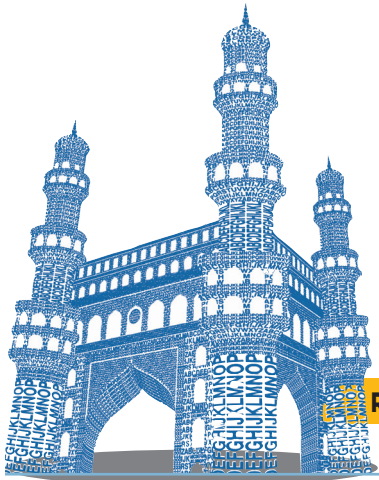




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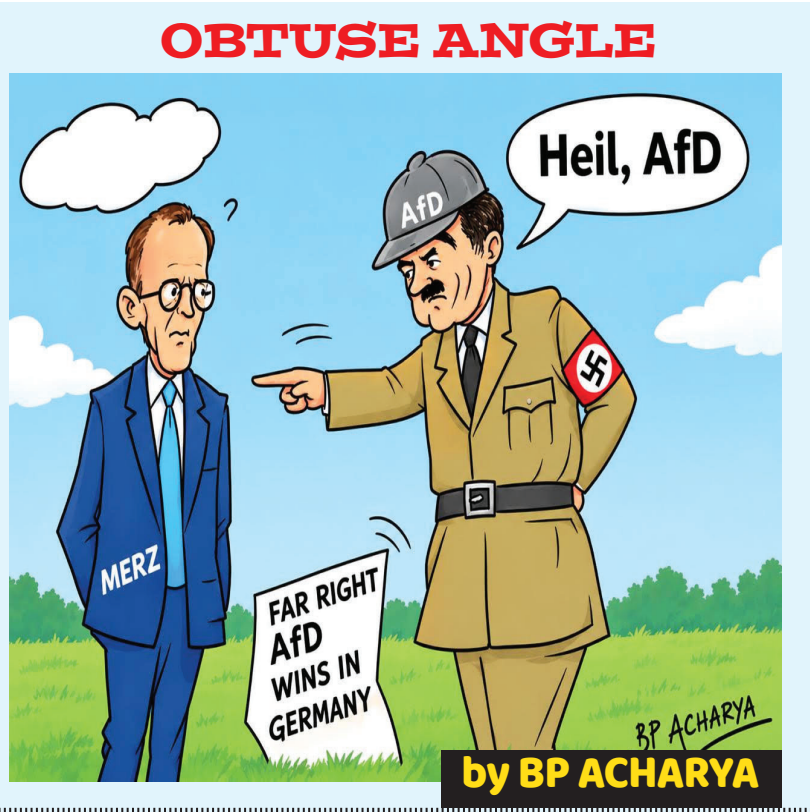


Govt plans new Seed Act, farmer meet on Sept 10

SPECIAL 02

'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' to mark Modi's 25yrs public service

SPECIAL 02



by BP ACHARYA

SHORT

TAKES

Red Fort Blast Case: Sensational Allegations in NIA Chargesheet

New Delhi: Key allegations have emerged in the chargesheet filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the blast that occurred near the Red Fort on November 10, 2025. According to the NIA, ideological documents seized during the investigation described existing political systems as "satanic and authoritarian systems" and promoted violent struggle to replace them with a new system.

The investigating agency alleged that these propaganda materials influenced the Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH) module linked to the Red Fort blast. The chargesheet stated that the documents referred to the concept of "Ghazwa-e-Hind" as well as armed struggles that took place in various countries.

GOVT. TO PROBE ASSEMBLY INCIDENTS

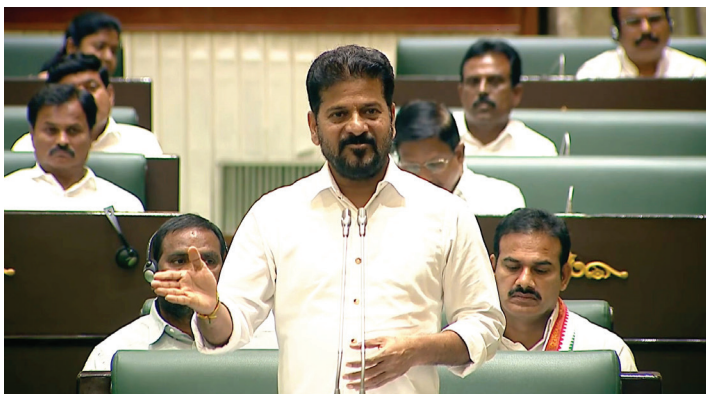
CM Revanth Reddy comprehensive probe, criminal cases and strict action over alleged misconduct during Assembly session

HYDERABAD, SEP 9

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy announced in the Legislative Assembly that the state government has decided to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the incidents that occurred during the Monsoon Session of the Assembly, register criminal cases wherever necessary and take strict action against all those found responsible for the alleged conspiratorial acts.

The entire Assembly expressed deep concern over the incidents reported on the first day of the session, particularly the alleged use of abusive language against Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar and the incident involving the alleged "purification" of the ground where Dalits had walked. The House stood firmly behind the Speaker over the incidents, which were described as an insult to the Chair, and appealed to him not to lose heart.

Speaking on Wednesday during a lengthy debate on the issues, the Leader of the House and Chief Min-



"The government will take all necessary legal measures against those responsible." — CM Revanth Reddy

ister assured the Assembly that the government stood firmly with the Speaker. He made it clear that those who had hurt the sentiments of the Speaker would not be spared and that the government would take all necessary legal measures against those responsible. "A few miscreants, driven by mania and incite-

ment, not only attacked officials but also acted in a way that insulted the Chair of the Speaker. They insulted the Speaker's mother," the Chief Minister said.

Revanth Reddy said the language used to insult the Speaker inside the Assembly premises was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BRS MLAs Barred for REST OF SESSION

Hyderabad, Sept.9: Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar on Wednesday suspended BRS members from the House for the remainder of the ongoing Assembly session following disruptions and protests. Acting on a recommendation from Legislative Affairs Minister D. Sridhar Babu, the Speaker suspended K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), T. Harish Rao, Kaushik Reddy, Madhavaram Krishna Rao, Manik Rao, Chinta Prabhakar, Prashanth Reddy, Marri Rajasekar Reddy, Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Kaleru Venkatesh, Vijayadu, Jagadish Reddy, Anil Jadhav, Sudheer Reddy, Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, Gangula Kamalakara, Sabitha Indra Reddy, Kova Lakshmi and Sunitha Lakshma Reddy.

Soon after the House commenced proceedings on the third day of the session, BRS members entered the Well and raised slogans of "We want justice", disrupting the proceedings. Subsequently, Minister Sridhar Babu moved a resolution seeking their suspension, which was accepted by the House. Following their suspension, the BRS members attempted to meet the Speaker but were stopped by Assembly marshals.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BRS urges Gov to probe alleged attacks on party legislators

Hyderabad, Sept.9: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on Wednesday urged Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla to intervene in what it described as a series of "atrocities" by the Congress government, including the alleged assault on its legislators, particularly women MLAs, restrictions on their entry into the legislature and the alleged attack on the residence of party chief and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

A BRS delegation led by party working president K.T. Rama Rao met the Governor at Lok Bhavan and submitted a representation detailing the incidents. The delegation alleged that BRS legislators were stopped on the road, prevented from entering the Assembly and assaulted despite being elected representatives.

The Governor, according to the BRS, responded positively and assured the delegation that he would order an inquiry into the issues raised by the party.

Speaking to mediapersons after the meeting, K.T. Rama Rao alleged that police personnel had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Kishan Reddy Emphasises Parliamentary Values

Disrupting legislatures amounts to disrespecting the people; elected representatives should conduct themselves with dignity

New Delhi, September 9: Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy said that parliamentary values should be given greater importance than political parties. He made these remarks while speaking as the chief guest at the 'Sansad Ratna' Awards ceremony held in New Delhi. He urged elected representatives to conduct themselves with dignity so that people's trust and respect for Parliament, the temple of democracy, would increase.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BJP Reports ₹ 1,472.8 Cr INCOME IN 2026

BJP received massive funding during the 2026 Assembly elections, with 1,472.8 crore received, according to a report.

NEW DELHI, SEP 9

The BJP received substantial funding during the 2026 Assembly elections, according to the party's election expenditure reports submitted to the Election Commission. The report stated that a total of ₹1,472.8 crore was received by the BJP's central headquarters during the Assembly election period in Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. During the same period, the party's central headquarters, state and district units together spent ₹160 crore on the elections in these three states. As of May 6, 2026, the BJP's closing balance stood at ₹7,627.2 crore. The balance was ₹6,722.6 crore on March 15, meaning it increased by ₹904.6 crore in roughly two months.

Highest Expenditure in Assam State-wise, the BJP spent the most on the Assam elections, at ₹96.3 crore. Of this, ₹76.7 crore was spent on general party

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Cabinet Clears 7 High-Density Rail Corridors

NEW DELHI, SEP 9

The Central Government has taken a key decision to reduce congestion on railway routes across the country and increase passenger and freight transportation capacity. The Union Cabinet has approved the development of seven high-density railway corridors in the country. The Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai corridors will be given special priority under these projects. Vijayawada will be developed as a key station on the Delhi-Chennai route, while Visakhapatnam will be given priority in the Howrah-Chennai corridor. The development of infrastructure in the Renigunta and Guntakal areas on the Mumbai-Chennai route is also expected to receive a boost. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that work on four lines is already underway on several routes. He added that some other corridors are at the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and approval stages. The minister expects these projects to increase the capacity of freight transportation and passenger services, while also improving the punctuality of trains.

Govt plans new Seed Act, farmer meet on Sept 10



NEW DELHI, SEP 9

The Union Government is preparing to introduce a stringent new Seed Act aimed at curbing the sale of fake and substandard seeds and protecting farmers from losses. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has convened a high-level meeting with farmer organisations from across the country at Krishi Bhavan on September 10. The meeting

comes ahead of the upcoming Parliament session and will focus on the proposed Seed Act as well as broader issues concerning agricultural development.

Representatives of several prominent farmer organisations, including the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, Bharatiya Kisan Union, All India Kisan Coordination Committee and South Indian Farmers Association, are expected to participate.

Focus on seed quality Chouhan is expected to seek suggestions from farmer leaders on the draft legislation and understand problems faced by farmers on the ground. The proposed law is likely to introduce stricter penalties, including heavy fines and imprisonment, for those involved in the sale of fake or poor-quality seeds. The government has also proposed QR-code-based

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Neopolis, Golden Mile E-Auctions Draw Strong Response

Hyderabad, September 9: The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) conducted e-auctions on September 9, 2026, for valuable plots in the Neopolis layout and Golden Mile Site-1, located within the limits of Kokapet village in Gandipet mandal, Rangareddy district. The auctions

received an enthusiastic response from bidders.

The 0.70-acre plot at Golden Mile Site-1 received the strongest response. Against the proposed upset price of ₹70 crore per acre, the highest bid was recorded at ₹115 crore per acre. This reflects the continuing

demand for plots located in strategically important areas of western Hyderabad.

Plot No. 17 in the Neopolis layout, spread across 4.59 acres, received a single bid. The bid was recorded at ₹120 crore per acre. Both plots are strategically located in key areas of Kokapet. They have excellent

connectivity to major locations such as the Outer Ring Road (ORR), Financial District, Gachibowli and HITEC City. Their location within the developed growth corridor of western Hyderabad is further enhancing their appeal for real estate development and investment.

CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

**GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL
TAMPER PROOF PACKING**

3 TIMES BETTER

KCR pays tribute to Kaloji

HYDERABAD, SEPT. 9

BRS president and former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) paid rich tributes to renowned poet and Telangana icon Kaloji Narayana Rao on his birth anniversary. In a statement, KCR recalled his personal association with Kaloji and said his life and writings reflected the life, language and dialect of the people of Telangana. He described Kaloji's literary journey as a powerful expression of Telangana's self-respect.

Recalling Kaloji's strong opposition to injustice and exploitation, KCR said the poet's words had inspired the second phase of the Telangana movement. Kaloji's fearless questioning of those in power remains an ideal for today's youth, he noted. KCR recalled that the then BRS government had declared Kaloji's birth anniversary as Telangana Language Day in recognition of his contribution. He also highlighted the annual Kaloji Narayana Rao award instituted to honour eminent poets and writers of Telangana literature.

He further noted that the Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences was established in his honour.

KCR called upon the youth to draw inspiration from Kaloji's courage and continue to question and expose alleged wrongdoing and injustice by those in power.

CONG NEVER WISHED HARM ON KCR: MAHESH GOUD

Hyderabad, Sept.9: TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Wednesday rejected allegations by BRS leaders that the Congress government was indifferent to the health and safety of BRS chief and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Speaking at the Assembly media point, Goud said the Congress had never wished harm on KCR and would never do so. "KCR is receiving the highest level of security in the state after the Chief Minister", Goud said, adding that the Congress respected KCR as a senior Opposition leader and movement leader. Goud criticised BRS leaders for allegedly indulging in "low-level politics" and questioned the appropriateness of BRS workers performing funeral rites for Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in Rajanna Sircilla district.

Govt plans new Seed Act, farmer meet on Sept 10

➤FROM PAGE 1

traceability and digital records to track seeds through the supply chain. Fines for violations could reportedly go up to Rs 30 lakh.

Modernising seed regulation

Chouhan has said the existing Seed Act, 1966, was framed at a time when advanced technology and digital record systems were not available. The proposed legislation seeks to establish greater traceability, transparency and accountability in the seed sector.

The government has maintained that the new law would encourage genuine seed companies while taking strict action against those supplying substandard products, with the larger objective of ensuring farmers have access to quality seeds.

Komatireddy flays BJP, BRS for disrupting Assembly proceedings

HYDERABAD, SEPT.9

Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Wednesday strongly criticised the BJP and BRS for allegedly disrupting proceedings of the Telangana Legislative Assembly and urged members to cooperate with the House.

Speaking in the Assembly, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said BJP Legislature Party leader A. Maheshwar Reddy should not have addressed Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in an informal and disrespectful manner.

Referring to the BRS' conduct towards Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, the Minister said BJP members had claimed

that they had come to the Assembly to "rescue" the Speaker from the BRS and urged them to withdraw the remark.

"From the first day of the Assembly session until today, the only objective of both the BJP and BRS appears to be to obstruct the proceedings," he said.

The Minister termed the alleged remarks against the Speaker and the use of unparliamentary language unfortunate, saying such behaviour was "something that should make any civilised society hang its head in shame."

He also alleged that certain members had made remarks about the Speaker's mother, resulting in unnecessary disruptions in the House.

Komatireddy Venkat Red-

dy questioned the BJP's alleged conduct towards Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. "If the BRS insults a Dalit Speaker and the BJP goes to the extent of 'purifying' the stage where Dalit leader Mallikarjun Kharge was seated, how can this be justified?" he asked.

The Minister said Kharge, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, was a senior politician who had won direct elections for nearly five decades. "Insulting such a leader amounts to an insult to democracy itself," he said.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy also termed the registration of an FIR against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his protest against the incident unfortunate.

'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' to mark Modi's 25 years in public service

NEW DELHI, SEP 9

BJP National President Nitin Nabin on Wednesday announced a month-long nationwide campaign, 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', from September 17 to October 17 to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi completing 25 years in public service.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, Nabin said October 7, 2026, will mark 25 years since Prime Minister Modi began his public service journey as the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

"On October 7, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will complete 25 years of public service, a journey that began when he assumed office as the Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001," Nabin said.

He said the campaign would highlight Modi's journey from an ordinary party worker to the country's 'Pradhan Sevak' and showcase various initiatives undertaken during his tenure in public life.

Nabin said that when Modi took over as Prime Minister, India was facing what he described as policy paralysis and was being referred to as one of the "Fragile Five" economies. He said the country had since emerged as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Highlighting India's growing startup ecosystem, Nabin said the country had become the world's third-largest startup nation, with young people increasingly emerging as job creators rather than merely job seekers.

Referring to initiatives such as Khelo India and Fit India, the BJP president



said India's youth were making their presence felt across different fields and contributing to the country's growing global profile.

Focus on women-led development

On women-led development, Nabin highlighted initiatives including Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, Lakhpati Didi and the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. He said these initiatives had contributed to greater participation and empowerment of women.

He also highlighted development in border areas, saying villages located along the country's international borders were increasingly being described as "first villages" rather than "last villages".

Nabin said Modi's development journey began in Gujarat, where initiatives such as the Narmada project and Vibrant Gujarat helped position

the state as an engine of growth and investment.

He also referred to the government's efforts against Naxalism and said the development journey under Modi had focused not only on economic progress but also on preserving India's cultural heritage.

Citing the Ram Mandir and Kashi Vishwanath, Nabin said the government had worked towards preserving and developing the country's cultural and religious heritage.

Month-long nationwide campaign

The BJP president said the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' would begin on September 17, which the party observes as 'Seva Diwas' to mark Prime Minister Modi's birthday, and conclude on October 17.

The campaign will begin with

a blood donation camp, while an 'Ashirwad Ka Diya' programme will also be organised on September 17. A cleanliness drive will be conducted on October 2, Nabin said.

The BJP will organise photo and digital exhibitions showcasing Modi's 25-year public service journey, including his governance record, development initiatives and welfare schemes.

Seminars and intellectual forums focusing on good governance, development and Antyodaya will also be organised as part of the campaign. Interactive programmes involving youth and other sections of society will also be held.

Special camps will be organised to create awareness about welfare schemes of the Central and state governments and the benefits available to eligible beneficiaries.

State teams to coordinate programmes

BJP National General Secretary Vinod Tawde has been appointed National Convener of the campaign. A seven-member team will be formed in each state to coordinate the programmes. The teams will comprise a minister, an organisational general secretary and five senior leaders.

Nabin said the BJP would use the campaign to take the message of public service and dedication to people across the country and highlight Modi's 25-year journey in public life.

Prime Minister Modi took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001. He served as Gujarat Chief Minister for nearly 13 years before becoming Prime Minister in 2014.

TGIC TO HOST MEET ON RTI UNIFORMITY

Hyderabad, Sept.9: The Telangana Information Commission (TGIC) will organise a two-day National Conference on "Operational Uniformity in Implementation of RTI: Challenges and Solutions" at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad, on September 10 and 11.

The conference is being sponsored by the National Federation of Information Commissioners in India (NFICI) and organised in collaboration with ASCI.

The conference assumes national sig-

nificance as it will bring together Chief Information Commissioners, Information Commissioners, legal experts, policymakers and senior administrators from across the country.

Around 20 State Chief Information Commissioners are expected to participate. Many of them are former Chief Secretaries and senior IAS and IPS officers. Eminent legal professionals, policymakers and senior administrators will also attend.

The Telangana Governor has con-

sented to be the Chief Guest at the inaugural ceremony and deliver the keynote address. The conference will provide a national platform to share experiences, examine emerging challenges and deliberate on measures to strengthen the implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

Its key objective is to promote greater consistency, efficiency, transparency and predictability in the functioning of Information Commissions, while ensuring that every case is examined on

its own facts and in accordance with the provisions of law.

The conference will also facilitate the exchange of best practices among Information Commissions and explore practical solutions to improve the delivery of information to citizens.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will participate in a dinner interaction at ASCI on September 10 along with the Central Chief Information Commissioner and participating State Chief Information Commissioners.

Kishan Reddy Emphasises Parliamentary..

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Kishan Reddy said that opposition parties should criticize the government, question it, and raise public issues. However, he said it was not appropriate to obstruct the smooth functioning of legislatures. He expressed concern that politics and political values had been much more dignified in the past, whereas their current decline was sending the wrong message to future generations.

He criticized the conduct of the ruling Congress and opposition BRS in the Telangana Assembly recently, describing it as undemocratic. He said it was not good for the democratic system for political parties to glorify incidents such as tearing or getting shirts torn off. He noted that people were closely observing the behavior of political leaders and urged

elected representatives to work in a manner that lived up to the people's trust.

Kishan Reddy said that his rise to this level from a farming family was a testament to the greatness of Indian democracy. He said he had drawn considerable inspiration from the speeches of leaders such as Atal Bihari Vajpayee, P. V. Narasimha Rao, and Morarji Desai. He stated that he had never entered the Well of the Assembly during his political career and had not missed a single day of Assembly proceedings. He also said that he had attended every day of Parliament's proceedings up to the Monsoon Session.

He said differences of opinion between the government and the opposition were natural. He recalled former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu

saying that if the opposition did not approve of the government's approach, it should criticize it constructively or stage a walkout. However, he criticized the current tendency to focus on creating chaos in legislatures instead of opting for a "speak-out" or "walkout."

Kishan Reddy called on elected representatives from different parties and ideological backgrounds to work together on public issues. He said that paralyzing Parliament and state assemblies amounted to disrespecting the people. He urged all political parties to act in a manner that enhanced the country's dignity on international platforms when it came to national issues, and said that making unnecessary criticism of constitutional institutions was not appropriate.

Uttam: Philippines Eyes Telangana Seeds, Meat

New Delhi, Sept.9: Telangana's emerging trade partnership with the Philippines is set to expand beyond rice, with the Southeast Asian nation expressing keen interest in importing high-quality seeds and meat products from the State, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Wednesday. Following a meeting with Philippines Secretary of Agriculture Francisco P. Tiú Laurel Jr. in New Delhi, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the discussions had opened up prospects for a broader and more diversified agricultural trade relationship between Telangana and the Philippines. "The Philippines has shown keen interest not only in purchasing more rice from Telangana but also in source-

ing high-quality seeds and meat products. This could develop into a significant and diversified agricultural trade partnership," he said.

The Philippines has also indicated its willingness to procure additional quantities of Telangana rice at a competitive price, which the Minister described as among the best prices secured by the State for its rice exports. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Philippines offered considerable potential for scaling up Telangana's rice exports, given the country's large and continuing dependence on imported rice.

Rice consumption in the Philippines was estimated at around 17.6 million metric tonnes (MMT) in 2025-26. Its domestic paddy production, estimated at

about 19.52 MMT, translates into a significantly lower quantity after milling, resulting in a gap between domestic rice availability and consumption. The scale of the opportunity is reflected in the country's import figures. The Philippines imported around 2.38 MMT of rice from various countries during January-May 2026, about 16.5 per cent higher than during the corresponding period of the previous year.

Against this backdrop, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana was positioning itself as a reliable and competitive supplier to the Philippine market. Sustained exports, he said, could provide a major alternative market for the State's surplus rice while benefiting farmers and the rice-milling industry.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

GOVT. TO PROBE ASSEMBLY..

➤FROM PAGE 1

extremely serious and compared the act to attempts by terrorists or extremists to attack the nation. He described the incident as a planned attack carried out with malicious intent.

The Chief Minister said Telangana and Indian society have traditionally accorded the highest respect to women and mothers. "Ours is a matriarchal society. We address women as Aparā Kali, Bhadrakali, Bhoomatha, Bharatamatha and Telangana Matha. Whenever we want to attribute or discuss power and greatness, we compare it to a mother, to a woman," he said.

"Our society worships women—we refer to this country as Bharatamatha

and Telangana as Telangana Talli. It is tragic that on this very soil of Telangana, people behaved in a way that insults a mother," he said, expressing deep concern over the incident.

Revanth Reddy further said that an insult to the Speaker amounted to an insult to society itself and asserted that Telangana society would not tolerate such acts. He recalled the state's history of resistance, saying the land had previously witnessed the Razakars being driven away and defeated.

The Chief Minister said democracy provided several legitimate avenues for expressing dissent and protest. However, he alleged that those responsible for the incidents had acted reck-

lessly and deliberately with the intention of hurting the Speaker.

He assured the House that the government would act responsibly and ensure that those who insulted the Speaker were dealt with in accordance with the law. The government, he said, would not allow such incidents to go without accountability.

The Chief Minister also alleged that the disruptions during the Assembly session were aimed at preventing discussion on important public issues. He said the government had planned to take up a wide range of matters during the sessions that began on September 7.

"The government intended to discuss public issues in the Legislative Assembly ses-

sions starting September 7. We planned to discuss issues in the education sector, irregularities in Dharani, Section 22(A), and many topics raised by the opposition. However, they disrupted the proceedings to prevent discussions on public issues," he said.

Revanth Reddy said the Assembly was meant to serve as a forum for discussion of issues concerning the people and that differences between the government and opposition should be addressed through democratic debate. He reiterated that the government would take legal action against those responsible for the incidents and ensure that the dignity of the Legislative Assembly and the Speaker's Chair was protected.

BJP Reports ₹ 1,472.8 Cr INCOME IN 2026

➤FROM PAGE 1

campaigning and ₹19.5 crore on candidates. The general campaign expenditure included ₹23.1 crore from the party's central unit. The BJP spent ₹27.3 crore on travel by star campaigners in Assam and ₹37 crore on advertising. It spent ₹8.9 crore on campaign materials and ₹2.3 crore on other expenses. The report said that ₹19.4 crore was paid as lump-sum amounts to candidates, while ₹16.7 lakh was spent on campaigning related to their criminal records.

51.6 Crore Spent in Tamil Nadu

The BJP spent a total of ₹51.6 crore on the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. According to the report, ₹44.5 crore was spent on general party campaigning and another ₹7 crore on candidates. In Puducherry, the party spent ₹11.9 crore. Of the BJP's total expenditure of ₹160 crore across the three states, ₹130.4 crore was allocated to general party campaigning. Another ₹29.6 crore was spent on lump-sum payments to candidates, campaigning related to their criminal records and other election activities.

Congress Spent 248.6 Crore

For the same election phase, the Congress party reported total election expenditure of ₹248.6 crore. However, the Election Commission has not yet made public the BJP's complete expenditure details for the West Bengal and Kerala Assembly elections. As a result, the full picture of the BJP's total expenditure across the five states is not yet clear. According to the election expenditure reports, the funding received by the BJP during the 2026 elections, its substantial closing balance, and the expenditure on campaigning and candidates have once again drawn attention to the election finances of political parties.



Distinguished Lecture on ‘Challenges in Processing Natural Signals like Speech’ Held at GITAM



HYDERABAD

Prof. B. Yegnanarayana, Former Professor at IIT Madras and INSA Senior Scientist at IIIT Hyderabad, delivered a distinguished lecture on ‘Challenges in Processing Natural Signals like Speech’ at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, on September 9, 2026. The programme was organised by the Department of Electrical, Electronics and Communication Engineering (EECE), School of Core Engineering.

In his insightful lecture, Prof. Yegnanarayana discussed key developments and challenges in signal processing, speech signal processing, computer vision, neural networks, and digital signal processing (DSP). Highlighting the importance of speech in human life, he noted that the widespread adoption of mobile phones has been closely linked to the ability to communicate through speech. Recalling the pioneering contri-

butions of researchers such as Bishnu S. Atal in speech compression and Linear Predictive Coding (LPC), and D. Raj Reddy in speech recognition, Prof.Yegnanarayana emphasised the significant contributions of Indian origin scientists to the field. He remarked that India possesses exceptional intellectual capability and urged students and young researchers to build on this legacy.

He also examined emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Large Language Models (LLMs), Generative AI and Agentic AI, stressing that their capabilities fundamentally depend on the quality of representation of data. He highlighted the limitations and challenges associated with current AI systems and encouraged students to explore speech and natural language processing as promising areas for future research. Distinguishing between speech processing and speech signal processing, Prof. Yegnanarayana explained

that human speech processing involves knowledge, context and selective attention, while speech signal processing focuses on machine-based analysis and representation using DSP techniques. He emphasised that understanding natural signals requires deeper investigation into their dynamic, non-repetitive and complex characteristics.

Concluding his lecture, Prof. Yegnanarayana called upon researchers to develop better ways of representing natural signals to reduce the complexity of AI models. He encouraged students to approach research with curiosity and persistence, observing that the deeper one explores natural signals, the more one discovers about their complexity.

Earlier, Prof. T. Madhavi, Convener of the programme, introduced the distinguished guest and welcomed the gathering. Prof. Ramesh Vaddi, Director, Core Engineering, and Prof.Prasanta R.M., Head, EECE, felicitated Prof.

Yegnanarayana on the occasion. Dr. Mariyadasu M of EECE coordinated this program.

GITAM Birth Anniversary of Sri KalojiNarayana Rao

The Student life at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, solemnly celebrated the 112th birth anniversary of Sri Kaloji Narayana Rao, the revered poet, freedom fighter, anti-fascist, and political activist from Telangana. Prof. KalojiNarayana Rao (9 September 1914 – 13 November 2002), popularly known as the People’s Poet. Government of Telangana has declared his birthday as Telangana Language Day. On this occasion, Prof. D. S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, GITAM Hyderabad, paid rich floral tributes. Ambika Philip, Director – Hospitality & Campus Life, faculty members and non-teaching staff, along with students, joined in paying floral tributes to the legendary poet.

TTD releases Brahmotsavam booklet

TIRUMALA: The 2026 Brahmotsavam booklet containing details of the Salakata and Navaratri Brahmotsavams at Tirumala was released on Wednesday during the TTD Board meeting held at Annamayya Bhavan in Tirumala. TTD Chairman

B.R. Naidu, E O Muddada Ravichandra and Board Members jointly released the booklet. The Salakata Brahmotsavams will be held from September 15 to 23, while the Navaratri Brahmotsavams will be observed from October 12 to 20.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY				
GeM NOTICE				
Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Southern Railway, Madurai- 625016 for and behalf of The President of India invites Online tenders in Two packet system from reputed contractors for the following works as per tender notice given in Government e-Marketing place (GeM) portal. The tenderer(s)/Contractor(s) to apply for works in Madurai Division, need to be enrolled in the GeM portal and only online tenders will be accepted.				
Sl. No.	Name of the work	Outcome Based comprehensive cleaning contract at RMM station and colony for a period of 365 days	Value of the work	Tender closing date
1	GeM/2026/B/6004639 Dt: 07.09.2026	Madurai – MDU Division	Rs. 1,02,37,236 (Including GST & Other taxes)	28.09.2026 18:00 hrs
Further details are available in the detailed tender notice on website www.gem.gov.in				
DME/EnHM & Frt./MDU				

SOUTHERN RAILWAY	
Tender Notice	
Southern Railway - Electrical (TRD) Branch, Tiruchchirappalli Division	
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager, Traction Distribution, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli-620001 invites online E-tenders from prospective tenderers/bidders for the following work.	
1 Tender Number	TPJ-TRD-2026-2027-15
2 Name of work	TPJ Division-Conversion of Tirunagesvaram Halt station into Crossing station and relocation of KMU Goodshed to TRM-Electrical Traction Arrangements.
3 Approx. value of tender in Rs.	94,63,381.09
4 Cost of tender booklet in Rs.	0.00
5 Bid Security in Rs.	1,89,300.00
6 Date & Time of Bidding	21.09.2026 to 15:00 Hours on 05.10.2026
7 Date & Time of Tender Opening	After 15:00 Hours on 05.10.2026
8 Period of completion	5 Months
9 Period of validity of offer	84 days from the date of tender opening
NOTE: All Addendum/Corrigendum, Time extension, clarifications, etc. will be uploaded on or before 21.09.2026 on the website only and will not be published separately in Newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.	
DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER, Electrical Traction Distribution, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli	

ELECTRICAL WORKS UNDER TINSUKIA DIVISION	
E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/254; dated: 03-09-2026. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: SN.1. Brief Description of Item: Annual maintenance contract of RBC-cum-EBCs of Electro waves Electronics Pvt. Ltd. make in coaches of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia coaching depots covering breakdown and preventive maintenance, repair and supply of spare parts for a period of 2 (two) years. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-TLAC-31-R1). Tender Value: ₹19,86,070.24; Earnest Money: ₹39,700.00. SN.2. Brief Description of Item: Annual Maintenance Contract of RBC-cum-EBCs of Hind Rectifiers Limited make in coaches of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia coaching depots covering breakdown and preventive maintenance, repair and supply of spare parts for a period of 2 (two) years. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-TLAC-31-R1). Tender Value: ₹19,86,070.24; Earnest Money: ₹39,700.00. SN.3. Brief Description of Item: Annual Maintenance Contract of RBC-cum-EBCs of IC Electricals Company Limited make in coaches of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia coaching depots covering breakdown and preventive maintenance, repair and supply of spare parts for a period of 2 (two) years. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-TLAC-32-R1). Tender Value: ₹9,02,759.20; Earnest Money: ₹18,100.00. SN.4. Brief Description of Item: Annual Maintenance Contract of RBC-cum-EBCs of Autometers Alliance Limited make in coaches of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia coaching depots covering breakdown and preventive maintenance, repair and supply of spare parts for a period of 2 (two) years. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-TLAC-33-R1). Tender Value: ₹2,70,827.76; Earnest Money: ₹5,400.00. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 25-09-2026 and Opened at 15:00 hrs. on 25-09-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 13:00 hrs on 25-09-2026 in website http://www.irops.gov.in	
DRM (Elect.)/Tinsukia	
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY "Serving Customers with a smile"	

PISA results raise concerns over learning outcomes

*** Need to strengthen deep learning, critical thinking and application skills: Dr. Lion Komati Reddy Gopal Reddy**



HYDERABAD

The latest PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) findings should prompt education systems to take a closer look at learning outcomes, particularly students' ability to read deeply, understand concepts, apply knowledge and think critically, said Dr. Lion Komati Reddy Gopal Reddy, eminent educationist and environmentalist and National Advisor, TRS-MA. The decline recorded in mathematics, reading and science performance across several education systems cannot be attributed to a single factor, he said. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, pre-existing learning trends, changing reading habits, excessive or unregulated screen use, teacher shortages, absenteeism, classroom disruptions and socio-economic conditions need to be examined together.

Dr. Gopal Reddy cautioned against viewing technology or Artificial Intelligence as inherently harmful to education. "The question is not whether technology should be used, but how, how much and for what purpose it is used," he said, stressing that digital tools and Generative

AI should complement, rather than replace, independent thinking and learning.

He also highlighted the importance of age-appropriate and level-appropriate teaching. Wide differences in students' learning levels within the same classroom, inadequate alignment between teaching and students' actual learning needs, absenteeism and disruptions can affect learning outcomes.

Social factors also deserve attention. Exposure to substance abuse, unsafe environments and social pressures may affect students' attendance, concentration and learning in some settings. However, such factors should not be presented as direct causes of the PISA decline without adequate evidence, he cautioned.

India needs a current assessment

Referring to India's participation in PISA in 2009, Dr. Gopal Reddy noted that India ranked 73rd among 74 participating countries/economies and regions. The results highlighted challeng-

es in reading comprehension, problem-solving and the application of knowledge.

However, he cautioned against using the 2009 results to judge the capabilities of today's Indian students. India has since introduced several changes in curricula, pedagogy and assessment, while current learning levels should also be assessed through national studies such as ASER and NAS.

He said India should learn from education systems such as Singapore, Japan and South Korea, particularly in strengthening reading pedagogy, teacher quality, classroom discipline, curriculum focus and balanced use of technology.

"Teach children to think, not merely to answer"

"Education must move beyond remembering answers. Students should be encouraged to ask why, how, where knowledge can be applied and how it can be used in unfamiliar situations," Dr. Gopal Reddy said.

Deep reading, conceptual understanding, application skills, critical thinking, balanced digital use and teaching aligned with students' learning levels should form the foundations of future education, he added. "PISA should not be viewed merely as a set of worrying numbers. It should serve as a mirror that helps us examine and strengthen our education systems," Dr. Gopal Reddy said.

Punjab Information Commissioner calls on Governor, highlights India's rich heritage

HYDERABAD

Punjab State Information Commissioner Harpreet Sandhu called on Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla at Lok Bhavan, Hyderabad, on Wednesday. During the interaction, Harpreet Sandhu presented his authored books showcasing the rich agrarian heritage of Punjab and the iconic heritage of Chandigarh, including a book on Sukhna Lake. He also presented his acclaimed artwork, "The Pride of Peacock – Glory of India", portraying the national bird of India.

The presentation was aimed at highlighting India's diverse natural, cultural, agrarian and architectural heritage across different States and promoting greater appreciation of the country's rich and multifaceted heritage. The Governor appreciated the artwork depicting the national bird and commended Harpreet Sandhu's initiative towards promoting and showcasing India's rich natural and cultural heritage.

Greetings on Kaloji Jayanti – Telangana Language Day

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said that the services of People's Poet and Padma Vibhushan awardee Kaloji Narayana Rao, who introduced the Telangana language, dialect, culture and way of life to the world through his writings, will remain unforgettable. On this occasion, he called upon everyone to remember the services and contributions of the great personality. He said that the People's Government is organising special programmes to carry forward the spirit of Kaloji, who stood as the voice of the people, to future generations. The government stated that Kaloji's contribution to the Telangana language is highly commendable and that, inspired by his ideals, the goal of the People's Government is to provide greater encouragement and support to the Telangana language and literature.

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SHORT
TAKES

BRS MLAs misbehaved with own women legislators: Seethakka



HYDERABAD: Minister for Panchayat Raj Danasari Anastuya, widely known as Seethakka, launched a scathing attack on the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on Wednesday, alleging that its male MLAs behaved inappropriately and indecently with female party colleagues during a protest at the State Legislative Assembly gate. To support her claims, the Minister released a video capturing the incident. Speaking informally to media representatives in the Assembly lobbies, Seethakka stated that BRS women legislators—Sabitha Indra Reddy, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, and Kova Lakshmi—were physically pushed from behind by their fellow party MLAs. Gangula Kamalakara and Sudheer Reddy, as they jostled to move forward. She specifically pointed out that the female leaders protested on the spot when BRS MLC Naveen Reddy forcibly pushed his way through the crowd. Directly targeting Gangula Kamalakara and Sudheer Reddy for their conduct toward Sabitha Indra Reddy and Kova Lakshmi, Seethakka likened the behavior of the BRS male leaders to the “Keechaka episode” from the Mahabharata.

Philippines eyes Telangana seeds, meat products beyond rice, says Uttam



NEW DELHI

Telangana's emerging trade partnership with the Philippines is set to expand beyond rice, with the Southeast Asian nation expressing keen interest in importing high-quality seeds and meat products from the State, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Wednesday.

Following a meeting with Philippines Secretary of Agriculture Francisco P. Tiou Laurel Jr. in New Delhi, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the discussions had opened up prospects for a broader and more diversified agricultural trade relationship between Telangana and the Philippines.

"The Philippines has

shown keen interest not only in purchasing more rice from Telangana but also in sourcing high-quality seeds and meat products. This could develop into a significant and diversified agricultural trade partnership," he said.

The Philippines has also indicated its willingness to procure additional quantities of Telangana rice at a competitive price, which the Minister described as among the best prices secured by the State for its rice exports.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Philippines offered considerable potential for scaling up Telangana's rice exports, given the country's large and continuing dependence on imported rice.

Rice consumption in the

Philippines was estimated at around 17.6 million metric tonnes (MMT) in 2025-26. Its domestic paddy production, estimated at about 19.52 MMT, translates into a significantly lower quantity after milling, resulting in a gap between domestic rice availability and consumption. The scale of the opportunity is reflected in the country's import figures.

The Philippines imported around 2.38 MMT of rice from various countries during January-May 2026, about 16.5 per cent higher than during the corresponding period of the previous year.

Against this backdrop, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana was positioning itself

as a reliable and competitive supplier to the Philippine market. Sustained exports, he said, could provide a major alternative market for the State's surplus rice while benefiting farmers and the rice-milling industry.

The Minister said the latest discussions were particularly encouraging as they had expanded from a rice-focused engagement into a wider agricultural trade dialogue covering seeds and meat products as well.

He said the State government's objective was to secure stable and sustainable international markets for Telangana's agricultural produce rather than depend solely on occasional export opportunities.

Cong making mockery of democracy, alleges Talasani

HYDERABAD

Former Minister and BRS MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Wednesday accused the Congress government of "making a mockery of democracy" and alleged that the State Legislative Assembly was being used for political drama instead of discussing pressing public issues.

Speaking informally to the media in the Assembly lobby, Talasani alleged that the government had created controversies on the first two days of the Assembly session and was deliberately avoiding discussions on issues such as Section 22-A and GO 97.

Questioning the suspension of BRS MLAs, he asked why an MLA who allegedly wished for former Chief Minister K. Chandrababhai Rao's death in Markooka mandal had not



been suspended, while former Minister Malla Reddy, who was reportedly in Tirupati, was suspended.

"They suspended KTR, who was not even present in the House, and also suspended Gudem Mahipal Reddy, who was present", Talasani said.

He accused the Congress government of acting out of fear of facing the Opposition on key issues and alleged that the Speaker, Gaddam Prasad Kumar, was being 'insulted'

despite belonging to a Dalit community. Talasani said the BRS respected the Speaker's position and recalled that the party had not fielded a candidate against him out of respect for the post.

He also condemned the circulation of AI-generated images of BRS MLAs and questioned the government's decision to suspend several Opposition members. He alleged that BRS leaders were arrested when they attempted to visit KCR's Erravalli farmhouse and claimed that Congress cadres attacked BRS workers at the Jawahar Nagar police station.

Talasani further alleged that the government has no genuine intention of conducting meaningful discussions in the Assembly and questioned the urgency behind the suspension of BRS MLAs.

Telangana steps up implementation of Gyan Bharatam Mission

HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is taking concerted measures to ensure the effective implementation of the Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM), a flagship national initiative of the Union Ministry of Culture aimed at surveying, documenting, conserving and digitising India's invaluable manuscript heritage. A meeting to review the im-

plementation of the mission in Telangana was chaired by A. Vani Prasad, Special Chief Secretary (Tourism, Culture and Heritage), with district Collectors and district nodal officers participating. The meeting was co-chaired by Venkatesh Dhote, Special Secretary (Education), and Ranjit Nayak, Director of Tourism. Senior officials from Heritage Telangana, the National Institute of Tourism

and Hospitality Management (NITHM) and the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TGTDCC) also attended. During the meeting, officials discussed various issues concerning the promotion and development of tourism in the districts. The discussions focused on identifying the distinctive tourism potential of each district and taking steps to promote it effectively.

Personality Development is All About Transforming Weaknesses into Strengths

KARIMNAGAR

Personality development is all about the development of each student by knowing his hidden strengths and weaknesses, overcoming his weaknesses and strengthening his positive characters, said renowned personality development expert, poet, writer, columnist, retired Principal Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy. Today, he delivered personality development session at Thimmapur Jyothiba Phule attended the Telangana Language Day program organized by the Telangana BC Welfare Department Residential Junior College-School as

the chief guest and garlanded the portrait of Kaloji Narayana Rao and said that Telangana is famous for its special dialect and language mixed with the fragrance of the soil. He said that Telangana Bhasha Diwas, which is organized on the occasion of Kaloji's birth anniversary, is a special festival. He wished that every Telangana youth should not neglect education alone but should grow to a level that the country would be proud of. He called upon them to learn good habits by knowing their hidden weaknesses and sacrificing them. He said that there will be a bright future only when there is wisdom and hu-

mility along with education. He said that education is the only sharp weapon to overcome poverty. He said that young women should pursue higher education and provide for their families. College Principal Dr. P. Saritha presided over the function and Lion Marripelli Mahender spoke as the guest of honor. Later, Dr. P. Saritha, who received the State Best Teacher Award, was felicitated by the chief guest Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy. Later, the chief guest was felicitated by the college management. On this occasion, books written by the chief guest were presented to the college library.

Personality Development is All About Transforming Weaknesses into Strengths

Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, renowned personality development expert

KARIMNAGAR

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Cabinet Approves Secunderabad-Kazipet Railway Line

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of a 110-kilometre-long multi-tracking railway line between Secunderabad and Kazipet. The decision was taken at a Union Cabinet meeting held in Delhi under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The project, which will be undertaken at an estimated cost of ₹2,418 crore, is expected to reduce train congestion and improve punctuality. It will also increase freight transportation capacity. Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy welcomed the decision. He thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for the approval. Kishan Reddy said the project would further facilitate train movement on the Vijayawada and Mumbai routes. He stated that the Central Government is giving special priority to railway development in Telangana.

No complaints on vehicle damage from E20 petrol: Minister Ponnamp

HYDERABAD

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar on Wednesday said the Transport department had not received any complaints from vehicle owners or automobile experts about vehicle damage caused by ethanol-blended petrol.

Replying to a question raised by MLC Prof. Kodandaram on the impact of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol, Prabhakar said the programme was a Central Government initiative implemented through oil market-

ing companies. He said the regulations concerning vehicle safety, type approval and certification come under the Central Motor Vehicles Act and related Central rules.

The Minister said E20 petrol has slightly lower energy content than conventional petrol and may result in a 3-5 per cent reduction in pickup and mileage. Certain vehicles may require replacement of spare parts and minor adjustments, while routine servicing would help ensure trouble-free operation, he added. Prabhakar highlighted three major

benefits of ethanol blending - better returns for farmers, reduced pollution and savings in foreign exchange. He said ethanol is produced from raw materials such as sugarcane juice and molasses and that oil companies blend it in specified proportions before supplying fuel to petrol pumps.

He said there was no need for specific guidelines from the State Transport department at present as no complaints had been received, and urged vehicle owners not to be concerned about using E20 petrol.

Ideals of People's Poet Kaloji Continue to Inspire the Present Generation

Minister Vakiti Srihari

HYDERABAD

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Telangana's People's Poet, freedom fighter and social activist Kaloji Narayana Rao, State Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Fisheries & Sports, and Youth Services, Vakiti Srihari, paid rich tributes to him.

The Minister lauded Kaloji as a great personality who brought the hardships, tears

and aspirations of the people to the attention of the world through his writings. He said that Kaloji Narayana Rao, as a son of the Telangana soil and a poet who always stood by the people, left an indelible mark on Telugu literature.

The Minister said that Kaloji questioned the injustices, inequalities, exploitation and oppression in society through his writings, declaring, "My struggle is my struggle." He stated that Kaloji's fight for the right to question in a democra-



cy, social justice and humanity will always be remembered.

The Minister noted that Kaloji's literature served as a great source of inspiration for

the movement for the formation of Telangana state and for creating social awareness among the people. He said that Kaloji's writings continue to teach today's youth about their social responsibility and commitment towards the people.

The Minister said that celebrating Kaloji Narayana Rao's birth anniversary as Telangana Language Day is a fitting honour to his legacy. He stated that carrying forward Kaloji's ideals is the true tribute to him.

Minister Vakiti Srihari said that, inspired by Kaloji, who fought throughout his life for the self-respect, language, culture and rights of the people of Telangana, the people's government is working towards the welfare of the people, social justice and equal opportunities. The Minister stated that the inspiration of People's Poet Kaloji Narayana Rao, who stood as the voice of the people, will continue to serve as a guiding force for Telangana society forever.

MGU celebrates offers rich tributes to the people's poet, Kaloji

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

NALGONDA

The Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU), Prof. Khaja Althaf Hussain, highlighted that Kaloji's ideology, which tirelessly challenged social inequalities, injustice, and tyranny through his writing, serves as a valuable guide for the current generation.

He urged the youth to develop the courage to support the people and question societal issues while embracing social responsibility. Speaking as the chief guest at a programme



organized by the Department of Telugu on Telangana Language Day celebrated in honor of Kaloji Narayana Rao's birth anniversary on the MGU campus, Prof. Althaf emphasized Kaloji's lasting contributions to the language, culture, and

dignity of Telangana. He encouraged students to draw inspiration from Kaloji's life and movements as they progress into the future.

Attending the programme as the special guest, Registrar Prof. Koppula Anji Reddy in-

formed students that Telangana Language Day was established in the separate Telangana State as a form of protest against the historical mockery of the Telangana dialect, often associated with villainous film characters before the forma-

tion of the State. He recounted how Kaloji's literary works, particularly "Naa Godava," symbolized a significant public protest.

Prof. (Retd.) Ganta Jalandhar Reddy delivered a lecture, discussing Kaloji's philosophy, upright lifestyle, and his resistance against exploitative rulers. Teachers of the Department of Telugu Dr. C. Anita Kumari, Dr. Maddirala Satyanarayana Reddy, and Gangadhara Narasimha also contributed their insights during the event. Earlier in the program, Vice Chancellor Prof. Khaja Althaf Hussain honored Kaloji Narayana Rao by garlanding his portrait.

TGSWREIS to launch special EAPCET coaching in 162 Non-COE colleges

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) will launch special EAPCET coaching in 162 Non-Centres of Excellence (Non-COE) colleges across the State from Thursday, TGSWREIS (FAC) Secretary Kambampati Sharada said.

The initiative is aimed at extending quality competitive-examination coaching beyond the existing Centres of Excellence and ensuring that a larger number of students studying in Non-COE colleges get access to structured prepa-

ration for the EAPCET.

For several years since the establishment of the Society in 1984, students largely relied on regular academic instruction to pursue their higher-education goals.

With the introduction of this initiative, systematic EAPCET coaching is now being extended to students of Non-COE colleges as well, Ms Sharada said. The coaching will be delivered through online and virtual classes by experienced subject experts, enabling students across the State to access quality instruction irrespective of their location. The programme

will make use of technology to provide standardised and structured coaching to students of Non-COE colleges, with a focus on strengthening their subject knowledge, examination preparedness and competitive skills.

At present, JEE and NEET coaching is available in 37 COE institutions. With the extension of competitive-examination coaching to Non-COE Science colleges across Telangana, a significantly larger number of Gurukul students will now have an opportunity to compete successfully in entrance examinations, she said.

Maharashtra
Power Firms
Won't Be
Privatised:
Fadnavis

MUMBAI: Maharashtra's three state-run power companies -- Mahatransco, MSEDCIL or Mahavitaran and Mahagenco -- would not be privatised under any circumstances, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday. The government's main objective was to make the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) debt-free, improve its efficiency and provide better services to consumers, he said. MSEDCIL currently has a debt burden of around Rs 80,000 crore, resulting in a heavy interest burden on the company.

MP Orders
Judicial Probe
Into Sagar Hooch
Tragedy

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday ordered a judicial inquiry into the spurious liquor tragedy in Sagar district that has claimed the lives of 15 persons, officials said. Soon after his arrival from Dubai, CM Yadav went to Sagar district to review the situation and ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident to ensure an impartial investigation and to fix responsibilities for the tragedy.

At the Border of Belief and Reality

Pradeep Jilwane's Kaakar-Kissa: A Novel of Changing Villages, Changing Beliefs and Human Vulnerability

REVIEW BY DR. PERUKA RAJU

Every village has a boundary drawn upon the land every society carries boundaries drawn within the mind. Dr. Pradeep Jilwane's Hindi novel Kaakar-Kissa inhabits the uneasy space between the two. Rooted in Madhya Pradesh and alive with the earthy cadence of the Nimadi dialect, the novel brings together rural transformation, belief, exploitation, caste, love and human vulnerability in a narrative regional in texture yet contemporary in significance.

In Nimadi, "Kaakar" refers to the recognised boundary of a village or region. In Jilwane's imagination, however, geography becomes metaphor. The Kaakar marks the uncertain threshold between village and town, tradition and modernity, faith and deception, belonging and displacement. As expanding towns absorb neighbouring villages, communities on their edges find themselves suspended between two worlds unable to preserve the old untouched, yet unable to embrace the new without losing something of themselves.

One of the novel's most striking choices is to place parrot astrology at the heart of its narrative. The familiar roadside astrologer, seated near a courthouse with a parrot and fortune cards, is an easily overlooked figure of everyday Indian life. Jilwane transforms

this marginal presence into a revealing lens through which to examine anxiety, hope, helplessness and the human urge to negotiate the uncertainty of tomorrow. Yet Kaakar-Kissa does more than document a fading folk practice. It traces its mutation under the pressures of modern life. Traditional parrot astrology may be struggling for survival, but belief itself does not disappear. It changes its costume. This transformation finds its sharpest expression in the protagonist Omprakash's Navagraha Jyotish Anusandhan Kendra, Khargone. What once occupied the pavement acquires the vocabulary of research, professionalism, publicity and commerce. Astrology moves into organised establishments, newspapers and television channels. The irony is telling modernity does not always destroy superstition sometimes it simply repackages and markets it.

The novel's varied characters broaden this social canvas. The troubled tribal character Soumya stands alongside educated professionals, businessmen and advocates such as Gupta and Brijmohan Mahajan. Through these contrasting lives, Jilwane suggests that uncertainty recognises few social boundaries. Education and economic position may differ, but the longing for reassurance remains profoundly human. Beneath this world of prediction runs a darker current society's tendency to invent convenient



काकड़ किस्सा

प्रदीप जिलवाने

explanations for misfortune. Omprakash's expulsion from the village becomes especially significant. He is blamed for ominous happenings not through evidence, but through collective fear. The episode raises a disturbing question what happens when suspicion acquires the authority of truth? When fear replaces reason, prejudice can easily disguise itself as judgment. Kaakar-Kissa

is therefore also a narrative of resistance. It confronts exploitation, caste divisions and attitudes that diminish human dignity. Its characters do not merely suffer they question, endure and resist. An engaging love story runs through this shifting landscape, bringing emotional warmth while allowing love, livelihood, caste, aspiration and identity to intersect naturally with changing village

life. Jilwane's use of Nimadi cultural texture lends authenticity without imprisoning the novel within regionalism. The local becomes a doorway to the universal. Through one landscape and its people, he opens questions that resonate across contemporary Indian society. A poet, fiction writer, researcher, editor and translator, Dr. Pradeep Jilwane has consistently engaged with regional culture and social change in works such as Aathva Rang@ Pahad-Gatha and Prarthana Samay. Kaakar-Kissa deepens that literary engagement. Perhaps the novel's greatest strength lies in its refusal to romanticise either tradition or modernity. It looks beneath the apparent innocence of rural life while questioning the polished promises of progress. Neither world escapes scrutiny. With its unconventional theme, regional rootedness and social questioning, Kaakar-Kissa occupies a distinctive space in contemporary Hindi fiction. Its Kaakar finally becomes more than a village boundary: it is the fragile line between inheritance and change, faith and reason, belonging and displacement between the world we receive and the world we choose to create.

Book Details
Author: Dr. Pradeep Jilwane,
Publisher: Setu Publications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi
Price: ₹295
Contact: 9755980001

Jagan Mohan Reddy to
launch Padyatra in
September-October next year

AMARAVATI

YSR Congress Party President and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday announced that he would launch a statewide Padyatra in September or October 2027 to take up people's issues and strengthen the grassroots connection ahead of 2029 polls.

Jagan Mohan Reddy made the announcement at a meeting of party workers from the Parchur Assembly constituency at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli.

"Two and a half years have passed in the blink of an eye, and another year will fly by just as quickly. My padyatra will begin next September or October, and it will pass through Parchur as well," he said. He said the people have already begun comparing the five years of the YSRCP's governance with the present Chandrababu Naidu government and are clearly seeing the difference.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said the YSRCP had given credibility to its manifesto by implementing 99 per cent of its promises. In contrast, Chandrababu Naidu distributed bonds carrying his and Pawan Kalyan's signatures before the elections but abandoned the promises after coming to power, he claimed.

Calling the coming political battle a "Kurukshetra Sangramam", he urged party cadres to stand firmly with the people and fight any misuse of official machinery. Recalling the 2017 Nandyal by-election and subsequent political developments, he said repression could never ensure permanent political success. "Whenever and however elections are held, the YSRCP will stand with the people. If elections are conducted fairly, the YSRCP will emerge victorious. Even if they are not, we will fight strongly," he said. Jagan Mohan Reddy claimed there is widespread public resentment against the TDP-led coalition government headed by Chandrababu Naidu.

"A ruler should always do good deeds and seek votes based on them. Only then will God bless them, and the people will support them. People will not tolerate lies and acts of aggression indefinitely," he said. Jagan Mohan Reddy said discussions were taking place in every household regarding the difference between the five-year rule of the YSRCP and Chandrababu Naidu's two-and-a-half-year tenure.

"Our governance was such that every party worker could speak about it with pride and visit any household with confidence. A YSR Congress Party work-



er could walk into any home and speak proudly about our achievements," he said, listing out the achievements of the YSRCP government.

Chandrababu Naidu had even sent bonds to every household along with the manifesto; yet, after the elections, there was no trace of that manifesto to be found, he said.

The YSRCP chief alleged that Chandrababu Naidu betrayed all sections of people by failing to fulfil promises made to them. People are realizing they were misled by trusting him, he said.

He accused Chandrababu Naidu of a conspiracy to delay local body elections. "It is uncertain whether they will actually take place, as Chandrababu is staging a drama regarding 34 per cent reservation for BCs in local bodies. He knows full well that the court will strike it down; yet, he is using this as a pretext to conspire and postpone the elections."

Accusing the coalition government of misusing police and targeting YSRCP leaders through false cases, he said a similar situation prevailed when the TDP was in power in 2014-19.

"The Nandyal by-election took place before my Padyatra in 2017. Due to gross abuse of power, our party lost by a margin of 35,000 votes. Between 2014 and 2019, he poached 23 MLAs and three MPs from our party. Subsequently, my Padyatra took place. A tsunami of people emerged, and the public delivered a clear verdict," he said.

Jagan Mohan Reddy recalled that Chandrababu could win only 23 Assembly seats and three Lok Sabha seats.

The YSRCP, which was reduced to just 11 seats in the 175-member Assembly in the 2024 elections, suffered many setbacks with several leaders leaving the party.

The YSRCP cadres are looking forward to the Padyatra by their leader as it is expected to lift the party's spirits and gear it up to face the next elections.

Jagan Mohan Reddy had undertaken a marathon 3,648 km Padyatra, which had helped the YSRCP to capture power with a landslide victory in 2019.

Spiritual and Social Outlook is the Compass for
Humanity: Peethadhipathi Dr. Umar Alisha

- Spiritual awakening in Pithapuram
- Brahmarshi Hussain Shah's 121st Birth Anniversary celebrated with grandeur
- Hussain Shah Kavi Award conferred upon poet-literary scholar Vistali Sankara Rao and social worker Vemuri Lakshmi Kanthi

BY DR SUNEELKUMAR YANDRA

Pithapuram: Dr. Umar Alisha Swamy, the ninth Peethadhipathi of Sri Viswa Viznana Vidya Adhyatmika Peetham, stated that a social and spiritual outlook serves as a guiding compass for humanity. Renowned poet, analyst, and literary scholar Vistali Sankara Rao remarked that the seventh Peethadhipathi, Brahmarshi Hussain Shah, was a great personality who presented humanity with the noble text 'Shah Tathvam', which acts as a compass for man to evolve into God without religious animosity. On the occasion of the 121st Birth Anniversary of Brahmarshi Hussain Shah, seventh Peethadhipathi of Sri Viswa



Viznana Vidya Adhyatmika Peetham, a literary gathering and the Umar Hussain Shah Kavi Memorial Award ceremony were organized on Wednesday at the Peetham's main ashram in Pithapuram under the auspices of the Umar Alisha Sahiti Samiti. The meeting, conducted by Dayana Chandraje, Secretary of Umar Alisha Sahiti Samiti, and presided over by Dr. Umar Alisha, the current Peethadhipathi of Sri Viswa Viznana Vidya Adhyatmika Peetham, felicitated poet Vistali Sankara Rao and prominent social activist Vemuri Lakshmi Kanthi (granddaughter of Gidugu Ramamurthy Pantulu) with the Hussain Shah Kavi Memorial Awards along with a cash prize of Rs. 50,116 each. Speaking on the occasion, award recipient Vistali Sankara Rao revealed that the core vision

of the 'Shah Tathvam' text authored by the nine Peethadhipathis of the Peetham is to deliver spiritual teachings, educational-social matters, welfare programs, and literature to the public. He shared that Hussain Shah authored this grand text comprising 91 chapters, offering solutions to every challenge a human faces in life. He noted that 'Shah Tathvam' is a monumental work that has already seen 8 print editions. He highlighted that Hussain Shah illustrated how a human ascends into the Supreme Light through his magnificent lyrical poem 'Paramjyothi'. He added that for spiritual living to take root in individuals, the greatness of true spiritual gurus who bestow wisdom must spread across society, describing the Peetham as a glorious temple of non-sectarian modern humanism. Another award



recipient Vemuri Lakshmi Kanthi, stated that Sri Viswa Viznana Vidya Adhyatmika Peetham is an extraordinary institution that has been delivering Vedantic knowledge adapted to changing times for hundreds of years, treating spiritual philosophy and social service as its two eyes. She expressed that receiving the Brahmarshi Hussain Shah Kavi Award was the fruit of good deeds from her past life. Addressing the gathering, Peethadhipathi Dr. Umar Alisha expressed concern that human values are deteriorating daily due to a lack of spiritual values, and that ignorance of spiritual and philosophical knowledge leads people toward negative traits such as hatred, jealousy, malice, and revenge, driving world destruction. He advised that alongside cultivating spirituality, individuals must actively participate in social

service activities. He affirmed that spiritual awakening sows the seeds for social awakening, and cultivating both social and spiritual vision paves a smooth path toward liberation. He emphasized the necessity for everyone in today's society to foster spiritual and philosophical wisdom. He stated that practicing Trayi Sadhana—combining meditation, wisdom, and mantra practice—helps individuals regulate the influence of the inner six enemies (Arishadvargas). He expressed joy in presenting awards to the literary scholar and social worker on the occasion of Brahmarshi Hussain Shah's 121st birth anniversary. He congratulated the members of Dr. Umar Alisha Sahiti Samiti for successfully running the organization from Bhimavaram for the past 34 years. Later, the Peetham presented

Special Service Awards along with cash prizes of Rs. 10,116 each to long-term dedicated members: Tsavatapalli Murali Krishna, Peetham Convener Peruri Suribabu, Dr. Pingali Anandakumar, and K. Swarnalatha couple. Peethadhipathi Dr. Umar Alisha was also grandly felicitated during the event. Furthermore, the Peethadhipathi released the book 'Sadguru Sai Swaroopam' written by Anantapur-based literary scholar Venkateswara Rao. Under the Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust, scholarships were distributed to students, sewing machines were handed over, new clothes were gifted to youth volunteers, and traditional grain sheaves (Dhanaya Kuchulu) were presented. Devotional hymns sung by members under the musical direction of Peetham member Uma Mukunda delighted the audience. The event was attended by Peetham Media Convener Akula Raviteja, Gita Advadhani Yerramsetti Umamaheswara Rao, Peetham Central Committee members N.T.V.Varma and A.V.V.Satyanarayana, Sahiti Samiti Treasurer Vaddadi Sri Venkateswara Sharma, Vaddi Vijayalakshmi, T.V.V.Krishnamurthy, among others.

Bhatti Vikramarka Slams BRS Over Conduct,
Urges Members to Maintain House Decorum

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka urges BRS members to maintain decorum in the Assembly

HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka came down heavily on the conduct of BRS members in the Telangana Legislative Assembly, stressing that every member has a responsibility to abide by the rules and regulations of the House. Bhatti Vikramarka said it was inappropriate for BRS members to repeatedly enter the Well of the House, engage in arguments with the Speaker and disregard his directions. He urged all members to cooperate in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Assembly. "This House and this State were formed on the foundation of self-respect. Any

attempt to undermine that self-respect is not acceptable. Such situations should not be allowed to recur in the interest of the State," he said. Reacting strongly to the BRS members' demand for justice, Bhatti Vikramarka questioned what further justice they were seeking after allegedly insulting the Speaker.

"What justice do you want? Justice is needed for the Dalit and Bahujan communities of this State. Justice is needed for the tribal communities. Justice is needed for all those people who have been subjected to humiliation at your hands," Bhatti Vikramarka said. Referring to what he de-

scribed as earlier incidents of humiliation of Dalits, he strongly criticised the BRS and also referred to an incident in which Dalits had staged a protest. He suggested that those raising the issue of social justice should first reflect on who has the greater responsibility to uphold it.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the government had been exercising restraint keeping the interests of the State in mind. However, he maintained that repeatedly disrupting the proceedings of the Assembly was unacceptable.

"The people of the State are watching this misconduct. The people of Telangana are

no longer prepared to tolerate such feudal attitudes," Bhatti Vikramarka said. He further made it clear that the issue concerning the "purification programme" allegedly undertaken by the BRS leadership must be discussed in the Assembly. Bhatti Vikramarka said that protecting the dignity of the House, upholding social justice and safeguarding the self-respect of the people were the collective responsibility of all members. He appealed to the Opposition members to cooperate in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Assembly, keeping the self-respect and interests of the people of Telangana in mind.

NHRC Directs Telangana DGP

HYDERABAD

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken cognisance of a complaint regarding the failure to register an FIR over public allegations of "black magic" and "occult rituals" against Siddipet MLA and former Minister T. Harish Rao.

The complaint was filed before the NHRC by Telangana High Court advocate and social activist Karupothula Revanth, with the authorisation of Harish Rao. The Commission has directed the Director General of Police (DGP), Telangana, to submit an Action Taken Report (ATR) in English within four weeks. The direction was issued by the Commission on September 9, 2026.

Advocate Karupothula

to Take Action Against Those Who Made Unsubstantiated Black Magic Allegations Against Harish Rao
Case No. 776/36/2/2026

Revanth filed the complaint on August 22, 2026, under Section 12(a) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

According to the complaint, since July 31, 2026, persons holding high public offices, including the Chief Minister and a Government Whip, have repeatedly made public allegations that Harish Rao had performed tantric or occult rituals at temples to stop the rains and cause drought.

The complaint states that no temple records, priest statements, receipts or other evidence supporting these allegations have so far been made public.

It further states that complaints were submitted at

the Osmania University and Vanasthalipuram Police Stations on August 4, 2026, followed by a representation at the DGP's office on August 17, 2026. However, according to the complaint, no FIR was registered and no reasons were communicated for the failure to register the case.

The complainant also referred to the Supreme Court judgment in Lalita Kumari v. Government of Uttar Pradesh, (2014) 2 SCC 1, regarding the registration of FIRs in cognisable offences.

The complaint expressed concern that public statements by persons holding high constitutional and political offices linking rainfall or drought to occult

practices could promote superstition among the public. It also warned that such claims could encourage accusations of witchcraft in rural areas and potentially lead to attacks against women, widows, elderly persons and members of SC/ST communities.

Speaking on the matter, Advocate Karupothula Revanth said:

"If an ordinary citizen makes such allegations, a case would be registered immediately. But when people in positions of power make such statements, no action is taken. That is the reason this complaint was filed."

The NHRC's direction to the Telangana DGP now requires the police authorities to report the action taken on the complaint within four weeks.

EDITORIAL

Clearing the Air: The Promises and Pitfalls of Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2026

The release of the Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2026 results on Swachh Vayu Diwas offers a timely moment to assess India's multi-year battle against urban air pollution. Conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) under the aegis of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), the survey evaluates 130 non-attainment cities not merely on ambient air metrics, but on their operational rigor—from managing road dust and vehicular exhaust to solid waste remediation and industrial emissions. This year's rankings, which saw Lucknow top the million-plus population category—followed by Indore and Jabalpur—demonstrate the growing institutionalization of clean-air governance. By penalizing municipal inaction and rewarding actionable engineering, such as Lucknow's mechanized road sweeping and municipal fleet electrification, the Sarvekshan injects much-needed competitive federalism into urban administration. On paper, the broader NCAP numbers paint an encouraging picture.

Out of the 130 targeted cities, 108 recorded measurable reductions in PM10 concentrations compared to the 2017–18 baseline. Furthermore, 72 cities achieved a drop of over 20%, while 26 cities surpassed a 40% reduction. However, a closer look at the targets set by the Government of India reveals that the nation's air quality crisis remains far from solved. The primary target under NCAP was originally set to achieve a 20% to 30% reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 levels by 2024, later revised to an ambitious 40% reduction or reaching the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) threshold of 60 µg/m³ by 2025–26. While reaching a 40% reduction in 26 cities is a notable milestone, it also highlights a stark disparity: only 20% of non-attainment cities have fully met the headline target. Crucially, only 14 out of 130 cities currently meet the baseline NAAQS for PM10. While this is an improvement from 6 cities in 2017–18, it exposes the structural gap between political ambitions and ground-level execution.

The systemic bottleneck does not stem from a lack of capital, but from capital deployment. Under NCAP and XV Finance Commission grants, over ₹16,400 crore has been provisioned to support targeted interventions. Yet, central tracking via the PRANA portal reveals that roughly 70% of these funds have been utilized. Many Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) continue to struggle with executing long-term structural overhauls, opting instead for capital-intensive, short-term fixes like anti-smog guns and localized water sprinkling that offer little permanent airshed relief. Furthermore, air pollution respects no administrative boundaries. Ranking cities individually creates healthy civic pride, but it risks obscuring the regional nature of particulate drift. A city like Lucknow or Delhi can mandate strict local dust controls and convert its public transit to electric power, but it remains vulnerable to regional biomass burning, industrial clusters across state borders, and secondary aerosol formation. To turn incremental progress into sustained, breathable air, India's clean-air strategy must evolve on three fronts. Planning must shift from isolated municipal boundaries to regional airshed management frameworks, binding neighboring districts to joint compliance targets. Funds must be directed towards root-cause polluters identified through localized scientific emission inventories rather than generic municipal expenditures. City assessments must place equal weight on fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) and gaseous precursors like NO2 and ozone, which pose severe, long-term human health risks. Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2026 confirms that the mechanics of urban environmental governance are finally moving in the right direction. Yet, awards and incremental score improvements are merely diagnostic tools. The ultimate measure of success remains whether the average citizen can breathe safe air year-round. Until the target of broad, regional compliance with national air safety standards is met, the fight for clean air remains an uphill battle.

Under the Same Sky

We wake beneath the same blue sky, though our mornings begin in different worlds. One hears the call of a crowded street, another the silence of a distant field. Some chase the rising sun through windows of glass and steel, while others greet it with hands deep in the soil. We speak in different tongues, carry different memories, build different dreams—yet every heart knows the language of hope. The borders we draw stand firm on maps, but clouds cross them without asking permission. The wind travels freely, and rain falls on every roof it finds. A child looks at the moon and does not ask which country owns its light. A mother lifts her eyes to the stars and sees the same wonder seen by mothers everywhere. We have built walls,

raised flags, drawn lines through oceans and mountains, and called them boundaries. But beneath those boundaries the earth remains one. The same rivers carry our stories. The same forests breathe for us. The same sun warms the faces of strangers and friends. Perhaps we have forgotten how closely we belong to one another. Perhaps the sky keeps reminding us—quietly, every day—that no matter how far apart we stand, no matter what names we give ourselves, we are still walking on the same earth, breathing the same air, looking up at the same stars. And tonight, when the cities fall silent and the last lights disappear, look up. You will find me there too,



Nano Pollution

The Next Environmental Battle Is Already Underway



"The next pollution crisis may not be visible to the naked eye. Yet science is beginning to uncover traces of an environmental challenge that could change how humanity thinks about pollution."

For generations, pollution was defined by what people could see. Smoke darkened horizons, untreated sewage discoloured rivers, and plastic waste choked coastlines. Environmental regulation followed the same logic: identify the contaminant, trace its source, set limits and enforce them. The next environmental challenge may not be so straightforward. As science and industry increasingly work at the nanoscale, materials smaller than a human cell are being used in products and industrial processes, while some nanoscale particles can also enter natural ecosystems. The question is no longer whether nanotechnology will shape industrial progress. It is whether environmental regulation can keep pace with its footprint.

A crucial distinction is necessary. Nano pollution is not a single contaminant. It can include engineered nanomaterials, deliberately produced at the nanoscale for applications in medicine, electronics, energy and water treatment, as well as nanoplastics formed as larger plastic materials break down. Treating the two as identical would be scientifically misleading. What they share is a problem of scale. At the nanoscale, materials can behave differently from their larger counterparts because of their high surface-area-to-mass ratio. Engineered nanomaterials can enter biological systems through inhalation, ingestion and skin exposure, although the consequences of long-term exposure remain an area of active research.

Plastic offers a warning of how the problem can evolve. A discarded bottle does not remain intact forever. Sunlight, heat and mechanical abrasion gradually break larger plastic into smaller particles. Microplastics can eventually reach the nanoscale, allowing particles to move through water, soil and air far beyond their original source. The implications for human health are becoming harder to ignore. A 2024 review of human studies found microplastics in eight of 12 organ systems examined, including the cardi-

ovascular, digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems. But the authors also stressed that the routes by which particles enter the body and their health effects remain uncertain, while differences in detection methods complicate comparisons between studies.

More recent evidence strengthens the case for investigation without justifying alarm. A systematic review of in-vivo human studies published in 2026 identified 25 studies from more than 5,500 records. It found micro- and nanoplastics in multiple human systems and reported associations with inflammation and functional changes, but also found substantial methodological differences and risks of bias that limit conclusions about cause and effect.

The World Health Organization has taken a similarly cautious position. Its assessments found no clear evidence that microplastics in drinking water posed a health risk at the levels then detected, but identified significant gaps in knowledge, particularly around the smallest particles, their fate in the body and long-term exposure. WHO has called for further research rather than complacency.

Engineered nanomaterials present a different regulatory question. Nanotechnology is already being explored for water treatment, pollution remediation, medicine and energy. A 2024

review in Nature Reviews Earth & Environment found that detected or predicted environmental concentrations of engineered nanomaterials are generally well below predicted no-effect concentrations. At the same time, it noted that long-term, low-level exposure remains poorly understood and that some point sources could create localised risks. This creates a difficult policy balance. Waiting for definitive evidence of harm before acting could repeat the mistakes of earlier environmental crises. But treating every nanomaterial as dangerous would also risk restricting technologies that may

“The test of technological maturity is whether regulation can operate at the same scale as innovation.”

deliver genuine environmental and medical benefits.

India needs to approach this emerging challenge with the same balance. Rapid urbanisation, expanding manufacturing and growing plastic consumption make better environmental surveillance increasingly important. Yet monitoring systems designed primarily around conventional pollutants are not necessarily equipped to identify, measure and track particles at the nanoscale.

What cannot be reliably measured is difficult to regulate. India therefore needs to move beyond isolated research projects towards a stronger national system for detecting and

tracking micro- and nanomaterials in water, soil, air and industrial environments. Standardised testing methods, better laboratory capacity and long-term exposure studies are essential. For engineered nanomaterials, life-cycle assessment should become part of responsible product development—from production and use to disposal.

The issue ultimately extends beyond any single industry. A particle released during manufacturing can enter wastewater. A fragment produced as plastic degrades can move through rivers or food chains. The environmental pathway may be long, diffuse and difficult to trace. That is why the answer should not be to slow nanotechnology itself. It should be to make its development environmentally accountable. The great achievement of modern engineering has been the ability to manipulate matter at scales invisible to the human eye. The next test of technological maturity is whether environmental science and regulation can operate at the same scale. The future of pollution may be invisible. The policy response cannot be.



D JAIRAM

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9 September 1947: When Gandhi stepped down at Shahdara to face a city on fire

VIVEK SHUKLA

The morning of 9 September 1947 was humid and strained. Independence was three weeks old. Partition was already tearing the capital apart. Gandhi had left Calcutta two nights earlier. To avoid the crowds at Howrah he was driven to Belur, a wayside station. The party reached the platform around nine. West Bengal's ministers came to see him off. At 9.30 p.m. sharp on 7 September the Delhi Express pulled out. Gandhi named the train himself in a letter that day to Manibehn Patel. He was still writing on board on the 8th. The train did not go on to Delhi Junction. The old-city station was no longer safe. It stopped at Shahdara on the morning of the 9th.

Sardar Patel and Rajkumar Amrit Kaur were on the platform, along with local freedom fighter B.D. Santoshi and his companions. Gandhi looked tired. Before he left the station he asked the people of Shahdara not to let rioters succeed in their neighbourhood. In that pocket of the city, his words held. Peace did not vanish from Shahdara as it did from so many other quarters. This was his last train journey. The next evening, at a prayer meeting, he said what he had seen on arrival: the usual smile had gone from Patel's face. He asked whether "the city of Delhi which always appeared gay" had "turned into a city of the dead" (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 89).

He had first stepped onto a Delhi platform on 12 April 1915, at Delhi Junction, with Kasturba. They stayed at St Stephen's College in Kashmiri Gate, guests of Thirupathi Sushil Kumar Rudra. Thirty-two years later the route into the



capital itself had changed.

He could no longer return to Valmiki Basti on Mandir Marg. Refugees now occupied the ground. His new address would be Birla House, on Albuquerque Road—today's Tees January Marg.

He had lived in a small room at the Valmiki temple from 1 April 1946 to 10 June 1947: 214 days. Krishna Vid-yarthi, who looks after the place now, says that while Gandhi stayed there he was fully safe. The Valmiki community guarded him day and night. He taught the children Hindi and English, morning and evening, and kept waiting leaders until the class was over. Nehru came. So did Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who stayed with him more than once. Louis Fischer came to interview him for The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, the book that later underpinned Richard Attenborough's film.

From that room he had gone out to Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta when the riots began. He had said he would return and teach the children again. Between his leaving and his coming back, India became free. Lakhs of Hindu and Sikh refugees poured in from across the border. Many Muslims left for Pakistan. In a few months the face of Delhi changed. On the road from Shahdara to Birla House, Gandhi would have seen parts of the city still burning.

At Birla House he began all-religion prayer meetings. "In the early days, only passages from Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh scriptures were recited," says Brother Solomon George, who is part of the All Faith prayer at Rajghat for the last three decades. After Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta, he now turned to Delhi. The violence did not yield quickly. Those last 144 days

were spent in a small ground-floor room of the mansion (Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase).

On 14 September he went to Idgah and Motia Khan. At both places Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims told him their losses. Refugee survivors were shocked when he said that Muslims had a right to live in India.

The riots still did not stop. On 13 January 1948 he began an indefinite fast. The last fast of his life to put moral pressure on the city. It worked. On 18 January he broke the fast after leaders of all communities signed a written pledge of peace.

Two days later, on 20 January, a bomb exploded at the prayer meeting. K.L. Madan, who recorded the meetings for All India Radio, remembered a crude blast that hurt no one. The papers named Madan Lal Pahwa. Gandhi asked that the

man be forgiven.

On 30 January 1948 he was killed. After that, his ashes left the city from New Delhi and Delhi Junction, travelling to different parts of the country - a last railway journey he did not take himself.



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SC Hears Pleas on CBSE Three-Language Policy

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday heard pleas challenging the CBSE's decision to make a third language compulsory for Class 9 students from the 2026-27 academic year. Senior Advocates Gopal Sankaranarayanan and Anand Grover urged the court to hear the matter next week without further adjournments, citing concerns among parents and students ahead of examinations. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured the bench that he would consult CBSE officials and return with a response. The bench also asked the government to consider relaxation for certain students already promoted under the existing system.

Delhi Government Takes Serious Action Against Illegal Constructions

New Delhi: The Delhi government is preparing to take strict action against illegal constructions. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has directed MCD officials to identify unauthorized structures and undertake demolition drives using bulldozers wherever nec essary. These actions will be carried out in several areas of Delhi. The Chief Minister also instructed senior officials of the Municipal Corporation to remain available on the ground.

Kejriwal Re-elected AAP National Convenor

Kejriwal's re-election comes as he continues to lead the party after its electoral setbacks in recent years.

Arvind Kejriwal was unanimously re-elected as Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) national convenor during the party's National Council meeting held virtually on Wednesday, with 330 members participating in the meeting. The party also elected Pankaj Gupta as its National Secretary, while ND Gupta will continue as the National Treasurer. A new 23-member National Executive was also constituted during the meeting. AAP's national media in-charge Anurag Dhanda congratulated Kejriwal on his re-election and said the party was prepared to face every challenge under his leadership. "Heartiest congratulations to Arvind Kejriwal ji on being unanimously re-elected as the National Convenor by the newly formed National Council of AAP. Under your guidance, we are ready for every struggle," Dhanda said in a post on X. pic.twitter.com/CyWvr6LAWot—Anurag Dhanda (@anuragdhanda) September 9, 2026

Kejriwal's re-election comes as he continues to lead the party after its electoral setbacks in recent years. A former Delhi Chief Minister, Kejriwal entered politics after years of activism centred on transparency, the Right to Information and anti-corruption. Before joining electoral politics, Kejriwal founded the NGO Parivartan to address public grievances related to the Public Distribution System,



public works, social welfare schemes, income tax and electricity. He resigned from the Income Tax department in 2006 and donated his Ramon Magsaysay Award prize money to establish the Public Cause Research Foundation.

Kejriwal emerged as one of the prominent faces of the anti-corruption movement before founding the AAP on October 2, 2012, along with other former members of the India Against Corruption movement. He contested his first Delhi Assembly election from the New Delhi constituency in 2013, defeating three-time Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit by a margin of more than 22,000 votes.

Kejriwal became Delhi's youngest Chief Minister when he took oath on December 28, 2013. However, he resigned in February 2014 after his government failed to pass the Jan Lokpal Bill in the Delhi Assembly.

He returned as Delhi Chief Minister on February 14, 2015, after the AAP secured a decisive victory in the Delhi Assembly elections and was subsequently re-elected from the New Delhi constituency.

BJP to Target Drugs, Corruption in Punjab Polls

BJP chief Nitin Nabin said the party will fight the Punjab Assembly polls on corruption, anarchy and drugs. The remarks signal an aggressive campaign against the AAP government ahead of next year's election.



BJP President Nitin Nabin on Wednesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab of "anarchy and corruption" and said his party would fight the upcoming Assembly elections in the state on these issues. He also said the BJP would raise the issue of the drug menace in Punjab and launch a public movement against it ahead of the polls due early next year. Speaking at his first press conference at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi since becoming the party's national president in January, Nabin made the remarks while replying to questions from reporters. The press conference was

held after he announced the launch of a month-long 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' across the country from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday on September 17 to mark his 25 years in public life through programmes focused on youth outreach and public participation.

Asked about the BJP's strategy for the Punjab polls, Nabin said that given the "state of anarchy and corruption" in Punjab, the Bharatiya Janata Party was fully prepared to confront the situation head-on. He did not comment on the possibility of an alliance between the BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal in the poll-bound state.

"We believe there is a pressing need for a widespread public movement against the drug menace, and the BJP will spearhead such a movement in the coming days," he said. "Furthermore, the anarchy and corruption characterising the Punjab government, along with the questionable nature of recent inductions into their party, pose a threat to both the state and the nation. We will take these issues to the electoral battlefield," the BJP chief added.

Nabin was apparently referring to the recent induction of Gurpreet Singh Sekhon into the ruling AAP in Punjab. Sekhon, a resident of Ferozepur, was one of the main accused in the 2016 Nabha jailbreak case. Asked if he had been visiting various states in view of the upcoming polls, Nabin said, "The Bharatiya Janata Party's cadre and leadership work 24x7. We are full-time politicians I am going to visit West Bengal this month."

Odisha Signs

BHUBANESWAR: Sept 9 The Odisha government signed an MoU for 14 new projects, entailing an investment of around Rs 2.10 lakh crore, during the first day of its investor outreach in the UAE on Wednesday, officials said. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who is leading

2.1 Lakh Crore Project Pacts in UAE

a high-level delegation to the UAE, was present in Abu Dhabi when the agreement was signed with a partnership between International Holding Company (IHC) and the Adani Group, expected to generate employment for around 8.68 lakh people, according to a statement. The in-

vestments are proposed in metal downstream industries, slurry pipelines, critical minerals and rare earths, chemicals and petrochemical derivatives, renewable energy equipment, healthcare, industrial infrastructure, tourism, skill development and sports infrastructure.

NIA Keeps UAPA Probe Open

New Delhi, Sept. 9: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against American national Matthew Aaron VanDyke and six Ukrainians under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, without invoking UAPA charges.

The NIA said the terror investigation remains open and that a supplementary chargesheet could be filed if further evidence emerges. The accused were arrested in March over allegations of illegally entering restricted areas and training ethnic armed groups in Myanmar in drone warfare.

VanDyke's lawyer questioned the agency's decision to file only Foreigners Act charges after nearly 180 days in custody.

The development triggered political criticism, with Congress and AIMIM leaders alleging possible US pressure. The government maintained that diplomatic enquiries by the US were normal consular practice. The court will consider the case on October

Supreme Court examines marital rape, says marriage does not mean loss of individual autonomy

The Supreme Court has taken up a batch of cases challenging and seeking interpretation of the marital rape exception, with the court deciding to first hear an appeal arising from a Karnataka High Court judgment that allowed prosecution in a case where a wife was allegedly treated as a "sex slave".

The Supreme Court on Wednesday confronted a key question in the marital rape debate: can a husband be prosecuted for rape despite the marital rape exception? The court will first hear a Karnataka case involving a man accused of treating his wife as a "sex slave", before taking up the broader constitutional challenge to the exception. The development, reported by Bar & Bench, came two days after the Supreme Court said it would await the Centre's stand before deciding when to hear the broader issue of criminalising marital rape. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, said it would first examine the Karnataka case. The court will consider whether existing law can be interpreted to allow

prosecution in such cases, as argued by senior advocate Indira Jaising, who is defending the Karnataka High Court judgment. The court will also examine the constitutional validity of the marital rape exception. It said all sides would be heard before a decision is taken. The matters have been listed for final hearing after three weeks, on Wednesday and Thursday, according to the Bar & Bench report.

KARNATAKA CASE AT THE CENTRE OF FIRST HEARING

Jaising, appearing for the wife, told the court that the Karnataka High Court had held that prosecution under the rape law could proceed despite the marital rape exception, given the facts of the case. She said the High Court had taken this view because the wife was treated virtually as a "sex slave". Jaising told the Supreme Court that she wanted to defend that judgment and argue that prosecution could be maintained under the existing law without necessarily striking down the exception. The court noted that Jaising's argument was that the existing provision could be interpreted sufficiently broadly to accommodate such conduct within the offence. She agreed, stressing



that she was not asking the court to simply ignore the exception but to interpret it.

The Chief Justice said the issue raised an important question of law: whether a provision containing a clear exception could nevertheless be interpreted in a manner that allows prosecution for conduct of this nature.

TWO KEY QUESTIONS BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

The hearing involved two broad questions:

- Whether the existing marital rape exception can be interpreted narrowly so that certain cases can still lead to prosecution.
 - Whether the exception itself violates the Constitution and should be struck down.
- The court said it would answer both questions, but would first take up the Kar-

nataka appeal and examine the interpretation issue before dealing with the constitutional challenge.

Senior advocate Karuna Nundy, appearing for another set of petitioners, argued that the questions of interpretation and constitutionality could not necessarily be viewed in isolation. She pointed to changes made to the rape law over the years, including amendments following the Nirbhaya case.

'MARRIAGE DOES NOT EXTINGUISH INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY'

Justice Joymalya Bagchi acknowledged the concerns surrounding the safety and security of married women and said there was no question of marriage resulting in the extinction of an individual's autonomy. However, he said the court was dealing with a penal law and therefore had to first determine whether the exception was unreasonable or manifestly arbitrary before prosecution specifically for rape could be permitted. The judge also pointed out that the marital rape exception does not protect a husband from every possible criminal consequence of sexual violence. Where grievous injury or death is caused, he said, other criminal provisions may

apply. The bench referred to the historic Phulmoni case, involving a very young girl who suffered a brutal sexual assault that resulted in severe bleeding and death, to underline that serious offences arising from sexual violence are not confined only to the legal definition of rape.

LAW CHANGED AFTER NIRBHAYA CASE

During the hearing, lawyers highlighted changes made to India's sexual-offence laws after the 2012 Nirbhaya case. The definition of rape was expanded beyond penile penetration to include other forms of penetration. At the same time, the wording of the marital exception was changed from "sexual intercourse" to "sexual intercourse or sexual acts". Nundy also pointed out that the exception continued to have implications for other forms of sexual violence within marriage. She said the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaced the IPC, had also dropped Section 377, raising further questions about the legal remedies available in such cases. The Solicitor General, Tushar Mehta, said the Union government would assist the court on the questions of law and rely on its replies already filed in the connected matters.

Cabinet Clears 11 Railway Multitracking Projects Worth RS. 20,804 CRORE

New Delhi, Sept. 9: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved 11 multitracking projects of the Ministry of Railways involving an estimated investment of ₹20,804 crore. The projects will add around 1,196 km to the existing railway network across nine states and are targeted for completion by 2029-30.

The approved projects include six-line and four-line expansions as well as doubling and additional-line works aimed at increasing railway capacity, easing congestion and improving operational efficiency and service reliability.

The projects cover 31 districts across West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana. Together, they are expected to improve rail connectivity to nearly 6,900 villages with a combined population of more than one crore.

Major Routes

The projects include the Kharagpur-Jharsuguda (Bagdehi) four-line section, Katni-Pendra Road four-line section and Bilaspur (Uslapur)-Pendra Road three-line section in eastern and central India.

In southern India, the approved works include the Arakkonam-Renigunta third and fourth lines, Whitefield-Bangarapet third and fourth lines, Hosur-Omalur doubling, Salem-Karur-Dindigul doubling and multitracking of the Secunderabad (Ghatkesar)-Kazipet section.

Boost to Freight Movement

The capacity expansion is expected to generate additional freight traffic of around 74 million tonnes per annum. The upgraded routes are important for the movement of coal, cement, iron

and steel, containers, automobiles, foodgrains, petroleum products and fertilisers.

The projects are expected to strengthen logistics networks, reduce bottlenecks and facilitate faster movement of goods and passengers. They will also support industrial and economic activity in the regions covered by the new infrastructure.

Tourism and Regional Connectivity

The enhanced rail network will improve access to several major tourist and religious destinations, including Tirupati, Yadagirigutta, Bhongir Fort, Kodaikanal, Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary, Taratarini Temple, Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Amarkantak and Achanakmar Tiger Reserve.

The projects are also expected to create employment and self-employment opportunities by improving connectivity between villages, towns, industrial centres and major markets.

Green and Efficient Transport

The projects have been planned under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, with emphasis on integrated planning, multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency.

According to the government, the railway capacity expansion will help reduce dependence on road transport, lower logistics costs and support India's climate goals. The projects in the two groups are expected to save around 20 crore litres of oil imports and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 104 crore kg annually, equivalent to the environmental benefit of planting nearly 4.5 crore trees. The government said the projects would strengthen India's rail infrastructure while providing more efficient movement of people, goods and services and supporting balanced regional development.

PINARAYI DEFENDS DAUGHTER OVER CMRL PAYMENTS

Alappuzha, Sept. 10: Former Kerala Chief Minister and Opposition Leader Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday defended his daughter Veena Vijayan amid allegations over financial transactions between her company, Exalogic Solutions, and Cochin Minerals and Rutile Limited (CMRL).

Vijayan said all payments received by his daughter's company were properly accounted for and taxes were paid. He said Exalogic provided IT services to several establishments and that its transactions with CMRL were not secret.

Rejecting allegations that funds received by Veena were later routed through her husband and CPI(M) leader Muhammad Riyas, Vijayan questioned whether media reports could portray him as a bribe-taker. He said the allegations would be contested both politically and legally.

Vijayan also alleged that the Enforcement Directorate's action against him was aimed at implicating him in the case. He said attempts to find evidence against him had not succeeded and accused the agency of targeting him.

The controversy follows ED allegations that Exalogic received ₹2.78 crore from CMRL purportedly for IT consultancy services without providing the services. The agency also said a CMRL-linked company extended a ₹50 lakh loan to Exalogic despite repayment delays.

Grand Welcome for BJP Leader Sharda Rana in Yamuna Valley After Being Elected DCB Chairperson

BY SUNIL THAPLIYAL

Barkot (Uttarkashi): BJP leader Mrs. Sharda Rana received a grand welcome in the Yamuna Valley on her first visit after being elected unopposed Chairperson of the Uttarkashi District Cooperative Bank (DCB). BJP workers greeted her with flower garlands, bouquets, and the traditional beats of dhol and nagadas, creating a festive atmosphere across the region.

The newly elected Vice-Chairperson Harimohan Chand and other elected directors of the District Cooperative Bank were also warmly welcomed during the programme. Party workers congratulated the newly elected team and expressed confidence that the bank would witness significant progress under their leadership while



serving the interests of the people. Addressing the gathering, BJP leader Satendra Rana thanked both the Central and Uttarakhand governments for strengthening the cooperative sector. He said the BJP had entrusted experienced and dedicated leadership with the responsibility of taking the cooperative movement to greater heights in the state. He expressed hope that under Sharda Rana's leadership, the Uttarkashi District Cooperative Bank would in-



troduce new initiatives for farmers, women, and rural communities.

In her address, Sharda Rana thanked BJP workers and local residents for the warm reception. She said her priority would be to strengthen the rural economy, provide better financial services to farmers and self-help groups, and expand the reach of the cooperative banking system to every village in the district.

The welcome ceremony was attended by BJP District

General Secretary Parshuram Jagudi, Mandal President Amit Rawat, Jashoda Rana, Ramesh Rawat, Sharat Chauhan, Atul Singh, Neeraj Chauhan, Praveen Rawat, Sandeep Aswal, Rajesh Singh, along with senior party leaders, public representatives, Mahila Morcha members, Yuva Morcha workers, and a large number of local residents. The event concluded with enthusiastic slogans and felicitations for the newly elected office-bearers.

NFR to Extend Operation of Two Pairs of Special Trains

MALIGAON

To facilitate passengers and clear the extra rush of passengers during the upcoming festival season, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has decided to extend the operation of 02 additional pairs of special trains. These include Train No. 04008/04007 (Anand Vihar Terminal – Jogbani – Anand Vihar Terminal) Festival Special Express and Train No. 08047/08048 (Sant-ragachi Jn. – Naharlagun – Sant-ragachi Jn.) Festival Special Express have been introduced for 05 trips from 10th October to 7th November, 2026. In the return direction, train no.



the festival season. These trains will operate with their existing schedule, timings, composition and stoppages.

The services of train no. 04008 (Anand Vihar Terminal – Jogbani) Festival Special Express have been introduced for 05 trips from 10th October to 7th November, 2026. In the return direction, train no.

04007 (Jogbani – Anand Vihar Terminal) Festival Special Express will operate for 05 trips from 11th October to 8th November, 2026. The train will operate via Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Gonda, Gorakhpur Jn., Chhapra, Hajipur, Barauni, Begusarai, Khagaria, Naugachia, Katihar, Purnea Jn., and

Forbesganj, among other stations. The train will have 20 coaches for the convenience of passengers.

Further, the operation of train no. 08047 (Sant-ragachi Jn. – Naharlagun) Special has been extended for 03 additional trips on 11th, 18th and 25th September, 2026. In the return direction, train no. 08048 (Naharlagun – Sant-ragachi Jn.) Special will operate for 03 additional trips on 12th, 19th and 26th September, 2026.

The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available at IRCTC website and social media platforms of N. F. Railway. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey.



India, Bangladesh hold talks to deepen defence cooperation

DHAKA

India and Bangladesh on Wednesday discussed ways to enhance defence cooperation and deepen engagement between their armed forces.

The talks were held between India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi and Advisor to Bangladesh's Prime Minister for the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Division, A K M Sham-sul Islam.

During the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

"The discussions underlined the strong bond existing between the Armed Forces of the two countries. The meeting included deliberations on wide-ranging topics to enhance defence-related engagements. Both the dignitaries expressed their commitment to further enhance the relationship and to work together



on various mutually beneficial areas of interests," the Indian High Commission in Dhaka posted on X.

The meeting came a day after Trivedi made a courtesy call on Bangladesh President Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir at Bangabhaban in Dhaka and discussed deepening bilateral ties.

High Commissioner conveyed warm greetings to the President and wished him success for his continued service

to the people of Bangladesh.

"The discussion underscored the deep-rooted bonds between India and Bangladesh, built on shared history, close cultural ties and people-to-people relations. They emphasised the importance of strengthening the bilateral partnership for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two sovereign countries," the Indian mission wrote on X.

President Alamgir said that Dhaka attaches significant

importance to its relationship with India, given its position as Bangladesh's closest neighbour and an important partner in trade and development.

He made the remarks during his meeting with Indian High Commissioner Trivedi at Bangabhaban on Tuesday morning, according to President's Press Secretary Md Sarwar Alam, Bangladesh media outlet UNB reported.

Alamgir expressed Bangladesh's willingness to build a

respectful, forward-looking and mutually beneficial partnership with India, based on sovereign equality, national interests, dignity and the welfare of the people.

Thanking the Indian High Commissioner for his greetings, President Alamgir asked him to convey his gratitude and best wishes to the President of India.

He further said there was significant scope to deepen bilateral cooperation in trade, water management, technology, connectivity, culture and people-to-people ties.

On Tuesday, Trivedi also met Bangladesh's Minister of Shipping, Railways, Road Transport and Bridges, Shaikh Rabiul Alam, in Dhaka, as the two sides discussed the importance of strengthening connectivity between the two countries. During the meeting, both sides also reviewed areas of mutual interest, including railways, shipping, connectivity and bilateral development projects.

US Navy to deploy first nuclear microreactor

WASHINGTON

The US Navy will deploy its first shore-based advanced nuclear microreactor at Naval Weapons Station Crane in Indiana by September 2028, providing the defence installation with continuous power independent of the commercial electricity grid.

The Micro Modular Reactor will also be the first power-producing nuclear reactor installed in Indiana, according to the Department of War.

The commercially owned and operated reactor is expected to sustain critical operations at the naval station during physical, cyber and electricity grid disruptions. NWS Crane is a major US defence technology, weapons research and manufacturing centre. The project is being carried out by the Army's Janus Program, the Navy and other Department of War offices in partnership with the state of Indiana. "Under President Trump's bold leadership, the Department of War is rapidly fielding next-generation energy solutions for our warfighters," said Emil Michael, Under Secretary of War for Research.

Pakistani forces forcibly disappear three more civilians in Balochistan

QUETTA

Another three civilians were forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces in Balochistan, leading human rights organisations alleged on Wednesday. This latest incident comes against the backdrop of a growing wave of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances across the province.

Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, mentioned that two doctors, 28-year-old Mahir Mazar and 28-year-old Jamshair Baloch, were subjected to enforced disappearance allegedly by Pakistani forces from the Turbat region of Kech district in the early hours of Tuesday.

The rights body noted that their whereabouts, safety, and legal status remain unknown since their disappearance, while their families have been denied information and contact with them.

"The forcible removal of individuals from their homes, followed by the concealment of their fate or whereabouts, constitutes enforced disappearance and represents a grave violation of fundamental

human rights. Such practices violate protections guaranteed under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly the rights to liberty, security, due process, and protection from arbitrary detention," Paank stated.

The rights body called on the Pakistani authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts, safety, and legal status of both doctors, allow them immediate access to their families and legal counsel, and release them without delay.

Calling for an immediate end to "nocturnal raids, arbitrary detentions, and the systematic practice of enforced disappearances" across Balochistan, it further said that Pakistani authorities must ensure accountability for those responsible and guarantee the safety and fundamental rights of all persons subjected to such operations. Highlighting the atrocities against civilians across Balochistan, the Baloch Voice for Justice (BVJ) said that Qadir Bakhsh Baloch was taken into custody by security forces on September 6.

Prince Rahim Aga Khan V arrives in India for week-long visit

NEW DELHI

Prince Rahim Aga Khan V, the 50th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims and Chair of the Aga Khan Development Network, arrived in India on a seven-day visit at the invitation of Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan.

"A warm welcome to His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V on his first visit to India since his accession as the 50th Imam of the Ismaili community. The visit will provide an opportunity to review ongoing cooperation with Aga Khan Development Network in social development and heritage preservation, and explore collaboration in various development and community initiatives," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on X.

According to the MEA, during his visit till September 15, Prince Rahim will call on President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. He will also meet Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar.

In addition to these engagements, Prince Rahim will visit Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad, where Aga Khan Development Network is involved in various development and community initiatives. Prince Rahim was named the 50th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims in February 2025 following the death of his father.

Rajnath hands over radar equipment to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday handed over spares and equipment to Sri Lanka during a deck reception organised onboard INS Udaygiri at the Colombo port here.

"Attended the deck reception organised onboard INS Udaygiri at Colombo port during my visit to Sri Lanka. Was also joined by the Deputy Minister of Defence and other senior government officials of Sri Lanka. During the event, handed over Spares for Indra MK 2 -Radar for the Sri Lankan Air Force, Spares for the SLN Ship Sayura and Inflatable targets to the Sri Lankan officials. This equipment will help in further boosting the capability and capacity of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces," the Defence Minister said on social media platform X.



He added that the INS Udayagiri was among the first responders during the devastating Cyclone Ditwah along with INS Vikram, and brought relief assistance to our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

"As Sri Lanka's closest neighbour and a civilisational twin, Bharat will continue to stand firmly with Sri Lanka in rain or shine. We remain each other's 'Sukh Dukh Mein Saathi,'" Rajnath Singh high-

lighted. "India and Sri Lanka are not only longstanding friends and neighbours connected through our shared cultural, historical and civilisational heritage, but also crucial partners in ensuring

safety and security of the Indian Ocean region," the Defence Minister noted while speaking at the Deck reception.

Highlighting India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Rajnath Singh said that a neighbour is always the one who comes to your help not only as a duty, but also a strong reaffirmation of deep friendship and affection. "It is not a formality but a commitment, a promise, to keep that we are always there through thick and thin, and we call it in Hindi, 'Sukh Dukh Ke Saathi,'" he added.

"Our mutual trust and respect is also visible in the long-standing defence and maritime cooperation between our two countries. Both bilaterally as well as under the multilateral rubric, our forces work together and benefit from each other's experiences and joint exercises," he said.

US sanctions Chinese-language scam hub

WASHINGTON

The United States on Wednesday sanctioned Xinbi Guarantee, a Chinese-language platform accused of operating a vast illicit marketplace that supports cyber scams, financial fraud and money laundering targeting Americans.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control also designated two companies that allegedly provided digital currency, technology and other financial services

essential to Xinbi Guarantee's operations.

"Scam centers in Southeast Asia steal billions of dollars from American victims each year," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said. "The Trump Administration is united in its efforts to dismantle these overseas criminal enterprises, and Treasury will continue using its tools to disrupt the networks behind this egregious fraud and protect Americans."

Xinbi Guarantee operates an online marketplace connecting



transnational criminal syndicates and scam centre operators with merchants offering financial services, technology and other goods, according to

the Treasury Department.

The platform allegedly provides escrow services to scam operators, money-laundering networks and cybercrime syndicates. It has reportedly been used by North Korean hackers and several entities previously sanctioned by OFAC, including Jin Bei Group Co., Ltd. and organisations linked to the Prince Group transnational criminal organisation.

Since its launch around 2022, the marketplace has processed more than \$24 billion

in digital assets and traditional currency, primarily facilitating transactions in Southeast Asian countries, the department said.

After the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network identified Huione Pay as a financial institution of primary money-laundering concern, cybercriminals attempted to shift their activities to Xinbi Guarantee, according to the department. Xinbi continued offering similar services to an overlapping customer base.

Measles outbreak in Bangladesh claims three more lives, death toll crosses 1000

DHAKA

As Bangladesh grapples with an unprecedented measles outbreak, three more children died from symptoms of the disease on Wednesday, pushing the overall death toll to 1002 this year, local media reported.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the deaths were reported in the 24 hours leading up to Wednesday morning.

The latest three fatalities from the disease were identified as suspected, Bangladesh media outlet UNB reported.

Reports suggest that while the number of confirmed deaths remained at 100, the total number of suspected deaths climbed to 902.

The DGHS recorded a total of 1,119 new suspected measles cases during the 24-hour period, bringing the overall tally of suspected cases to 167,580.

Additionally, 69 new confirmed cases were reported, increasing the total to 19,904 during the same period.

According to public health experts, inadequate vaccina-



tion coverage and the lack of effective preventive measures have contributed to the situation, leaving infants under six months particularly vulnerable to measles.

The health authorities acknowledged gaps in vaccination coverage, saying additional vaccines were being procured and a short, intensive drive was likely to be launched to reach children who remain unvaccinated, Bangladesh's leading newspaper The Daily Star reported.

Epidemiologist Prof Mahmudur Rahman, who also chairs the National Verification Committee for Measles

and Rubella Elimination, said the government should first constitute an expert panel to examine surveillance and immunisation data and identify gaps in coverage.

He said that the gaps could be geographic, age-specific or socioeconomic, depending on the findings, and urged targeted interventions in areas where vaccination coverage remains low. "If necessary, sub-immunisation activities (SIAs) should be conducted in those areas. Even if it is not possible to cover everywhere, focusing on areas with major gaps could produce results," The Daily Star quoted Rahman as saying.

Sheikh Hasina's fate is certain when she returns to Bangladesh, echo separate opinions

NEW DELHI

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's return home and her future there have been the subject of speculations and deductions, issues that have subsequently been addressed by those concerned, as reported in a section of the media. Dhaka has been insisting that India extradite Hasina immediately, despite her repeated statements that she intends to return voluntarily in December.

After her ouster in August 2024, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal sentenced Hasina to death in absentia on allegations of crimes against humanity.

Reports from Dhaka note that officials have made it clear she will face execution upon return, with no chance to appeal.

Zahed Ur Rahman, Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Adviser on Information and Broadcasting, was quoted as saying that India "must send Hasina back" if

bilateral relations are to normalise, reiterating his government's views. Referring to Hasina as "an accused", "absconding accused", and "convicted person sentenced to death", he told the media in Dhaka that the government wants to bring her back rather than wait for her to return voluntarily.

"Even if she returns to the country, she will not have the opportunity to seek a review of the trial held against her," he said, quoting the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal, reported by The Daily Star on Tuesday. "Technically, the situation now is that she will arrive and the death penalty awaits her. We want to bring her back by capturing her," he added.

Meanwhile, the deposed Premier herself expressed fears of being killed "at the airport" if she returns, reported Bengali news website The Wall Sunday. Bangladesh being her "own country", she asked in the telephonic interview why she wouldn't be allowed to return, while also expressing



concern for her safety.

"Even if I return, they might try to kill me at the airport," she maintained. Yet, she has consistently said that she will return to Bangladesh in December 2026 to surrender, reiterating her intention to come back on her own terms.

Similar apprehensions were shared by Shafiqul Alam, former Press Secretary to the then Chief Adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus. "If the BJP government allows her to cross into Dhaka via Benapole or Banglabandha and she is either mobbed or executed after exhausting her legal options, the BJP would face immense backlash at home. The Con-

gress-led opposition, which maintains warm ties with Hasina, would heavily blame the BJP for her death," he posted among seven points he shared on Facebook over Hasina's possible return.

The Benapole border crossing lies in Bangladesh's Jessore district, across Petrapole in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, while Banglabandha is a major inland port in northern Bangladesh close to the strategic narrow Siliguri Corridor that connects India's Northeast to other parts of the country.

"Consequently, no Indian government would permit her return. Their only viable route is to negotiate a deal with a future friendly administration in Dhaka that guarantees her safety and rules out execution. Right now, no government in Bangladesh would agree to such terms; no one wants to repeat May 1981," he added.

Alam appeared to refer to the May 30, 1981 assassination of then President Ziaur Rahman, father of the incumbent

Prime Minister. However, he did not mention the assassination of the founding President of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family on August 15, 1975. Hasina and her sister were the only survivors, then, being in abroad.

Alam also added that Hasina naming Sheikh Selim as her potential successor as leader of the Awami League is in anticipation that "her direct access to the media may soon be cut off". Dhaka sees her virtual interactions as attempts to undermine its authority and influence international opinion.

Officials argue that allowing her to remain in India until December gives her space to continue shaping the narrative, something they are determined to prevent. Thus, while Dhaka insists on immediate extradition, framing it as a matter of justice and sovereignty, Hasina portrays her return as a voluntary act of accountability. Separate opinions, and yet they all reflect a similar fate for Hasina whenever she lands in Bangladesh.



NHAI tightens
plantation
compliance
norms for NH
projects

NEW DELHI:
State-owned NHAI on Wednesday said it has tightened compliance norms for plantation along the median and avenues of National Highway projects before the issuance of a provisional completion certificate.
Under the new guidelines, NHAI will ensure that median and avenue plantation is undertaken strictly in accordance with the respective contract/concession agreement and prescribed guidelines as per the Green Highways Policy, 2015 and other relevant guidelines issued by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and NHAI, the state-owned entity said in a statement.
It said a key provision of the guidelines is the introduction of a minimum threshold for the issuance of the provisional certificate of completion (PCC) / provisional commercial operation date (PCOD).

Sensex, Nifty fall sharply as crude oil crosses \$100; IT stocks lead sell-off

Benchmark indices ended sharply lower on Wednesday, with the BSE Sensex falling more than 800 points as Brent crude crossed the \$100-a-barrel mark and a fresh sell-off in IT stocks added to pressure on the market.

The Sensex closed at 74,764.23, down 813.35 points, or 1.08%, while the Nifty 50 declined 203.60 points, or 0.86%, to 23,431.50. The Sensex opened at 75,216.22 and touched a high of 75,251.23 before slipping to its day's low of 74,764.23. The Nifty opened at 23,522.05, hit a high of 23,571.55 and ended at its day's low of 23,431.50.
The sell-off intensified as crude oil prices moved closer to and then crossed the psychologically important \$100-a-barrel level. Brent crude was trading at \$100.47, up 2.60%, while WTI crude rose 2.28% to \$95.15. Rising oil prices are a concern for India as they can increase the country's import bill, put pres-



sure on inflation and widen the trade deficit. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, that markets are increasingly pricing in a prolonged Middle East conflict, with continued hostilities and retaliatory actions expected to keep crude oil prices elevated in the near term. "Persistent geopolitical uncertainty is making it difficult for major central banks to achieve a balance between growth and inflation, while higher energy costs pose risks to both economic activity and price stability. With bond yields and currencies remaining volatile, investors are likely to adopt a cautious stance, limiting risk

appetite and keeping market sentiment subdued," he added.
IT STOCKS LEAD THE FALL
IT stocks emerged as one of the biggest drags on the benchmark indices, with the Nifty IT index falling 3.24%. The sector has been under pressure amid concerns over higher US interest rates and the impact of a prolonged Middle East conflict on global growth and corporate technology spending.
Among the major IT stocks, HCLTech fell 4.55%, Infosys declined 4.43%, Tech Mahindra dropped 3.87% and TCS fell 2.26%. The weakness in IT added significantly to the broader market sell-off. The

Nifty MidSmall IT & Telecom index also declined 1.79%.
METAL STOCKS BUCK TREND
The broader market remained under pressure, although metal stocks bucked the overall trend. The Nifty Metal index gained 1.79%, making it the best-performing sectoral index of the day. Among Sensex stocks, Adani Ports was the top gainer, rising 3.67%, followed by Tata Steel, which gained 2.42%. Trent rose 1.12%, while NTPC and Asian Paints gained 0.53% and 0.08%, respectively. PowerGrid was marginally higher by 0.02%. On the other hand, HCLTech was the biggest Sensex loser, followed by Infosys and Tech Mahindra. Bajaj Finance fell 1.42%, UltraTech Cement declined 1.39%, Bharti Airtel dropped 1.14% and BEL fell 1.05%. The weakness was visible across the broader market, although losses were smaller than those in the headline indices. The Nifty 100 fell 0.72%, while the Nifty 200 declined 0.68% and the Nifty 500 dropped 0.64%. The Nifty

Midcap 50 fell 0.55%, the Nifty Midcap 100 declined 0.51% and the Nifty Smallcap 100 lost 0.48%. India VIX, a gauge of market volatility, rose 6.32% to 11.94, signalling increased nervousness among investors. Sector-wise, the Nifty Realty index was among the biggest losers, falling 2.23%, while Financial Services 25/50 declined 1.23%. FMCG fell 0.96%, Private Bank 0.95%, Media 0.92%, Financial Services Ex-Bank 0.84% and Pharma 0.70%. Healthcare declined 0.26%, Consumer Durables fell 0.58% and Oil & Gas slipped 0.14%. Nifty PSU Bank declined 0.51%, while Auto fell 0.44%. The Nifty Chemicals index dropped 0.23%. The Nifty MidSmall Healthcare index fell 0.34%, while MidSmall Financial Services declined 0.55%.
With crude prices crossing \$100 and IT stocks witnessing another sharp sell-off, investors remained cautious, with geopolitical uncertainty, interest-rate concerns and volatility in global markets continuing to weigh on sentiment.



Govt launches Rashtriya Poshan Maah to boost engagement with Anganwadi Centres

NEW DELHI
The Central government on Wednesday launched the 9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026 at Varanasi, inaugurating a month-long nationwide Jan Andolan for nutrition. The campaign aims to deepen community engagement with Anganwadi Centres and promote collective action towards improved nutrition, maternal health and early childhood development. Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath highlighted the transformative role of Anganwadi Centres in advancing the objectives of Poshan Abhiyaan and strengthening grassroots nutrition services. He emphasised that sustained convergence between departments, active community participation and the dedication of frontline workers are critical to achieving the goal of a malnutrition-free India.
The Chief Minister noted that Anganwadi Centres have been upgraded and renovated into vibrant community institutions with improved infrastructure and learning environments.
He further said that Anganwadi Workers have been equipped with smartphones, enabling real-time data entry and improved service delivery through digital monitoring.
Adityanath observed that Anganwadi Centres are now regularly providing Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) and

Take Home Ration (THR) to eligible beneficiaries, contributing to better nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers across the state. The event will showcase innovation-focused innovations, local nutritious foods and best practices from Anganwadi Centres. Over 150 crore Jan Andolan activities have been conducted through Poshan Maah, Poshan Pakhwada and other community engagement initiatives. Meanwhile, launched on March 1, 2021, the Poshan Tracker has emerged as the primary governance tool for monitoring infrastructure, service delivery and nutritional outcomes under Anganwadi Services. The digital platform enables near real-time tracking of key activities, including the functioning of Anganwadi Centres, daily attendance of children, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) activities, and growth monitoring. The system currently covers a wide range of beneficiaries, including pregnant women, lactating mothers, children up to six years of age and adolescent girls. As of July 31, 2026, India's nutrition delivery network comprised nearly 13.99 lakh Anganwadi Centres supported by around 13.30 lakh Anganwadi workers. Together, this extensive grassroots network serves nearly 8.94 crore beneficiaries across the country.

Xiaomi's India business faces probe over investment, e-commerce practices

The proposed probe will examine the movement of funds and whether Xiaomi obtained the mandatory approvals for investments in India after the government tightened its scrutiny of Chinese investments in 2020.

India's Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) has recommended a detailed investigation into Xiaomi's business in India over alleged irregularities in its business model and possible violations of foreign investment rules, according to a government document, reported Reuters.
The proposed probe will examine the movement of funds and whether Xiaomi obtained the mandatory approvals for investments in India after the government tightened its scrutiny of Chinese investments in 2020. The memorandum was prepared in May and is currently being examined

by the government, according to a person familiar with the matter. The SFIO has also proposed examining the ownership and control of Xiaomi's foreign investors and group companies. The investigation would check whether any direct or indirect ownership, control or changes in control were properly disclosed and approved. Xiaomi said it has not received any notice or communication from the SFIO and maintains that it complies with Indian laws.
PROBE AWAITS GOVERNMENT APPROVAL
The SFIO is India's main agency for investigating corporate fraud and has powers to arrest and prosecute offenders. The proposed investigation covers Xiaomi Technology India Private Limited and related entities. The recommendation is still awaiting approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, which is the SFIO's parent ministry. There is no fixed timeline for such



decisions and the process can take months, according to Meghav Gupta, founder of law firm Consecro Law. The ministry can approve the probe, decide not to proceed if it does not find sufficient grounds, or ask another government department to examine the matter. India introduced stricter foreign investment rules in 2020, requiring prior government approval for investments by Chinese entities. Companies including Xiaomi had said these rules caused delays. Earlier this year, the government relaxed some of the restrictions as India and

China worked towards maintaining peace at the border.
XIAOMI FACES SEVERAL CHALLENGES
An SFIO probe could add to Xiaomi's challenges in India. The company has been unable to overturn the freeze of Rs 5,551 crore in its Indian bank assets by the financial crime-fighting agency since 2022. The freeze relates to alleged illegal remittances, which Xiaomi has denied.
Xiaomi has also lost market share in India. It now holds 13% of the smartphone market, placing it fourth, compared with 19% earlier,

according to Counterpoint Research. Its India revenue stood at \$2.52 billion in 2025, down 40% from three years earlier. The SFIO said its recommendation was based on complaints and inputs received through the government's commerce ministry. The agency has also proposed coordination with other government departments to examine possible overlapping violations. The memorandum sets out a 21-point framework covering the scope, methodology and proposed course of the investigation. It also allows for company executives to be summoned if required.
The SFIO has proposed examining Xiaomi's financial statements and auditor reports filed with the government for possible material misstatements. Statements from current and former directors, chief financial officers and compliance officers may also be recorded.
E-COMMERCE PRACTICES UNDER SCRUTINY
The proposed investigation also covers Xiaomi's online sales through Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart. Small offline retailers have accused the two e-commerce platforms of entering into exclusive arrangements with sellers. Such arrangements are prohibited under India's foreign investment rules for e-commerce, according to the allegations. Amazon and Flipkart have denied them. In 2024, India's antitrust agency alleged that Xiaomi was among smartphone companies that worked with the two e-commerce platforms to launch products exclusively online, in breach of competition rules. Xiaomi has not commented on the matter. The SFIO has proposed further scrutiny of Xiaomi's arrangements with Indian sellers and launch partners. The agency will examine whether Xiaomi had effective control over these sellers or partners while presenting the relationships as being between independent entities. The investigation will also look at whether preferential and exclusive launches of Xiaomi products on selected e-commerce platforms went against the purpose of India's foreign investment policy for e-commerce companies.

Cabinet okays 5 railway projects in south India at total cost of Rs 10,021 crore

New Delhi: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved five multi-tracking railway projects with an investment of Rs 10,021 crore. The five projects, covering 17 districts across Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana, will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 540 km. The multi-tracking projects

will enhance connectivity to approximately 2,121 villages, with a total population of about 52 lakh. These projects include the Arakonam-Renigunta 3rd and 4th Line over a stretch of 77 km, Whitefield-Bangarapet 3rd and 4th Line, 47 kms, Hosur-Omalur Doubling, over 147 km, Salem-Karur-Dindigul Doubling, amounting to 159 km, and Secunderabad (Ghatkesar)-Kazipet, extending to 110 km,



according to an official statement. The increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking projects are poised to alleviate congestion and are scheduled to be completed by 2029-30. The projects are planned under the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan with a focus on enhancing

multi-modal connectivity and logistics efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations. These projects will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods, and services. The approved capacity enhancement will improve rail connectivity to several prominent tourist destinations across the country, including Tirupati, Subramaniya Swamy Temple (Tiruttani),

Sri Padmavati Ammavaari Temple (Tiruchanur), Kotilingeshwara Devalaya, Sri Seethi Byraveshwara Swamy Temple, Bangaru Tirupati, Kolar Gold Fields, Hogenakkal Falls, Hosur Fort, Mettur Dam, Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary, Namakkal Anjaneyar Temple, Namakkal Fort, Yadagirigutta Temple, Bhongir Fort, Surentrapur, and Swarnagiri Temple.



VVC Mahindra Opens New Flagship Showroom at Kothaguda

HYDERABAD
VVC Motors has inaugurated one of the city's largest Mahindra & Mahindra showrooms at Kothaguda, opposite AMB Mall, on Wednesday. The new showroom was jointly inaugurated by Pawan Kumar, Senior Vice President, Mahindra & Mahindra; Sachin Gupta, Head – Field Operations;

and V. Rajendra Prasad, Chairman & Managing Director, VVC Motors. Speaking on the occasion, V. Rajendra Prasad said that the state-of-the-art showroom has been designed with modern facilities and new-age standards, with the capacity to display up to 10 vehicles. He further announced plans to establish a large workshop dedicated

to electric vehicles. Highlighting Mahindra's strong customer support infrastructure, he said that the extensive service network across Hyderabad is one of the brand's key strengths. "With our philosophy of 'We Value Customer' (VVC), we are committed to delivering customer-centric services and an exceptional ownership experience.

Our aim is to establish the Kothaguda showroom as one of the best Mahindra showrooms in the country in the coming years," he said. Harsh Seth, Head – Channel Development, and Viran Chowdary, Director, VVC Motors, along with other distinguished guests and representatives, were also present at the inauguration ceremony.

Medical bills, education, marriage: How new EPF rules let you withdraw money

Your EPF money may be meant for retirement, but there are times when you need to dip into it much earlier – for a medical emergency, your child's education or even a home. The EPFO has now simplified the rules governing such advance withdrawals, making it easier for members to understand when and how often they can access their savings. In a recent X post, the EPFO highlighted the simplified EPF advance rules and said withdrawal provisions have now been made easier for members to understand. The revised framework groups EPF advances into three broad categories – essential needs, housing-related requirements and special circumstances. The rules cover expenses such as illness, education, marriage and housing.
NO LIMIT ON EPF ADVANCE FOR ILLNESS



Under the essential-needs category, members can take an EPF advance for the treatment of themselves or eligible family members. There is no specified limit on the number of times a member can make an advance withdrawal for illness, subject to the applicable conditions. This means members facing repeated medical expenses can access their EPF savings through the advance facility without a fixed cap on the number of withdrawals.
Education: Up to 10 withdrawals
EPF members can also use an

advance to meet education-related expenses for themselves or eligible family members. Under the revised rules, education-related withdrawals can be made up to 10 times during the member's EPF membership.
Marriage: Up to five times
Marriage is another expense covered under the essential-needs category. Members can take an EPF advance for marriage-related expenses up to five times during their membership. The provision covers the member and eligible family members.
HOUSING NEEDS ALSO COVERED
The second category covers housing-related requirements. Members can use an EPF advance for purposes such as buying a flat or site, constructing a house, repaying a home loan and carrying out renovation, alteration or improvement work. For

these housing-related purposes, withdrawals can be made up to five times during the EPF membership.
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
The third category covers special circumstances notified by the Central Board of EPF. Members can use this provision up to two times in a financial year. Further, the revised framework also provides a common withdrawal structure. Members can withdraw up to 75% of their EPF balance, including the employee's and employer's contributions, while the remaining 25% has to be retained. The applicable eligibility conditions still need to be met. Simply put, the new framework is aimed at making EPF advances easier to understand by grouping different withdrawal purposes under broader categories instead of having several separate provisions.

The New Space Race..

Space is no longer just a frontier for scientific discovery—it is becoming a crucial arena for technology, economic growth, national security and global influence.

The story of space exploration has entered a dramatic new chapter. For decades, space was mainly the domain of powerful governments and national space agencies. The United States and the Soviet Union once competed to reach the Moon, launch astronauts and demonstrate technological superiority.

Today, however, the race beyond Earth has become much larger, more commercial and strategically important. In September 2026, the world is witnessing a new phase of space activity. India has achieved a major milestone with its EOS-05 satellite, Europe is discussing ways to strengthen its independent

space capabilities, NASA has begun commissioning the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, and private companies are playing an increasingly important role in building rockets, satellites and space infrastructure. Space is no longer just about scientific curiosity. It has become essential for commu-

tion, weather forecasting, disaster management, navigation, national security, agriculture, climate monitoring and economic development. The question before the world is no longer simply, “Can humans explore space?” The bigger question today is: “Who will shape the future of space?”

India's New Eye in the Sky

India has taken an important step in strengthening its space capabilities with the successful launch of EOS-05, the country's first dedicated geo-imaging satellite. The satellite was launched aboard the GSLV-F17 mission and successfully completed manoeuvres to enter geosynchronous orbit. What makes EOS-05 significant is its ability to observe the Indian region continuously from a much higher orbit. Unlike many Earth observation satellites that rapidly move around the planet and can observe a particular location only for a limited period, a geosynchronous satellite can remain positioned over a specific region relative to Earth. This capability could become extremely valuable for India. Continuous observation can help monitor weather systems, cyclones, floods, forest fires, agricultural conditions and other developments across the Indian subcontinent. Such data can also have strategic importance for national security and maritime surveillance.

The mission also represents an important moment for India's GSLV programme. The GSLV rocket has faced technical challenges in the past, but the successful launch of the heavy EOS-05 satellite has strengthened confidence in India's ability to conduct increasingly complex missions. For millions of ordinary citizens, satellites may appear distant and invisible. Yet their impact is felt almost every day. When a weather department issues cyclone warnings, when farmers receive information about rainfall, when ships navigate across oceans, when emergency teams respond to floods or when television signals reach remote areas, space technology often plays an important role. The satellite above the Earth has become one of the most important tools for life on the ground.

From Rocket Launches to Everyday Life

The modern world depends on space more than most people realise.

Mobile communication, GPS navigation, digital television, internet connec-

tivity, weather forecasting and banking networks are closely linked to satellites orbiting Earth. A person using a smartphone to find directions is benefiting from space technology. A farmer checking weather information is indirectly using satellite data. A fisherman receiving warnings about dangerous weather conditions is depending on information gathered from the skies. This is why countries are investing heavily in space technology. Space is no longer a distant scientific laboratory. It has become part of national infrastructure. A major disruption to satellite networks could affect transportation, communication, emergency services and financial systems. This growing dependence has also made space a strategic issue. Countries are increasingly concerned about protecting their satellites and ensuring access to launch vehicles, communication systems and orbital positions. The future of national development may increasingly depend on what happens thousands of kilometres above the Earth.



The Growing Importance of Private Companies

One of the biggest changes in the new space age is the growing role of private companies.

For decades, national governments dominated space exploration because rockets and satellites required enormous investments. Today, technological progress and commercial competition are changing that situation. Private companies are developing reusable rockets, small satellite launch vehicles, communication networks and Earth observation systems. India is also experiencing this transformation. The country has encouraged greater participation from private industry in the space sector. Manufacturing, satellite development, launch services and new technologies are gradually opening up to Indian companies. At the same time, recent discussions have raised concerns about the changing role of Indian Space Research Organisation. ISRO has clarified that the expansion of private participation does not mean that the organisation will lose its importance. Instead, the goal is to create a larger space ecosystem in which government agencies, private companies, academic institutions and industries can work together. India's reforms aim to increase the overall scale of the space sector while allowing ISRO to focus strongly on advanced research, strategic missions and future exploration. This transformation could create new opportunities for Indian engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs and technology companies. The space sector is gradually becoming

The Rise of the Global Space Economy

The space economy is expanding rapidly across the world. Satellite communication companies are providing internet connectivity to remote regions. Earth observation companies are collecting information about farms, forests, oceans and cities. New companies are developing small rockets to carry satellites into orbit. There is also growing interest in space tourism, lunar ex-

economy?

The United States, China, India, Europe and several other countries are investing heavily in space technology. At the same time, private companies have become powerful players. The competition is creating innovation, but it is also creating geopolitical tensions. The new space race is not simply about reaching another planet first. It is about technology, economic power and strategic independence. Europe Searches for Greater Space Independence Europe

India's Long-Term Space Vision

India's ambitions are also expanding beyond satellite launches. The country has already demonstrated important capabilities through lunar exploration, Mars missions and Earth observation programmes. The next major phase involves human spaceflight and more advanced exploration technologies. India is working on the Gaganyaan programme, which aims to develop the country's human spaceflight capability. The programme represents one of the most challenging technological projects undertaken by ISRO. Sending humans into space requires much more than building a rocket. The spacecraft must protect astronauts from extreme conditions. Life-support systems must provide oxygen and maintain safe temperatures. Engineers must ensure that astronauts can return safely to Earth. Every stage of the mission requires precision. India is also developing new technologies for future space transportation, including improved engines, electric propulsion systems and technologies that could support reusable launch vehicles. According to government information released earlier this year, India is continuing work on electric propulsion, advanced cryogenic technologies and engine systems designed to improve mission flexibility and efficiency.

European leaders are concerned that dependence on other countries could create strategic vulnerabilities in the future. The International Space Summit being held in Paris in September 2026 reflects this growing urgency. The discussions are focused on Europe's role in the rapidly changing global space industry and the need to strengthen independent capabilities. Europe currently faces intense competition from the United States and China. The rapid development of reusable rocket technology

panies compete for technological leadership, scientists continue to look deeper into the mysteries of the universe. NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is among the major scientific missions attracting attention in 2026. The telescope was launched at the end of August and is currently undergoing commissioning as it travels toward its operational destination near the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2. The Roman Space Telescope is expected to study some of the biggest mysteries in modern

tions are enormous.

- What is dark energy?
- What is dark matter?
- How many planets exist beyond our solar system?
- Could some of those planets support life?

The Roman Space Telescope may not answer every question, but it could open new doors in humanity's understanding of the universe.

The Moon Is Becoming Important Again

The Moon is once again attracting global attention. For many years after the Apollo missions, human exploration of the Moon slowed down. Today, however, several countries are planning new lunar missions. The Moon is being viewed not only as a destination but also as a possible base for future exploration. Scientists believe that lunar resources could help support long-term human missions. The Moon could also become an important stepping stone for future journeys to Mars and deeper into the solar system. Countries are studying how astronauts could live for longer periods on the lunar surface. Future lunar missions may require habitats, power systems, communication networks and transportation systems. The challenge is enormous. The Moon has no breathable atmosphere. Temperatures can vary dramatically. Astronauts must also be protected from radiation and other dangers. Yet humanity has reached a stage where these challenges are being seriously studied. Space agencies are no longer asking whether people can return to the Moon. They are increasingly asking how humans can stay there.



ploration and commercial space stations. The idea of earning money from space would have sounded like science fiction a few decades ago. Today, it is becoming a serious business opportunity. The future space economy could include manufacturing in orbit, extracting resources from celestial bodies, providing satellite services and developing infrastructure for human missions. However, this expansion also raises an important question.

Who will control the new space

is also facing a major challenge. European countries have strong scientific institutions and a long history of space exploration. However, Europe has become increasingly concerned about its dependence on foreign technology and launch systems. The European Space Agency is considering ways to increase launch capacity as demand for satellites continues to grow. Europe is also discussing the development of stronger independent capabilities in rockets, satellite systems and even human spaceflight.



and large satellite constellations has increased pressure on European space programmes. European leaders believe that access to space is becoming too important to depend entirely on outside powers. This debate shows how dramatically space has changed. The ability to launch satellites is increasingly being viewed as an issue of national security and economic independence.

NASA's New Telescope and the Search for Cosmic Answers

While governments and com-

science. One of its major goals is to help scientists understand dark energy, the mysterious force believed to be responsible for the accelerating expansion of the universe. It will also study dark matter and search for planets beyond our solar system. The telescope is expected to observe enormous regions of space and collect data on billions of stars and galaxies. Astronomers hope that the mission will provide new clues about how the universe evolved and why its expansion is accelerating. The ques-





Women's Asia Cup: Shafali backs middle-order to fire in semi-final against Bangladesh

DUBAI

Unfazed by the recent lack of runs from India's middle-order, dynamic opener Shafali Verma on Wednesday threw her weight behind them ahead of their Women's Asia Cup semi-final clash against Bangladesh, adding that the lack of runs from them is a temporary phase.

While India's openers, Shafali and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana have carried much of the run-scoring burden in the continental event, rest of the batters have struggled for consistency. A collapse of eight wickets for 46 runs against Thailand earlier in the tournament showed that India's middle-order batting issues are yet to be resolved.

But Shafali expressed full confidence in her batting colleagues to deliver when it matters most in the knockout stage at the Dubai International



Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

"Well, I would say there are a bit of bad days. But they all are very good players. They all are very good batters. Just talking about Bharti and Richa, they all are very good finishers and even do great things in the middle order as well. So, I am pretty sure they will do well for our team," Shafali told reporters during the pre-match

press conference. Seven-time champions India enter the semi-finals following a brief rest period after beating Pakistan by seven wickets in their last Group A game. It's a breather that Shafali believes came at the right time for the squad to recharge and refine their plans.

"We had good preparation. We got four days of break and on those days, we recovered

well and did practice as well. So, we all are ready for the semis," she said. On a personal front, Shafali has enjoyed a solid run with the bat by scoring 104 runs in three games. But Shafali insisted that she treats every new match as a fresh start rather than relying on past performances. "As a batter, whenever I go to bat, I just start from zero. But what came from that

innings, it's just confidence. So, I will take that confidence and just start from zero again," she remarked. Addressing the playing conditions at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Shafali noted that the slow and spin-friendly pitches in Dubai closely resemble those back home in India, giving the team a familiar environment to adapt to. "Of course, the conditions here are similar – like how it is in India. So, we all know the conditions. There is a bit of turn in the wicket. We all are prepared about that and I also know about the conditions. So, I just go out there, take time and enjoy it," she explained.

When asked about potential changes to the playing eleven for the crucial semi-final, Shafali was quick to point out that team selection remains strictly under the captain's purview. "I am not a captain. So, the captain will decide this. I just try to play my best."



I still remember that: Vishal recalls 2024 heartbreak after India's AFC U20 Asia Cup qualification

NEW DELHI

India U20 winger Vishal Yadav has described the team's qualification for the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2027 qualification as a moment of redemption, almost two years after suffering heartbreak in the 86th minute against Thailand at the U17 level.

India secured their place in the AFC U20 Asian Cup after a 20-year wait, with Yadav playing an important role in the qualifying campaign. The 18-year-old scored a spectacular goal against Bangladesh on September 6 to help India seal a crucial victory.

For Yadav, however, the qualification carried an added emotional significance. On October 27, 2024, Yadav had scored to put India U17 2-1 ahead against Thailand in their final AFC U17 Asian Cup qualifier. But Thailand struck in the 86th minute to win 3-2 and eliminate India, who needed only a draw to qualify.

Nearly two years later, the 86th minute brought a different memory. Shami Singamyaum scored in that minute against Syria in India's opening match of the U20 qualifiers, with the goal eventually proving decisive in the qualification campaign.

"I still remember that day, October 27, 2024. At that time, we conceded in the 86th minute against Thailand, and, basically, if they hadn't scored, we would have qualified. So, I

am very happy that we have got redemption now," Yadav said.

Reflecting on India's historic qualification, Yadav said the achievement was a source of pride for the young squad.

"I am very happy, individually and as a team, because after 20 years, we have qualified for the U20 Asian Cup, which is historic for India. Our young players should be proud that we have done it," he said.

Yadav himself made a telling contribution against Bangladesh, doubling India's advantage in the 60th minute with an acrobatic finish following a long throw from Yaipharemba Chingakhom and a flick-on by Rishikanta Meitei Laishram.

The goal was not merely an instinctive finish, with Yadav revealing that the team had worked on the set-piece routine. "We had a strategy for the long throw. We tried the same thing against Singapore as well. It was the same ball and the same strategy; with a flick, this time, it was the same ball, but I was ready. I just wanted to convert the ball in the middle," he said.

The winger has progressed through India's age-group teams, representing the U16s, U17s and now the U20s. He also tasted senior football when he made his Indian Super League debut for Punjab FC against FC Goa in February 2025.

"I am still very young, and to represent the nation at different age-group levels is a very big thing for me. I have played

for the U16s, U17s and now the U20s. Every year, I have been able to continue this journey, and I am very grateful for that," he said.

Yadav's football journey began in Uttar Pradesh, after he moved to live with his aunt in Varanasi. He credits his cousin Shubham Yadav with encouraging him to take up the sport seriously. "He took me to the ground and made me feel that football was fun. He told me to play and follow my passion. That is where my football journey really started. He is the reason," Yadav said.

Having now achieved success at multiple youth levels, Yadav has set his sights on representing the senior national team.

"I felt that I wanted this jersey one day. Fortunately, I got selected for U16s, and I was very shocked. I could not believe it. Even after reaching Bhutan for the SAFF U16, it felt unbelievable," he said.

"Now, the dream is bigger. I want to continue this journey and one day play for the senior national team."

The AFC U20 Asian Cup in China, scheduled for March and April 2027, will provide a considerably tougher test, with India set to face some of Asia's leading youth teams. "The qualifiers were difficult, but the final round will be even harder. There will be big teams like Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia. They are very good, especially technically.

FYERS American Gambits beat Triveni Continental Kings and Alpine APL Pipers defeat CheQ Mumba Masters as race to the final heats up

HYDERABAD

With India bidding to host the 2036 Olympics, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday said it was his dream to see Telangana and Hyderabad host the prestigious sporting event. He said Telangana and Hyderabad were being prepared in every aspect to host the Olympics.

The Chief Minister, along with Indian Olympic Association President P.T. Usha, inaugurated the Gachibowli Sports District and the Young India Physical Education and Sports University (YIPESU).

He announced that the sports university and a world-class sports academy with state-of-the-art facilities would be developed across 82 acres. "The country has lagged behind in sports due to the absence of a clear policy in the sector. That is why we introduced a clear sports policy in

Telangana," he said.

The Chief Minister stated that there was a need for a policy governing sports training centres and universities across the country. He said the government established the Young India Sports University, drawing inspiration from the Young India weekly newspaper led by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle.

He noted that Hyderabad, which had earlier hosted events such as the Afro-Asian Games, the World Military Games and the Commonwealth Games, had not hosted any major sporting event over the past 20 years.

"Stadiums built 23 years ago were subsequently used for weddings and political events; we intend to revitalise all of them," he said.

He stated that to provide comprehensive support to genuine athletes, the government had established the



sports university through a public-private partnership.

"There is no government interference in its operations. We set up the university in collaboration with individuals who champion sports – such as Dr Sanjiv Goenka, Abhinav Bindra, Kapil Dev, Kavaya Maran, Upasana Konidela and Ravikanth Reddy – and have granted them full autonomy regarding its management," he said. The Chief Minister said a bright future awaited those who

excelled not only in academics but also in sports and urged the youth to focus on sports. He announced that the Telangana government would take responsibility for providing government jobs to athletes who excel in sports and bring laurels to the country.

"Youth are the nation's wealth. When observing the medal tallies of various countries during the Olympics and other sporting events, India often finds itself at the bot-

tom of the list. We need the support of individuals like P.T. Usha to help promote sports and athletes. There is much to learn from P.T. Usha; it was her excellence in sports that paved the way for her to become a Rajya Sabha member," the Chief Minister said.

"To excel in any field, one must possess focus; that is the only way to succeed. One must practise with total dedication. There is no need to be disheartened by a single defeat. A loss should not discourage us; instead, we should view it as a challenge," he added.

P.T. Usha congratulated the Chief Minister and the state government for establishing YIPESU with a strong commitment to promoting sports. On the occasion, cash incentives totalling Rs 7.15 crore were awarded to six athletes from Telangana who demonstrated exceptional talent in various sports.

Duleep Trophy: Played a lot of white-ball cricket, but red ball remains my favourite format: Tilak

CHENNAI

Having played white-ball games for India, left-handed batter Tilak Varma on Wednesday expressed a strong desire to play Test cricket for the national side, calling the longest format as his 'favourite' format to play the sport.

Tilak has been in sparkling red-ball form for South Zone in the ongoing Duleep Trophy, via making 116 not out, 51 not out, and now hitting 99 in the ongoing final against East Zone at Chepauk on Wednesday.

"Playing red-ball cricket for India is my biggest goal because I love red-ball cricket. I thought as a kid, I'll be playing Test cricket first and after that only white-ball cricket. I'm really keen to play red-ball cricket and let's see how it goes.

"I wouldn't necessarily say it cricket comes naturally. But I began my professional journey in red-ball cricket and played for many years with the red ball. Over the past few seasons, I've played a lot of white-ball cricket, but red ball



remains my favourite format - it's my A game," Tilak told reporters at the end of day four's play. Tilak suffered a heart-breaking dismissal when he was caught and bowled on 99 off 211 balls, leading to him missing out on a well-deserved ninth first-class century as South Zone were bowled out for 336 in response to East Zone's massive first-innings total of 708. Despite the personal disappointment, Tilak remained pragmatic.

"The result has gone in their favour, so scoring a hundred or being not out doesn't matter to me. A hundred might have been

something for working hard, but cricket is a funny game. You never know what is in the coming games. It's an important knock for me, but at the same point, I was only focused on what the team needed.

"I could have taken more chances before itself, but the plan was simply to take it session-by-session. Cricket is a funny game - if you can bat out a session and if some other batsman stays with me, I was confident we could take it session-by-session and push for a draw. Unfortunately, we lost wickets, and the result went in their favour," he added.

Currently serving as South Zone captain after previously leading India A, Tilak noted that leadership responsibility has accelerated his growth as a cricketer. "There has been a lot of learnings. If you see, there are youngsters and also India A, we're a young side as well. One game we lost there and again we got back. "You have great talent in the team and when you have that talent and eagerness to win, then it's easier as a captain to win tournaments.



Chennai Open

Ajeetesh Sandhu opens two-shot lead



CHENNAI: Ajeetesh Sandhu fired a six-under 66 to open a two-shot lead after the second round of the INR 1 crore Chennai Open 2026, here at the TNGF Cosmo Golf Course. The 37-year-old from Chandigarh (65-66), who began the day sharing the lead, made eight birdies against two bogeys to reach 13-under 131 at the halfway stage. Sandhu, a five-time winner on the DP World PGTI and a former Asian Tour champion, moved two strokes clear of overnight co-leader Stepan Danek. The 29-year-old Czech Republic golfer (65-68) made six birdies and two bogeys in a four-under 68 to take sole possession of second place at 11-under 133. Delhi's Rashid Khan (66-68), winner of the Telangana Open in Vikarabad two weeks ago, occupied third place at 10-under 134. His four-under 68 included an eagle on the par-five 18th, four birdies and two bogeys.

Delhi HC seeks WFI stand on Vinesh Phogat's participation in World Wrestling Championship trials

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to obtain instructions on whether wrestler Vinesh Phogat can be permitted to participate in the selection trials for the 2026 Senior World Wrestling Championships and listed the matter for hearing on Thursday.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma directed the counsel appearing for the WFI to seek instructions on the issue and also on Phogat's request to defer any final decision in the disciplinary proceedings initiated against her.

"Take instructions on both matters. I will hear them tomorrow," the judge said. Phogat has moved a fresh application in her pending plea seeking a fair and structured

policy for women athletes returning to competitive sport following pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum recovery. The Delhi High Court had issued notice to the WFI, the Centre, and the Indian Olympic Association on the plea and listed it for hearing on November 18.

Through the application, she has challenged the WFI's September 7 circular prescribing eligibility criteria for the selection trials for the 2026 Senior World Wrestling Championships, scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan's Astana, from October 24 to November 1. She has sought a stay on the operation of the circular insofar as it excludes her from the selection process and a direction to the WFI to provisionally include her in the eligibility pool and permit her to participate in the women's selection trials scheduled for September 14 at



the Indira Gandhi Stadium here.

Phogat has contended that the latest selection framework creates a "closed" pathway by making eligibility dependent on participation and performance in specified qualifying competitions, without providing an alternative mechanism for athletes who were unable to compete because of pregnancy, childbirth, and post-partum recovery.

Her counsel, senior advocate Rajshekhar Rao, submitted that

Phogat's maternity-related absence could not be used to deny her an opportunity to participate in the selection process. "My maternity cannot come in the way of my eligibility to participate. I'm not asking for a free pass," Rao submitted.

The latest application is part of Phogat's broader challenge to the WFI's selection and disciplinary framework and her demand for a fair pathway for women athletes returning to competitive sport after maternity. The dispute over Phogat's eligibility had earlier reached the Delhi High Court in connection with the Asian Games 2026 selection trials. Phogat was initially excluded from the May 30-31 selection trials under the WFI's revised eligibility criteria. She approached the Delhi High Court challenging the decision and sought permission to participate.



Washington Sundar, Nitish Kumar Reddy likely to play upcoming T20Is against Afghanistan

NEW DELHI

Off-spin bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar and seam-bowling all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy have been deemed fit for the upcoming T20I series against Afghanistan, beginning on September 13. The duo are set to join the team in the national capital on Thursday.

"Both Sundar and Reddy became fully fit sometime ago. The duo have cleared their fitness tests and match stimulations at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru," a source tracking the developments told IANS on Wednesday.

Sundar had missed the recent two-game Test series in Sri Lanka due to a hamstring injury picked during the second ODI against England in Cardiff in July. Reddy last featured for India during the home ODI series against Afghanistan in June before aggravating a left quadriceps injury, which led to him missing out on trips to Ireland, England and Sri Lanka.

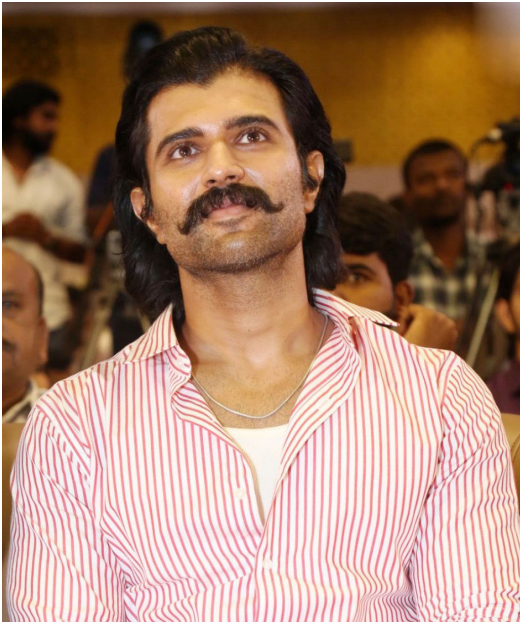
There is no definitive word yet on Jasprit Bumrah joining the team for the three-game series after a knee injury sustained while fielding in the second ODI against England has kept him out of action.

There's also suspense over the participation of seam-bowling all-rounder Harshit Rana, who has been recovering from the hamstring injury picked up during the England tour in July. If either of the two don't link up with the national team, India pacer and local lad Prince Yadav shapes as an option for last-minute inclusion into the squad. The three-match T20I series against Afghanistan, also the first-ever bilateral series against the Ibrahim Zardran-led side in the shortest format, serves as the primary preparatory window for the Shreyas Iyer-led squad before they depart for Japan.

India are scheduled to play a solitary T20I game against Japan at the Sano International Cricket Ground on September 22 before commencing their Asian Games gold medal defence at the Korogi Sports Park on September 28.

Meanwhile, Ishan Kishan, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Tilak Varma will link up with the Indian team in New Delhi once they are done with their ongoing Duleep Trophy final commitments in Chennai. IANS understands that the trio's arrival in the national capital depends on when a drawn result is called in the final at Chepauk.

Vijay’s Operation TFI Begins



Vijay Deverakonda believes Telugu cinema is enjoying one of its best phases this year, with several films winning at the box office and, more importantly, making audiences genuinely enjoy the experience. Speaking at Anand Devarakonda’s the Epic pre release event, Vijay said the success of Telugu films is giving him immense happiness. He believes the industry can maintain a 100 percent strike rate with the promising lineup ahead. Vijay mentioned several upcoming films including Epic, The Paradise, Ranabali, Mysaa, Ee Nagaraniki Emaindi 2, Fauzi and Dada. He expressed confidence that these films can continue the winning momentum of Telugu cinema. He also revealed that Epic will be followed by his own Ranabali next month, while Rashmika Mandanna’s Mysa is expected to arrive the following month. Vijay said he will continue meeting audiences as part of these film promotions. Vijay’s comments come at a time when Telugu cinema is looking increasingly strong with different kinds of films connecting with audiences. The focus is now on whether the upcoming releases can continue this impressive run. Calling it Operation TFI, Vijay hopes Telugu cinema can maintain its momentum and deliver another successful season. With several highly anticipated films lined up, the coming months could be crucial for the industry.

Yash Reacts To Toxic’s Result

The failure of Toxic has clearly affected everyone involved with the film, but Yash’s latest response to the debacle shows a mature side of the actor. Dubbing artist Jaidev Mohan recently spoke about a conversation he had with Yash after the film’s release. Going into detail, Jaidev reveals that Yash personally called him and discussed the film’s outcome. Instead of getting angry or blaming someone to blame, Yash told him not to worry about the failure and said that they should focus on what comes next. aidev further reveals that Yash accepted that the audience did not connect with the film and has the final

say. What makes the conversation interesting is the emotion behind Yash’s words. There appears to be genuine disappointment, but at the same time, he seems determined to move forward. The response also stands out at a time when some Yash fans have questioned the intelligence of the audience for rejecting the film. Yash, however, appears to have taken a completely different route and accepted the failure. Failures are part of every actor’s career, especially when expectations are high. Accepting the result, learning from it, and concentrating on the next project is the best quality of a star, and Yash stands tall amidst such heavy criticism.



Ashika’s Magical ‘Vishwambhara’ Moment

Kannada actress Ashika Ranganath, who is familiar to Telugu audiences, is currently busy with some exciting projects across South Indian cinema. She is set to share screen space with Megastar Chiranjeevi in *Vishwambhara* and will also be seen opposite Karthi in *Sardar 2*. In a recent interview, Ashika opened up about her experiences working on both films and shared several interesting details about her career. Talking about *Sardar 2*, she said the film is a completely new genre for her as she is attempting an action spy thriller for the first time. She revealed that her character has good importance in the story and that she had the opportunity to work with Karthi and S.J. Suryah. She also clarified that she does not have combination scenes with Malavika Mohanan and Rajisha Vijayan. Ashika praised Karthi for his dedication and passion towards cinema, saying that he pays attention to even the smallest details and always strives for perfection. She also appreciated his simplicity and humility despite being such a big star. Speaking about *Vishwambhara*, Ashika described sharing the screen with Chiranjeevi as an incredible experience. She revealed that she grew up watching the Megastar’s songs and dance performances and feels proud to have finally worked alongside him. According to Ashika, Chiranjeevi’s experiences and insights on the sets are highly inspiring for actors. She also revealed that she met actress Trisha on the sets, describing the experience as a memorable “fan-girl moment.” Ashika further spoke about her journey in the film industry. She said Kannada cinema will always feel like home to her, as it was where her career began. She enjoys the comfort of waking up, having home-cooked food and heading to shoots. She admitted that, early in her career, she was hesitant to venture into other industries because she did not know the languages. However, she is now consciously taking up diverse roles in Telugu and Tamil cinema in an effort to prove herself. Ashika also revealed that she is currently working on two more Telugu projects. One is being produced by *Baby* producer S.K.N, while the other is backed by Sithara Entertainment and stars Sree Vishnu as the lead. She added that she is also waiting for interesting and unconventional roles in Tamil cinema.



Nivetha Turns ‘Srimathi’

Nivetha Thomas, who has carved a niche for herself with her performances in diverse films such as Ninnu Kori, Vakeel Saab, and Saakini Daakini, is all set to return with another interesting project titled Srimathi. Her recent film 35 Chinna Katha Kaadu, in which she played the lead role, received critical acclaim and a positive response from audiences. Following the success of the film, the makers have now officially announced her upcoming project Srimathi. The title and first-look poster were unveiled on X, with Nivetha seen portraying the role of a simple homemaker. The film is directed by Visakh Khanderao and is jointly produced by K. Niranjan Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy under the PrimeShow Entertainment banner. The first look has already generated curiosity about the film and Nivetha’s new character.



Nikhil’s Swayambhu Eyes October Release

Nikhil Siddhartha’s Swayambhu, a warrior period film, has been delayed due to extensive CG work. After a lot of dilly dallying, we hear that the film is in its last leg of the post-production works. Inside buzz is that the makers are aiming for an October 2026 release. At a time many in the industry think Swayambhu may not release in 2026, sources close to the film’s unit have quashed them as mere rumours. Swayambhu is aiming for release in the next couple of months, i.e either in October or November. In fact, the Swayambhu makers said to have planned to release it on October 3rd week. Meanwhile, Ranabaali had confirmed its release date as October 16. Rajinikanth’s Jailer 2 has also been slated for October 15th release. Certainly, this week looks quite choc-a-bloc and there could be a big jostle for the screens. Swayambhu is a grand scale high-budgeted movie with best technicians like Senthil as the cinematographer and Ravi Barsur as the music composer. Given the huge budget involved and its large scale, the makers are planning for a perfect release date, if possible, a solo release week. If all goes well, Swayambhu may come in October or at least as soon as possible depending on the technical aspects of release. Swayambhu is one of the most



awaited films for Nikhil who previously scored Pan India blockbuster with Karthikeya 2. After Swayambhu, Nikhil has India House and Karthikeya 3 lined-up. Nikhil wants to speed up the works of his other films, once the technical hurdles for Swayambhu’s release end.

Vaishnavi’s Epic Test Grabs Attention

Vaishnavi Chaitanya, who shot to fame with Baby, received equal hate from a section of the audience for her portrayal of the female lead in the film. Despite worrying about getting stereotyped, the actress is attempting yet another bold character in her next film, Epic. Directed by Aditya Hasan, the film features Anand Deverakonda in the lead role. With the film slated for release on the 11th of this month, everyone is glued to Vaishnavi, thinking about how her role will be received. The trailer already gave audiences a clear idea of her character. Vaishnavi will be seen as a modern and independent girl with a casual mindset. There are a lot of conversations about relationships, love, lust, sex, periods, intimacy, and satisfaction after sex. These conversations are still considered taboo today, but the film seems to discuss them at length, in an entertaining way as well. Vaishnavi will be featured in intimate scenes, kisses, and some bold yet sensitive topics. There have been mixed responses to Vaishnavi’s choice with Epic. Aditya Hasan feels tense about how the character will be received and worries about audience reactions. But the producer Naga Vamsi is confident that she will get good fame with this film. Vaishnavi is also not too worried about the response after the release; in fact, her presence is adding a lot of value to the film and generating attention. The team is also confident about the film’s result, which is why they are holding premieres tomorrow. We have to see how the film turns out to be.

