underscored this human-centric ethos. Gurajada Apparao urged, “

Curb a fraction of your self-interest, and lend a helping hand to your neighbor.” Sri Sri challenged societal hypocrisy: “You bow before lifeless stones believing they possess divine grace, yet why do you treat living human beings as lower than dust?” C. Narayana Reddy

poignantly observed, “What caste does moonlight belong to? What race does the gentle breeze claim? Such is the essence of humanity—the supreme force above all distinctions!” The collective wisdom of these thinkers reminds us to place human values above all else. Regrettably, modern society is witnessing a rapid erosion of values in favor of unbridled materialism. Man has transformed into a mere “money-making machine,” obsessively pursuing wealth through deceit, betrayal, and cutthroat competition, prioritizing balance sheets and property over the lives and well-being of fellow human beings.

History offers humbling lessons on the fleeting nature of wealth and power. Conquerors like Alexander the Great, visionaries like Steve Jobs, and legendary cultural icons like Lata Mangeshkar all arrived at a single, shared realization in their final days: material wealth, titles, and possessions are utterly useless in one's ultimate hours, and we should never attach supreme value to things that offer no lasting solace. What truly matters is valuing people with noble hearts and treating everyone with warmth, friendship, and love. On this World Humanitarian Day, let us resolve to act with kindness, compassion, and generosity, striving to make the world around us more humane. True fulfillment in life comes from uplifting the orphaned, the destitute, and the vulnerable. As long as humanity endures within us, we remain truly human; without it, we risk becoming cold, unfeeling machines.

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Shorts Dispute Sparks Brawl at Sinhagad Fort
PUNE:

Police have registered a case against eight members of a right-wing outfit for allegedly assaulting a man following an altercation at the popular Sinhagad fort near Pune city over the group members objecting to his friend's young daughter wearing shorts.

Police said the incident took place on Monday near the samadhi (memorial) of Tanaji Malusare, a legendary military commander and trusted companion of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, on the fort.

"A group of members of the right-wing outfit objected to the girl wearing shorts on the fort, which led to a heated argument between them and the complainant. The argument escalated and the complainant was allegedly assaulted," inspector Rajesh Ramaghare of the Haveli police station said.

Major reshuffle in top police posts in Delhi ahead of BRICS Summit
NEW DELHI:

A major reshuffle at the senior level in the Delhi Police was carried out on Tuesday, the first after Anurag Kumar took charge as the Commissioner of Police, with the changes coming ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit scheduled to be held in the national capital on September 12-13.

As part of the reshuffle, the traffic division has once again been entrusted to 1996-batch IPS officer Ajay Chaudhary. His batchmate Manish Aggarwal, who was Special CP (Traffic), has been given charge of the Security unit.

According to an official order, 1994-batch IPS officer Garima Bhatnagar has been given the additional charge of MD, Delhi Police Housing Corporation Limited (DPHCL), along with Special CP/EOW.

Uttam Urges Balance Between Drinking Water and Irrigation

Says drinking-water security must remain paramount while available water should support Kharif crops
Directs officials to base reservoir releases on usable storage, dependable inflows and realistic rainfall assessments

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 18

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday called for a judicious balance between safeguarding drinking-water requirements and meeting the irrigation needs of farmers, particularly in view of the prevailing El Niño conditions and uncertainty over rainfall during the remaining monsoon period. Reviewing reservoir levels and irrigation prospects for the remaining Kharif season at Jal Soudha, the Minister said water management during the coming months must be guided by prudence, scientific assessment and actual availability, rather than optimistic assumptions about future rainfall. He said drinking-water security would remain a paramount consideration, but stressed that this should not result in withholding irrigation water where reservoirs and other dependable sources had adequate supplies. "Our approach must be judicious. We have to protect drinking-water requirements while ensuring that water available beyond those requirements reaches standing crops. Every release must be based on actual usable storage, dependable inflows and a realistic assessment of rainfall," Uttam Kumar Reddy said.

Major Reservoirs 74.57%



Full

Major reservoirs in the Krishna basin were at 76.63%, with 746.12 TMC against a capacity of 973.68 TMC. Godavari basin reservoirs were at 68.1%, holding 208.38 TMC against 306.20 TMC. So far as the water level in Nagarajuna Sagar, a joint project in Krishna Basin, is concerned, the present storage touched 164 tmc as against the gross capacity of 312 tmc. It is still left with a flood cushion of about 47 per cent. The Nagarajuna Sagar left canal has an ayacut of over 6.4 lakh acres spread over the districts of Nalgonda, Suryapet and Khammam in the state. Uttam Kumar Reddy cautioned officials against presenting an overly optimistic picture based only on gross storage percentages. Every assessment should clearly show gross capacity, live storage, usable water, committed requirements and the quantity actually available for irrigation, he said.

He also directed officials to compare the 2025 and 2026 storage and inflow positions and not assume heavy inflows during September and October. He said the government's objective for the rest of the Kharif season was to use every dependable water source to protect standing crops, conserve supplies where inflows were uncertain and maintain complete transparency with farmers. The Minister specifically reviewed the position of Wyra Reservoir and questioned delays in releasing water when the reservoir could be replenished with Godavari water. He said water should be conserved in reservoirs dependent on uncertain inflows, but irrigation should not be unnecessarily restricted where dependable replenishment was available.

Officials were directed to examine and facilitate releases, subject to verified availability, from Devadula, Nizam Sagar, Swarna, Sadarmat

Anicut, Ramadugu, Buggalavagu, Ramapalli, Palem Vagu, Gouravavaram, Pocharam, Rajiv Sagar, Nelavayi, Vatti Vagu, Nalla Vagu and Palvai Purushotham Rao (Yerravagu) Project and Chelmelavagu (NTR Sagar projects. Available Musi waters should also be properly used for irrigation, he said.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the irrigation plans under the SRSP should match with the storage and inflows status. The position of Nizam Sagar, Lower Manair Dam, Singur and other Godavari basin reservoirs was also reviewed.

Priority to Singur Repairs

The Minister directed officials to give top priority to repairs and strengthening works at Singur Dam. He asked engineers to verify its latest storage position and quickly resolve the technical issues affecting the reservoir. Reviewing the Srisaillam Left Bank Canal tunnel works, Uttam Kumar Reddy was informed that excavation was progressing from both the inlet and outlet sides.

The Minister directed engineers to closely supervise the difficult geological stretches and speed up the remaining work without compromising safety. Uttam Kumar Reddy instructed officials to use the latest data from the Central Water Commission and India

Meteorological Department for all technical studies. River cross-sections should be updated instead of relying on outdated information, he said.

He also sought early follow-up with IIT experts studying the possible submergence impact of the Polavaram project in Telangana. The study should clearly estimate the extent of possible flooding and provide a strong technical basis for Telangana to seek safeguards from the Centre wherever applicable, he said.

Interstate Water Cases Reviewed

The Minister also reviewed Telangana's position in ongoing interstate water disputes, including cases before the tribunal and the Supreme Court.

Senior irrigation, engineering and legal officials were directed to prepare a concise note on tribunal proceedings, Supreme Court cases, Krishna water operations, power generation and the jurisdiction of the Krishna River Management Board. Irrigation Secretary E. Sridhar, Engineer-in-Chief (General) O.V. Ramesh Babu, Joint Secretary K. Srinivas, tunnel expert Col. Parikshit Mehra, Engineer-in-Chief (Administration) T. Srinivas, and Engineer-in-Chief (O&M and Quality Control) R. Madhusudhan Rao were among the senior officials who took part in the review.

Rail Link Boosts Jogighopa Logistics Park

MALIGAON, 18TH AUGUST, 2026:



Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has completed the track linking works connecting Jogighopa (JPZ) Railway Station yard with the Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) GCT siding in Assam, marking an important milestone in strengthening freight logistics and multimodal connectivity in the Northeast Region.

The Non-Interlocking (NI) work has been completed, paving the way for freight trains to and from the MMLP to directly access the national railway network. The completed connectivity includes links from Line No. 1 and Line No. 2 of Jogighopa station towards the MMLP GCT, enabling smoother and more efficient freight movement. Strategically located along the Brahmaputra River, Jogighopa MMLP is the first Multi Modal Logistics Park in Assam, integrating road, rail, air and waterways to facilitate seamless movement of goods and strengthen the region's connectivity with national and international markets. The new rail connectivity will further enhance the potential of Jogighopa MMLP as a major logistics hub for the Northeast, supporting efficient supply chains and facilitating movement of freight to markets across India and towards neighbouring countries.

Its strategic location also offers significant potential to strengthen trade and commercial connectivity with Bhutan and other neighbouring countries.

The MMLP is equipped with modern logistics facilities including warehouses, railway siding, cold storage, customs clearance house, yard facilities, workshops, petrol pumps and truck parking, supporting integrated handling, storage and transportation of cargo.

The enhanced rail connectivity is expected to provide significant benefits to trade, industry and logistics sectors by improving freight efficiency and supporting regional economic growth. It will also strengthen the Northeast's potential to emerge as a strategic gateway for international trade and regional connectivity.

Attack on right to dissent: Kharge slams Modi government over social media takedowns

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday accused the Modi government of mounting a "brazen and calculated attack" on the democratic right to question and dissent, alleging that the Centre issued 1.95 lakh social media blocking orders in just five months. In a post on X, Kharge claimed that most of the orders were directed at students and young people who had taken to the streets demanding accountability over the NEET paper leak and reforms in the examination system. "Modi Government has launched its most brazen and calculated attack on the democratic right of every Indian to speak, to question and to dissent," Kharge said, alleging that social media censorship was comparable to the use of force against protesting youth. Kharge claimed the 1.95 lakh blocking orders amounted to one order every 68 seconds and alleged that they were being used not against criminals but



against students and young Indians demanding accountability over examinations. He further alleged that while protesters faced police action, social media posts supporting them were "systematically erased" through government orders. "Any creator, any journalist, any ordinary citizen who posts something critical of this government today faces immediate takedowns, threatening FIR notices and coordinated intimidation," the Congress chief alleged. Kharge also accused ruling-party supporters of engaging in online harassment, including doxxing women and issuing rape threats, without facing similar legal consequences.

Kejriwal welcomes national debate on education, says it has become a movement

Kejriwal also claimed the AAP had introduced several improvements in government schools, first in Delhi and later in Punjab, with some becoming better than leading private institutions.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday welcomed the growing nationwide discussion on education, saying it should have begun much earlier. He claimed that government schools improved by his party in Delhi and Punjab now competed with

private institutions in facilities and educational quality. Education and healthcare had always been the AAP's two most important priorities, the former Delhi Chief Minister said. "I am so happy that education and schools are being discussed everywhere in the country today. It has become a people's movement. This should have happened long ago," Kejriwal said in a post on X. He claimed the AAP had introduced several improvements in government schools, first in Delhi and later in Punjab, with some becoming better than leading



private institutions. "There are thousands of instances in Delhi and Punjab where parents have shifted their children from private to government schools," he added. Kejriwal was responding

to a video posted by Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains, who visited Government High School in Jhalla village to verify claims in another video about poor facilities there.

Bains said the video being circulated was old and did not reflect the school's current condition. "Someone posted an old video of a Punjab government school today. I am glad that the Education Minister himself visited the school to verify the situation on the ground. Do read his report," Kejriwal said. The AAP leader said no country could progress

without providing high-quality, free education and healthcare to all citizens, describing the two sectors as the foundation of national development. He acknowledged that improvements to Punjab's government schools were still underway but said most had received basic facilities. "Barring a few, most schools have been provided basic facilities. The remaining schools will also receive them soon. Many government schools in Punjab now compete with the best private schools in terms of facilities and quality of education," Kejriwal said.

Approval Granted for Procurement of Gypsum

Improve 10 Lakh Acres of Land in the State: CM Nayab Singh Sain

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 18

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that 25,000 tonnes of gypsum will be procured at a cost of approximately ₹15.63 crore to improve 10 lakh acres of land in the state, ensuring adequate availability of gypsum to farmers.

The Chief Minister was chairing a meeting of the High-Powered Purchase Committee. Education Minister Sh. Mahipal Dhandra, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sh. Vipul Goel, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana, Public Works and Public Health Minister Sh. Ranbir Gangwa, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sh. Arun Kumar Gupta, along with other senior officers, were also present at the meeting.

The Chief Minister said that gypsum is being provided to farmers through the Haryana Land Reclamation and Development Corporation at a 50 per cent subsidy for land reclamation. He said that high-quality gypsum should be made available so that the land can be improved quickly and made more fertile. In



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini presiding over a meeting of High Powered Purchase Committee (HPPC) at Chandigarh. Education Minister, Sh. Mahipal Dhandra, Urban Local Bodies Minister, Sh. Vipul Goel, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana and Public Health Engineering Minister, Sh. Ranbir Gangwa are also seen in the picture. (18.08.2026)

addition, approval was given for construction of a 21,680 MT-capacity warehouse and a quality control laboratory at the HAFED Complex in Kaithal at a cost of ₹9.80 crore.

Drinking Water Schemes Worth ₹75.50 Crore Approved for 9 Villages in Panipat

The Chief Minister approved drinking water schemes under the Mahagran Yojana at a cost of ₹75.50 crore for nine villages in Panipat district, namely Bhainswal, Kutani, Rajakheri, Nimbri, Ugrakheri, Risalu, Nangal Kheri, Kabri, Garhi and Sikanderpur. Similarly, approval was given for sewerage lines in the Shani Mandir

and MPS Gudha areas of Gohana city at a cost of ₹16.30 crore. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini also approved the construction of a judicial complex in Sector 27, Pinjore-Kalka, at a cost of ₹22.70 crore. Similarly, approval was given for Phase III of the Administrative Block of the Mini Secretariat in Ambala City at a cost of ₹34 crore.

Government Nursing College to be Established in Safidon

The Chief Minister said that works completed before the stipulated time would be incentivised as per the government's policy. He also approved the construction of the Bank Square Building, Phase

I, in Ambala Cantonment at a cost of ₹52 crore. In addition, the Government Nursing College in Safidon will be constructed at a cost of ₹37.49 crore.

District Jails to be Constructed in Panchkula and Fatehabad

The Chief Minister approved ₹16.80 crore for up-grading and strengthening roads in Industrial Area Phase I, Panchkula. A district jail will be constructed in village Jalo-li, Panchkula, at an estimated cost of ₹40 crore. In addition, repair and maintenance work on approximately 83 kilometres of the Kundli-Manesar road section will be undertaken at a cost of ₹65.66

crore. The Chief Minister also approved the construction of a district jail in Fatehabad at a cost of ₹37 crore. Similarly, ₹21.17 crore will be spent on water supply works in Julana city. He said that the hospital in Narnaul would be upgraded from 100 beds to 200 beds at a cost of ₹26.30 crore. A 50-bed Ayush Hospital will also be constructed in Yamunanagar at a cost of ₹16.89 crore. The Chief Minister approved the work on the Kurukshetra-Saharanpur State Highway. The approximately 10-metre-wide road will be constructed at a cost of ₹26.90 crore. He said that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) is being prepared to convert this road into a four-lane highway. Subsequently, the Kurukshetra-Saharanpur road will be widened to four lanes. Additional Chief Secretary Sh. Sudhir Rajpal, Sh. A.K. Singh, Sh. Vijayendra Kumar, Sh. Anurag Aggarwal, Chief Advisor, GMDA, Sh. D.S. Dhesi, Commissioner and Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Dr. Amit Agrawal, Director General Sh. Yash Garg, along with officers of other departments, were also present at the meeting.

Madhya Pradesh to Support PM's Vision: CM Yadav

DR.BHUPENDRA VIKAL

Bhopal 18 August: Chief Minister Dr.Mohan Yadav has said that Madhya Pradesh will contribute its maximum in achieving the resolutions announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from the Red Fort on Independence Day. To find sports talent among children aged between five to 15, a talent hunt campaign will be run in every village, city and school, the talent of the children will be seen and then they will be given special training to make them good players. It has been decided to provide free online coaching for various examinations for the youth, in which a complete network will be created to provide free coaching to the youth by pooling resources. In the coming one year, 1 crore youth will be trained in AI skills so that the youth have the ability to lead in the world of AI. A big campaign of 100 weeks for drug-free India will be launched. In this, everyone will get support from spiritual personalities, volunteers, social workers etc. A vibrant network of civil defense will be created. A large voluntary force will be created to protect citizens from modern threats. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav was addressing the ministers before the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Chief Minister Dr.Refrerring to Prime Minister Shri Modi's Independence Day address,



Yadav said that the first power of the seven streams is manufacturing power, the second power is agriculture and food production, the third power is technology and innovation, the fourth power is speed power, the fifth power is defense power and the sixth power is green economy, blue economy, which is greenit also gives birth to jobs. There are good possibilities of working for health, craft, culture, creative films, gaming and digital economy through spirituality, yoga and Ayurveda as the seventh power. At present 30 percent green energy production is taking place in Madhya Pradesh, the target has been set to take it to 50 percent. Chief Minister Dr.Yadav said that a big change will be brought in the rural economy through mother power by creating 3 crore new lakshpati didis in India. This will give impetus to the empowerment of the poor, farmers, youth and women of the country.

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav also discussed the ongoing activities under Jan Vishwas Abhiyan. He said that due to this cam-

paign not only the problems on the ground are coming to light but also paves the way for their solution. The third Friday of the campaign is coming on 21st August. On this day, Chief Minister Dr. Yadav's visit to Tikamgarh district is scheduled. Chief Minister Dr.Yadav directed the ministers to definitely conduct field visits under the Jan Vishwas Abhiyan. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that Madhya Pradesh is leading across the country in many ambitious beneficiary-oriented schemes of the Central Government. The state has achieved another big achievement in the agricultural year. Dindori district of the state has come first in the entire country in the Prime Minister Money-Grain Implementation Scheme. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav extended hearty congratulations and best wishes to the Agriculture Department and the entire team of Dindori district. Chief Minister Dr.Yadav said that all other districts should also follow the Dindori model and ensure effective implementation of this scheme

India desires ‘positive, constructive and forward-looking’ ties with Bangladesh: MEA

NEW DELHI

Emphasising India's commitment to maintaining constructive ties with Bangladesh based on mutual interests and reciprocity, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday reiterated that extradition requests of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are being examined through established procedures.

“Let me say that India desires positive, constructive, and forward-looking relations with Bangladesh based on mutuality of interest and reciprocity.

Our position on the press conference by the former Prime Minister needs no repetition. On the issue of extraditions, our consistent position has been, and you're well aware of that.

These requests are being examined as part of our established processes,” MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said while addressing a bi-weekly media briefing in



New Delhi. He was responding to a question on the recent remarks made by the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry. Dhaka on Sunday urged India to act expeditiously on its request and help create a “propitious environment” for Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to make a bilateral visit to India.

“We are of the view that a propitious environment needs to be created for the visit,” said A K M Shahidul

Karim, spokesperson at the Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He said that officials from Bangladesh and India have remained in contact for several weeks over the possibility of Prime Minister Rahman's bilateral visit to India, Bangladesh media reported.

Karim said that Bangladesh had requested Indian authorities to promptly act on its extradition request

concerning Hasina and other “fugitives”, and to hand over the accused in the killing of Bangladeshi radical Islamist leader Sharif Osman under the terms of the bilateral extradition treaty.

“We are awaiting their response,” said the spokesperson. Last week, the MEA said that India was examining Dhaka's request for the extradition of former Prime Minister Hasina in accordance with

the established procedures, while reiterating that New Delhi's position on the matter remains unchanged.

Addressing a bi-weekly media briefing in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Jaiswal said the matter concerning Hasina's extradition was being examined, while investigations into the case involving the suspects in the killing of Hadi were underway.

“Our High Commissioner met with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh yesterday, and they discussed matters of mutual interest. On the other two issues that you raised about the extradition of the former Prime Minister, as also the case of Hadi. On Hadi, I told you that this is a legal matter in which investigations are ongoing presently.

As far as the extradition matter is concerned, as I said before, our position has been very clear on this particular matter: that we are looking into the case as per established processes that we have on our side,” said Jaiswal.

About 30 killed in overnight attack in central Nigeria: Local media

ABUJA

About 30 people were killed and others injured after a group of gunmen attacked a community in Nigeria's central state of Plateau overnight, local media reported Tuesday. The attack reportedly occurred when the heavily armed gunmen carried out a house-to-house raid in Binper, a community in Mangu Local Government Area, attacking residents between Monday night and Tuesday morning, according to Vanguard Newspaper, a national daily, which cited survivors.

“The gunmen opened the doors of people who were sleeping and killed them,” said Daniel Musa, an eyewitness, Xinhua News Agency reported. Joyce Pama, another resident, told Xinhua by telephone that about 30 bodies had been recovered ahead of burial Tuesday morning.

Local media reported that some residents were missing following the attack, while community leaders were conducting a headcount. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. Plateau State is located in Nigeria's Middle Belt, which links the country's predominantly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south. The state has experienced recurring violence in recent years, often involving disputes over land and resources between different communities.

Global press freedom group slams Pak over escalating crackdown on journalists



PARIS

As unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) deepens, a leading international press freedom organisation called on the Pakistani authorities to release detained journalists and end the sweeping crackdown on media professionals in the occupied territory.

Expressing grave concern, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said that internet outages, the blocking of international media outlet Al Jazeera, the arrest of journalists, travel restrictions imposed on foreign reporters, court summons, and attacks on press freedoms are increasing at an alarming rate.

The organisation said that protests calling for electoral reform in PoK have been violently suppressed by Pakistani authorities resulting in mass arrests. At the same time, in recent weeks, the authorities have also stepped up measures to restrict media coverage of the region, where the so-called ‘legislative assembly elections’ were held from July 27.

Criticising the escalating crackdown in PoK, Celia Mercer, Head of the RSF South Asia desk said that the authorities appear to have done everything in their power to impose a veritable information blackout in the region.

She said that the “internet shutdown and restrictions on internet access, the surge in arrests and restrictions on access for media professionals”, as well as prosecutions under Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), reveal a dramatic deterioration in press freedom in the country.

RSF called for the immediate release of detained journalists, full restoration of internet access in PoK, lifting of new restrictions targeting foreign media journalists, an end to abusive legal proceedings and

the guarantee of the right to information. The organisation noted that Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting blocked access to the Al Jazeera website on August 2, accusing the media outlet of sensationalised news coverage of the region.

Just two days later, the ministry introduced ‘Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines 2026’, which RSF described as “new draconian guidelines”. Under the new guidelines, foreign correspondents – including Pakistani journalists working for international media outlets – are required to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to cover news outside the cities of Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi.

The guidelines also stipulate that media professionals may have their accreditation revoked for vague reasons such as “acts contrary to Pakistan's ideology, sovereignty, security, or public order”.

Beyond PoK, the RSF said that legislation is increasingly being used to crack down on media professionals in Pakistan. On July 29, the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) summoned freelance journalist Asad Ali Toor under Section 26A of the PECA, which penalises the dissemination of “false information”.

The organisation further said that state pressure is also being exerted on newsmen across Pakistan. In July, journalist Munizah Jahangir, vice chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, was forced to leave ‘Aaj TV’ after 11 years at the helm of her television programme Spotlight.

“There was external pressure putting the management under severe strain. The situation for journalists has never been so serious,” RSF quoted Jahangir as saying.

Mauritius President raises toast celebrating longstanding friendship



PORT LOUIS

Mauritius President Dhambeer Gokhool and Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius Anurag Srivastava raised toasts to celebrate the longstanding friendship between India and Mauritius at a reception hosted by the High Commission of India to celebrate the 80th Independence Day. “Toasts were raised by President Dhambeer Gokhool and High Commissioner Anurag Srivastava, celebrating the longstanding friendship between India and Mauritius,” the Indian High Commission in Mauritius said on social media platform X.

During his remarks, High Commissioner Srivastava highlighted key achievements over the past year, including the Enhanced Strategic Partnership, the announcement of a Special Economic Package worth \$680 million, the inauguration of the Renal Transplant Unit, and the handing over of 100 e-buses. He also underscored upcoming projects, such as a joint satellite and an e-judiciary.

“The evening was enlivened by a vibrant cultural programme featuring energetic dance performances and melodious singing. The celebration also featured One

District One Product (ODOP) corners showcasing handicrafts and specialties from different regions of India,” the High Commission noted.

It also said that the event was graced by Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Deputy Prime Minister Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie, Vice-President Robert Hungley, Chief Justice Rehana Mungly-Gulbul, Speaker Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra, Ministers, Junior Ministers, Members of Parliament, business community members, socio-cultural organisations, members of the media, and friends of India from all walks of life. On Saturday, the High Commissioner hoisted the Indian flag and shared President Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation.

He underscored the Enhanced Strategic Partnership between India and Mauritius, the special economic package announced for Mauritius, and other significant developments in the bilateral partnership. He encouraged diaspora members, particularly the youth to stay connected to India and take benefit of various Indian government schemes, including OCI cards, Know India Programme, Youth Exchange Programme, ITEC training slots.

Will stop taking back illegal migrants, Pakistan threatens UK over Rochdale rapist deportation

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani authorities have threatened that they would stop taking back illegal immigrants if Britain tries to force Islamabad to take back the notorious grooming gang ringleader, the UK media reported.

Leading UK daily ‘The Telegraph’ noted that Pakistani officials are aggrieved at the suggestion by the UK government that it is ready to impose sanctions, which include banning visas for Pakistanis seeking to go to the UK and withholding foreign aid if Islamabad continues to refuse to take back child rapist Shabir Ahmed. Ahmed, whose country of birth is Pakistan, was released from prison recently after serving 14 years of his 22-year sentence for 30 child rape offences.

“It comes as Andy Burnham is seeking to increase the deportation of foreign offenders as part of efforts to create more space in overcrowded prisons and reduce the need for the early release of more criminals. There were 306 Pakistanis held in UK jails



as of June 30,” the Telegraph reported. Currently, the UK Ministry of Defence is spending thousands of Pounds to accommodate Ahmed, who is electronically tagged and geographically excluded from Oldham and Rochdale, where he lived and committed the majority of his crimes.

Last month, political parties in the United Kingdom urged the Labour Party to stop all foreign aid to Pakistan and impose visa sanctions until Islamabad

takes back the child rapist. Interestingly, the UK government has signed a three-year, GBP 153 million foreign aid package to Pakistan.

“Pakistan. No foreign aid. No visas. Until you take back rapist Ahmed,” Richard Tise, Deputy Leader of Reform Party, wrote on X. “The fact Labour plans to continue to send them aid is proof the political class do not care about the British people. Reform will stop foreign aid and visas issued to Pakistan immediately,” Zia Yusuf, Reform Party's home affairs spokesperson, was quoted as saying by The Telegraph.

“The fact Labour have approved £153m aid for Pakistan when they are refusing to take back Shabir Ahmed tells you all you need to know,” UK's Shadow Foreign Secretary, Priti Patel, said, adding, “No surprise that Labour slipped this out on the last day of this session of Parliament, so nobody can hold them to account,” noted the report.

India emerges as Armenia's major partner in military technical cooperation

YEREVAN

As Armenia seeks to diversify its defence procurement, India has emerged its major partner in military technical cooperation with both countries sharing similar views on multilateralism and strategic autonomy, the Ministry of Defence stated as Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh held ‘fruitful’ discussions with Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, Mnatsakan Safaryan in Yerevan on Tuesday.

“Their discussion focused on the expanding defence partnership between India and Armenia. As Armenia seeks to diversify its defence procurement, India has emerged as Armenia's major partner in military technical cooperation as both countries share similar views on multilateralism and strate-



gic autonomy,” noted the Ministry. The Defence Secretary also called on Deputy Minister of Defence of Armenia, Karen Brutyan, in Yerevan and reviewed the entire spectrum of India-Armenia defence cooperation.

“Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh called on Deputy Minister of Defence of Armenia Mr Kar-

en Brutyan in Yerevan on August 18, 2026. The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of India-Armenia defence cooperation, including capacity building, training, defence industrial cooperation, research & development. They reaffirmed their commitment to mutual security and strategic autonomy,” the Ministry of Defence stated on X.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary visited the Vazgen Sargasyan Military Academy of Armenia and reviewed the IT Lab established with New Delhi's support. During his visit to the military academy, Singh was also briefed on weapon systems supplied by India. He underlined the expanding cooperation in capacity building and training and reiterated India's commitment to supporting Armenia in areas of mutual interest.

He addressed the faculty, officers and staff at the Military Academy and highlighted its vital role in building character, cultivating judgement and developing leadership.

“He underscored the expanding India-Armenia cooperation in capacity building and training and reiterated India's support to assist Armenia in areas of mutual interest,” the ministry stated. At the academy, Secretary Singh met the Head of the Military Academy, Maj Gen Arsen Mangasyan and underlined the expanding engagement between India and Armenia in the areas of capacity building and training. According to the ministry, he also encouraged greater linkages between Indian and Armenian defence training institutions to further strengthen the evolving defence partnership.

Syria condemns Israeli airstrikes on military airport in Idlib

DAMASCUS

Syria on Tuesday strongly condemned Israeli airstrikes on the Abu al-Duhur military airport in the northwestern province of Idlib, calling the attack a violation of the country's sovereignty and a dangerous escalation threatening regional security and stability.

In a statement, Syria's foreign affairs authority said the strikes constituted “an unjustified act of aggression” and a “flagrant violation” of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It said continued Israeli attacks since the fall of the former government on December 8, 2024, were undermining efforts by the new Syrian authorities to consolidate stability and avoid escalation, Xinhua News Agency reported. It held Israel responsible for the escalation and called on the international community and the UN Security Council to condemn the attack and take a firm stance against what it described as repeated Israeli violations of Syrian sovereignty. The statement came hours after Syrian state-run Al-Ikhbariya TV reported, citing a military source, that Israeli warplanes had carried out eight airstrikes on the runway of the Abu al-Duhur military airport in the eastern countryside of Idlib early Tuesday. The strikes caused material damage to the airport's infrastructure, with no casualties reported, according to the military source. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the strikes. The Abu al-Duhur military airport is located near the town of Abu al-Duhur, about 27 km east of Saraqeb. It is situated near routes linking parts of Idlib, Aleppo and Hama provinces, with areas extending toward Syria's central desert.

Trump doubles down on Hormuz Strait as ‘New US Territory’ after Iran MoU implodes

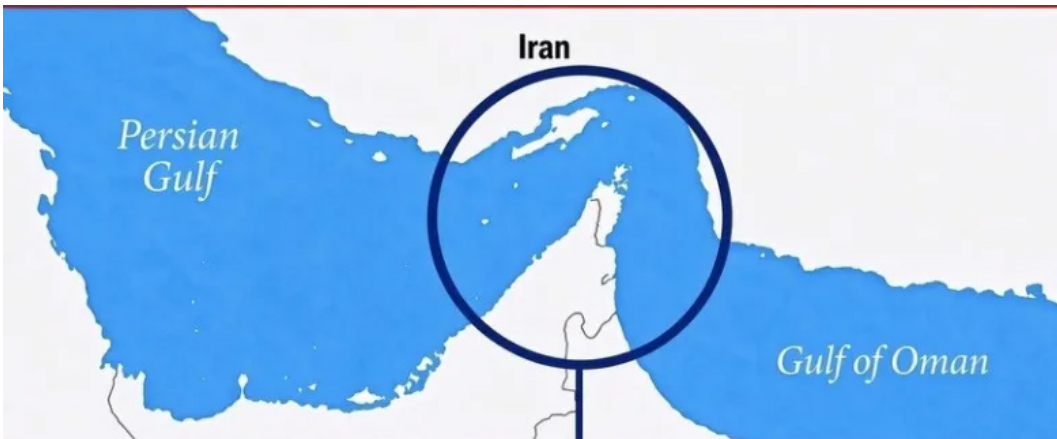
NEW YORK

US President Donald Trump doubled down on his plan to take over the Strait of Hormuz, posting on Tuesday a map of the crucial artery for global energy supplies showing it as “New US Territory”.

After posting the map on Truth Social a day after the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iran imploded, he said: “The Hormuz Strait is open and operating. All water mines have been removed or detonated.” Trump, who is under domestic pressure because of the price rise attributed to the Hormuz crisis, added that the US naval blockade of Iranian ports “remains in full force and effect”.

However, shipping has not resumed anywhere near normal levels, according to various agencies monitoring shipping in the Strait.

Attacks on ships continued Tues-



day with a British monitor of maritime incidents reporting that a “bulk carrier was struck by an unknown projectile whilst conducting a transit of the Strait of Hormuz”, resulting in damage to the vessel and crew casualties.

The United Kingdom Maritime

Trade Operations agency, which also reported a similar attack on Monday, said: “Vessels are advised to transit with caution.”

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi earlier called Trump seizing the Strait a “fanciful delusion” that cannot be accom-

plished by a “tweet”.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the Strait would not open till its conditions were met, according to Tasnim news agency.

On Monday, Trump threatened to attack Oman, an ally, if it inter-

feres with his plans for the Strait. “If Oman gets in the way, we'll bomb the s---t out of them,” he told an interviewer on Fox News.

Iran has claimed that it was close to finalising a deal with Oman on opening the Strait, with the route for entering it going on the Iranian side and exiting it, with each country controlling the routes on their sides. Such a deal would sideline the US, besides challenging a US takeover of the Strait.

Besides Iran, Oman and the United Arab Emirates border the Strait, and a takeover of the 167-km-long waterway would have to agree to the US takeover, which would also run afoul of international law.

Trump would also face military logistical problems in maintaining unilateral control of the strait.

The MOU between the US and Iran signed with fanfare in June collapsed on Monday when its 60-

day window ended, and both countries decided not to extend it.

During this period, the two countries were to have allowed normal shipping; however, it did not work out when Iran attacked two ships last month, and the US retaliated by bombing Iran and blockading its ports. Since then, both countries have attacked ships, while Iran pounded targets in the Gulf and other countries, escalating tensions.

During the 60-day period, Washington and Tehran were to have held negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme, which Trump wants ended and has said it was his top priority.

Both sides have said that they were not talking. Trump said on Tuesday: “There are no talks or conversations going on, or scheduled.” Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi told Tasnim there were no talks taking place.

Dr. MCR TIMS becomes the first hospital in Telangana to Receives IGBC Gold Rating

for Green Healthcare Excellence.. Plaque for IGBC Gold Rating Handed Over in the Presence of Shri Revanth Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Telangana

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 18, 2026

The Dr. MCR Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS), Sanath Nagar, Hyderabad, was awarded the IGBC Gold Rating under the IGBC Green Healthcare Facilities Rating System, recognizing its commitment to sustainable healthcare infrastructure and resource-efficient design. The plaque commemorating the prestigious rating was handed over by Mr. C Shekar Reddy, National Chairman, CII Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), to the TIMS and Megha Engineering teams at a ceremony held in the presence of Shri Revanth Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Telangana. Speaking at the plaque handover ceremony, Shri Revanth Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Telangana, said, "Investment in healthcare is not merely an expenditure; it is an investment in the future of Telangana and the well-being of its people. Our government is commit-



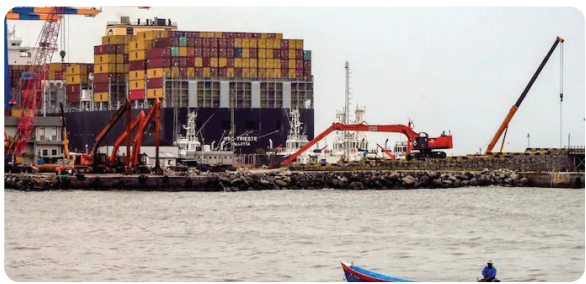
ted to strengthening public healthcare infrastructure and ensuring that advanced, quality medical care is accessible to every citizen, irrespective of their economic circumstances. Dr. MCR Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences, Sanath Nagar, is a significant step in this direction, strengthening our public health system and bringing world-class healthcare closer to those who need it most." The IGBC Gold Rating recognizes the hospital's adoption of several green building strategies focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, sustainable materials, and patient well-being. TIMS, Sanath Nagar, demonstrated approxi-

mately 14.89% energy savings through energy-efficient design strategies and systems. The facility has installed a 540 kW solar PV system, meeting 10.31% of the annual energy consumption and reducing dependence on conventional energy sources. The hospital also incorporated significant water conservation measures. Water-efficient plumbing fixtures have resulted in a 29.97% reduction in potable water consumption compared with baseline fixtures. Its 3,030 m³ rainwater harvesting capacity was designed to capture 100% of roof and non-roof runoff generated from the project site, strengthening its water management practices.



Indian Green Building Council, said:
"It is a pleasure to recognize Dr. MCR Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences, Sanath Nagar, for achieving the IGBC Gold Rating under the IGBC Green Healthcare Facilities Rating System. The project is a great example of how sustainability can be integrated into large-scale healthcare infrastructure. It demonstrates 14.89% energy savings, a 540 Kw solar power system, sustainable construction practices and healing gardens with medicinal plantations, creating restorative green spaces that support patient recovery and contribute to a healthier and more therapeutic healthcare environment.
Mr. C Shekar Reddy, National Chairman, CII

port resource efficiency, patient well-being, and environmental responsibility. We congratulate the Government of Telangana, the TIMS team, Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Pvt Ltd., and all stakeholders on this important achievement." The IGBC Green Healthcare Facilities Rating System promotes the development of healthcare facilities that minimize environmental impact while enhancing the health, safety, comfort and well-being of patients, visitors and healthcare professionals. The rating framework encourages hospitals to adopt measures covering energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable materials, waste management, indoor environmental quality, and site development. The IGBC Gold Rating for TIMS, Sanath Nagar, underscores the growing importance of sustainable healthcare infrastructure and Telangana's strong leadership potential in developing healthier, resource-efficient and future-ready public healthcare facilities.



Vizhinjam Port begins export-import operations, set to boost India's global trade

The move is expected to give businesses in South India easier access to international shipping routes, reduce dependence on foreign transshipment ports and improve the efficiency of India's supply chains.

Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala has started full-fledged export-import (EXIM) operations, marking a major shift in its role from a transshipment hub to a direct gateway for Indian goods entering and leaving global markets. The move is expected to give businesses in South India easier access to international shipping routes, reduce dependence on foreign transshipment ports and improve the efficiency of India's supply chains.

FROM TRANSSHIPMENT HUB TO TRADE GATEWAY

EXIM operations mean the port can now handle cargo that is directly exported from or imported into India, apart from moving containers between international shipping services.

Located around 10 nautical miles from major international shipping routes, Vizhinjam has a natural draft of 18-20 metres. This allows it to handle some of the world's largest container ships, including Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs).

The port is expected to benefit businesses in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka by providing more direct access to global shipping networks.

WHY VIZHINJAM MATTERS FOR INDIA
India currently sends more than 75% of its container transshipment cargo through foreign ports. This adds to shipping costs and can increase transit time. With EXIM operations now beginning at Vizhinjam, a larger share of this trade can potentially be handled closer to home. This could help Indian exporters and importers save time and make their supply chains more efficient.

The port could be particularly useful for manufacturing and commercial centres such as Bengaluru, Coimbatore and Tiruppur. Its growth

is also expected to create demand for warehousing, freight forwarding, logistics and other related services. Vizhinjam began commercial operations on December 3, 2024, and has already handled more than 2.28 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and around 1,100 vessels. The port crossed the 1-million-TEU mark within 10 months and reached 2 million TEUs in 18 months. It has also handled more than 80 Ultra Large Container Vessels. Among the biggest ships to call at the port was MSC Iriana, a 399.99-metre-long vessel with a capacity of 24,346 TEUs. These numbers have helped establish Vizhinjam as a port capable of handling large-scale global shipping operations.

Rs 16,000 CRORE EXPANSION PLANNED

The next big step is the port's Phase 2 expansion, which involves an investment of Rs 16,000 crore.

The expansion will increase Vizhinjam's annual capacity to 5.7 million TEUs. It will also add 1,200 metres of container berth and provide permanent rail connectivity. The project will further include better road links, logistics parks, warehouses and other supporting infrastructure. The accelerated completion of the full phase is targeted for December 2028. With this expansion, the cumulative investment by the Adani Group in the Vizhinjam project is expected to reach Rs 30,000 crore.

MORE JOBS AND A WIDER BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

The development is expected to create more than 5,000 additional direct and indirect jobs. The impact is likely to go beyond the port itself. As cargo volumes increase, businesses involved in transport, storage, freight forwarding, logistics and other support services could also see greater demand.

The Kerala government has also said that stronger road and rail connectivity will be important to make the most of Vizhinjam's potential. It plans to allocate Rs 3,200 crore for land acquisition for the Ring Road, while discussions are under way to attract private investment.

Digital Bharat Nidhi, Chhattisgarh Ink Fibre Network Pact

NEW DELHI:

The Department of Telecom's Digital Bharat Nidhi, earlier known as Universal Service Obligation Fund, has signed a pact with the Chhattisgarh government for rolling out a high-speed optical fibre network under the Amended BharatNet Program in the state, an official statement said on Tuesday. The Centre has approved financial support of Rs 3,942 crore for implementation of the programme in Chhattisgarh. "In a significant step towards strengthening digital infrastructure and accelerating broadband connectivity across rural Chhattisgarh, Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), signed an agreement for implementation of the Amended BharatNet Program (ABP) in the state under the state-led model," the statement said.

Sensex falls 493 points, Nifty slips for 6th day as crude, IT stocks drag

The BSE Sensex closed 492.70 points, or 0.63%, lower at 77,235.46, while the Nifty 50 fell 132.75 points, or 0.55%, to 24,154.90. Tuesday marked the Nifty's sixth straight losing session, while the Sensex has declined in five of the last six sessions.

Equity benchmarks extended their losing streak on Tuesday as rising crude oil prices, higher US bond yields and fading hopes of an early end to the Iran war kept investors cautious. Weakness in IT stocks added to the pressure, with the Nifty IT index falling nearly 2%. The BSE Sensex closed 492.70 points, or 0.63%, lower at 77,235.46, while the Nifty 50 fell 132.75 points, or 0.55%, to 24,154.90. Tuesday marked the Nifty's sixth straight losing session, while the Sensex has declined in five of the last six sessions. The Sensex opened at 77,418.97 and moved between a high of 77,575.21 and a low of 77,234.36 during the session.



CRUDE REMAINS THE BIGGEST WORRY

Brent crude remained around \$91 a barrel on Tuesday, while WTI crude was trading at \$84.99 a barrel. Brent has risen about 9% in less than two weeks as hopes of an early resolution to the Iran conflict faded. Iran has threatened to take a "fully offensive" military posture as efforts to negotiate a permanent end to the war with the US have stalled. Washington has also ruled out extending the temporary ceasefire, adding to concerns about disruption to energy supplies. For India, higher crude prices

are a key concern as the country is a major oil importer. Sustained high oil prices can raise import costs and increase inflation risks. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said crude oil remained the primary drag on market sentiment, while rising US bond yields and weak global cues prolonged the risk-off trend in Indian equities. "Investor anxiety increased as hopes for a Middle East resolution faded following the expiration of the temporary U.S.-Iran ceasefire, heightening concerns about renewed inflation," Nair said.

IT STOCKS LEAD THE SELL-OFF

IT stocks were among the biggest losers of the day. The Nifty IT index fell 1.93%, with most major IT stocks ending sharply lower. Infosys was the biggest Sensex loser, falling 2.02%. HCLTech declined 1.93%, TCS fell 1.47% and Tech Mahindra dropped 0.83%. ITC also fell 1.15%. Nair said IT stocks were under pressure amid fears that persistently high interest rates could dampen global technology spending. The weakness extended beyond the large IT names, with the Nifty Midcap IT & Telecom index falling 1.05%.

SENSEX GAINERS AND LOSERS

Most Sensex stocks ended lower, although a handful of stocks managed to buck the trend. Axis Bank was the top Sensex gainer, rising 0.89%. Power Grid gained 0.66%, while M&M advanced 0.47%. Bajaj Finance rose 0.27%, Larsen & Toubro gained 0.15% and Reliance Industries edged up 0.08%. Bajaj Finserv and NTPC also ended marginally higher. On

the losing side, Asian Paints fell 2.40%, Infosys declined 2.02% and HCLTech dropped 1.93%. Bharti Airtel fell 1.75%, TCS declined 1.47% and Hindustan Unilever lost 1.41%. Ultratech Cement fell 1.28%, IndiGo declined 1.23%, ITC dropped 1.15%, Kotak Mahindra Bank fell 1.11% and SBI lost 0.97%.

12 OF 16 SECTORS END LOWER

The sell-off was broad-based, with 12 of the 16 major Nifty sectoral indices ending in the red. The Nifty IT index was the biggest sectoral loser, falling 1.93%. Nifty Realty declined 1.42%, while Nifty PSU Bank fell 1.01%. Nifty FMCG lost 0.77% and Nifty Metal declined 0.61%. Nifty Financial Services 25/50 fell 0.49%, while Nifty Private Bank declined 0.23%. Nifty Healthcare and Nifty Pharma, however, gained 0.21% and 0.08%, respectively. Nifty Auto rose 0.30%, while Nifty Media gained 0.40%. Nifty Oil & Gas also edged up 0.20%, showing some resilience despite elevated crude prices.

Overseas Patient Regains Knee Function Without Surgery

A knee condition assessed as too high-risk to operate on elsewhere is successfully reconstructed through staged, multidisciplinary surgery

HYDERABAD, AUGUST 18

A 36-year-old man from Sudan, left with a severely disabled left knee following an injury sustained three years ago, has regained the ability to stand and move after a complex knee reconstruction at Medicovert Hospitals, Hitec City, Hyderabad. The patient had already undergone several operations in his home country, but the knee had fused into a fixed, bent position — stiff, painful, and unable to straighten — accompanied by heavy scarring and an old, badly broken kneecap. According to the patient, he had approached multiple hospitals seeking definitive treatment, where the reconstruction was assessed as very high-risk and was not attempted.

He was subsequently evaluated by Dr. Koteswara Prasad Veeragandham, Senior Consultant — Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement at Medicovert Hospitals, and a treatment plan was drawn up across specialities. Because the tissue around the knee



was extensively scarred, the Plastic Surgery team, led by Dr. Rajasekhara Madala, first carried out corrective work to prepare the area. Dr. Veeragandham then performed a hinged total knee replacement — a specialised implant used when the knee's own ligaments and bone can no longer provide stability. Despite the scarring, distorted anatomy, significant bone loss, and the burden of previous surgeries, the operation restored the knee's alignment, stability, and range of movement. The patient's recovery was uncomplicated, and he has since begun a structured rehab-

ilitation programme. "A knee in this condition is difficult because every layer — skin, bone, and ligament — has already been damaged and operated on. The priority was to restore a stable, functional joint safely, which is why the reconstruction was planned in stages together with our plastic surgery colleagues," said Dr. Koteswara Prasad Veeragandham.

Cases such as this reflect the multidisciplinary planning available at Medicovert Hospitals for complex joint conditions, including those that have not responded to earlier treatment.

Hearzap Acquires Amplifon India

Strengthening Its Position as a Leading Force in India's Organised Hearing Healthcare Sector.. The landmark acquisition unites Hearzap's growing national footprint and Amplifon's globally recognised clinical excellence, strengthening a 420-centre network on its path to 500 centres by 2027.

HYDERABAD, 18TH AUGUST, 2026:

Hearzap - India's fast-growing hearing care provider today announced the successful completion of its acquisition of Amplifon India's hearing healthcare business,* following the definitive agreement announced in May 2026, marking one of the most significant developments in India's organised hearing healthcare sector. Supported by its investor 360 ONE Asset Management, one of India's leading private equity investors, the transaction brings Amplifon India's established network of approximately 240 hearing care points of sale, including 115 directly operated locations, experienced clinical teams and loyal client base into Hearzap's rapidly expanding national platform, significantly strengthening its position in the country's growing hearing healthcare market.

With this acquisition, Hearzap expands its footprint to 420 centres across India, supported by more than 1,000 service providers, taking a significant step towards its ambition of establishing a 500-centre network by 2027. The integration is expected

to improve access to quality hearing care across metropolitan cities as well as emerging Tier II and Tier III markets, while strengthening the company's ability to deliver globally benchmarked clinical services.

Commenting on the acquisition, "Raja S., Managing Director, Hearzap," said, "The acquisition of Amplifon India represents a defining milestone in Hearzap's journey. It is not merely an expansion of our network but an opportunity to integrate globally proven clinical expertise, operational excellence and client-centric care into our organisation. Together, we are building a stronger platform capable of delivering world-class hearing healthcare to millions of Indians. Our focus remains on expanding access, strengthening clinical quality and ensuring that every client receives personalised care supported by the latest technologies and international best practices."

The acquisition comes at a time when India's hearing healthcare sector is undergoing a period of rapid transformation, driven by rising life expectancy, increasing awareness, greater exposure to occupational and environmental



noise, and growing acceptance of hearing care solutions. However, access to specialised hearing services remains limited across large parts of the country. Hearzap believes this acquisition will play a key role in bridging this gap by creating a stronger, more accessible and clinically advanced hearing healthcare ecosystem.

The acquisition is strategically significant beyond its scale. Over the next twelve months, Hearzap will undertake a phased integration of Amplifon India's operations, ensuring a seamless transition for clients and employees while maintaining uninterrupted clinical services. Existing Amplifon India professionals will continue to play an integral role in the organisation, ensuring continuity of care while contributing their expertise to Hearzap's future growth. The

combined business is expected to cross ₹230 crore in topline revenue post-integration, with Hearzap targeting revenues of approximately ₹250 crore by the end of the current financial year and scaling towards nearly ₹500 crore by FY2029. To support this growth trajectory and further strengthen its position in India's hearing healthcare sector, Hearzap plans to make significant investments across key areas including the launch of new hearing care centres, expansion into underserved markets, adoption of AI-enabled diagnostics and tele-audiology solutions, enhancement of rehabilitation services, and continued investment in training and clinical excellence. The company also intends to deepen collaborations with healthcare institutions, insurance providers and community health programmes to improve awareness, enable early diagnosis and promote long-term hearing wellness across the country. With this acquisition, Hearzap enters its next phase of growth, combining scale, clinical expertise and technology to strengthen India's organised hearing healthcare ecosystem. The company remains committed to expanding access, im-

proving early intervention and delivering high-quality hearing solutions to communities across the country.

About Hearzap

Founded in 2018 and headquartered in Hyderabad, Hearzap is India's leading organised hearing healthcare provider, offering comprehensive hearing assessments, advanced hearing aid solutions, speech and hearing rehabilitation, and lifelong hearing care support through its nationwide network. Backed by 360 ONE Asset Management and guided by a vision to make quality hearing healthcare accessible to every Indian, the company continues to invest in technology, clinical excellence and nationwide expansion, with a goal of establishing 500 hearing care centres by 2027.

About Amplifon India

Amplifon India is part of the Amplifon Group, one of the world's leading hearing healthcare companies with operations across 24 countries. Over the years, the company has built a strong reputation for clinical excellence, advanced hearing solutions and personalised patient care through its network of hearing care centres across India.





Indian Agriculture at a Turning Point

Technology, climate resilience and sustainable farming are reshaping the future of Indian agriculture, creating new opportunities while putting farmers and natural resources at the centre of growth.

Agriculture remains one of the most important pillars of the Indian economy and society. Even as India has rapidly expanded its services, manufacturing, technology and infrastructure sectors, farming continues to play a central role in the lives of millions of people. Agriculture provides food to a population of more than a billion, supplies raw materials to industries, supports rural livelihoods and contributes significantly to the overall economy.

However, Indian agriculture is at an important crossroads. The sector has achieved remarkable progress in food production since Independence, but farmers today face a new set of challenges. Climate change, irregular rainfall, rising input costs, fragmented landholdings, changing consumer preferences, water shortages and market uncertainties are putting pressure on traditional farming systems.

At the same time, agriculture is experiencing a transformation. Digital technology, precision farming, artificial intelligence, drones, improved irrigation, agricultural biotechnology, food processing and organised markets are creating new opportunities. The future of Indian agriculture will therefore depend not only on producing more food but also on producing it efficiently, sustainably and profitably.

Agriculture as the Foundation of Rural India

For millions of Indian households, agriculture is more than an economic activity. It is a source of livelihood, social security and cultural identity. Rural communities have historically depended on farming and allied activities such as dairy, poultry, fisheries, horticulture and livestock rearing. India's agricultural diversity is one of its

greatest strengths. The country produces rice, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables, spices, tea, coffee and numerous other crops. Different climatic conditions allow farmers to cultivate a wide range of crops across different regions. Yet this diversity also creates challenges. A farmer in Punjab faces very different conditions from a farmer in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra or Assam. Soil conditions, rainfall, irrigation availability, cropping patterns, market access and local prices vary considerably. Therefore, agricultural policies and solutions cannot always follow a single model across the country.

From Food Shortage to Food Security

One of independent India's greatest agricultural achievements has been the transformation from a food-deficit nation into one of the world's major food producers. The Green Revolution dramatically increased wheat and rice production through improved seeds, irrigation, fertilisers and modern farming practices. This transformation helped India strengthen its food security and reduce dependence on imports.

Technology Is Changing the Farm

Technology is beginning to transform agriculture from traditional experience-based farming into a more data-driven activity. Smartphones, satellite imagery, sensors, drones and artificial intelligence can provide farmers with information that was previously difficult to access. Weather-based advisories can help farmers decide when to sow or harvest. Soil testing can identify nutrient requirements. Drones can monitor crops and help identify pest infestations. Satellite imagery can provide information about crop health and water stress. Artificial intelligence could further change farming by analysing large amounts of agricultural data. AI-based systems can potentially help predict weather conditions, identify diseases, estimate yields and recommend suitable farming practices. The challenge is ensuring that these technologies reach small farmers in affordable and accessible ways. Technology is useful only when farmers can understand it, trust it and use it effectively.

Over the decades, agricultural research and improved technology have further increased productivity in several crops.

But the success of the Green Revolution also created new concerns. Excessive dependence on certain crops, particularly water-intensive crops in some regions, has contributed to groundwater depletion and soil degradation. The challenge today is to move from simply producing more food to

producing nutritious food while protecting natural resources.

The Growing Pressure on Farmers

Despite progress in agricultural production, farming remains financially uncertain for many cultivators. A farmer's income can depend on factors beyond his or her control, including rainfall, pests, disease outbreaks, market prices and input costs. The cost of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, electricity, machinery, labour and transportation can significantly affect farm profitability. When crop prices fall after harvest, farmers may struggle to recover their production costs. Small and marginal farmers face an additional disadvantage because they often operate on limited land. Small landholdings can make it difficult to achieve economies of scale or invest in expensive machinery and modern technologies. This makes income diversification increasingly important. Dairy farming, poultry, fisheries, horticulture, food processing and other allied activities can provide additional sources of income and reduce dependence on a single crop.

The Rise of Precision Agriculture

Precision agriculture represents an important direction for the future. Instead of treating an entire field in the same way, precision farming uses data to understand differences in soil, moisture, nutrients and crop health within a field. This allows farmers to apply water, fertilisers and pesticides more accurately. Such methods can reduce input costs while improving productivity

Climate Change Is Reshaping Agriculture

Climate change is emerging as one of the biggest long-term challenges for Indian agriculture. Farming depends heavily on temperature, rainfall and water availability, making it particularly vulnerable to changes in weather patterns. Erratic monsoons, prolonged dry periods, excessive rainfall, heatwaves, floods and unseasonal weather can damage crops and reduce yields. Rising temperatures can also affect crop growth and increase the spread of certain pests and diseases. For farmers, climate change is not an abstract environmental issue. It directly affects decisions about what to plant, when to plant and how much to invest. Climate-resilient agriculture will therefore become increasingly important. Drought-tolerant crop varieties, efficient irrigation systems, weather forecasting, crop diversification, soil conservation and improved farm management can help farmers adapt to changing conditions.

Water: The Most Critical Agricultural Resource

Water is at the heart of Indian agriculture. Irrigation has helped farmers reduce dependence on rainfall and increase cropping intensity, but water availability is becoming a major concern in several regions. Groundwater has played a crucial role in India's agricultural development, particularly in areas with extensive irrigation. However, excessive extraction has caused groundwater levels to decline in many places. The future of farming will require a stronger focus on water efficiency. Drip irrigation, sprinkler systems, rainwater harvesting, farm ponds and water-efficient cropping patterns can help reduce unnecessary water consumption. The concept of "more crop per drop" is becoming increasingly important.

and limiting environmental damage. As smartphones, sensors and agricultural platforms become more affordable, precision agriculture could gradually move beyond large commercial farms and become useful for smaller holdings as well.

From Crop Production to Higher Farm Income

The future of agriculture cannot be measured only by production. The more important question is whether farmers receive adequate income from their efforts. A kilogram of tomatoes may have a low value at the farm gate but a much higher value after sorting, packaging, transportation, processing and retail. This difference highlights the importance of the agricultural value chain. Better storage facilities, cold chains, food processing units, transportation networks and organised markets can help reduce post-harvest losses and improve farmer returns. Food processing can also create employment in rural areas. Instead of sending raw agricultural products directly to distant markets, villages and small towns can increasingly become centres for processing, packaging and value

Drones and Artificial Intelligence

Agricultural drones are attracting increasing attention because they can perform tasks quickly over large areas. They can be used for crop monitoring, identifying stress, mapping fields and, where regulations and equipment permit, applying agricultural inputs. Artificial intelligence can complement drone and satellite data by analysing images and identifying patterns that may not be obvious to farmers. The combination of drones, satellite technology and AI could eventually create a digital monitoring system for farms. Farmers could receive early warnings about crop diseases, water stress or pest attacks rather than discovering problems only after visible damage occurs. However, technology should complement farmers rather than replace their knowledge. Local agricultural experience remains extremely valuable because farmers understand their land, weather patterns and cropping conditions in ways that automated systems may not fully capture.

The Importance of Farmer Organisations

Small farmers can face difficulties when negotiating individually with traders, purchasing inputs or accessing markets. Farmer Producer Organisations and cooperatives can help farmers combine their purchasing and selling power. When farmers work collectively, they can potentially

purchase inputs at better prices, access machinery, improve storage and negotiate with buyers more effectively. Collective farming does not necessarily mean giving up individual land ownership. It can mean creating economic cooperation among farmers while retaining ownership of individual holdings. Such organisations can become an important bridge between small farmers and modern agricultural markets.

Diversification Can Strengthen Rural Incomes

India's agricultural future will not depend only on rice and wheat. Diversification towards horticulture, pulses, oilseeds, dairy, fisheries, poultry, livestock and other high-value activities can provide new income opportunities. Fruits and vegetables can generate higher returns per unit of land under suitable conditions, although they also require better storage and market systems. Dairy and fisheries can provide regular income compared with seasonal crop production. Similarly, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation and other specialised activities can offer additional opportunities in suitable regions. Diversification can also

improve nutrition and reduce excessive dependence on a small number of crops.

Natural and Sustainable Farming

Growing awareness about soil health, chemical use and environmental sustainability is encouraging interest in natural, organic and other low-input farming approaches. Healthy soil is one of the most valuable assets of agriculture.





FOOTBALL

Our aim should be to get players from APL to play in the IPL'



GUWAHATI: Guwahati Royals coach Abu Nechim praised his team's fearless approach after they secured their place in the semifinals of the Assam Premier League (APL), while also highlighting the tournament's role in creating a pathway for young cricketers from Assam. Reflecting on the Royals' performance, Nechim said the team's intensity and attacking approach had been key to their success. "It was a very good match. Our intensity throughout the 40 overs was very good. Our cricket, which I have been saying since the first day, is fearless, attacking cricket. We did that today, and we got the result," said Nechim.

Badminton WC

Chen, Yamaguchi reach second round



NEW DELHI: Tokyo Olympic champion Chen Yufei of China and defending champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan both reached the women's singles second round of the 2026 BWF World Championships in New Delhi on Tuesday. Fourth-seeded Chen rallied from one game down to beat Lo Sin Yan Happy of Hong Kong, China, 18-21, 21-8, 21-11. "I made some adjustments after the first game, such as making myself more excited and moving faster on the court," said Chen, who added that winning the title was only one of her goals, while learning and making progress through competitions were also important. Chen will next face Ukraine's Polina Buhrova, who overcame Prakriti Bharath of the UAE 21-13, 20-22, 21-14 to advance, reports Xinhua.

SWIMMING

'Artistic swimming set for further rule changes on road to LA28'



BUDAPEST: Artistic swimming is set for further rule changes as the sport moves toward the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, with adjustments to free routines and their length to be announced soon, World Aquatics Artistic Swimming Technical Committee chair Lisa Schott told Xinhua. "In the new rule changes coming out very, very shortly, you will see some changes in the free routines and their length," Schott said during the Aug. 12-16 World Aquatics Junior Artistic Swimming Championships in Budapest. "I'm just giving a little secret tip there," she added. Schott described the Budapest event as "the largest Junior Worlds in the history of the sport," with nearly 300 athletes from 35 federations competing and new federations taking part in the championships.

Hockey World Cup: Unbeaten India storm past South Africa 6-1 to register first win of 2026 edition

AMSTELVEEN

The Indian women's hockey team strengthened their position at the top of Pool D at the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium & Netherlands 2026 with a commanding 6-1 victory over South Africa at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen on Tuesday. The emphatic win keeps India unbeaten in the tournament, having earlier drawn 2-2 against 2024 Olympic silver medallists China, taking their tally to four points from two matches, with India currently leading the pool on goal difference.

India, who have played out a 2-2 draw against 2024 Olympic silver medallists China in their opening match, came into the contest determined to secure all three points. They made their attacking intent clear from the opening minutes, combining quick passing with incisive runs into the circle.

South Africa created the first major opening of the match when Kayla de Waal found herself through on goal in the fourth minute, but Bichu Devi Kharibam stood tall to make an important save and keep India level. India responded immediately, with Salima Tete driving forward on the right before finding Sunelita



Toppo, whose effort was saved by South African goalkeeper Marlise van Tonder.

India continued to build pressure and earned their first penalty corner in the seventh minute after Baljeet Kaur's work down the left flank resulted in a foot inside the circle. Deepika stepped up to take the set piece, but van Tonder produced a full-length save to deny the Indian drag-flick.

The sustained pressure eventually paid off in the 11th minute. India worked the ball patiently around the South African circle before an attempt from Sakshi

Rana found its way towards the far post, where Sunelita Toppo was alert to finish and give India the lead. India were briefly reduced to 10 players after Ishika Chaudhary received a green card in the 15th minute, but India maintained their composure and continued to dictate the tempo. At the start of the second quarter, Savita took over in goal for India, and the team continued to push forward.

India doubled their advantage in the 17th minute through a well-executed penalty corner routine. Navneet Kaur changed the angle before unleashing a low,

powerful slap hit that found the backboard to make it 2-0.

The Indian attack continued to threaten in waves, with Navneet, Neha and Deepika combining effectively around the circle. India earned another penalty corner in the 24th minute after Navneet found space inside the circle, and the resulting move led to another set piece.

India extended their lead in the 25th minute. Deepika's drag-flick took a deflection off the first rusher and fell kindly for Sushila Chanu, who managed to get the decisive touch and put India 3-0

ahead. South Africa continued to search for a way back into the contest, but India went into the half-time interval with a commanding three-goal advantage after controlling large portions of the opening 30 minutes.

India resumed the second half with the same attacking intent. They moved the ball quickly through the midfield and repeatedly found openings in the South African defence. Salima and the Indian forwards continued to stretch the opposition defence, while the backline remained alert to South Africa's attempts to counter. In the 38th minute, India added a fourth goal through a superb attacking move. Navneet exchanged passes with Baljeet on the left before the ball was cut back to Deepika. She controlled the ball on her backhand and unleashed a powerful tomahawk into the bottom far corner, leaving the goalkeeper with no chance.

The third quarter turned into a dominant period for India as they continued to attack with pace and purpose. Two goals in the space of two minutes further strengthened India's grip on the match.

In the 44th minute, Lalremsemi received an aerial ball from Neha inside the circle, cut onto her

reverse and fired towards the far post. The effort found its way past the goalkeeper to make it 5-0.

India then struck again in the 45th minute. Salima carried the ball forward on the right before finding Ishika, whose effort struck the post. Sakshi Rana reacted quickest to the rebound and sent a powerful reverse hit into the top corner to complete India's sixth goal of the evening.

India entered the final quarter with a 6-0 advantage and six different players on the scoresheet, underlining the depth and variety of their attacking threat.

South Africa continued to fight until the end and were rewarded in the 55th minute when Kayla de Waal converted a penalty corner. A drag-flick from Pearce took a deflection off the first Indian rusher before de Waal reacted quickest at the far post to reduce the deficit to 1-6. India, however, remained composed in the closing stages and saw out the remainder of the contest to secure a comprehensive 6-1 victory. The result gives India a valuable three points in Pool D and a significant boost in their bid to progress to the next stage of the World Cup. India will conclude their Pool D campaign against England on 20 August.

Treesa-Gayatri stun 16th seeds to reach pre-quarters; Lakshya, Unnati advance



NEW DELHI

India's top women's doubles combination of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly up-set 16th seeds Allison Lee and Lauren Lam with yet another solid performance on the second day of the BWF World Badminton Championships 2026 at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here on Tuesday. In singles, 2021 bronze medallist Lakshya Sen and debutant Unnati Hooda sealed their designated spots in the second round with contrasting wins over their respective opponents.

Commonwealth Games medallists Gayatri and Treesa, currently ranked 39th in the world, packed off Lam and Lee 21-15, 21-12 in 39 minutes to advance to the pre-quarterfinals.

The Indian combination was brilliant overall, with Gayatri controlling the net with aplomb and Treesa mixing her soft drops with those booming smashes to keep the Americans on their toes. After the initial exchanges, the home favourites opened up a 6-2 lead by bagging four straight points and then main-

tained the advantage to wrap up the first game.

Playing from the better side in the second game, Treesa and Gayatri clinched seven straight points from 5-4 to take a 12-4 lead, and though the Americans did show some moments of brilliance, they could never really make a comeback in the match.

In the women's singles opening round, Unnati initially struggled to adjust to the conditions and trailed Myanmar's Thet Htar Thuzar 13-16 in the opening game before coming back strong to win 22-20, 21-16 to set up a second round clash against 13th seed Michelle Li of Canada. Li also needed extra points in the opening game before beating Chinese Taipei's Chiu Pin-Chian 22-20, 21-12.

Later in the day, 14th seed Sen took time to find his stride as Austria's Collins Filimon used his height and dominated the opening game. But Lakshya dominated the second and third games to win 16-21, 21-8, 21-4 to advance to the next round.

Playing from the difficult side in the opening game, Sen was tentative with his lifts,

and world number 128 Filimon used his big smashes to take the first game. But once Sen settled down in the second game, he clinched 11 straight points from 10-8 to draw level. Sen then gave the Romania-born Filimon a lesson in controlled aggression as he changed side at 11-1 and then wrapped up the match without much ado.

"I was a bit tentative in the first game because I was playing from the difficult side and was struggling to get used to the conditions. But in the second game, I knew that I would be playing from the better side, and once I found the range of my shots it was quite easy," said Sen, who will now face Garret Tan of the USA in the second round.

Among the other top players, fifth seed Christo Popov of France was knocked out by Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-17, 21-19 in men's singles while former champion Nozomi Okuhara came from a game down to beat Ozge Bayrak of Turkey 18-21, 21-16, 21-9 and fourth seed Chen Yufei of China overcame a tentative start to beat Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy 18-21, 21-8, 21-11.

135th Durand Cup: Home favourite East Bengal take on high-scoring SC Delhi in semis

KOLKATA

East Bengal FC and SC Delhi will clash in the first semi-final of the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Wednesday, with a place in the final at stake.

East Bengal have scored 14 goals and conceded only once throughout the competition, that solitary concession coming in their opening 0-1 defeat to Mohun Bagan Super Giant in Group A. Since then, they have produced four consecutive clean sheets, beating CISF Protectors 8-0 and South United FC 5-0 in the group stage, before edging Indian Army FT 1-0 in the quarter-final, results that also confirmed their place among the two best runners-up.

SC Delhi have been the tournament's most prolific side by some distance, scoring 21 goals across their four matches while conceding just three. They topped Group C with nine points, beating Jamshedpur FC 2-1, Defenders FC 7-0 and Indian Air Force FT 7-1, before producing another comeback victory in the quarterfinal, defeating FC Raengdai 5-1 after falling behind. That blend of attacking efficiency and defensive control has marked them out as one



of the standout sides of the competition. Dani Ramirez has emerged as a key creative presence for East Bengal. The Spanish midfielder has shown a real ability to operate between midfield and attack, helping the side progress possession and unlock defensive blocks. Mohammed Basim Rashid offers a further attacking outlet, while PV Vishnu has been particularly influential in front of goal, scoring four times in the tournament so far — three of them in the 8-0 win over CISF Protectors, before his header settled the quarter-final against Indian Army FT. Among head coach Tomasz Tchórz's attacking options is Brazilian forward Ro-

driguinho, the tournament's leading scorer with seven goals.

The 25-year-old, whose full name is Rodrigo Araújo da Silva Filho, joined the club ahead of the tournament and is equally comfortable operating as a second striker or from the right flank. His movement, directness and finishing have been central to SC Delhi's attacking output. East Bengal's defensive record also reflects the imprint of head coach Antonio López Habas, whose sides have traditionally been built around defensive organisation, tactical discipline and compactness, allied to the ability to transition quickly once possession is regained.

Jr Women Hockey National: Chandigarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Manipur storm into quarters

PUNE

Teams from Chandigarh, Hockey Association of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Manipur advanced to the quarterfinals of the 16th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship 2026 at the Maj. Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium, Nehrunagar-Pimpri, near Pune on Tuesday. On Tuesday, in Pool 'A' Hockey Chandigarh downed Hockey Punjab 3-1, while in Pool 'B' Hockey Association of Odisha beat Hockey Bengal 6-0, in Pool 'D'

Pool 'C' Manipur Hockey downed a luckless Hockey Maharashtra 3-2, while in Pool 'D' Hockey Madhya Pradesh downed Hockey Himachal 6-0 to make it to the quarterfinals in the tournament being organised by Hockey Maharashtra under the aegis of Hockey India.

On Tuesday, the last day of pool matches, in Division A, Pool 'A': Hockey Chandigarh had an easy win over Hockey Punjab 3-1 and recorded their first win of the pool. The scorers for the winners were Diksha (33'), Ravina (34') and Pri-

ya Chauhan (46'), while the losers had Jaismeen Kaur (40') reduce the margin.

Hockey Chandigarh (3 pts; 2 matches) claimed second position in Pool A, behind pool winners Hockey Jharkhand (6 pts; 2 matches), while Hockey Punjab finished last (0 pts; 2 matches).

In Pool 'B', Hockey Association of Odisha subdued Hockey Bengal 6-0 for their first win of the pool. The scorers for Hockey Association of Odisha included a brace by Drupati Naik (10', 47').

'Matter of great pride': AIFF chief Kalyan Chaubey hails I. Arumainayagam on Arjuna Award

NEW DELHI

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey hailed former Indian footballer I. Arumainayagam's recognition with the Arjuna Award (Lifetime), calling it a "matter of great pride" for Indian football and praising his contribution to the country's historic 1962 Asian Games triumph.

Indian football legend I Arumainayagam was conferred with the Arjuna Award (Lifetime) 2025 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on Tuesday in recognition of his contribution to Indian sport both during and after his illustrious playing career.



The Arjuna Award (Lifetime) honours and motivates sportspersons who have made significant contributions through their performances and continued to contribute to the promotion of sport after retiring from active competition.

A speedy winger who repre-

sented India during one of the most celebrated periods in the country's football history, Arumainayagam was part of the Indian team that won the gold medal at the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta, one of the greatest achievements in Indian football. He made his international debut against Thailand on August 28, 1962, at the Asian Games and went on to represent India 18 times, scoring three goals.

Arumainayagam also represented India at the 1964 AFC Asian Cup, where India finished runners-up, and at the Merdeka Cup in 1966 and 1967; India finished third at the 1966 Merdeka Cup.

Matches against Pakistan are not as tough now', says Sreejesh

NEW DELHI

Former India hockey player PR Sreejesh believes matches against Pakistan no longer carry the same level of difficulty they once did, with the Indian team's improved fitness, strength, game awareness and decision-making giving it an edge ahead of their crucial FIH Hockey Men's World Cup 2026 clash. Sreejesh also supported India in playing its natural style of play and asked the team to remain compact, apply pressure from a high position, and avoid dropping too deep when facing their main rivals.

"Conceding goals in the last quarter or final minutes used to be a problem for us, but that is no longer the case. Now, we are the ones scoring late to win matches. Earlier, during the 35-minute halves, we used to make mistakes due to fitness or poor decision-making and



let in goals. But since the four-quarter system came in, and even before that, we made big improvements in our fitness, strength, game awareness, and decision-making, and because of that, matches against Pakistan are not as tough as they used to be. In the past, India vs Pakistan games were tight, often ending 1-0 or 2-1. Pakistan still have potential, but their current team's level is not the same as before," Sreejesh told

JioStar. The India-Pakistan match has greater importance since India was beaten by England in their last game, which has put their chances of reaching the semifinals on a tighter schedule. Sreejesh, on the other hand, thinks that India should concentrate on their own strengths and make sure their defensive setup does not become too passive.

"The Indian men's hockey team has been playing a new formation for the past year and a half. That formation mostly forces us into defense, but in the recent Pro League, we pushed up and pressed hard in many matches. One important thing is that we need to stay compact in defense when playing against European teams. Otherwise, we should play our natural game in the World Cup. In defense, we used zonal marking, so we need to improve our understanding in that area. We should

not drop too deep. We need to step out, press high, and defend even beyond the centre line," he said.

Sreejesh also gave his opinion regarding Harmanpreet Singh's leadership, emphasising that a captain's main duties usually arise outside of the pitch.

"Harmanpreet Singh is a very good captain. On the pitch, a captain's influence is limited because you cannot control every move or player. The person with the ball has to make the decision. Most of a captain's work happens off the pitch, keeping the team united, supporting younger players, helping them settle in, creating a positive team environment, taking players' concerns to the coach, clearing doubts, and making sure everyone understands the coach's instructions. So, for a hockey captain, the work off the field is much more important than what you do on the field," Sreejesh said.



Sankranthi 2027 Mega Clash



The Sankranthi 2027 season is set to witness an interesting Mega family clash at the box office. Megastar Chiranjeevi and his nephew Sai Durgha Tej are likely to face each other during the festive season. Sai Durgha Tej's upcoming film Sambarala Yeti Gattu (SYG) was officially announced for Sankranthi a few days ago. After several delays, the film has finally locked January 12, 2027 as its release date. Now, reports suggest that Chiranjeevi's upcoming film, directed by Bobby, is also eyeing a Sankranthi 2027 release. The official release date is expected to be announced on Chiranjeevi's birthday on August 22. Chiranjeevi, who is set to turn 71 on August 22, is reportedly planning to make the Sankranthi season special with his upcoming film. If both films release during the same festival season, it will be a rare "Mega Mama vs Mena Alludu" clash. Such a direct box-office clash between two leading Mega family heroes has been uncommon so far. The clash is expected to bring huge attention at the box office, as both films have targeting the Sankranthi audience. It remains to be seen whether Chiranjeevi and Sai Durgha Tej will finally arrive together for Sankranthi 2027 and how Sambarala Yeti Gattu performs against Chiranjeevi's big-ticket film. The Sankranthi 2027 box office could be an interesting battle for Mega fans and Telugu cinema audiences.

TWO TITLES REGISTERED FOR NTR,TRIVIKRAM



The much-awaited collaboration between Jr NTR and director Trivikram Srinivas is continues to generate excitement among fans. As per the latest update, NTRArts has registered two interesting titles for the film. According to sources, God of War and Devasenapathi are the two titles that have been locked by the production house. Among them, God of War is a title that has been associated with the project for the last few months and has already become popular among fans. However, Devasenapathi is a new title and has caught the attention of movie lovers. The title sounds powerful and has a mythological as well as mass appeal, which will make fans happy if final-

ized. Trivikram and Tarak are expected to team up after completing their ongoing commitments, and expectations are naturally sky-high. Their previous collaboration, Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava, was a commercial success, and now all eyes are on this biggie. As of now, there is no official confirmation regarding which title will eventually be used for the film. But whichever title will be used is surely going to be powerful and showcase Jr NTR like never before. Stay tuned for more updates on this project.

Film Expo India 2026

DR.BHUPENDRA VIKAL

India's film, media and entertainment industry is going to witness a major confluence as Film Expo India 2026 will be held from 26-30 August 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The five-day mega event aims



to create one of India's largest platforms connecting the entire entertainment ecosystem including filmmakers, producers, artists, OTT platforms, technology companies, investors and creative professionals. Designed as a business-driven industry platform, Film Expo India 2026 will focus on creating new collaborations, investment opportunities and growth

prospects in the fast-growing film and entertainment sector. A mega gathering of India's entertainment industry. The expo will bring together professionals and organizations from across the entertainment value chain including film production houses, directors, writers, actors, OTT platforms, broadcasters, distributors, exhibitors, VFX and animation studios, post-production companies, film production technology providers, music and media companies, investors, startups and creative enterprises. In this event 80,000 visitors will attend and up to 500 exhibitors will come from 10+ states. 200+ celebrities will attend. There will be live demonstrations and technology shows. There will be expert panel discussions, exclusive film screening events, industry networking opportunities, 30+ workshops and masterclasses, workshops and masterclasses featuring experienced professionals from filmmaking, acting, writing, production, OTT, technology, VFX, distribution and other creative fields.

Balayya Eyes Early Return For NBK 111 Despite Injury

Nandamuri Balakrishna is a true fighter and wears a devil-may-care attitude. Balayya, who severely injured his leg while shooting for NBK 111, underwent major knee surgery in July end. Even as Balayya is yet to recover from the injury completely, he informed the team NBK 111 and director Gopichand Malineni that he would join the film's shoot next month and asked the team to make the preparations accordingly. The makers are planning to wrap up Balakrishna's shooting portions in early September as soon as he returns to the shoot and thus kickstart the post-production works and the film's promotions accordingly. Balakrishna is said to be committed to release NBK 111 for December this year, ahead of the Sankranti 2027 race. Meanwhile, Sankranti has a very huge pipeline. Chiranjeevi's Mega 158, Venkatesh and Anil Ravipudi's Film, Nagarjuna's King 100, Ravi Teja's film with Vishnu and Hashit Goli, Sharwan-and-Sreenu Vaitla's films are aiming for Pongal.



Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently revealed that "compression socks" are what she now calls fashion, offering a candid glimpse into her current style priorities. Taking to her Instagram Stories, the 'Kushi' actress shared a picture in which her legs and feet could be seen wrapped in compression socks. For the caption she simply wrote, "What I call fashion now: compression socks." Going by the picture, it appears that Samantha's feet are swollen, prompting her to turn to compression socks for comfort. To note, Samantha is expecting her first child, and compression socks are commonly used during pregnancy to help with swelling and improve circulation. For the unversed, the actress officially confirmed her pregnancy in June 2026, revealing that she and her husband, filmmaker Raj Nidimoru, are expecting their first child. The 'Yashoda' actress shared the news at the success meet of her film "Maa Inti Bangaaram" and also announced that she would be taking a temporary maternity break. Speaking to media, Samantha said, "After Maa Inti Bangaaram, I will have to take a small break, given my condition. I'll have to take maternity leave. After that I'll be back with another film for my fans." Samantha and Raj Nidimoru tied the knot in an intimate ceremony on December 1, attended by just 30 guests. Samantha first met the filmmaker when she joined his Amazon Prime Video series "The Family Man 2." Reportedly, their initial interactions were strictly professional, with Samantha playing the fierce antagonist Raji in the critically acclaimed second season of the series, created by Raj and DK. Following the success of 'The Family Man 2,' Samantha and Raj Nidimoru teamed up once again for "Citadel: Honey Bunny," the Indian installment of the global Citadel franchise.

Nidhhi's Next Is A Mythical THRILLER

If sources in the industry are to be believed, actress Nidhi Agerwal's next film, which recently went on the floors with a grand pooja ceremony, will be a mythological thriller. The new film, which is being produced under the banner of Varah Films as Production No. 1, features Nidhi Agarwal as the heroine and was recently launched in a grand fashion. Sources point out that the film will be a female-centric thriller. The film, which is being produced by Suneeth Padolkar and which is being directed by 'Tantra' fame Srinivas Gopisetty, went on floors on a day the actress celebrated her birthday. Taking to its social media timelines to announce the launch of the film, Varah Films wrote, "A new journey begins. A new world takes shape. With the Pooja Ceremony, #ProductionNo1 officially begins its journey. Today we celebrate the one at the heart of it. Happy Birthday, @AgerwalNidhi." Sources present at the film's launch event said that P. Ashok and P. Renuka switched on the camera for the inaugural shot. Heroine Nidhi Agerwal, whose performances in her recent films -- Prabhastar 'Raja Saab' and Pawan Kalayanastar 'Hari Hara Veera Mallu' -- caught the attention of critics, participated in the event along with the members of the film unit. The makers also released a poster of the actress from the film on the occasion. Nidhi Agarwal's look in the poster is very interesting and gives the impression that she will be playing a character which she has not played before.

Sam Turns Socks Into Style

