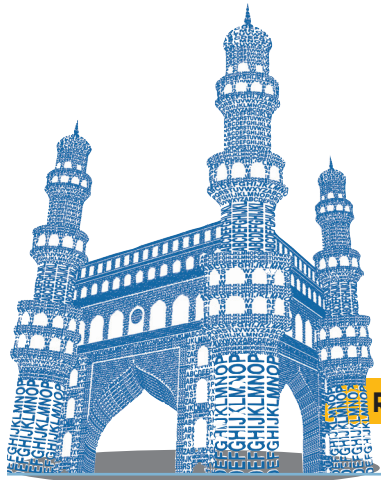




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The Day That Changed the Meaning of SAFETY

OPINION 06

Modi Calls for Safe, Peaceful Space

SPECIAL 02



SHORT

TAKES

Court Frames PMLA Charges Against Lalu, Rabri, Tejashwi

NEW DELHI, SEP 10

A Special MP-MLA Court on Thursday ordered framing of money laundering charges against RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav, Rabri Devi, Tejashwi Yadav and others in the LARA Projects case linked to the alleged IRCTC hotel tender scam. The court said the Patna land involved in the case was "proceeds of crime" and rejected the argument that the probe against Lalu was politically motivated.

The court discharged seven accused, while directing the charged accused to appear before the Rouse Avenue court on October 3. Lalu's lawyer said the order would be challenged in the High Court, alleging political vendetta.

CM flags BRS conduct, urges MLAs to stay alert
Revanth asks MLAs to focus on SIR, local issues
CM says BRS lost public support after Assembly row

Revanth warns MLAs over performance, voter rights
CM urges Congress MLAs to counter BRS narrative
Revanth flags voter delegations, calls for vigilance
CM asks MLAs to ensure full Assembly attendance

HYDERABAD, SEP 10

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday claimed that a flash survey conducted on developments in the state over the past three days showed a drastic decline in the BRS graph, and said the developments had exposed the opposition party's conduct before the people.



Addressing the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting at the Assembly Committee Hall, Revanth Reddy directed all Congress MLAs to attend the ongoing Assembly session without fail and raise issues concerning their respective constituencies. He said the performance and conduct of every legislator would have a direct bearing on the party's prospects in the next elections.

The Chief Minister said people had given the Congress a strong mandate and asked legislators to work hard during the remaining term. He warned that those seeking a second term must demonstrate their performance both inside the Assembly and in their constituencies.

Revanth praised Congress legislators for strongly countering what he described as a BRS conspiracy to disrupt Assembly proceedings and said their efforts had helped expose the opposition's conduct to the public. He said an inquiry had already been initiated into the incidents of the past three days.

The Chief Minister alleged that the BRS had deliberately attempted to stall the Assembly session

and criticised its leaders for allegedly abusing police officials and public representatives. Referring to the incidents at the Assembly gate on September 7, he accused BRS members of behaving inappropriately with officials and creating an uncomfortable situation for women officers by removing their T-shirts.

He also condemned the alleged use of objectionable language against Assembly Speaker and said such conduct was unacceptable. Revanth further alleged that BRS leaders had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Delhi Gears Up for 18th BRICS SUMMIT

NEW DELHI, SEP 10

The national capital is gearing up to host the 18th BRICS Summit on September 12 and 13, with several world leaders and senior delegations scheduled to arrive from Thursday evening amid heightened security and elaborate arrangements.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and UAE Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan are among the prominent leaders expected to attend the two-day summit.

With the arrival of foreign dignitaries beginning Thursday evening and continuing into Friday morning, security has been significantly tightened across key areas of the capital. Barricades have been erected at several locations, while traffic and security arrangements have been put in place along routes likely to be used by visiting leaders and their delegations. Hotels hosting the visiting dignitaries have also made extensive preparations, including special arrangements for food, housekeeping, guest services

XI JINPING TO VISIT INDIA FOR BRICS SUMMIT

New Delhi: Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit India on September 12-13 to attend the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, China's Foreign Ministry confirmed on Thursday.

The visit will be Xi's first to India in seven years and comes amid efforts to improve bilateral ties strained by the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes. Xi last visited India in 2019 for an informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mamallapuram. India-China trade rose 12.4 per cent last year to a record \$155 billion.

Access protocols and security checks have been strengthened, with separate areas designated for official delegations and support staff.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

SC Asks Centre to Reconsider NEET-SS CUT-OFF

NEW DELHI, SEP 10

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre to reconsider its decision not to lower the qualifying percentile for National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Super Specialty (NEET-SS) seats, expressing concern over a large number of seats remaining vacant every year.

A Bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe made the observation after Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati told the court that the Centre was willing to conduct a "stray round" to fill vacant NEET-SS seats, but had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



UPPAL-NARAPALLY FLYOVER TO OPEN BY NEXT JUNE: KOMATIREDDY



Hyderabad, Sept.10: Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Thursday assured the Legislative Council that the long-delayed Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor would be completed and thrown open to the public by next June under all circumstances.

Responding to queries raised by Leader of the Opposition Sirikonda Madhusudhana Chary and members Teenmar Mallanna and Pingili Sripal Reddy, the Minister admitted that the project—initially launched in 2017—had stalled due to severe operational hurdles. However, he emphasised that the Congress government has taken proactive measures to clear the bottlenecks and accelerate construction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

KTR ALLEGES 200-CR SCAM, SEEKS CENTRAL PROBE CM'S FAMILY



Hyderabad, Sept.10: Escalating its offensive against the Congress government, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Thursday alleged that his party's MLAs were suspended from the Telangana Legislative Assembly solely to block them from exposing a massive land scam involving Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's family. The BRS demanded an immediate investigation by central agencies, including the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBD), and Income Tax (IT) department.

KT Rama Rao made these statements after leading a delegation of senior BRS leaders and legislators to inspect the site allotted to Tesseract Advanced Systems in the proposed

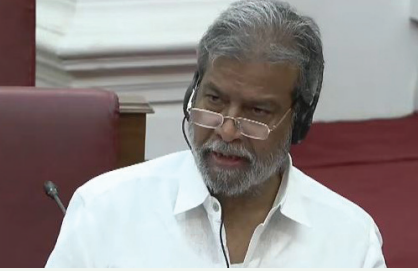
'Bharat Fourth City'. The delegation included BRS Deputy Leader T. Harish Rao, along with former ministers P. Sabitha Indra Reddy and Talasani Srinivas Yadav.

According to the BRS leadership, prime government land worth nearly ₹200 crore was handed over to the firm allegedly linked to the Chief Minister's brother, Kondal Reddy for a mere ₹7 crore.

Following a breakfast meeting at KT Rama Rao's residence on Thursday, the BRS convoy proceeded to the Tukuguda-Raviraj area, where leaders held a demonstration displaying banners and placards accusing the Chief Minister and his family of land grabbing and improper allotments.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

9 MRI, 8 CT SCANNERS FOR STATE HOSPITALS : RAJANARSIMHA



Hyderabad, Sept.10: Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha announced in the Legislative Council that the Telangana government is expanding high-end diagnostic and critical care infrastructure across state-run hospitals. Replying to queries raised by MLCs during the session on Thursday, the Minister stated that the government is procuring nine new state-of-the-art 3-Tesla MRI machines, installing eight CT scanners, and procuring 485 additional ventilators for high-demand facilities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

GST Data Enables Real-Time AP Economy Tracking

Amaravati, Sept.10: Andhra Pradesh is developing a real-time system to track economic activity and estimate Gross Value Added (GVA) using GST and commercial tax data, Commercial Taxes department Chief Commissioner Babu A said at the 8th Collectors' Conference.

The GST-based assessment indicates 19.6 per cent year-on-year growth in manufacturing upto July, with estimated manufacturing GVA at around Rs.1.75 lakh crore. The estimate closely matched the Planning department's First Advance Estimates, with a variation of just 0.6 percentage points.

The department has developed an AI-based analytical system that combines GST returns with e-way bill data to assess manufacturing activity in real time. District-wise heat maps allow Collectors to drill down to individual manufacturing units and examine their contribution to economic

activity.

As GST returns are generally filed between the 18th and 20th of each month, the system could provide an early indication of the previous month's economic performance, paving the way for monthly nowcasting of growth.

A similar methodology for construction, using GST data from about 65 relevant HSN categories including cement, iron and steel, estimated construction GVA at Rs.1.25 lakh crore, against the Planning department's estimate of Rs.1.29 lakh crore.

The department is also developing real-time assessments for trade, hotels and restaurants, real estate, communication and broadcasting, with mining and electricity proposed for inclusion. Babu said the approach could enable Andhra Pradesh to move from delayed economic estimates towards faster, data-driven monitoring of growth and sectoral performance.

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3 TIMES BETTER



Space promise is infinite, responsibility collective,' says PM; urges cooperation over confrontation and sustainability over short-term gains

NEW DELHI, SEP 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for collective global efforts to ensure that outer space remains safe, secure, peaceful and sustainable, stressing that international cooperation must keep pace with the growing number of space actors, increasingly powerful technologies and crowded orbits.

Addressing the first International Space Summit in Paris through video conference, Modi thanked French President Emmanuel Macron for taking the initiative and inviting him to the landmark gathering. "I am happy to be a part of the first International Space Summit," he said.

Reflecting on humanity's enduring fascination with the cosmos, Modi said space had inspired human imagination for centuries but had now become closely linked to everyday life on Earth. From climate monitoring and agriculture to oceans and communities, space-based technologies are playing an increasingly important role in addressing challenges on the ground.

"The promise of space is infinite, and our responsibility is collective," Modi said, underlining the need for countries to work together to ensure that the benefits of space exploration reach people across the world.

Cooperation Over Confrontation

The Prime Minister said the space environment was becoming increasingly complex, with orbits getting more crowded, technologies becoming more powerful and the number of actors operating in space continuing to rise.

Against this backdrop, he stressed that international partnerships must focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term gains. "Our choices must be clear: cooperation over confrontation, sustainability over short-term gain, and inclusion over exclusion," Modi said.

He emphasised that responsible behaviour in space would require countries to work through dialogue, international law and multilateral cooperation. India, he said, supports a space domain that is safe, secure, peaceful and sustainable.



ISRO's Global Reputation

Highlighting India's journey as a space-faring nation, Modi said satellite technologies had become an important tool in improving the lives of people. Space-based systems are being used for weather forecasting, disaster management and navigation, while also supporting communities such as farmers and fishermen.

The Prime Minister praised the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), saying it had earned global admiration for its technological excellence and cost-effective missions.

"ISRO, which stands at the heart of this journey, has earned global admiration for its excellence and cost-effective missions," he said.

He noted that India's space programme had also developed a strong international footprint through launch services and scientific partnerships. More than 430 payloads from 34 countries have been successfully deployed aboard Indian rockets, he said.

Modi said ISRO's technologies and partnerships were benefiting not just India but the wider global community.

Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1 Milestones

Recalling India's recent achievements in space exploration, Modi highlighted the Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission and the Aditya-L1 solar mission.

He noted that Aditya-L1 was currently helping scientists study the Sun and understand its behaviour, while Chandrayaan-3 had achieved a historic landing near the lunar south pole.

"Chandrayaan-3 made India the first

nation to land near the lunar south pole," Modi said. He also referred to the participation of an Indian astronaut in a mission to the International Space Station last year, describing it as another significant milestone in the country's expanding human spaceflight programme.

Space Station by 2035, Moon Mission by 2040

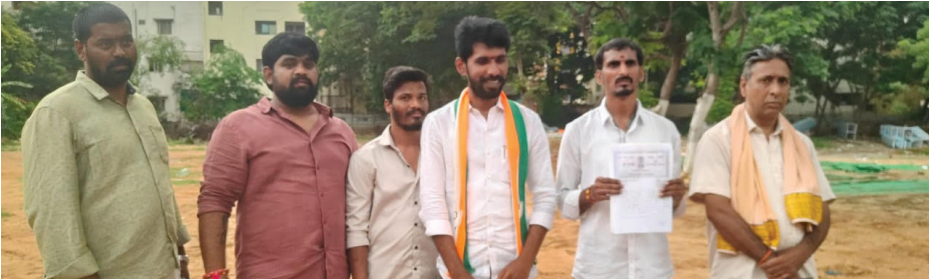
Outlining India's long-term space ambitions, Modi said the country planned to establish an indigenous space station by 2035 and send an astronaut to the Moon by 2040. He stressed that these ambitious targets were not merely technological milestones but were part of a broader effort to ensure that the benefits of space exploration reached humanity as a whole.

"In all these efforts, our guiding principle has been clear: their benefits must reach all humanity," he said. The Prime Minister said India's future space programme would continue to combine scientific exploration with practical applications and international cooperation.

'We Lost Our Life Savings': Victims Plead for JUSTICE IN ALLEGED CHEATING CASE

Elderly people, ex-servicemen, priests and unemployed victims allege they lost their life savings to promises of jobs, housing and land settlements.

Medchal-Malkajgiri, September 10: For several elderly people, priests, ex-servicemen, small traders and unemployed individuals, money paid with hope has allegedly turned into financial hardship and emotional pain.



At least 12 people have accused Muthireddy Phanindra, also known as P.R. Naidu, of allegedly collecting lakhs of rupees by promising government jobs, double-bedroom houses, land settlements, debt recovery and official permissions. The victims said they trusted him because of his claimed political connections and handed over their hard-earned savings.

The complainants alleged that they were left helpless after the promised assistance did not materialise. They said their repeated requests for refunds

were allegedly met with threats through phone calls and voice messages.

The amounts allegedly collected ranged from ₹35,000 to ₹14 lakh. Some victims claimed they borrowed money, while others said they used savings kept aside for medical treatment, retirement and family needs.

The victims said the alleged cheating caused them severe financial stress, fear

and emotional suffering. They appealed to the police to protect them, recover their money and ensure that no other vulnerable person is similarly deceived.

Some complainants reportedly approached Congress leaders and were advised to file complaints with the K.P.H.B. Police. Police have reportedly begun an inquiry, while an FIR has allegedly been registered against Naidu at Bachupally Police Station in one of the cases.

Congress leaders said P.R. Naidu had earlier faced suspension from the party following allegations of collecting money from builders.

The allegations were brought before the media by V. Rajesh Goud, Congress president of Balanagar Division, Kukatpally Constituency. The claims remain subject to police investigation and legal proceedings.

256 GRAMS OF CANNABIS SEIZED IN KUKATPALLY



Excise Police Recover Two-Wheeler, Launch Investigation to Uncover Drug Network

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, SEP 10

Excise Police in Kukatpally have arrested a man on allegations of drug sales, in an operation aimed at curbing illegal substances that pose serious risks to public health and community safety.

Police took R. Prasad (33) into custody and, during the investigation, seized 256 grams of cannabis from him. Officers also seized a two-wheeler believed to have been used in connection with the alleged activity.

The accused was brought to the Kukatpally Excise Station, where a

case was registered. Police have begun a detailed probe to trace the source of the drugs, identify possible associates, and determine the wider network involved. Authorities said the seizure highlights the growing threat that drug trafficking brings to society. Cannabis use can negatively affect mental health, lead to addiction, and increase unsafe behavior—particularly among young people. It also strengthens crime networks that impact law and order.

Excise Police added that further operations will be carried out to identify and arrest others involved in illegal drug sales in the area.

WOMEN MUST LEAD INDIA'S NEXT GROWTH STORY: FTCCI

HYDERABAD, SEPT.10

Women's empowerment is no longer just a social objective but an economic imperative for India's growth, speakers at an international conference organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) said here on Thursday. The International Conference on "Women empowerment - driving inclusive growth and leadership", organised by the FTCCI Women Empowerment Committee at Cyber Gardens, Hitec City, brought together over 250 policymakers, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors and experts. The conference was supported by the Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

C.S.S. Rao, joint director & HoO, MSME-DFO, highlighted government schemes including PMEGP, Stand-Up India, Procurement & Marketing Support and ZED certification that support women-owned enterprises. He urged women entrepreneurs to embrace technology, digital platforms and e-commerce.

Veteran actor and entrepreneur Amala Akkineni said empowerment begins when women believe in their ideas and aspirations. She called for stronger support from families, institutions, workplaces, government and industry.

FTCCI president K.K. Maheshwari said women must be at the centre of India's next phase of economic transformation, while Dr. Tasneem Shariff, chair, women empowerment committee, FTCCI, stressed that "Viksit Bharat is not possible with half the human capital under-utilised."

Dr. Tasneem noted that female labour-force participation had risen from 23.3 percent in 2017-18 to 41.7 percent in 2023-24, but said women needed greater access to capital, markets and leadership opportunities to scale.

Uma Devi Chigurupati, executive director, Granules India, called for fair and inclusive workplaces, while Uma Ghurkha, founding member of COWE, stressed that women's empowerment must begin at home and translate into entrepreneurship and leadership.

The conference featured panel discussions on scaling rural enterprises globally, accelerating women-led businesses and next-generation leadership. A special session explored India-Armenia business corridors, and an expo showcasing women-led enterprises was also held.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

9 MRI, 8 CT SCANNERS..

>FROM PAGE 1

Currently, government hospitals operate nine MRI machines, 50 CT scanners, and 1,770 ventilators. Existing MRI services at major centers—including Gandhi, Osmania General, NIMS, MGM Warangal, RIMS Adilabad, TIMS, and MNJ Cancer Hospital—will soon expand to Government General Hospitals in Nizamabad, Siddipet, Suryapet, Nalgonda, and Mahabubnagar, alongside Niloufer Hospital, he said. Owing to increased foot-fall driven by improved service standards, both Gandhi Hospital and Osmania General Hospital will receive additional MRI units to handle the surge in patient numbers, the Minister said.

Highlighting maintenance protocols, Damodar Rajanarsimha emphasised that the government is ensuring continuous operation of all critical infrastructure through the e-Upakarn web-based system, which monitors equipment procurement, supply chain logistics, and maintenance.

UPPAL-NARAPALLY FLYOVER TO OPEN..

>FROM PAGE 1

Explaining the delay, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy noted that the primary contractor had approached the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). A secondary agency brought in midway to execute the project also failed to deliver. The state government, with the intervention of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, has since coordinated with Gayatri Projects to resume and fast-track the work, he said. "This is not an ordinary flyover; it is a massive elevated corridor serving as a vital lifeline," the Minister said, highlighting its strategic role in connecting Hyderabad to Warangal, AIIMS Bibinagar, Bhongir, and Jangaon. He added that BT road renewals and surface repairs under the flyover are complete, and round-the-clock construction is currently underway. A high-level review was conducted three days ago with the Chief Engineer and National Highways Regional Office officials to streamline logistics and ensure timely payments to the contractor.

Reiterating the government's commitment, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy assured the House that despite earlier delays that pushed back the initial Dasara deadline, the corridor will strictly meet its revised target of June.

Delhi Gears Up for 18th BRICS SUMMIT

>FROM PAGE 1

Leaders and Delegations

The summit will bring together leaders and senior representatives of BRICS member and partner countries, besides heads of major regional and international organisations. Among the member countries, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia and South Africa will be represented by their respective heads of state or government. Brazil will be represented by Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, while Saudi Arabia will be represented by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud.

The UAE delegation will be led by Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Partner countries participating in the summit include Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim are among the senior leaders expected to attend. Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr will also participate in the summit.

Global Institutions to Attend

The summit will also feature the participation of the current chairs of

key regional organisations, including ASEAN, the African Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, CELAC and the Eurasian Economic Union.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and New Development Bank President Dilma Rousseff are also scheduled to attend, along with heads of other international institutions.

Heightened Security

Authorities have stepped up security measures across the national capital ahead of the high-profile gathering. Traffic restrictions are expected in areas along the routes used by visiting dignitaries, with security agencies co-ordinating closely to ensure their safe and smooth movement.

The summit assumes added significance as India hosts the expanded BRICS grouping, which brings together major emerging economies and countries from across the Global South.

Under its BRICS presidency, India is expected to push for greater cooperation among member countries and advance discussions on key global economic, developmental and geopolitical issues.

KTR ALLEGES 200-CR SCAM, SEEKS CENTRAL PROBE CM'S FAMILY

>FROM PAGE 1

Addressing the gathering, KT Rama Rao pointed out the contrast between the government's grand investment claims and its selective favoritism. "If an unemployed youth in Telangana starts a company with a capital of ₹1 lakh, will the government give them ₹200 crore worth of land for cheap?" he questioned.

He alleged that Kondal Reddy established an aerospace and defense entity, partnered with an Israeli innovation firm, and subsequently secured five acres of valuable government land. The BRS working president further

charged that another entity linked to Anumula Jagadishwar Reddy received state benefits valued at ₹1,000 crore, questioning if this reflected the Congress's promised Praja Palana (people's governance). Calling out Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, KT Rama Rao asked if this favoritism represented the party's vision of Indiramma Rajyam. He also questioned the BJP's silence on the matter, urging central agencies to initiate a swift, transparent probe. "If the BJP is sincere about accountability, the ED, IT, and CBI must immediately investigate and bring the truth out into the open," he said.

SC Asks Centre to Reconsider NEET-SS CUT-OFF

>FROM PAGE 1

decided against reducing the qualifying percentile.

The court observed that the number of unfilled seats made the case for lowering the cut-off "rather compelling" and asked the Centre to reconsider the matter. The hearing followed a petition by the Tamil Nadu Medical Officers Association, which said 40 NEET-SS seats in the state remained vacant. The association sought their return to Tamil Nadu and argued that many eligible in-service government doctors, particularly those serving in rural areas, were awaiting a reduction in the qualifying percentile.

The Centre informed the court that vacant seats could revert to states such

as Tamil Nadu. Bhati also said experts had differing views on lowering the cut-off and noted that the qualifying percentile had been reduced to zero in previous years.

Justice Narasimha advised the Centre to "reflect a little more" on lowering the percentile and consult others on the issue.

The court fixed September 17 for further hearing and directions.

The association had challenged the diversion of 152 vacant super-specialty seats earmarked for in-service government doctors in Tamil Nadu to the All-India Quota. It has also sought protection of the state's in-service reservation policy pending a final decision on the qualifying percentile.

Flash Survey Shows Sharp DROP IN BRS GRAPH: REVANTH

>FROM PAGE 1

humiliated the Dalit community by "purifying" the ground at KCR's Erravelli farmhouse after members of the Congress SC Cell had walked there during a protest.

Taking a dig at BRS working president K T Rama Rao, the Chief Minister sarcastically questioned his political motives and remarked that KTR appeared to have been angered by seeing him among police personnel. Revanth also targeted former Congress leaders Sunitha Lakshma Reddy and Sabitha Indra Reddy, questioning whether they could have reached prominent political positions without the opportunities provided by the Congress party.

Focus on SIR, Voting Rights

Push for Telangana

The Chief Minister expressed serious concern over the alleged deletion of voters' names under the SIR exercise and asked Congress legislators to treat the protection of voting rights as a priority. He alleged that around 15 crore adult voters were missing from electoral rolls across the country, claiming that against an estimated adult population of 103 crore, the voter lists contained only about 88 crore names. He urged Congress MLAs to remain vigilant and protect the voting rights of eligible citizens. Revanth said the issue was particularly important for legislators seeking to retain their seats, as electoral success would depend not only on party support but also on individual performance.

Caste Census Model

Revanth also asked Congress leaders to mount pressure on the Centre to adopt the Telangana model of caste enumeration and conduct a caste census alongside the general Census.

He described the caste census undertaken by Telangana as a model for the country and said it was an important achievement of the state.

1,000 Days of Governance

The Chief Minister said the government would organise a public meeting on completion of 1,000 days in office to explain its decisions, development initiatives and welfare programmes to the people.

He asked Congress legislators to use the Assembly platform effectively, raise con-

stituency-level concerns and ensure that the government's development and welfare agenda reached the public.

Revanth also accused the opposition of spreading false propaganda over Section 22A and said the government would expose details of lands allegedly registered by former minister T Harish Rao under the Dharani system. He claimed that records relating to BRS leaders were ready and warned that the details would be brought before the public.

Reiterating his call for full attendance, the Chief Minister told Congress legislators that their presence and participation in every Assembly debate were essential to counter the opposition and strengthen the government's position in the House.



IDL Lake Set for Ganesh Immersion as CMC Commissioner Conducts Safety Review



■ Officials from Traffic, Health, Sanitation and Engineering Urged to Complete Pending Works Ahead of the Programme

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

Today, the Commissioner visited IDL Lake to review the arrangements being made for the upcoming Ganesh Immersion programme. The visit was

attended by senior officials, including the Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Additional Commissioner (Health & Sanitation), the Zonal Commissioner (Kukatpally), the Deputy Commissioner, the Superintending Engineer, and all Heads of Departments from the Kukatpally Zone. During the review, the Commissioner checked the progress of important works carried out by different departments. These included

sanitation preparations, engineering works, traffic management planning, health-related arrangements, and other civic facilities needed for the event. The officials explained the status of the immersion facility and the steps being taken to support smooth public movement and safe stay conditions. The Commissioner also gave clear instructions to all concerned officers to complete remaining pending works immediately and to expedite on-

going tasks. The goal is to ensure that the IDL Lake immersion facility is fully ready well before the programme begins, with public safety measures, sanitation arrangements, traffic control, and civic amenities in place for devotees and visitors. Finally, the Commissioner directed all departments to work together with close coordination and continuous monitoring, so that the immersion can be conducted in a smooth, orderly, and safe manner.

“100-Day Assurances, 1,000-Day Delay”: Opposition Slams Ruling Party

■ Former corporator Madhavaram Ranga Rao hands out “due cards” door to door in Ricksha Pullers Colony, demanding fulfilment of 420 promises and six guarantees.

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

Opposition leaders have strongly criticized the ruling party, saying that election promises are being ignored even after about 1,000 days. Former corporator Madhavaram Ranga Rao alleged that when the Congress government came to power, it promised to complete 420 promises and six “guarantees” within 100 days. But he said the government has failed to implement them fully. Ranga Rao said that people were made to believe in these assurances during the election campaign and were asked to trust the ruling party. However, he claimed that many promises—especially those related to women, farmers, youth, unemployed people, and the poor—are still not delivered. He questioned why the government has not given a clear response to the public despite the long delay.



As part of their political campaign, Ranga Rao and local leaders visited Ricksha Pullers Colony and went door to door to hand over what they called “due cards” to households. He said the cards are a way to remind the public that the government still owes answers and action. The opposition is using the programme to pressure the ruling party and highlight the gap between election claims and ground reality. Ranga Rao demanded that the government immediately act on the pending promises and also explain clearly to the people. He said the ruling party should keep the promises made during elections and stop treating public issues as delays.

Senior leaders who participated in the event included Gattumukkala Pedda Bhas-kararao, Anjaneyulu, Praveen, Vikram, Kiran, Ravi, Shanap-

pa, Raju, Sekhar, Yadagiri, Anand, Venkanna, Jagadeesh, Chandu, Rammurthy, Shailaja, Kumar, Nagesh, Santosh, along with others.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY				
Trivandrum (Works Branch)				
Trivandrum Division E-TENDER NOTICE No.V/W/TVC/9/2026 DATED 08-09-2026				
Divisional Railway Manager/Works Branch/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum-14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice and Complete details are given in our e-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in .				
Sl. No	Description	Approx. value Rs. (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit Rs.	Period of completion in months
1.	Proposed Subway at KM 13/106 (26.50 X 8.00 M X 5.50 M) in lieu of existing LC No. 18 between NCJ-CAPE Railway stations.	100206614	2004100	12
2.	Proposed Subway at KM 11/686 (27.700 X 8.00 M X 5.50 M RCC Box) in lieu of existing LC No 16 at KM 11/742 between NCJ-CAPE Railway stations.	108721142	2174400	12
3.	ERC greasing, distressing, anti-corrosive painting of rails in 'SSE/P Way/ VPRD Jurisdiction	11325887	226500	12
4.	ERC greasing, distressing, anti-corrosive painting of rails in 'SSE/P Way/ TCR Jurisdiction	13104421	262100	12
5.	ERC greasing, distressing, anti-corrosive painting of rails in 'SSE/P Way/ ERS Jurisdiction	8577508	171600	12
6.	Shoranur- Ernakulam - TRR(P) - 16.558 Tkm	27194995	543900	12
7.	Construction of new Rest house for track machine staff at AMPA, KYJ stations.	22376821	447500	06
8.	Construction of new Rest house for track machine staff at WKI, UJK, CKI, AFK, ERS stations.	55028269	1100600	12
9.	SRR-ERS Section - Pro Reconstruction of Exg. Bridge No. 193 (1x 1.22 m pipe) as 3.50 x 2.00 m RCC box at km. 94/700-800 between KLMA and IPL stations	14470763	289400	09
Tender Closing date and time SL No: 1 to 9 on 01.10.2026 at 11.00 hrs.				
Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderer to check any Corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken in to account while submitting.				
Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Trivandrum-14				

Welfare of the disabled is the responsibility of civil society

■ Lion Captain Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy, Motivational Speaker

KARIMNAGAR

Renowned motivational speaker and retired principal of Lion Capt Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy said that the role of parents, schools and civil society is very crucial in developing physical, mental, emotional and com-

munication skills of the disabled children. Speaking as the chief guest at an awareness program organized by the Peddapalli Collectorate for the parents of the disabled children, he said that even if a disabled person has a defect in one organ, other body organs work very actively. He suggested that efforts should be made to provide special equipment to the disabled and to provide them with inclusive education along

with other students. He called on the neighbors to understand the mental distress of the parents and family members of the disabled and share their sympathy with them. He suggested that many disabled people have overcome their disabilities and earned special recognition in the society and should be taken as role models. The district additional collector Sri Ramulu lit the lamp and inaugurated the program. Speaking as



a special guest, Differently Abled and President's Award winner V Anjana Reddy urged us to keep in mind the disabilities of our children and provide them with the necessary special needs to help them grow. Haribabu, in-charge of the school for the mentally handicapped, senior officials of the Peddapalli Education Department, Apollo Hospital experts Dr. Jagadish, organiser Kavitha, and others were present at the event.

Let Us Move Forward to Fulfil Chakali Ilamma’s Ideals

■ Kapra Press Club President Merugu Chandramohan

KUSHAIGUDA

Everyone should work towards fulfilling the ideals of Veeranari Chakali Ilamma, said Kapra Press Club President Merugu Chandramohan. On the occasion of the 41st death anniversary of the legendary Telangana armed struggle warrior Chakali Ilamma, Chandramohan paid floral tributes at her statue at ECIL Crossroads on Thursday along with Press Club advisors Empally Padma Reddy and Belide Ashok, former president Shanigaram Ashok, treasurer Ramachandra Murthy, and journalists Palugula Pavan, Ramesh, Keerthi Srinivas, Dommati Kiran Kumar and Gade Ramu. Speaking on the occasion,



Chandramohan said Chakali Ilamma's struggle for land, livelihood and liberation from forced labour remains an unforgettable chapter in the history of Telangana. He said her courage

and determination in fighting for the rights of oppressed communities continue to inspire the present generation. He urged people to draw inspiration from Ilamma's strug-

gle against social inequality, exploitation and discrimination. He stressed the need to work towards equality, social justice and self-respect in society in accordance with her ideals.

47th Samuhik Ganesh Utsav: BGUS ready for grand immersion on Sept 25

HYDERABAD

The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi (BGUS) on Thursday announced that preparations for the 47th Samuhik Ganesh Utsav are nearing completion, with Ganesh idol installations beginning on September 14 and the grand mass immersion scheduled for September 25, Anantha Chaturdashi. The Samithi, at a press conference, urged devotees not to be confused about the immersion date and said preparations have been underway for the past three months in coordination with the police and various government agencies. More than 150 designated immersion points, including Vinayak Sagar, Saroornagar and Kapra lake, are being readied, besides around 110 baby ponds. BGUS expects more than 50 lakh devotees to participate across Bhagyanagar and called for adequate police, traffic and civic arrangements to ensure



safe and smooth immersion. BGUS stressed the need for stronger field-level coordination among the GHMC, police, traffic authorities and other civic agencies. It expressed concern over the casual conduct of a GHMC coordination meeting and the absence of a Hyderabad Police Commissioner-level coordination meeting. The Samithi urged the government to conduct an immediate high-level review, warning

that any lapses in public safety, traffic management, immersion arrangements or other essential services would be the responsibility of the concerned government agencies. BGUS also appealed for traditional devotional and cultural programmes to be facilitated within applicable rules and opposed 'unnecessary' restrictions on DJ bands and sound systems, citing their importance to celebrations and livelihoods.

The Samithi called upon devotees to promote Swadeshi and locally produced goods, including Khadi, and said the economic activity generated by the festival should benefit local artisans, traditional occupations and cultural talent. BGUS confirmed that immersion at Vinayak Sagar, Saroornagar, Ameenpur and Kapra lakes would take place as usual. It also condemned the alleged physical attack and harassment of its Vice-President Govind Rathai by Bhagyanagar Police in connection with the Aagaman processions at Sultan Bazaar. The festival will feature several devotional and cultural programmes, including observances associated with Vande Mataram, Telangana Liberation Day, Sant Ravidas and Pujya Ashok Singhal. BGUS appealed to devotees, organisers, volunteers, public representatives, police personnel and civic officials to cooperate in ensuring peaceful, disciplined and safe celebrations.

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‘Chalo Hyderabad’ Deferred, But Employees’ Discontent Simmering



■ **State JAC gives government time to address key demands; next course of action after September 18**

KARIMNAGAR

The proposed ‘Chalo Hyderabad’ programme may have been deferred, but the discontent among employees continues to simmer. The State JAC’s decision to postpone the agitation came following the government’s request and its assurance to address several long-pending demands.

The postponement has provided a temporary window for dialogue, but employees are now looking towards September 18, when the government is scheduled to hold discussions with JAC representatives on pending DAs and other financial issues.

The government has also agreed to expedite the submission of the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) report

and constitute a committee to examine the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

10,000 from Karimnagar prepared to mobilise

The proposed agitation had received a strong response in Karimnagar district. JAC leaders said more than 10,000 employees from the district had prepared to travel to Hyderabad.

Nearly 5,000 employees attended a preparatory meeting in Karimnagar on September 8, according to district JAC leaders. Employees from various departments and categories, including teachers, pensioners, gazetted officers, Class-IV staff, contract and outsourcing personnel and Anganwadi workers, had reportedly made arrangements to participate.

The large mobilisation, leaders said, reflected the growing dissatisfaction over unresolved employee

issues.

PRC, DAs and CPS among key demands

Employees have been seeking implementation of the PRC in view of the rising cost of living, settlement of pending DAs and arrears, and resolution of problems concerning the health insurance scheme.

Restoration of the old pension system by scrapping the CPS also remains one of their major demands.

JAC leaders said employees were ready for an intensified movement but had chosen to exercise restraint after the government sought time to address their concerns.

September 18 crucial

The government’s assurances have now shifted the focus from the proposed mobilisation to the September 18 talks. If there is substantial progress on the PRC, DAs, pending bills,

CPS and health-related issues, the situation may ease. However, employees have made it clear that the postponement should not be mistaken for withdrawal of the movement.

“If there is no positive outcome on September 18, we will be ready for the next course of action announced by the State JAC,” district leaders said. The State JAC is expected to hold an emergency meeting on September 19 if there is no meaningful progress and announce its future action plan.

‘Not a retreat, but a tactical pause’

District JAC leaders described the postponement as a tactical decision taken in response to the government’s appeal. “The government has recognised our concerns and agreed to talks. Our unity and mobilisation brought the government to the negotiating table. This is a victory for employees,” they said.

They appealed to employees, teachers, pensioners and gazetted officers to remain patient and united until September 18. District Employees JAC Chairman and TNGOs District President Daram Srinivasa Reddy, Convener and TGOs District President Madipalli Kalicharan Goud, TNGOs District Secretary Sangam Laxman Rao, TGOs District Secretary Adla Aravind Reddy, Class-IV Employees Association President Kota Ramaswamy, pensioners’ leaders Usman Pasha, Keshava Reddy and Prabhakar Rao, and TNGOs Treasurer Muppidi Kiran Kumar Reddy were among those present.



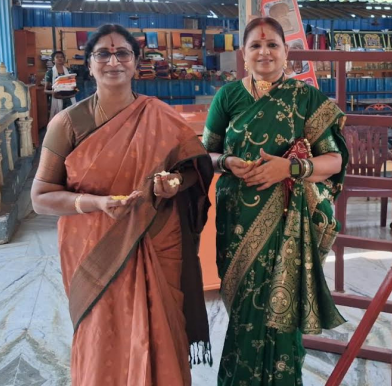
BJP Organising Bhadradi Dist. Workers meeting

BHADRACHALAM

A meeting organized by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was successfully held on Wednesday in Bhadrachalam town of Bhadradi Kothagudem district amid enthusiastic participation from party workers. The large-scale meeting was held under the chairmanship and leadership of BJP district president Sri Prabhakar Reddy. Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Sri Bandi Sanjay Kumar attended the meeting as the chief guest.

Bandi Sanjay Kumar

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Sri Bandi Sanjay Kumar stated that the Narendra Modi-led Central Government is committed to the overall development of Telangana as well as the development of agency areas. He said that the Centre is continuously extending its support for the development of the Bhadrachalam pilgrimage centre and the surrounding tribal areas. He called upon party workers to take the welfare schemes of the Central



Government to the people on a large scale at the grassroots level. He said that party workers are the backbone of the party and directed them to always be at the forefront in fighting for the resolution of public issues. He encouraged the party cadre to further strengthen the party from the booth level and win the confidence of the people.

Prabhakar Reddy

District president Sri Prabhakar Reddy stated that leaders and workers are working collectively to strengthen the party in the district and said that in the coming days they would transform the party

into an even stronger platform for the people.

BJP State Vice-President Smt. Jayashree and former State Mahila Morcha president Smt. Geetha Murthy stated that the party gives priority to women’s empowerment and the advancement of weaker sections of society. They emphasized the need to further increase women’s participation in party programmes. Former Member of Parliament Sri Naik explained the steps being taken by the Centre regarding the rights of tribal communities and the creation of employment opportunities for youth.

A large number of BJP district and Mandal-level workers and supporters participated in the programme. Earlier, Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, senior leader Manohar Reddy, Jayashree, Geetha Murthy, Prabhakar Reddy, and other leaders visited the famous Sita Rama Chandra Swamy Temple in the town and offered prayers and worshipped the deities.



Special Measures for the Care of Stray Dogs with Support from Blue Cross of Hyderabad

SURYAPET

Special measures have been taken for the care and treatment of stray dogs in the town suffering from skin diseases caused by the Canine Distemper (CD) virus. Concerns have been raised among the public over the increasing number of stray dogs affected by skin-related ailments.

Responding to the issue on humanitarian grounds, Akkineni Amala, founder of the Blue Cross of Hyderabad, sent injections and medicines worth approximately ₹1.80 lakh from Hyderabad to Suryapet for treating the affected dogs. Town residents expressed their special gratitude to her for providing the medicines and injections. Speaking on the occasion, District Veterinary Assistant Director Dr. S. Kiran Kumar and District Blue Cross In-charge Narender Naidu said that, with the cooperation of Municipal

Chairperson Morishetti Niveditha Lakshadhi and Commissioner C.H. Hanumantha Reddy, a total of 194 virus-affected dogs have so far been identified in the town.

They said that treatment was being provided to the affected dogs in a phased manner and that all necessary measures were being taken to ensure their complete recovery. They recalled that recently, a special team led by N.S.K. Kumar, Shelter Director of Blue Cross of Hyderabad, visited Suryapet and identified dogs suffering from skin diseases and conducted medical examinations.

They said that medicines were brought from Hyderabad and the treatment programme was launched in July. Virus-affected dogs were identified across all 48 municipal wards, and necessary vaccines and medicines were administered.

Do Dalits Pollute the Ground Simply by Walking on It?

- **Congress SC Cell slams alleged ‘purification’ ritual by BRS leaders**
- **‘Are Dalits still untouchables after 80 years of Independence?’ asks Korivi Arun Kumar**
- **Complaint lodged with ACP seeking SC/ST Act case against those responsible**

KARIMNAGAR

Taking strong exception to an alleged ‘purification’ ritual carried out by BRS leaders at the road near former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao’s farmhouse, Karimnagar District Congress SC Cell president Korivi Arun Kumar lodged a complaint with the ACP, seeking registration of a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against those responsible.

Arun Kumar alleged that BRS leaders sprinkled milk and turmeric water on the road after Dalits had walked on it, describing the act as highly objectionable and an insult to the dignity of the Dalit community.

He said the Congress SC Cell had organised a peaceful protest near KCR’s farmhouse with



1,000 drums across the State, as directed by TPCC SC Cell State chairman and Manakondur MLA Dr Kavvampalli Satyanarayana, condemning the alleged inappropriate remarks made by BRS MLC Tata Madhubabu against Speaker Gaddam Prasad.

‘Are Dalits still untouchables?’

Reacting to the alleged purification ritual, Arun Kumar questioned whether Dalits were still being treated as untouchables in the country even after eight decades of Independence. “Do Dalits pollute the ground simply by walking on it? If a road has to be purified merely because members of a particular community walked on it, what does that say about social equality?” he asked.

He alleged that such incidents reflected the persistence of caste discrimination and were contrary to the spirit of equality guaranteed

by the Constitution.

‘With what face will BRS seek Dalit votes?’

Arun Kumar demanded that KCR and BRS leaders explain the alleged incident and publicly apologise to the Dalit community.

He also questioned how the BRS would seek votes from Dalits in the future in the wake of such an incident. “This is not merely an insult to Congress workers. It concerns the self-respect of the entire Dalit community. Dalit leaders within the BRS should introspect on the incident,” he said.

‘Self-respect cannot be compromised’

Arun Kumar said Dalits would not remain silent if their dignity and self-respect were insulted. He demanded immediate legal action against those responsible and said the Congress SC Cell would con-

tinue to oppose any act that promoted caste discrimination.

‘BJP and BRS are two sides of the same coin’

Alleging that the BJP and BRS had similar approaches on issues concerning Dalits, Arun Kumar described the alleged purification exercise as an indication of what he termed the BRS’s “caste arrogance”. He warned that if such incidents were repeated, the Dalit community would intensify its protests through democratic means.

Those who participated in the programme included TPCC SC Cell State vice-chairman Mulakala Malleshham, State general secretary Samudrala Laxman, District Minority Cell president MD Tajuddin, District ST Cell president Shrivani Naik, SC Cell district vice-chairmen Dubbasi Kumar and Gotte Babu, Rural SC Cell president Meesala Sailu, district general secretary Kanakam Vidyasagar, Youth Congress district vice-president Gurram Vasu, City Mahila Congress president Vennam Rajitha Reddy, Manakondur Youth Congress Mandal president Kondra Suresh, SC Cell leaders Jeedi Ramesh, Hastapuram Tirumala and Teetla Eshwari, and former Youth Congress Assembly president Abdul Rahman, among others.

Maduri Brahmachari selected for Spirit of India Excellence Award

SURYAPET



Senior photojournalist Maduri Brahmachari, who has been working as a photojournalist in Suryapet district for the past 25 years and has drawn the attention of the authorities through several impactful photo stories, has received a rare honour.

Maduri Brahmachari, a photographer with the Andhra Prabha daily newspaper based in the district headquarters, has been selected for the prestigious Spirit of India Excellence Award.

According to an announcement released in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on Thursday, the Photography Academy of India, in association with the Andhra Pradesh State Creativity and Cultural Commission, Government of Andhra Pradesh, organised the National Photography Contest 2026, Photo Exhibition and Award Presentation as part of the 80th Independence Day celebrations.

Brahmachari had submitted two photographs taken between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on August 15 for the exhibition. His photographs were selected, and he was honoured with the Spirit of India Excellence Award.

The award will be presented to him on October 2, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, at Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada. He will receive a cash prize of ₹3,000 along with a certificate, which will be presented by prominent personalities. Brahmachari has previously received several awards and honours from former Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu, Union and State ministers, MLAs and Zilla Parishad chairpersons.

Uniformity in RTI implementation essential, says Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

HYDERABAD

“Effectiveness of the RTI regime should be assessed not merely by the number of applications and appeals disposed of, but by the extent to which it had enhanced transparency and accountability in governance,” said Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla. Inaugurating a two-day national conference sponsored by the National Federation of Information Commissioners in India (NFICI), New Delhi, and jointly organised by the Telangana Information Commission (TGIC) and the Centre for Public Policy, Governance and Performance (CPPGP), ASCI.

on “RTI: Operational Uniformity in Implementation – Challenges and Solutions” at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad on Thursday, the Governor called for greater uniformity in the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act across the country. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Thursday urged Information Commissions and govern-



ment departments to strengthen proactive disclosure, leverage technology and ensure faster and more effective access to information for citizens.

Emphasizing the need to give greater importance to proactive disclosure under Section 4 of the RTI Act, saying government departments should move from a system of providing information only on request to one in which relevant and updated information is routinely placed in the public domain, the Governor said, would reduce the need for citizens to file RTI applications for information that could otherwise be disclosed suo motu. The Governor said information held by government departments was, in essence, public information, and making it available to citizens in a

timely, accessible and transparent manner was an important responsibility of the administration. He also called for greater use of Artificial Intelligence, data analytics and digital record management to improve transparency and efficiency in the handling of RTI matters.

Technology, however, should remain citizen-centric and should facilitate access to information rather than create additional barriers, he said. Governor Shukla stressed the need to make the RTI mechanism more accessible to people in rural and remote areas, women, persons with disabilities and vulnerable sections of society. He also suggested that Information Commissions across the country develop a strong mechanism for sharing best practices, innovative approaches and

successful experiences. Regular training of officials and continuous improvement in institutional processes were necessary to improve the quality and speed of RTI disposal, he added.

Speaking in the inaugural session, Central Information Commissioner and NFICI Chairman R.K. Goel, ASCI Chairman K. Padmanabhaiah and ASCI Director-General Dr. N. Ramesh Kumar underlined the importance of transparency and accountability in public administration and called for the use of advanced technology to ensure faster and quality disposal of RTI applications.

The Governor also released the Telangana Information Commission’s newsletter titled “Telangana Transparent Times – Samachara Darpanam” on the occasion. Telangana State Chief Information Commissioner G. Chandrasekhar Reddy, Governor’s Joint Secretary K. Shashikiran Komanduri, and Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners from various States participated in the conference.

Mohammed Imran Appointed NSUI Karimnagar District President

KARIMNAGAR

Mohammed Imran has been appointed as the new district president of the National Students’ Union of India (NSUI), Karimnagar district. Telangana State NSUI president Edavally Venkata Swamy issued the appointment orders on Thursday.

Imran has been associated with the Congress student wing for the past 10 years and has held various responsibilities at different levels. He began his political journey as a college president and later served as NSUI constituency coordinator, Karimnagar district general secretary and district vice-president.

He also worked as NSUI in-charge during the Huzurabad Assembly elections and served as Karimnagar district coordinator during the MLC elections. His active involvement in student issues and organisational activities was cited as a recognition of his long-standing services.

Speaking after his appointment, Imran thanked NSUI State president Edavally Venkata Swamy for



entrusting him with the responsibility.

He also expressed gratitude to Minister for BC Welfare and Transport Ponnamp Prabhakar, Karimnagar DCC president and Choppadandi MLA Medipalli Satyam, Manakondur MLA Dr Kavvampalli Satyanarayana, Karimnagar RTA member Padala Rahul, Karimnagar MLC candidate Alphones Narender

Reddy and Huzurabad constituency in-charge Vodithala Pranav Babu for their support.

Imran said he would work with dedication for the organisation and the student community and would implement the party’s directions sincerely. He also assured that he would continue to raise issues concerning students and work towards strengthening NSUI in the district.

Govt Launches
DILRMP 3.0

NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday launched the operational guidelines for the third phase of the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP 3.0), with an outlay of Rs 565.5 crore for 2026-31, aimed at integrating land records, maps, registrations and related data through a GIS-based digital framework. Launching the guidelines, Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the programme would move beyond digitisation of individual records towards an integrated land management system. "Land is not just a piece of soil, it is the pride of our farmers, the blessing of our ancestors and the identity of future generations," Chouhan said.

BJP MLA's
School
Backtracks on
Paryushan Rule

THANE: A school run by a BJP MLA in the district was on Thursday forced to withdraw a circular advising students not to carry root vegetables such as onion, garlic, potato and beetroot in their lunchboxes during the Paryushan period observed by the Jain community, as it triggered a controversy and backlash from local political parties including the MNS.

Stalin snipes at Vijay over body-shaming
row: You're right, my jaw was fractured

DMK president MK Stalin on Thursday launched a sharp counterattack on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay over his reference to Stalin's Emergency-era imprisonment and the alleged torture he suffered under MISA Act, recounting his arrest and saying the scars of the brutal treatment he endured in prison remain with him even today.



The controversy began during a debate on police department grants in the Assembly, where Vijay accused the DMK of repeatedly invoking its MISA-era struggles to deflect allegations of present-day corruption. While referring to Stalin's detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency, Vijay made a gesture involving his jaw, which Opposition members saw as a mockery of Stalin's prison injury. Responding to the controversy in a video message, Stalin urged Vijay to maintain the dignity expected of the occupant of the state's highest constitutional office. "Brother Vijay, what you said is true. There is no lie in it," Stalin said, referring to his imprisonment under MISA. The former Chief Minister then gave a graphic account of what he described as the brutality he suffered in prison. "I suffered

many forms of torture in prison," he said, alleging that political prisoners were taken to a facility where leprosy patients had previously been housed. "Ten people were confined in a small room. Inside that room, all of us had to urinate in a single vessel. The place was extremely filthy. That was where we slept," Stalin said. He alleged that prisoners were beaten at night with lathis and kicked with boots, while life convicts were allegedly brought in to assault them. Stalin said DMK leader and former parliamentarian Chitti Babu died in prison following the alleged assaults. He also directly addressed Vijay's gesture in the Assembly, where the Chief Minister had held his jaw while referring to Stalin's MISA imprisonment. "My jawbone was fractured because of the beatings. You too showed your jaw by placing your hand there, didn't you? That was cor-

rect," Stalin said. "Even today, I have scars from the beatings. I am not denying that," he added. Stalin also recalled how he was arrested during the Emergency. He said the DMK government headed by his father and former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi was dismissed by the Union government on January 31, 1976, during the Emergency, after Karunanidhi had opposed the Emergency and strongly criticised MISA. Stalin said that immediately after the government was dismissed, police went to the Karunanidhi residence in Gopalapuram to arrest him under MISA. "I was not at home that day. Kalaignar told them, 'The boy has gone for campaigning. He will return tomorrow. Once he comes, I myself will call you. You can come and arrest him,'" Stalin recalled. He said that when he returned the next day, Karunanidhi himself asked the police to come and arrest

him. Stalin said the repression faced by political activists during the Emergency was part of the broader history of the DMK and those who had fought for Tamil Nadu. "Opposing something and facing the consequences of that opposition is nothing new to us," he said. He challenged Vijay to verify his account through official records. You said there is a library in the Legislative Assembly, didn't you? All the documents are available there. Go there and read about my history of struggle. You will understand what the truth is," Stalin said.

STALIN QUESTIONS VIJAY'S SARKARIA COMMISSION CLAIMS

Stalin also accused Vijay of providing incorrect information about the Sarkaria Commission and corruption allegations involving the Karunanidhi government. He questioned why no action had been taken against those accused if the allegations had substance. "After the Sarkaria Commission was constituted, governments changed several times at both the Union and state levels. If any of these allegations had been true, action would certainly have been taken," Stalin said. He accused Vijay of repeating what he described as politically motivated allegations against Karunanidhi and also criticised the Chief Minister for citing an Enforcement Directorate letter in the

Assembly. Stalin claimed that "95 per cent" of cases in which the ED had made allegations had not resulted in convictions and alleged that the agency was frequently used for political vendetta. "Everyone here knows very well that the Enforcement Directorate is largely used for political vendetta," he said. Pointing to cases involving Congress leaders, Stalin asked how Vijay could remain unaware of the issue while portraying the Union government as an ideological adversary.

'ASSEMBLY HAS DIGNITY AND HONOUR'

Stalin then urged Vijay to focus Assembly debates on issues concerning Tamil Nadu rather than personal and political controversies. "The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has its own dignity and honour," he said and urged the Chief Minister to discuss law and order, welfare schemes, development and the protection of Tamil Nadu's rights. "That is what is good for Tamil Nadu and the Tamil people," Stalin said, adding that unnecessary controversies should not be raised in the House. Stalin also recalled Vijay's visit to his residence after becoming Chief Minister, claiming that Vijay had apologised for criticising him during the election campaign. "I told you, 'It is okay, brother. I have not taken any of that to heart.'"



Mahatma Gandhi University
to Host 45th Annual Session of
South Indian History Congress

DR SRINIVAS VOORADI

Nalgonda: The Department of History and Tourism of Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) is hosting the 45th Annual Session of the South Indian History Congress, an initiative aimed at highlighting and celebrating the distinct historical attributes of South India. During the release of the poster on Thursday, MGU Vice Chancellor Prof. Khaja Althaf Hussain announced that historians and faculty members from across South India will present their research papers during the Congress, scheduled for November 13 to 15. He emphasized that the gathering offers an exceptional chance to showcase MGU's reputation and the rich historical background of Telangana. The Vice Chancellor encouraged all departments to actively participate and contribute their utmost efforts to ensure the success of the

prestigious event. Dr. K Vijaya Babu, Chairman of the Board of Studies in History, mentioned that over 1,200 historians from across the nation are expected to attend the significant intellectual gathering. Registrar Prof. Koppula Anji Reddy, Principal of the the University College of Arts and Social Sciences Dr. Aruna Priya, Principal of the Science College Prof. Vasantha, Engineering College Principal Dr. Harish Kumar, Management College Principal Dr. Sridevi, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Business Management Prof. Aluvula Ravi, IQAC Coordinator Dr. Miriyala Ramesh, Controller of Examinations Dr. G. Upender Reddy, NSS Programme Coordinator Dr. Maram Venkatarama Reddy, Dr. Sivaram, Dr. Hymavathi, teachers of the Department of History and Tourism Dr. Panasa Ramakrishna, Dr. Sharif, and Vivek were present.

Jagan Demands Lokesh
Resignation, CBI Probe into DSC

AMARAVATI

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday reiterated the demand for the resignation of Education Minister Nara Lokesh and a CBI probe into the DSC 2025, saying it is laden with unprecedented 'irregularities' and jobs were given away on a platter to candidates who did not even write the exams. Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, he questioned the silence of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh on the questions raised by the opposition regarding the DSC recruitment process. He claimed that irregularities in the recruitment of teachers through DSC 2025 were emerging one after another. Jagan accused the government of deliberately weakening the DSC scam investigation. He asked why Chandrababu Naidu was trying to protect his son and alleged that the government was "playing with the lives and futures of unemployed youth". "Why were the preparation and supervision of DSC examination papers placed in the hands of a single individual, and why did the government introduce GO No. 4 and GO No. 47? Why were the GOs changed after



the recruitment process was complete?" he asked. YS Jagan wanted to know how 372 posts under the sports quota were filled without conducting an examination. "GO No. 4 and GO No. 47 opened the gates for irregularities, while GO Nos. 23, 25, and 56 were brought in later to close those gates after the work was completed." The former Chief Minister highlighted how jobs were given away, throwing caution to the wind and violating all set norms, and since the DSC was exposed, the coalition government has stalled the APPSC exams, which they planned to recruit in the same modus operandi. "Jobs were given to candidates based on participation certificates for tournaments which never took place, he said. Terming the DSC as a gem in the list of scams of Chandrababu, Jagan said, "Many skeletons are tumbling out with every passing day from the DSC 2025 cupboard."

board." YS Jagan said that while CM Naidu has been trying hard to cover up the issue to shield his son, officials were running out of words to defend the allegations and their version that the verification was done seven times before giving the jobs stands out as a joke. He accused CM Naidu and his son Lokesh of "misleading the legislature" only as a cover-up bid. Giving case-by-case details, he explained how jobs were given without writing any exam under the sports quota. According to him, "39 jobs were given in the sports quota; some of them have provided certificates that they participated in a tournament that never took place in Khammam, which was categorically stated by the Judo Association of Telangana, while the fake certificates were given by AP Judo Association, of which the co-brother of Lokesh Bharath is the president. The same malpractice was carried out in Softball, and Kuna Ravi Kumar happens to be its head," he said. "One Yogeshwara Rao and his sister were given jobs under sports quota as a family pack on the basis that they won medals in the Kho-Kho Championship held at Nalgonda, but the irony remains that such a competition was never held, as was categorically told by the Telangana Kho-Kho Association.

AP CM Urges Officials to
Focus on Governance Results

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu told Andhra Pradesh collectors to prioritise results, factual reporting and faster execution. The message underlined his push for proactive governance and a stronger response to misinformation.



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday told officials that results matter more than reviews, and asked them to submit an action taken report on issues discussed at the previous collectors conference. Addressing the eighth district collectors conference at the Secretariat, he said officials must focus on delivery and accountability. Naidu urged district collectors to see themselves as public servants and said leadership begins with taking ownership. He told the two-day conference, being held on September 10 and 11, that the government now needed visible outcomes from its work. "Let's remain public servants, avoiding ego. We need results, not reviews," Naidu said. He noted that several

structural changes had been brought in over the past 27 months in the state, and said the results of those initiatives were now visible. The Chief Minister directed IAS officers to move from reactive governance to proactive governance, saying pending files amounted to pending development. Likewise, he said pending complaints indicated pending justice for people. Naidu said a vision without execution was only an aspiration. He added that times had changed, and that apart from delivering work, it was also important to counter 'fake propaganda'. Amid what he described as fake propaganda, the TDP supreme asked officials to take the lead in countering misinformation. He also told collectors not to submit

reports that mislead the government and instead place facts before them. Naidu called for healthy competition among government departments and among districts, and said, "Let's share the best practices and implement the best policies as we move from intention to implementation." He stressed that officials should regularly assess progress on key programmes, identify delays and take corrective measures quickly. He said coordination between departments and district administrations would be crucial for translating government decisions into tangible benefits for citizens. Summing up his government's approach, Naidu said, "one state, one vision, one mission, that is Swarna Andhra."



Andhra temple shop charges
customer extra Rs 7 on
water bottle, fined Rs 7 lakh

The case was filed by D Venkateswara Rao against Satya Deva Fancy Coconuts and Cool Drinks, a licenced outlet operating on the premises of Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Vari Devasthanam at Annavaram.

A temple shop in Andhra Pradesh has been ordered to pay a hefty Rs 7 lakh penalty after allegedly charging a devotee more than the printed price of a water bottle. The East Godavari District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission also directed the shop to refund the excess amount and compensate the complainant. The case was filed by D Venkateswara Rao against Satya Deva Fancy Coconuts and Cool Drinks, a licenced outlet operating on the premises of Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Vari Devasthanam at Annavaram. In its order dated August 28,

2026, issued in a consumer complaint, the Commission found that the vendor had collected Rs 7 above the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of the packaged water bottle. Apart from ordering a refund of the excess Rs 7, the commission awarded Rs 10,000 to the complainant as compensation and Rs 5,000 towards litigation expenses. It further directed the vendor to deposit Rs 7 lakh with the Consumer Welfare Fund. The Commission also issued directions to the Devasthanam, asking it to use its supervisory powers to ensure that all licensed shops within the temple premises clearly display the MRP of packaged products. The directions are intended to prevent similar instances of overcharging and safeguard devotees' consumer rights. The order is likely to prompt stricter monitoring of commercial outlets operating inside the temple premises and greater compliance with MRP rules.

Vijay Heads
to UK to Woo
Investors

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay left for the UK with a high-level official delegation on Thursday to attract foreign investments and also to study world-class motorsports infrastructure. He would pitch the state as Asia's premier investment hub and attract foreign direct investment across key growth sectors, the government said about his first official overseas trip since Vijay assumed charge as chief minister in May. The delegation includes Public Works and Sports Development Minister Aadhav Arjuna, member secretary of Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) Meghnatha Reddy, Managing director and CEO of Guidance Tamil Nadu Deepak Jacob.

SC issues notice to Centre on plea seeking
safeguards for minors accessing social media

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has issued notice to the Centre on a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking safeguards, including firewalls, to protect children below 18 years from online exploitation and other risks associated with social media and other digital platforms. The plea, filed by the Just Rights for Children Alliance (JRCA), raises concerns over minors being allowed to independently create and maintain accounts on digital platforms despite their inability to enter into contracts under Section 11 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872. The petition says the absence of an effective and uniform mechanism to verify the age and legal authority of users exposes children to risks including online grooming, sexual exploitation, digital

trafficking, sextortion, behavioural profiling, misuse of personal data, cyberbullying and exposure to age-inappropriate content. The matter was heard by a three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana. The plea has sought directions to the Centre to inform digital platforms, including social media intermediaries, that any contract entered into by a child below 18 is _void ab initio_ and to suspend steps taken in furtherance of such contracts. It has also sought insertion of a specific provision in the Information Technology Rules, 2021, or framing of appropriate guidelines to ensure that minors do not enter into such agreements without the consent of a parent or lawful guardian, with the identity and authority of

the parent or guardian being verified through e-KYC or another legally recognised mechanism. The petition further seeks directions for advisories requiring parental or guardian involvement wherever minors are permitted to access digital platforms, with safeguards proportionate to the nature and risk of the service, as well as interim directions until the government puts an appropriate mechanism in place. "An incapacity of a minor to enter into a contract is settled law, and that protection cannot simply disappear when the agreement moves from paper to a click online. Millions of children are being onboarded onto powerful digital platforms every day on nothing more than a self-declared birthdate, with no real age verification and no guardian involved.

Our petition asks the Court to close that gap and ensure that the same legal protection available to a child offline applies with equal force online. The Court has said that there need to be safeguards in India and that there should be some firewalls to protect children in the digital environment. We welcome today's notice as an important step towards ensuring the law keeps pace with where children actually are," said Senior Advocate HS Phoolka, who represented the Just Rights for Children Alliance before the Supreme Court. The petition does not seek to exclude children from the digital ecosystem, noting that digital platforms play an important role in education, research, skilling, examination preparation, career opportunities and civic participation. Instead, it seeks to ensure that minors' access is based on a legally attributable and digitally verifiable mechanism rather than an unverified declaration of age by the child. It advocates a 'prevention by design' approach under which foreseeable risks to children are addressed while digital services are designed and provided, rather than relying only on detection, reporting, removal of harmful content or prosecution after harm has occurred. "Digital safety must begin with prevention by design. We should not wait for harm to happen and then react; we must design our schools, our migration systems, and our technologies in a way where exploitation becomes impossible," said Rachna Tyagi, General Counsel of Just Rights for Children Alliance.

ease congestion, improve train punctuality and strengthen connectivity to Tirupati, benefiting both pilgrims and passengers while boosting freight movement," he said. Earlier, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan also thanked the Prime Minister and the Railway Minister for their continued support to Andhra Pradesh and their unwavering commitment to strengthening the state's infrastructure. "The Indian Railways network is set for a major transformation with five multitracking projects worth ₹10,021 crore, adding nearly 540 km of new capacity. This will mean faster passenger movement, smoother operations, stronger freight connectivity and new possibilities for growth. For Andhra Pradesh, the Arakkonam-Renigunta 3rd & 4th Line is particularly significant.

CM Chandrababu Naidu
thanks Centre for another
push to Andhra's rail infra

HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday thanked the Centre for another major push for the state's connectivity, following the Union Cabinet's approval of the third and fourth railway lines on the Renigunta-Arakkonam section. He took to X to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for this significant boost to Andhra Pradesh's rail infrastructure. "Another major push for Andhra Pradesh's connectivity under the NDAs double-engine, bullet-train Sarkar! The Union Cabinet approved the 3rd & 4th railway lines on the Renigunta-Arakkonam section, with 46 km in AP covering Tirupati & Chittoor districts, at a cost of ₹1,157 crore. This will



EDITORIAL

Recalibrating Pragmatism:
Navigating the Delicate
Balance of India-Azerbaijan
Relations

In the modern architecture of Eurasian diplomacy, few regional dynamics illustrate the tension between bilateral friction and multilateral necessity quite like the evolving ties between New Delhi and Baku. Against the backdrop of the recently concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, India and Azerbaijan find themselves at a crucial geopolitical crossroads. The summit—marked by high-level exchanges, including an interaction on the sidelines between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev—highlights a subtle yet significant attempt to reset engagement after seasons of underlying tension.

For years, the narrative surrounding India and Azerbaijan has been shadowed by rigid alliance structures. Azerbaijan's overt geopolitical closeness with Pakistan and Turkey—most notably manifested in its firm support for Islamabad's regional stances—has historically drawn sharp wariness from New Delhi. In response, India expanded its diplomatic and strategic engagement with Armenia, Azerbaijan's long-standing South Caucasus rival. This diplomatic maneuvering created a zero-sum perception, where warmth toward Yerevan was viewed in Baku as a counterweight, while Azerbaijan's alignment with Pakistan limited its bilateral runway with India.

However, the global economic reality demands a departure from zero-sum thinking. At the core of the necessity for constructive dialogue lies transport and energy infrastructure. Both nations are vital actors along the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)—a 7,200-kilometer multi-modal freight network designed to connect India, Iran, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe. Azerbaijan serves as an irreplaceable terrestrial bridge in the INSTC's western route, linking Iranian ports to European markets. As West Asian conflicts disrupt traditional maritime routes and landlocked Central Asian nations look for stable trade conduits, the economic imperatives of INSTC make pragmatic cooperation between India and Azerbaijan non-negotiable.

The SCO multilateral forum serves as an ideal platform for this diplomatic recalibration. Designed around the "Shanghai Spirit"—which emphasizes mutual benefit, equality, and non-alignment—the SCO encourages dialogue over confrontation. Azerbaijan's participation in the Bishkek summit as an SCO Dialogue Partner underlines its ambition to integrate deeply into Eurasian economic and security frameworks. For India, fostering functional relationships with all Dialogue Partners, irrespective of political disagreements, reinforces its identity as a responsible global power capable of maintaining multi-aligned foreign policy.

Economic relations between the two countries already reflect an untapped foundation. India remains a significant purchaser of Azerbaijani crude oil, while Indian enterprises have shown sustained interest in Central Asian energy, pharmaceuticals, and technology trade. Yet, turning economic potential into durable diplomacy requires managing sensitive political boundaries. Baku must recognize that strengthening bilateral economic cooperation with India does not mandate compromising its existing regional partnerships. Conversely, India's strategic posture in the South Caucasus can accommodate a nuanced, multi-track policy that separates its trade and transit interests with Baku from regional disputes.

The post-summit atmosphere presents an opening that neither nation should squander. Moving forward, both states ought to prioritize economic track-two diplomacy, institutionalize trade dialogues, and streamline customs protocols along the INSTC freight routes.

Diplomacy in the multi-polar world is rarely about perfect alignment; it is about managing contradictions to serve national interest. As the Eurasian continent navigates economic realignments and security shifts, India and Azerbaijan have an opportunity to move beyond past friction. By leveraging multilateral spaces like the SCO to rebuild bilateral trust, both nations can build a relationship grounded in mutual commercial benefit, continental connectivity, and mature statecraft.

THE VERDICT OF A RAINDROP

Born in the cradle of a cloud,
a raindrop borrowed wings from the wind,
crossed the threshold of the sky,
and came to rest
upon the brow of the earth.
Merging with the Ganges,
it became sacred water
lifted reverently to the forehead
sinking into the soil,
it became breath to the root,
green in the field,
grain for the hungry
falling into a filthy drain,
the same drop became
something no hand wished to touch.
The raindrop had not changed
where it arrived
rewrote its destiny.
So it is with us.
In a mother's arms,
we are all innocent raindrops.
No hatred inhabits a newborn fist,
no religion is written on a tender cheek,
no border runs through a child's heart.
Our tears carry the same salt.
Our blood bears the same red.
Then where do all these walls come from?
Who plants these thorns
between one heart and another?
One hand
pulls a trigger
and silences a breath
another
stands before a bullet
to save one.
One word
can set a heart ablaze
another becomes balm
to a heart
broken into pieces.
One awakens
the beast within a human being
another searches
even within the beast
for the human still alive.
The flesh is the same
only the paths are different.
Steeped in hatred,
a human becomes a storm
touched by love,
the same human becomes moon-light.
When violence enters the hand,
a human becomes a weapon
when compassion enters the heart,
a human becomes a sanctuary.
Look

thunder may shake the heavens,
lightning may dazzle the night,
but thunder
cannot raise a blade of grass,
nor lightning
persuade a flower to bloom.
It is the quiet raindrop
that whispers into the seed
the secret of spring.
So
tell me not
how high you have climbed
tell me how many
you have lifted with you.
Tell me not
how many bowed before you
tell me how many
stood taller because of you.
Tell me not
how many hands applauded you
tell me how many tears
your hands have wiped away.
That is your height.
That is your triumph.
That is your true address.
Polluted water
can be filtered.
A clouded mirror
can be wiped clean.
But what can cleanse
a heart darkened by hatred?
Perhaps
a single drop of compassion
enough for humanity
to take root again
even in the cracks
of a heart turned to stone.
A raindrop is not sacred
merely because it joins a sacred river
its journey becomes sacred
when it reaches a thirsty root
and rises again
as life.
Nor is a human being great
merely for being born human
life becomes meaningful
when we become light
in someone else's darkness.
When rain touches the earth,
it is nature
when one heart touches another,
it is tenderness
when one human hand
wipes another human tear
that is humanity.
One day,
time will loosen our names
from the memory of the world,
and earth will swallow
our footprints.
Yet

a tear we stopped,
a life we helped rise,
a heart in which we kindled hope
may continue walking this earth
long after our footsteps
have disappeared.
And perhaps
life will ask us only this:
not how long you lived,
but in how many lives you remained
not how much you gathered,
but how much goodness you left
behind
not which river carried you,
but what became cleaner, kinder,
brighter
because you passed through it.
So... do not merely thunder
be the rain that gives life.
Do not merely flash
be the lamp that outlives the night.
Do not point at the world
and demand that it change
turn that finger inward
and touch your own heart.
For every river
that ever changed the landscape
began somewhere
with a single drop.
Every dawn
that defeated darkness
began with
a single ray.
And every change
that moved humanity forward
began in
a single human heart.
Why should that heart
not be yours?
Before asking the world
to become better
become the beginning.
Let change cease to be
a word upon your lips
and become
the life within your footsteps.
Let humanity cease to be
something we preach
and become
something we leave behind.
Then you need not wait
for Time to pass its verdict
let your life itself
become the verdict of Time.


...: **Dr. Peruka Raju** ...
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THE DAY THAT
CHANGED THE
MEANING OF
SAFETY

There are moments in history that do not remain confined to the calendar. September 11, 2001, became one such moment. Four passenger aircraft were hijacked in the United States and used in a coordinated terrorist attack. Two planes were flown into the World Trade Center in New York, another struck the Pentagon, and the fourth crashed near Shanksville in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people died. What happened that morning came to be known across the world as 9/11, and its effects reached far beyond the places where the attacks occurred.

Before that morning, the word security had a different meaning for many ordinary people. It was largely associated with borders, police, military strength and the protection of important buildings. After the attacks, security became part of everyday life. It appeared at airports, railway stations, public gatherings, offices and even in the way people looked at unfamiliar surroundings.

That change did not happen through a single announcement. It entered daily life quietly. Airport queues became longer. Baggage checks became more detailed. Identity verification became routine. Security cameras multiplied in public places. Intelligence agencies received greater attention. International cooperation against terrorism became a major concern.

For a traveller, these may appear to be ordinary procedures today. But they are also reminders of how deeply one morning altered the habits of the modern world.

The most disturbing part of the tragedy was not only the scale of destruction. It was the suddenness. People had gone to their offices, boarded aircraft and begun an ordinary working day. Families had their usual plans. Nobody knew that within a short span of time their lives, and the lives of thousands of other families, would take an irreversible turn.

Television carried those scenes into homes across the globe. People who were thousands of kilometres away watched the unfolding events with disbelief. The repeated images became part of a generation's memory. Even those who were too young to understand what was happening at the time later encountered the event through photographs, documentaries, books and the memories of their parents.

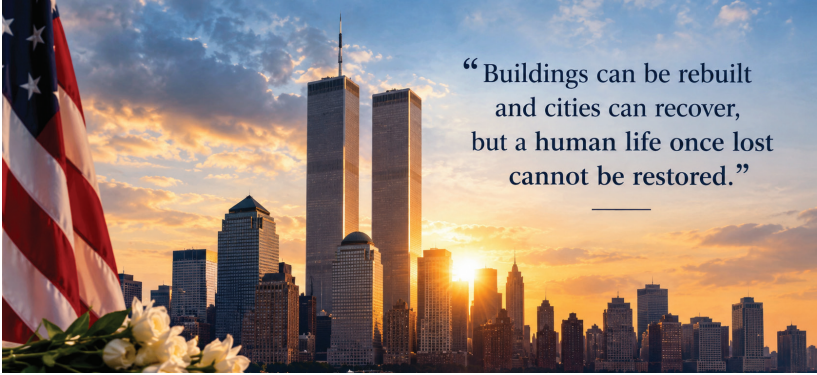
The tragedy also changed the psychology of air travel. An aircraft, which had always represented movement and connection between distant places, was suddenly seen through another lens. Airports became spaces where freedom of movement had to coexist with careful examination.

That balance continues to challenge modern societies. Safety is necessary. At the same time, a free society cannot allow fear to become an excuse for treating every unfamiliar person as a threat. Security measures have meaning only when they protect both human life and human dignity.

The consequences of the attacks did not stop with the immediate rescue operations. They influenced international relations for years. Military actions followed, new security doctrines emerged and terrorism became one of the central subjects of global politics. Decisions taken in the name of security affected people far away from the original scene of the tragedy.

This is where the human side of history deserves greater attention.

Political history usually records governments, decisions, wars and agreements. Human history is often hidden in smaller details—a family wait-



ing for a telephone call, a photograph kept carefully in a drawer, a child's unanswered question, or a name being read aloud at a memorial. Statistics tell us how many people died. They cannot tell us what each absence meant to a family.

Every number in a tragedy represents a complete human story. Someone's father, someone's mother, someone's brother, sister, friend or colleague. The passing of time may turn an event into a historical chapter, but it does not turn a lost life into a mere historical figure.

There is another lesson that deserves equal importance. Terrorism must never be used as a reason to judge an entire religion, nationality, race or community. Violence is committed by people and organisations; its responsibility cannot fairly be transferred to millions of innocent people. Whenever fear creates collective suspicion, ordinary people become victims of a tragedy in which they had no part.

The years that followed also demonstrated the enormous influence of the media. News travelled faster and reached more people than ever before. Later, social media made that speed almost instantaneous. Today, an event taking place in one corner of the world can reach another corner within seconds.

That convenience carries a responsibility. During moments of grief, information should not become entertainment. The dead deserve dignity. The families of victims deserve sensitivity. Journalism has the difficult task of informing people without turning suffering into spectacle.

For literature, such events present a different responsibility. A newspaper may report the facts. A historian may arrange them in chronological order. A memorial may preserve names. Literature can preserve the emotional residue left behind.

A poem does not need to count the dead to speak about loss. A story does not need to describe every detail of destruction to make a reader understand loneliness. Sometimes a single image—a vacant chair, an unopened letter, a pho-

tograph kept for years—can say more about grief than several pages of statistics.

That is why major historical tragedies continue to find a place in literature and art. Writers, poets, filmmakers and artists try to understand what happens to human beings when familiar ideas of safety, trust and certainty suddenly collapse.

Twenty-five years is enough time for a personal memory to become a historical memory. A child born in 2001 is now an adult. For that generation, the event may have been first encountered through a textbook, a documentary or an elder's recollection rather than through direct experience. Yet history becomes meaningful only when succeeding generations understand the human consequences behind its dates.

The memorial at the former World Trade Center site serves that purpose. The names of those who died are remembered not as a statistical total but as individuals. The flowing water at the memorial pools creates a space for silence in a place once filled with noise and activity.

The Survivor Tree carries an even quieter message. It endured severe damage, was cared for and eventually returned to the memorial site. A tree growing again in a place marked by destruction does not erase what happened there.

It simply reminds visitors that survival can exist alongside memory.

That distinction is important. Remembering does not mean remaining trapped in the past.

The twenty-fifth anniversary should therefore be more than another occasion for looking at old photographs. It is an opportunity to think about what the world learned—and what it may still have to learn.

Hatred does not appear suddenly. It is cultivated through prejudice, manipulation, intolerance and the refusal to understand another human being. Preventing violence therefore requires more than weapons and surveillance. It also requires education, dialogue, responsible leadership and societies in which differences do not automatically become reasons for hostility.

The world of 2026 is technologically far removed from the world of 2001. Communication has changed. Security systems have become more sophisticated. New forms of terrorism and new forms of digital threat have emerged. Yet technology alone cannot make the world secure.

A safer world ultimately depends on how human beings respond to fear.

If fear produces suspicion, society becomes divided. If fear produces understanding and preparedness, society becomes stronger. That may be one of the most difficult lessons left by the tragedy. A quarter of a century later, the most meaningful remembrance is not simply to recall how many lives were lost or how much destruction occurred. It is to remember the ordinary people behind those numbers and to ask what kind of world future generations deserve. Buildings can be reconstructed. Roads can be rebuilt. Cities can regain their rhythm. But a human life once lost cannot be restored.

History has already recorded what happened on that morning. The greater task belongs to the present—to ensure that remembrance does not end with ceremonies, but becomes a reason to value peace, dignity, dialogue and human life.



CHITIKENA KIRAN KUMAR
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India's Rise as a
GLOBAL MEDICAL TOURISM HUB

Across the world, healthcare is increasingly becoming global. Patients are no longer confined to their home countries when seeking quality treatment, specialised medical to manchi Lo unna Needa expertise or affordable care. This growing movement of patients across borders has given rise to medical travel, an important and rapidly developing part of the global healthcare sector. For India, this trend offers a significant opportunity to bring together advanced medical care, skilled professionals, modern infrastructure, hospitality and its rich traditions of wellness.

India is steadily strengthening its position as a destination for international healthcare. More than five lakh foreign nationals are estimated to have travelled to India for medical treatment in 2025, according to government figures. Patients come to India for a wide range of services, including cardiac care, cancer treatment, orthopaedic procedures, fertility care and dental treatment.

India is attractive to international patients because it has well-established hospitals, experienced doctors, advanced medical facilities and comparatively affordable treatment. For many major procedures, patients can access quality healthcare at competitive costs, along with specialised medical expertise and modern healthcare facilities.

Medical tourism in India broadly covers two areas: medical treatment and wellness programmes based on AYUSH. AYUSH includes Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy. The combination of modern healthcare infrastructure and India's traditional systems of wellness gives the country an opportunity to offer patients a more complete healthcare experience.

The Government of India is also taking steps to make medical travel easier for international patients. The Medical Value Travel portal is designed to simplify the patient journey, while the e-Medical Visa facility has been expanded to nationals of 176 countries. The e-Medical Visa is now valid for one year, with multiple entries permitted. Dedicated e-AYUSH and e-AYUSH Attendant visa categories have also been introduced for foreign visitors seeking traditional Indian systems of medicine and wellness programmes.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has highlighted the potential of the sector and set out an ambition for India to attract 10 million medical value tourists a year. Achieving such a goal would require close cooperation among hospitals, doctors, caregivers, hospitality providers, transport services and other sectors. Maintaining high quality standards and providing a smooth and reliable patient experience will be important for building international confidence.

Medical travel does not end with treatment at the hospital. International patients and their families also need comfortable accommodation, suitable food, reliable transport and support during recovery. Hotels and other accommodation providers can play an important role by understanding these needs. Well-trained staff who respect patients' privacy, care and cultural differences can make the entire experience more comfortable.

India can also connect modern medical treatment with its long-established wellness traditions. Yoga, Ayurveda and other appropriate AYUSH services can complement medical and rehabilitation programmes. This can attract patients who wish to combine treatment with recovery and wellness.

The growth of medical tourism can bring significant economic benefits to India. The country's medical tourism market is estimated at around \$8.7 billion in 2025 and is expected to reach about \$16.2 billion by 2030. The sector can also create many jobs, not only for doctors and nurses, but also for caregivers, patient coordinators,



translators, hospitality workers, transport providers, rehabilitation specialists and other support professionals.

India is well placed to serve patients from regions such as Africa and Central Asia, where international patients travel to the country for a range of medical services. Government support, digital services, regional medical centres and better cooperation between public institutions and private healthcare providers can help strengthen the sector further.

The proposed regional medical hubs and improved digital services can make medical travel easier and more organised. The Ministry of Tourism is promoting India as a medical tourism destination, while the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is working with hospitals, healthcare professionals and industry organisations to improve coordination.

Medical Value Travel offers India much more than the opportunity to attract overseas patients. It can help build a strong and integrated healthcare ecosystem where quality treatment, affordable care, skilled professionals, hospitality and compassionate service come together.

The success of medical tourism will depend on more than building hospitals and medical facilities. Patients need to have trust in the quality of care, easy access, efficient coordination and reliable services throughout their journey. With continued investment in infrastructure, technology, quality standards and skilled professionals, India can strengthen its position as a global medical tourism hub while creating new opportunities for employment, skills and economic growth.



DR. KRISHNA KUMAR VEPAKOMMA
Professor & Principal (Retd.)
Columnist

Mumbai is full of filth: Bombay High Court warns BMC officers over garbage on roads

The Bombay High Court on Thursday pulled up the Mumbai civic body over garbage piling up on city roads, saying the "whole city is full of filth" and warning that ward officers would be held accountable if the situation did not improve.

Hearing a batch of petitions concerning pollution near the Kanjurmarg dumping ground, a division bench of Justices Girish Kulkarni and Neela Gokhale said the "entire municipal machinery is inactive" and questioned how Mumbai could call itself an international city amid the poor state of cleanliness. "Everywhere there is only filth. We will take action against the BMC officers. Seems like the machinery is not working. You need to have a proper SOP. How are we calling ourselves an international city," the bench said. The court observed that while the municipal commissioner and senior officials had initiated some measures, there appeared to be little improvement on the ground, with ward officers failing to take adequate action at several identified garbage dumping spots. "This is a serious matter. This is something very painful. There are some identified spots in the city where one will always find heaps of garbage lying and still the concerned ward officers do not take any action," the court said. The bench warned that it would hold ward officers responsible for failing to maintain cleanliness and hygiene on public roads. "Now we will hold these officers also accountable and responsible.



Draft electoral roll under SIR not the final voter list, says Maharashtra CEO

MUMBAI

Maharashtra's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on Thursday clarified that the recently published draft electoral roll under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) program is not the final voter list. The clarification comes in response to media reports claiming that the total number of voters in the draft list published under the SIR drive is lower than the total votes cast during the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections. Addressing these reports, the state CEO, in a statement detailing the factual situation, said that the primary focus during the first phase of the SIR-2026 was to verify the actual residential status of voters. Consequently, individuals who were not found residing at the addresses provided in their application forms have not been included in the current draft electoral roll. Voters who are currently absent or have relocated from their registered addresses but continue to reside within the state of Maharashtra can now apply to register their names in the voter list corresponding to their current place of residence, it was stressed. Names of deceased

PM Modi's BRICS gala to feature 160 artistes from India and member nations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BRICS Summit gala dinner will feature a 160-member cultural ensemble at Bharat Mandapam. The BRICS Symphony and friendship mural underline India's push for cultural diplomacy and people-to-people ties.



More than 100 artistes, mainly from India and other BRICS countries, are set to perform at a gala dinner that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host for world leaders on the opening day of the BRICS Summit at Bharat Mandapam, according to people familiar with the matter. India will host the summit on September 12 and 13, with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and several other heads of state expected to attend.

The performance, titled 'BRICS Symphony', will feature a large ensemble of dancers and musicians and is being coordinated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), the cultural arm of the Ministry of External Affairs. A special mural is also being cre-

ated at the venue as part of the cultural programme around the summit.

"A large group of artistes -- classical dancers and musicians, largely from India, as well as musicians from various other member countries of BRICS, will showcase 'BRICS Symphony' during the gala dinner that the prime minister will host for the invited leaders at the Bharat Mandapam," a person familiar with the matter told PTI. The ensemble is expected to have about 160 members, with Indian dancers and musicians forming the core of the troupe.

Indian dancers will present classical forms including Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi and Kathak, representing different regions of the country. Musicians will

play traditional Indian instruments, along with musicians from some of the other BRICS member countries. The performance is expected to run for about 20 to 25 minutes and will also include intermittent vocal renditions. Members of the Indian team have been rehearsing over the past two days ahead of the event.

India is a founding member of BRICS and has previously held the chairship in 2012, 2016 and 2021. It assumed the chairship for a fourth time on January 1 and has since hosted meetings across thematic areas including finance, environment, diplomacy, law, culture and tourism. India also hosted the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 14 and 15, chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Under the theme 'Samanvay', the ICCR had welcomed guests at a BRICS cultural performance and gala dinner hosted by Jaishankar on May 14 at Bharat Mandapam, featuring devotional music, Bharatanatyam and folk dances from across India.

BRICS, which began with Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, with Indonesia joining in 2025. Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam became BRICS partner countries last year. The grouping brings together 11 major emerging economies and accounts for around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of global GDP and around 26 per cent of global trade. The year 2026 also marks 20 years since BRICS was established.

Referring to the mural project, the ICCR said in a social media post earlier this week: "The BRICS Summit 2026, hosted by India, provides an important platform for strengthening cooperation

and people-to-people ties among the BRICS nations, including through cultural and artistic exchange. As part of the BRICS Friendship Mural project, artists from across the member countries have come together in India to create a collaborative artwork inspired by the concept of 'Sangam' - the confluence of rivers, symbolising the coming together of diverse cultures and traditions."

It said the artists also visited Agra, where they saw the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort, visited an embroidery and traditional handicraft centre, watched a live Zardozi demonstration and experienced Indian classical music.

In a media statement, the MEA said India's BRICS chairship is guided by the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', reflecting PM Modi's vision of a people-centric approach rooted in the spirit of 'Humanity First'. As India prepares to host the 18th BRICS Summit, the planned performance and mural are being positioned as part of the wider cultural exchange among member countries.



Meeting Held at Banaras Locomotive Works on Compliance with the Four New Labour Codes

VARANASI

A meeting on the effective implementation and compliance of the four new Labour Codes was held today, 10 September 2026, at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) under the chairmanship of Principal Chief Personnel Officer Shri Lalji Chaudhary, with the designated Nodal Officers of all departments. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on issues related to the social security, payment of wages and welfare facilities of contract workers. Emphasis was laid on ensuring compliance with EPF/ESIC provisions, timely payment of wages at prescribed rates, issuance of wage slips, maintenance of attendance records, registration of workers, and other statutory and welfare provisions. It was directed that the provisions of all four new Labour Codes—the Code on Wages, 2019; the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; the Code on Social Security, 2020; and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020—be effectively incorporated and complied with in all con-

tracts relating to contract workers engaged at BLW. All departmental Nodal Officers were instructed to verify the necessary records pertaining to contract workers and contractors engaged in their respective departments and ensure complete compliance with all statutory provisions related to social security, wage payments, workplace safety and worker welfare. It was also clarified during the meeting that compliance with the new Labour Codes would be regularly monitored and reviewed. The concerned departments were directed to keep their compliance status updated and take necessary action at their respective levels. All concerned departments were further instructed to ensure full, effective and time-bound compliance with the four new Labour Codes at BLW and to exercise utmost diligence in this regard. The meeting was attended by Chief Mechanical Engineer/Service Engineer and Principal Employer Shri Vipul Singh, Chief Safety Officer Shri Jitendra Agrawal, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer (Headquarters) Shri Sameer Paul, and other senior officers.



Freight Loading at NFR Registers 4.5% Growth During August 2026

MALIGAON

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) registered a total freight loading of 0.957 million tonnes (MT) during August 2026, recording a growth of 4.5% over the 0.916 MT loaded during the corresponding month of the previous year. The cumulative freight loading from April to August 2026 reached 5.09 MT, reflecting an increase of 6.5% over the 4.78 MT recorded during the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Several major commodities contributed to the growth during August 2026. Cement loading more than doubled to 0.13 MT, registering a significant increase of 106.6% over August 2025. Loading of miscellaneous commodities, including fruits, vegetables and timber, grew by 92.3%, while coal and dolomite loading increased by 54.5% and 46.4%, respectively. Food-

grains loading also recorded a growth of 39.6%, followed by container traffic at 6.3% and fertilizer loading at 3.7% during the month. During the cumulative period from April to August 2026, cement loading recorded an impressive growth of 161.9%, while miscellaneous commodities registered an increase of 44.6%. Dolomite loading grew by 34.2%, followed by coal at 7.5% and container traffic at 7.1% over the corresponding period of the previous year.

The sustained growth in freight loading reflects NFR's continued focus on improving operational efficiency, strengthening coordination with freight customers and facilitating the timely transportation of essential commodities. NFR remains committed towards expanding its freight traffic base and providing reliable and customer-oriented transportation services across the region.

Delhi's young athletes to receive Rs 2,000 monthly incentive at grassroots level: CM Rekha Gupta

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, has taken a decision to nurture sporting talent at the grassroots level and help young athletes progress to higher levels of competition by providing them Rs 2,000 monthly incentive. At a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister on Thursday, the Delhi government approved the introduction of the 'Grassroot Training Support Assistance' component under the 'Mukhyamantri Khel Prot-

sahan Yojana' (MKPY), an official statement said. Under the new initiative, eligible young athletes who regularly train at Delhi government sports centres and stadiums will receive financial assistance of Rs 2,000 per month. The aim is to remove financial barriers that can disrupt training and ensure that young athletes have access to continuous training from the early stages. Chief Minister Gupta said the new assistance scheme expands the reach of the 'Mukhyamantri Khel Protshan Yojana' to the grassroots level.

Bound by law: Omar Abdullah on full rendition of Vande Mataram at J&K events

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday hit back at ally Congress over the Vande Mataram row, saying standing for all the stanzas of the national song at official events is a statutory requirement and cannot be bypassed. He said the issue had been needlessly politicised after the Congress criticised the full rendition of the song at the inauguration of the International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir.



chief justice of our high court are present, the national anthem will obviously be played." He said that legally, wherever the national anthem is played, all the stanzas of Vande Mataram have been made mandatory. He said the rule was not limited to Jammu and Kashmir. "This is not just for Jammu and Kashmir; it applies to the entire country. In states governed by the Congress, the same will happen at government functions," he said. Asserting that legal action can be taken against those who do not stand for the full national song, Abdullah asked whether the Congress wanted Kashmiris to be jailed on this pretext. Referring to the festival's closing ceremony, he said a Union minister would be present and added, "The national anthem will be played there, and the national song will be played too." Abdullah said his party had not adopted the full song, but had no objection if the Congress revoked the provision in future. "When the Congress comes to power, and I pray the Congress comes to power as soon as possible, they can revoke this in Par-

liament. Let them do it, we have no objection. In fact, as a party, we have never adopted Vande Mataram, and we won't adopt it in the future either. But whatever our legal and statutory obligations are, we have to fulfil them," he said. He described the row as an attempt to make "a mountain out of a molehill".

On the controversy over alleged derogatory remarks by National Conference chief spokesperson and Zadibal MLA Tanvir Sadiq against the people of Kashmir, Abdullah said it too had been blown out of proportion. "Now, what did Tanvir say that was historically inaccurate? Walter Lawrence wrote about it in his book. Many other historians have documented the extreme poverty of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly of Kashmiris, how back then we were crushed between the 'Zaildars', 'Chakdars', and landlords. People had no money," he said. Defending Sadiq further, the chief minister said the reference to Kashmiris once having to borrow trousers from a mosque to visit the city had often been made by senior National

Vijay Mallya's Rs 15,000 crore recovery won't end money laundering case: ED

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has told the Bombay High Court that the subsequent recovery of bank dues from fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya cannot, by itself, make the pending proceedings under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) or the criminal prosecution complaints against him redundant or infructuous.

In its reply, filed through advocate Ashish Mehta, the agency said the recovery of substantial amounts by the consortium of banks was distinct from the criminal proceedings arising out of alleged scheduled offences and money laundering. It maintained that the amount recovered by the lenders may have a bearing on the calculation of outstanding civil dues, but cannot determine whether the offences alleged against Mallya have been established. The ED also highlighted Mallya's continued absence from India and his failure to submit himself to the jurisdiction of



the competent criminal court. The agency said this remained a relevant factor while considering the relief sought by him. "His continued absence and conduct, therefore, remain relevant to the overall factual background of the present proceedings," the ED stated. The agency was responding in the backdrop of Mallya seeking closure of a long-pending matter before the High Court on the ground that his civil liabilities had effectively been settled. His lawyers have claimed that the SBI-led consortium has recovered around Rs 15,000 crore, compared with an orig-

inal claim of about Rs 6,203 crore, including interest. The ED, however, rejected the characterisation of the dispute as essentially commercial. It said Mallya's attempt to link the recovery of bank dues with the continuation of criminal proceedings was misconceived because the PMLA case concerned alleged scheduled offences and money laundering, which operate separately from recovery proceedings initiated by lenders. "The amount of bank recovery and the liability determined in recovery proceedings may have relevance for the purpose of quantifying the outstanding dues of the banks; however, the same does not determine whether the ingredients of the scheduled offences or the offence of money laundering are made out". The agency further said the subsequent recovery of assets did not wipe out the criminal proceedings. It pointed out that properties worth approximately Rs 14,31.60 crore

had been restored or handed over to the SBI-led consortium pursuant to orders passed during the restoration process by a special PMLA court in Mumbai. "The restoration of assets under Section 8(8) of the PMLA is a statutory mechanism for restitution to a claimant having a legitimate interest in the property and does not, by itself, determine the existence of the scheduled offence or the offence of money-laundering. The subsequent restoration/recovery of assets, therefore, cannot be construed as extinguishing or rendering infructuous the pending proceedings under the PMLA," said ED in its reply. Mallya, who has been in the UK since leaving India in 2016, was declared a fugitive economic offender in 2019. His broader legal battle also includes a challenge to the constitutional validity of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act and the proceedings declaring him a fugitive economic offender.

Gender-based violence deep-rooted and multi-faceted challenge in Pakistan: Report

ISLAMABAD

An effective multi-sectoral approach is needed to combat Gender-Vased Violence (GBV) in Pakistan, as the issue is deep-rooted and multi-faceted in society, stemming from individual attitudes, family dynamics and community norms, a report has detailed.

Prevention measures and conviction rates in cases related to gender-based violence in Pakistan remain low despite the passage of anti-rape legislation, domestic violence laws and several amendments addressing crimes against women, according to a report in The Friday Times.

Lack of political will, stereotypes, societal taboos, and judicial processes mired in caveats and complexities together prevent effective action against gender-based violence in Pakistan. Authorities might be making some efforts to curb gender-based violence in Pakistan; however, it is clearly not enough or is not being conducted in a way that produces any discern-



ible results, the report detailed.

"If we are serious about nipping GBV in the bud, the whole 'ecosystem' nurturing violence against women must be disabled, and we need to decide where to start. GBV is a deep-rooted, multi-faceted challenge in our society, stemming from individual attitudes, family dynamics, community norms, and so much more, and hence requires a commitment

to multi-sectoral approaches before we can even cause a dent in this scourge," it mentioned.

Recently, six women were allegedly raped, while three young girls, including a mentally challenged 15-year-old, were sexually assaulted in different places in Pakistan's Punjab province. All the incidents occurred in Lahore in the past few days, despite Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's repeated

claims of a zero-tolerance policy against gender-based violence, Pakistan-based daily Dawn reported.

In one shocking incident, the suspect took a mentally challenged girl to a deserted place, where he allegedly raped her. In another incident, a woman in Hanjarwal said that her former husband forcefully entered her house and allegedly raped her. She alleged that the suspect

physically assaulted her when she resisted and threatened her against reporting the incident to police. Another woman said that a cab driver told her about a job opportunity with a good salary package at a factory. A few days later, the driver contacted the woman and told her to come to a place in Kahna to share details about the job. When she reached the location, the cab driver and his friend gang-raped her and also made a video of the gang rape and committed the crime again through blackmail.

A woman from Johar Town filed a complaint with the police, where she alleged that a man established physical relations with her on the promise that he would get married to her but refused to do so after she got pregnant.

Nishtar Colony police registered a rape case against a suspect who sexually assaulted a woman several times. Similarly, Shahdara Town police registered a case after a woman complained that a man raped her several times.

In July, Sahil's Six Months

Cruel Numbers Report revealed that 3,172 cases of gender-based violence were reported in Pakistan in the first six months of 2026, including 18 cases involving transgender persons.

According to the report, 644 murders, 514 cases of torture, 462 abductions, 363 suicides, 280 rapes, 175 injuries, 132 honour killings, and 21 other crimes, including harassment, gang rape and pornography cases, were reported in Pakistan in the first six months of 2026, Dawn reported.

As per the report, 334 victims were in the age group 21-30 years, while 306 victims were aged between 11-20 years and 120 victims were aged between 31-40 years. The ages of victims were not included in 71 per cent of the cases.

The six-month report was based on information gathered from national and regional newspapers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan forces kill father, forcibly disappear son in Balochistan

QUETTA

At least one civilian was extrajudicially killed, while another was forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces in Balochistan, local media reported on Thursday.

Citing family sources, The Balochistan Post reported that Pakistani forces allegedly killed Akbar Haider during a raid on his home in the Turbat area of Kech district and subsequently detained and forcibly disappeared his son Babar.

According to the family, Akbar Haider spotted several people climbing over the wall of his house and allegedly mistook them for thieves during the raid on his house on Monday night.

He reportedly fired into the air with his licensed pistol, after which Pakistani forces allegedly opened fire, hitting him in the abdomen.

The family said that Haider sustained serious injuries and lost a significant amount of blood, while alleging that the forces prevented him from being taken to hospital or receiving medical care.

The forces left the area after searching the house and completing other operations, but by then Akbar Haider had died from excessive blood loss, the family said.

Reports suggest that the

following day Pakistani forces took Akbar Haider's son Babar from Absar Football Ground and transferred him to an undisclosed location.

Expressing concern over Babar's detention, his family said he had not been involved in any illegal activity, while calling on the authorities to disclose his whereabouts and produce him before a court if there are any allegations against him.

Meanwhile, Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, strongly condemned the enforced disappearance of four Baloch men by Pakistani forces in separate incidents across Pakistan, including Mastung, Quetta and Karachi, over the past few days.

The victims were identified as 20-year-old Ali Baloch, 19-year-old Bakhtiyar Ahmed, 45-year-old Habib Ur Rehman Baloch and 25-year-old Zakir Razzak. "These cases demonstrate the continuing use of enforced disappearance against Baloch citizens and the urgent need for accountability, transparency and protection of fundamental rights," Paank noted. The rights body called on the Pakistani authorities to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of the four missing youths and ensure their safe release.



Successive river blockages highlight Nepal's vulnerability to climate disasters

KATHMANDU

As Nepal continues to grapple with the devastation caused by the massive Bhotekoshi River floods in Rasuwa district, a new threat has emerged, with a series of landslides blocking rivers and streams across the country over the past two weeks.

These incidents have raised fresh concerns over the risk of further flooding and disasters in a country vulnerable to climate change-induced disasters.

On August 26, an avalanche blocked the Lhendi Khola, a tributary of the Bhotekoshi River, in Rasuwa district in Nepal-China border area. Subsequent flooding caused massive loss of life and property, with the latest figures showing that 1,369 people had died and 5,132 remained unaccounted for as of Wednesday evening, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority.

Since then, three separate incidents involving rivers or streams being blocked have occurred in Nepal. However, they did not result in large-scale flooding as the water gradually washed away the landslide debris.

The latest river blockage occurred in Annapurna Rural Municipality, a remote mountainous area of Kaski

district in western Nepal.

On Tuesday, a landslide temporarily blocked the Kimrung Khola, a tributary of the Modi Khola River, in Annapurna Rural Municipality, raising concerns about a possible flash flood downstream.

Authorities issued an alert for residents of Nayapul, Birrethanti and surrounding settlements downstream of the blockage, urging them to move to safe locations and take necessary precautionary measures.

On Wednesday, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority issued another notice saying that water flow in the Kimrung Khola had returned to normal and that there was currently no major risk of flooding.

"However, as a normal level of risk remains, people are advised to remain alert and exercise caution along the Modi Khola up to the confluence with the Kali Gandaki River," the authority said.

Kumang Singh Gurung, chief district officer at District Administration Office, Kaski, said the alert was issued after shepherds reported that the stream had been blocked at a location near Annapurna South. "The landslide blocked the upper section of the Kimrung Khola," he said.

Prince Aga Khan meets HM Shah, discusses strengthening cooperation across various sectors

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, on Thursday met Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed strengthening cooperation in various sectors.

"Pleased to meet His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V in New Delhi. India cherishes its bond with the Aga Khan Development Network, tied by a shared commitment to human development," HM Shah stated on X.

"Our discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in social development, irrigation, cooperatives, natural farming—including millets—and solar energy. Reaffirmed our shared commitment to advancing these partnerships for sustainable development and the greater good of humanity," he added.

Earlier in the day, he called



on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. During their discussions, President Murmu appreciated the work undertaken by the Aga Khan Development Network.

"His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President appreciated the work undertaken by the Aga Khan Development Network and said it demonstrates how non-profit organisations,

working in partnership with the government, can improve people's quality of life," the President's Secretariat stated on X.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan held a meeting with Aga Khan, with discussions held on further strengthening cooperation between India and the Aga Khan Development Network in several sectors, including sports and education.

During the meeting, the two leaders reaffirmed the

need to eradicate radicalisation and emphasised that dialogue remains the path to peace, stability and shared prosperity.

"H.H. Prince Rahim Aga Khan V met Hon'ble Vice-President of India Shri C P Radhakrishnan at Rashtrapati Bhavan today. The two leaders discussed the Aga Khan Development Network's contributions to water and sanitation, women-led Self-Help Groups, education and community development, and appreciated its impactful initiatives in East Africa and Afghanistan," the Vice President's Office posted on X.

"They also discussed further strengthening cooperation between India and the Aga Khan Development Network in sectors such as sports and education. Both leaders reaffirmed the need to eradicate radicalisation and underscored that dialogue remains the path to peace, stability and shared prosperity," it added.

Ireland is monitoring developments in Balochistan, reflecting growing international attention

QUETTA

Reflecting on the growing international attention to the developments in Balochistan province of Pakistan, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Helen McEntee, has said that the country is monitoring the developments in the region and continues to raise concerns over human rights with Pakistani authorities through diplomatic channels.

McEntee made the remarks in an official response to Ruth Coppinger, an Irish Parliamentarian who raised concerns about the situation in Baloch-

istan and reports of civilian casualties following the latest incidents in the province, local media reported.

"According to a statement issued by the Foreign Department of the Baloch National Movement (BNM), the intervention followed the organisation's international outreach efforts after the Pakistani airstrikes in Balochistan's Surab. The BNM said the issue had been brought before the Irish Parliament by Coppinger, whom the organisation thanked for highlighting developments in Balochistan," online news network The Balochistan Post reported.

McEntee said she was aware of the reports regarding ongoing unrest in Balochistan, noting that the region has seen violent insurgencies, political and ethnic conflict in recent years.

According to her, the promotion and protection of universal human rights remains a cornerstone of Irish foreign policy, which includes the protection of freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and participation in the political process. "The Irish foreign minister noted that Ireland regularly engages with Pakistan on political and human rights issues through both bilateral

India emerges as 'dependable partner' in times of crisis: Report

DAR ES SALAAM

India's emergence as a first responder is more than just a slogan; it reflects a blend of diplomatic intent, military mobility, indigenous technology, medical expertise, logistics and long-term infrastructure development, a report has highlighted.

It noted that New Delhi's response to the earthquakes in Venezuela and Afghanistan demonstrates the expanding reach of India's humanitarian capabilities. Despite the geographical distance and differing diplomatic climate, New Delhi moved swiftly to assist in both countries.

The trend is part of a broader evolution of India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, from regional interventions to a global humanitarian footprint extending across the Indian Ocean Region, West Asia and beyond," a report in the Tanzania-based news website IPP Media stated.

"India's growing role as a first responder to humanitarian crises and natural disasters is becoming an important dimension of its global engagement. From Venezuela in South America to Afghanistan in Asia, India has demonstrated a willingness to rapidly deploy relief materials, medical teams, military assets and logistical capabilities when disasters strike," the report detailed.

"The response to the devastating earthquakes in Venezuela in June 2026 and to the earthquake in Afghanistan in



August 2025 illustrates this approach particularly well. These interventions are not isolated incidents. Over the past decade, India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations have expanded across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond, reflecting a broader policy of being a reliable and responsible partner in times of crisis," it detailed.

According to the report, India's relief efforts in Venezuela following the massive twin earthquakes in June this year carried significance beyond the quantity of assistance provided. Although India's relationship with Venezuela is not as close or frequent as its ties with neighbouring countries and Gulf partners, New Delhi responded at short notice by sending military aircraft, medical personnel and a field hospital.

"This demonstrates an important evolution in India's humanitarian diplomacy: assistance is increasingly being extended not merely on the basis of conventional strategic proximity but on the basis of humanitarian need. The message

is clear. India seeks to project itself as a country capable of responding to crises wherever its capabilities can make a meaningful difference, including in countries where its immediate strategic footprint may be limited," it added.

The report noted that India's humanitarian support for Afghanistan continued beyond its initial earthquake response last year. In April 2026, following another combination of floods and earthquakes that struck Afghanistan, India sent additional relief supplies, including kitchen sets, hygiene kits, sleeping bags, tarpaulins and plastic sheets.

"Afghanistan's experience demonstrates that India's humanitarian policy can operate even in complex diplomatic environments, with assistance focused on civilians rather than political considerations," the report stressed. By responding swiftly to humanitarian crises wherever help is needed, it said, India is "strengthening its image as a dependable partner in times of crisis and reinforcing its broader position as a responsible global power."

Chinese, Taiwanese Arrests Expose Bangladesh Cybercrime Network

DHAKA

Bangladesh police recently arrested six people, including five Chinese and one Taiwanese national, following a raid on a hotel in Cox's Bazar district that uncovered what investigators believe could be one of the country's largest organised cyber-fraud operations, a report has stated.

It noted that the six suspects were charged with online fraud and cybercrime and sent to jail after being produced before a Cox's Bazar court on September 4.

The raid led to the seizure of nearly 2,000 iPhones, dozens of laptops and desktop computers, and a specially designed facility reportedly used to operate hundreds of online identities.

Police said around 250 to



300 others, mainly Chinese and Taiwanese nationals, are still at large, including several wanted fugitives suspected of organising the network, according to a report in Bangladesh's newspaper The Daily Star.

"The operation raises a question that extends beyond Cox's Bazar: is Bangladesh beginning to develop the kind of criminal ecosystem that has

already turned parts of South and Southeast Asia into major centres of transnational fraud? There is not yet enough evidence to suggest that Bangladesh has become a regional scam hub on the scale of Cambodia or Myanmar. But the Cox's Bazar case could be an early indication of a problem that, once established, can prove considerably harder to contain," the report detailed.

It highlighted several vulnerabilities in Bangladesh that have enabled such networks to establish themselves, including relatively easy entry for foreign nationals, weak monitoring of rented properties, limited cybercrime investigation capabilities and the availability of local facilitators.

"The question, therefore, is not simply whether foreign scam operators have arrived in Bangladesh, but whether the country is developing the conditions under which a wider criminal ecosystem could take root," it stated.

Highlighting that the Cox's Bazar case did not emerge in complete isolation, the report said that days before the raid, Chinese-linked criminal networks were found operating from Dhaka's Uttara,

Bashundhara and Nikunja areas.

The networks were allegedly involved in online scams as well as illegal VoIP and gambling operations, with investigators also identifying Bangladeshi accomplices in some of these cases.

According to the report, Bangladeshi investigators and the Chinese Embassy have also flagged another worrying pattern involving Bangladeshi women allegedly being deceived into "fraudulent marriages" with Chinese nationals.

"None of these cases has been shown to be connected to the Cox's Bazar network. But they demonstrate that Chinese-linked criminal activity, and local facilitation of such activity, are already present in Bangladesh," it added.



Skoda Auto
VW India, JSW
Group Explore
Partnership
NEW DELHI

Skoda Auto Volkswagen India and JSW Group have signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore a strategic partnership in India, with the proposed cooperation aimed at expanding product offerings, deepening localisation and strengthening manufacturing and R&D capabilities. The planned cooperation aims to strengthen competitiveness through expanded product offerings, deeper localization, and enhanced manufacturing and R&D capabilities, Skoda Auto Volkswagen India said. "It is based on a two party partnership structure with joint control, clearly defined roles, and mechanisms designed to support swift and effective decision making. Deep localisation and platform synergies are intended to support competitive product offerings, increased scale, and improved profitability in the Indian market," the company said.

MSD inaugurates expanded
Hyderabad Tech Center

Expanded Center enhances MSD's global technology network and digital capabilities that support innovative health solutions worldwide
Shri D. Sridhar Babu, Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce and Legislative Affairs, commemorated the opening of the new office

MSD (trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., USA) today announced the opening of its expanded Hyderabad Tech Center, a new facility supporting enterprise digital technology capabilities across artificial intelligence, data, digital platforms, cyber-security, cloud, automation and software engineering and more. The Center was inaugurated by Shri D. Sridhar Babu, Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce and Legislative Affairs, joined by Abhishek Narayan Singh, senior vice president, Digital Human Health, MSD. Building on MSD's long-standing presence in India, the expanded office enhances the company's global technology network and brings



together technology talent focused on developing scalable digital solutions that help advance MSD's purpose of saving and improving lives. Since its launch in 2025, the Hyderabad Tech Center has grown in scale and scope as an important part of MSD's global technology network. The expanded facility adds capacity for Hyderabad-based teams to contribute to enterprise technology solutions, collaborate with colleagues globally and help

Hon'ble Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce, and Legislative Affairs, Government of Telangana, said, "Today, we are proud to welcome MSD to the growing life sciences ecosystem. Telangana has built a truly end-to-end life sciences ecosystem of more than 2,000 companies. Hyderabad has emerged as a global life sciences capital and is home to one of the largest concentrations of USFDA-approved facilities outside the United States. Over the last two years, we have built on this strong foundation to accelerate discovery, innovation, advanced R&D and global capability creation. Through our Next-Gen Life Sciences Policy 2026-30, we are bringing discovery, manufacturing, clinical research and technology together, giving



RECPDCL Hands Over
Musalgaon Power
Transmission Limited

a SPV of Intra State Transmission Project of Maharashtra, to M/s Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited

REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, a Maharashtra CPSU under the Ministry of Power, handed over Musalgaon Power Transmission Limited, the project-specific Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), to the successful bidder, M/s Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited, on 09 September 2026. M/s Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited emerged as the successful bidder through the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process conducted by RECPDCL, the Bid Process Coordinator, for development of Maharashtra's intra-state transmission project on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis.

The SPV was handed over by Shri Ratnesh Kumar, General Manager (Engg.), RECPDCL, to Shri Amit R. Naik, Chief Engineer (TBCB), Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited, in the presence of senior officials from Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited, Maharashtra STU, and RECPDCL. The transmission project broadly envisages establishment of a 220/132/33 kV AIS substation at Musalgaon, 220 kV D/c line of around 111 km from Musalgaon to Babhaleshwar (existing) & Raymond (existing) and 132 kV D/c line of around 13 km from Musalgaon to Sinner (existing) along with associated works. The implementation scheduled of project is 12 months at an estimated cost of Rs. 560 crores.

India's top 50 districts
drive 33 per cent of
informal sector activity

India's top 50 districts drive nearly one-third of the unincorporated non-agricultural sector's activity in the country, while women comprise one-third of the workforce in 237 districts, reflecting their growing empowerment across the country, according to the first-ever district-level estimates released by the National Statistics Office on Thursday. "The top 50 districts, ranked by the number of unincorporated establishments, account for nearly one-third of the total establishments, workforce, and Gross Value Added," the figures show. Roughly one-third of all districts have more than one lakh unincorporated establishments per district. In 280 districts, GVA per worker exceeds the all-India average, indicating relatively higher levels of economic productivity in these districts. The top 10 districts are spread across four states: Gujarat, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, while the top 50 districts are spread across twelve states: Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.



The district-level distribution further reveals considerable variation in the scale of the unincorporated sector across the country. Roughly one-third of all districts have more than one lakh unincorporated establishments per district, while about 9 per cent of the districts have fewer than 10,000 establishments per district. Only 16 districts (eight from West Bengal, three from Maharashtra, two from Gujarat, one each from Karnataka, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh) have more than 5 lakh unincorporated establishments per district. The importance of granular and high-frequency data has grown significantly in recent years, reflecting the increasing need for evidence-based policymaking and targeted interventions. In particular, sub-state-level statistics play a crucial role in identifying regional variations, emerging strengths and areas requiring attention, thereby enabling more targeted and area-specific policy interventions, an official statement said.

Sensex ends 138 points higher,
Nifty nears 23,500; Axis Bank up 2%

Benchmark indices snapped their losing streak on Thursday, ending higher despite Brent crude remaining above the \$100-a-barrel mark as investors took some comfort from buying in key large-cap stocks.



Gains, however, remained limited amid elevated oil prices, geopolitical tensions and uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's rate trajectory. The BSE Sensex opened at 74,742.54 and closed at 74,902.59, gaining 138.36 points, or 0.19%. The Nifty 50 opened at 23,446.60 and ended at 23,477.80, up 46.30 points, or 0.20%. Brent crude was trading at \$102.24 a barrel, up 1.02%, while WTI crude rose 1.53% to \$97.52. Oil prices remained elevated as the Middle East conflict continued to raise concerns over supply disruptions. Sustained crude prices above \$100 are a concern for India as they can increase the import bill, add to inflationary pressures and weigh on corporate earnings. The market's recovery came after both the Sensex and Nifty had fallen for seven of the previous eight sessions, with the benchmarks ending Wednesday at three-month lows. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "The prospect of synchronised monetary tightening strengthened as higher crude prices and prolonged geopolitical tensions reinforced energy-led inflation concerns. 'Investors now await key US inflation data for cues on the rate trajectory. Meanwhile, rising global bond yields, coupled with concerns over a potential yen carry trade unwind amid expectations of a BOJ rate hike and a stronger yen, are likely to keep capital flows into emerging markets under pressure,' he added. 'Consequently, the domestic market endured a choppy session on expiry day amid weak Asian cues, as investor focus remained closely tethered to the volatility in crude prices. Although the strong August equity fund flow data and the moderation in the SIP stoppage ratio lent support to the markets, sentiment was tempered by the depreciating rupee and firming domestic bond yields,' said Vijay Kumar.

POWER, BANKING STOCKS LEAD GAINS Power stocks led the recovery among major Sensex constituents. PowerGrid was the top gainer, rising 2.27%, followed by Axis Bank, which gained 1.65%. UltraTech Cement advanced 1.44%, NTPC rose 1.13%, Tech Mahindra gained 1.09% and Bharti Airtel climbed 1%. HDFC Bank gained 0.98%, while L&T, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Bajaj Finance rose 0.76%, 0.62% and 0.58%, respectively. Titan gained 0.40%, TCS rose 0.34% and SBI advanced 0.29%. On the losing side, HCLTech fell 2.43%, Tata Steel declined 1.38% and Trent dropped 1.12%. ITC fell 0.84%, while BEL and Adani Ports declined 0.79% each. Maruti slipped 0.78% and Reliance Industries fell 0.47%. The broader sectoral picture remained mixed. The Nifty Financial Services 25/50 index gained 0.53%, while Media rose 0.55%, PSU Bank advanced 0.39%, Private Bank gained 0.34%, Financial Services Ex-Bank rose 0.31% and Consumer Durables edged up 0.06%. Oil & Gas gained 0.01%, while Realty was almost flat, declining 0.02%. On the other hand, Nifty Metal fell 0.65%, Pharma declined 0.51%, Auto dropped 0.41%, FMCG fell 0.27% and Healthcare declined 0.38%. Nifty MidSmall IT & Telecom was down 0.77%, while Nifty IT declined 0.08%. Chemicals fell 0.03%, while Nifty MidSmall Healthcare declined 0.52%. Nifty 500 Healthcare fell 0.31%. The broader market remained weaker than the benchmark indices. The Nifty 100 gained 0.08%, while Nifty 200 fell 0.02% and Nifty 500 declined 0.03%. The Nifty Midcap 50 fell 0.36%, Midcap 100 declined 0.38% and Smallcap 100 slipped 0.07%. India VIX, a measure of expected market volatility, declined 1.71% to 11.72. The recovery in the headline indices came even as crude remained above \$100, with investors now looking towards US inflation data and developments in the Middle East for further cues. Elevated oil prices, global bond yields and currency volatility are likely to remain key risks for the Indian market in the near term.

PepsiCo bullish on India, targets
top-10 global
market status
GUWAHATI

Global food and beverage major PepsiCo expects India to break into its list of top 10 global markets in the coming years, as the country continues to draw investment for its expanding manufacturing footprint and rising consumption potential, its India & South Asia CEO Jagrut Kotecha said on Thursday. Calling India one of its most promising markets globally, he said the company remains "very bullish" on the country's growth potential, backed by an investment of around Rs 5,700 crore by 2030 to scale up capacity and strengthen its regional footprint. PepsiCo, which is investing to enhance capacity and scale up its supply chain network, inaugurated its fifth manufacturing plant in Nalbari, Assam, on Thursday, with an investment of Rs 778 crore.

Telangana, Zepto to Set Up 5 PRAGATI
Centres for Gig Workers Across Hyderabad

2024 Hyderabad HeatWatch survey found nearly 7 in 10 workers surveyed lacked clean washroom access; centres to provide all-weather rest spaces, drinking water, sanitation, health support, charging and WiFi

The Government of Telangana and Zepto have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish five Project PRAGATI Centres across Hyderabad, creating dedicated spaces where gig workers across platforms can rest and access essential facilities during the working day. The initiative seeks to address gaps in basic urban infrastructure for workers who spend much of their day on the road. A 2024 HeatWatch survey of 166 gig and platform workers in Hyderabad, whose findings were subsequently examined in Economic & Political Weekly, found that nearly 69% of workers surveyed lacked access to clean washrooms, while more than 80% lacked shaded resting areas or cooling facilities while working. The PRAGATI Centres will be open to gig workers across platforms, including



workers in quick commerce, food delivery, e-commerce, apparel and other last-mile delivery networks. Depending on the locations jointly identified by the Government and Zepto, each centre could see hundreds of worker visits. Vikas Sharma, Chief Operating Officer, Zepto, said, "India's gig workforce is projected to grow from 77 lakh workers in 2020-21 to 2.35 crore by 2029-30. As this workforce grows, the infrastructure supporting it must evolve too. Access to drinking water, clean washrooms, a safe place to rest or somewhere to charge a phone are basic requirements for anyone spending much of their working day on the move. We already provide these facilities to delivery partners across our store network. Through Project PRAGATI, we are extending that thinking beyond Zepto's ecosystem and working with the Government of Telangana to create spaces that can be accessed by gig workers across platforms." Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary to the Government, Metropolitan Area &

Urban Development Department, said, "Gig and platform workers are an increasingly important part of Hyderabad's urban economy. As the nature of work evolves, cities must also respond to the everyday infrastructure needs of people working on the move. Project PRAGATI will create accessible spaces that address some of these practical requirements and are available to workers irrespective of the platform they are associated with. We welcome Zepto's partnership in supporting this initiative for Hyderabad's wider gig-worker community." Each centre will provide safe, all-weather resting space, clean drinking water, clean washroom access, first-aid support, mobile charging points and WiFi connectivity. The centres will also host periodic health camps and facilitate awareness around e-Shram registration for eligible gig and unorganised workers. Zepto will fund and maintain the centres on an ongoing basis as provided in the MoU with the Malkajigiri Municipal Corporation. Zepto's store network already provides delivery partners access to core facilities such as drinking water, washrooms, resting space, charging and first-aid support. Project PRAGATI extends this approach to the wider gig-worker ecosystem through dedicated, platform-agnostic centres. About Zepto Founded in 2020 by Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra, Zepto is a quick commerce marketplace platform operating in India. Zepto uses technology and a network of delivery hubs to enable delivery. Zepto sellers offer products across categories such as groceries, household electronics, beauty, apparel, toys, and everyday essentials. Zepto Café is Zepto's food offering, providing freshly prepared items through the sellers on the Zepto app.

India's growth momentum resilient,
constructive on equities: Report

India's growth momentum remains resilient, supported by a strong Q1FY27 GDP print, returning foreign portfolio investor flows, among other positive factors, a report said on Thursday, going overweigh on Banks, Capital Goods and Defence, Diversified Financials, Metals, Healthcare, Telecom and Ports. The report from PL Wealth also cited robust domestic liquidity and a healthy capital expenditure cycle as positive macro factors for India. The firm maintained a selective approach across sectors and market capitalisations, while remaining underweight on IT Services, Auto, Consumer and Oil & Gas. The foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers for two consecutive months and domestic institutional investors continued to supply strong liquidity, the report said, while remaining selectively constructive on Indian equities for a short term (0-6 months). Valuations remain reasonable relative to historical averages, limiting meaningful downside. The report favoured staggered deployment into quality large-cap and diversified equity strategies, with a preference for stock-picking over passive index exposure.



Six Modaks to Sweeten Ganesh Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival of devotion, celebration and togetherness, and few things capture its festive spirit quite like a beautifully prepared plate of modaks. Considered among Lord Ganesha's favourite offerings, modak has a special place in homes and temples during

the 10-day Ganesh Utsav. From traditional steamed varieties to contemporary versions packed with dry fruits, millet, rose and paan, the humble modak has evolved into a versatile festive sweet while retaining its cultural significance. Ganesh Chaturthi is set to begin

on September 14 and continue until September 25 this year. Across the country, families will welcome Lord Ganesha into their homes, decorate their prayer spaces, prepare elaborate offerings and gather with relatives and friends. Food forms an important part of these celebra-

tions, with devotees preparing a variety of sweets and savouries as offerings to Bappa. Among all these festive preparations, modak continues to hold pride of place. In Maharashtra, the traditional Ukadiche Modak made with a rice-flour covering and a sweet coconut-jaggery

filling, is one of the most popular preparations associated with the festival. However, changing tastes and creative home cooking have introduced several new interpretations of the classic sweet. For those looking to add something different to their Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations,

modaks made with saffron, pistachios, dry fruits, ragi, paan and rose offer plenty of inspiration. These recipes bring together familiar festive ingredients and modern flavours, making them suitable for both traditional celebrations and contemporary dessert tables.

The Timeless Appeal of Modak

Modak is more than just a sweet served during Ganesh Chaturthi. It carries deep cultural and devotional significance. Traditionally, devotees prepare modaks as an offering to Lord Ganesha, who is believed to have a special fondness for the sweet. In many households, 21 modaks are offered during the puja before the prasad is shared among family members and guests. The classic steamed modak is particularly associated with Maharashtra. Its delicate rice-flour outer layer is filled with a mixture of grated coconut, jaggery and cardamom. The combination is simple, but the aroma of freshly steamed modaks filling the kitchen is an important part of the festival experience for many families.

Over time, however, the modak has moved beyond the traditional recipe. Mawa-based modaks, chocolate modaks, dry-fruit varieties and versions made with healthier grains have become increasingly popular. This experimentation has allowed families to preserve the tradition while giving the sweet a personal touch.

The six varieties below are ideal for anyone who wants to experiment this Ganesh Chaturthi without moving too far away from the festive character of the traditional sweet.

Kesari Modak for a Festive Touch

Saffron has long been associated with Indian festive cooking, thanks to its distinctive aroma, warm colour and luxurious flavour. Adding kesar to modak instantly gives the sweet a rich and celebratory character, making Kesari Modak an excellent choice for Ganesh Chaturthi. The recipe retains the familiar sweetness of a traditional modak while allowing saffron to take centre stage. A small quantity of saffron strands can be soaked in warm milk before being added to the sweet mixture. This helps release the colour and aroma of the spice and gives the modaks their characteristic golden appearance. Depending on

the preparation, the base can be made with mawa, milk solids or a traditional rice-flour mixture. Cardamom can be added for extra fragrance, while a few saffron strands can be used as a garnish. The key to a good Kesari Modak is balance. Saffron has a delicate flavour, so using too much can overpower the sweetness. Allowing the saffron to infuse properly gives the modaks a subtle aroma rather than an overly strong taste. These golden modaks are particularly attractive when arranged on a festive platter alongside flowers, fruits and other traditional offerings. Their colour also makes them visually appealing for family celebrations where presentation is an important part of the festive meal.

Dry Fruits Modak for a Naturally Sweet Treat

For those looking for a modak that combines indulgence with nutrient-rich ingredients, Dry Fruits Modak is an excellent option. This version relies largely on the natural sweetness of dates and figs, reducing the need for large quantities of refined sugar. The preparation is relatively simple, which makes it convenient for busy households during the festival. Dates and dried figs can be blended into a smooth mixture before being combined with finely chopped nuts. Almonds, cashews, pistachios and walnuts can be used according to preference. The mixture is then cooked lightly, if required, until it reaches a consistency that can be shaped easily. Once it cools sufficiently, small portions can be pressed into modak moulds to create the familiar shape. The natural sweetness of dates and figs pairs well with the richness of nuts. Cardamom can add another layer of fragrance, while a small amount of ghee helps bind the ingredients and improves the texture. Dry Fruits Modak is also versatile enough to be customised. Those who enjoy a richer flavour can add roasted pistachios or almonds, while coconut, sesame seeds or a few strands of saffron can provide additional texture and aroma.

Because the recipe does not depend heavily on refined sugar, it can be a useful alternative for families seeking a more wholesome festive sweet. It still feels celebratory while allowing the natural flavours of dried fruits and nuts to shine.

Pista Modak Brings Richness to the Festive Table

Pistachios have a natural ability to make desserts feel luxurious. Their colour, texture and distinctive nutty flavour make them particularly suitable for festive sweets. Pista Modak combines pistachios with blanched almonds to create a creamy and indulgent version of the traditional offering. The preparation generally begins by grinding pistachios and almonds into a fine mixture. This is combined with a suitable sweet base and cooked gently until it comes together. The mixture should remain soft enough to shape but firm enough to hold the modak form. The use of good-quality pistachios is important because they provide most of the flavour. Blanching the almonds gives the mixture a smoother texture and allows the green colour of the pistachios to stand out. Once shaped, the modaks can be decorated with saffron strands or finely chopped

A Sweet Celebration of Tradition and Creativity

Ganesh Chaturthi is rooted in tradition, but traditions often become richer when new ideas are welcomed. Modak is a perfect example of this evolution. The traditional Ukadiche Modak continues to hold an irreplaceable place in the festival, yet new versions allow families to experiment with ingredients and flavours while retaining the familiar shape and symbolism. Kesari Modak brings the richness of saffron. Dry Fruits Modak highlights the natural sweetness of figs and dates. Pistachio Modak adds a luxurious nutty character, while Ragi Modak introduces the earthy goodness of a traditional millet. Paan Gulab Modak offers a refreshing contemporary flavour, and Gulab Modak brings the fragrance of rose to the festive table. Each variety offers a different experience, but all share the same purpose: celebrating the festival with sweetness, devotion and togetherness. As homes prepare to welcome Bappa this Ganesh Chaturthi, the kitchen once again becomes an important part of the celebration. The aroma of ghee, cardamom, saffron and freshly prepared sweets fills the air, while family members come together to cook, decorate and share.

pistachios. A small amount of edible silver leaf may also be used for a more elaborate festive presentation, although the natural green colour is often attractive enough on its own. Pista Modak works particularly well for guests who prefer creamy, nut-based sweets. Its rich taste makes it a natural addition to a larger festive dessert spread, where it can sit alongside traditional coconut-jaggery modaks and other Indian sweets.

Millet Ragi Modak for a Wholesome Twist

As more families look for ways to incorporate traditional grains into everyday cooking, ragi has found its way into festive recipes as well. Millet Ragi Modak gives the classic sweet a wholesome twist without taking away its traditional flavours. Ragi flour forms the foundation of this preparation. It is gently roasted in ghee until it develops a pleasant nutty aroma. This step is important because properly roasted ragi has a much more appealing flavour and helps eliminate the raw taste of the flour. Jaggery provides sweetness, while cardamom adds fragrance. Depending on the recipe, nuts or grated coconut can also be added to improve texture and flavour. The mixture should be combined carefully so that it remains moist

enough to hold its shape. Once it cools slightly, it can be pressed into modak moulds and shaped. Ragi is naturally rich in fibre and several important nutrients, making this version attractive to those who want a more grain-based festive sweet. However, it is still a dessert, and portion size remains important. The beauty of Ragi Modak lies in its familiar flavour profile. Jaggery, ghee and cardamom ensure that it still tastes unmistakably like an Indian festive sweet, while the ragi introduces a deeper, earthy note. It can be particularly appealing to households experimenting with millets and looking for ways to make festival food more diverse.

Paan Gulkand Modak for an Unexpected Flavour

For a modak that breaks away from conventional flavours, Paan Gulkand Modak is difficult to overlook. Inspired by the refreshing combination of paan leaves and gulkand, this variety brings a distinctive flavour to the festive dessert platter. The preparation commonly uses mawa or khoya as the base. Finely chopped or blended paan leaves are incorporated into the mixture along with sweet gulkand, which is made from rose petals. The result is a combination of creamy richness, floral sweet-

ness and the refreshing character of paan. The amount of paan used can be adjusted according to taste. Those trying the recipe for the first time may prefer a milder flavour, allowing the gulkand and mawa to remain prominent. The mixture is cooked gently until it reaches the right consistency before being shaped into modaks. A small amount of chopped nuts can provide contrast, while a little gulkand placed in the centre can create a pleasant surprise when the modak is cut open. Paan Gulkand Modak is especially suited to modern festive gatherings where guests may enjoy trying unusual flavours. It retains the visual identity of a modak while offering something completely different from the traditional coconut and jaggery combination. Its refreshing aftertaste also makes it an interesting dessert to serve after a heavy festive meal.

Gulab Modak for a Fragrant Celebration

Rose has been a favourite ingredient in Indian desserts for generations, and Gulab Modak brings its delicate floral character into the world of Ganesh Chaturthi sweets. This preparation typically uses mawa, rose essence and dried rose petals. The mawa gives the modak its soft and creamy texture, while rose essence provides fragrance. Dried rose petals add both visual appeal and a subtle floral note. The secret to a good Gulab Modak is restraint. Rose essence can be quite strong, so only a small quantity is generally required. The goal is to create a delicate fragrance rather than an overpowering perfume-like taste. The mawa mixture is cooked until it reaches the right consistency and then allowed to cool slightly before being shaped. The modaks can be garnished with dried rose petals and pistachio slivers. Their pale colour and floral garnish give Gulab Modaks an elegant appearance. They can become the centrepiece of a festive dessert platter, especially when arranged alongside colourful fruits and traditional decorations. The flavour is equally appealing.



Making Modaks at Home

Preparing modaks at home can be both a culinary activity and a way for families to participate in the spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi. Children can help shape the sweets using moulds, while older family members can prepare the fillings and handle the cooking. Modak moulds make the process considerably easier, especially for beginners. Instead of attempting to create the traditional pleated shape by hand, the prepared mixture can simply be pressed into a greased mould and released carefully. The consistency of the mixture is one of the most important factors. If it is too dry, the modak may crack while being shaped. If it is too soft, it may fail to retain its form. Allowing the mixture to cool to a manageable temperature before shaping usually makes the process easier.





Sher-E-Punjab T20

Naman Dhir's 95 powers Amritsar Soormas to third straight win



MOHALI: Amritsar Soormas continued their impressive late-season surge in the Sher-E-Punjab T20 League with a thrilling nine-run win over Jalandhar Warriors, securing their third consecutive victory and strengthening their playoff push. Batting first, the Soormas posted 178/9, powered by another sensational knock from Naman Dhir, who followed his match-winning 173 in the previous game with a blazing 95 off 48 balls, including six fours and eight sixes. Dhir struck at 197.92, once again putting the opposition under pressure and giving Amritsar a strong platform. Jalandhar mounted a spirited response, led by Randeep Singh (32 off 22), with Prabhsimran Singh (28) and Aryan Yadav (26) also contributing. However, Amritsar kept striking at crucial moments to restrict the Warriors to 169/8.

CRICKET

'Healthy competition' helps Tanya Chaudhary set national record in hammer throw



NEW DELHI: A healthy competition with fellow trainee Anushka Yadav proved beneficial for Tanya Chaudhary of Uttar Pradesh as he set the national record in women's hammer throw in the Indian Athletics Series Final in New Delhi. It was like the fulfilment of a dream for Tanya, and the fact that she set a new mark just before the upcoming Asian Games was like icing on the cake as the 22-year-old took the spotlight on the opening day of the meet on Thursday. Day One of the prize-money meet saw two national records being set in the hammer throw, with Tanya achieving the feat that she has been chasing for the past three years. Tanya achieved her quest by improving the national record in the women's hammer throw as she hurled the iron ball to a distance of 68.35m.

India bowling coach Morkel's arrival delayed by visa issues, physio Jain likely on his way out

NEW DELHI

The arrival of India's bowling coach Morne Morkel in New Delhi has been delayed due to visa issues, though he's expected to link up with the team very soon ahead of their T20Is against Afghanistan, sources told IANS.

South Africa-based Morkel's absence during a preparatory session at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Thursday did raise eyebrows, but sources said it was only due to visa-related issues. "Morne had visa issues, but he should be here soon once it's solved," sources told this news agency.

Meanwhile, it is understood that physiotherapist Kamlesh Jain is on his way out of the national setup, having remained absent from the squad's training session in the national capital. "About Kamlesh, it's yet to be known when he will be here," further said the sources.

Women's Asia Cup: Shafali Verma's 64, Deepti's three-fer help India beat Bangladesh, reach final

DUBAI

Opener Shafali Verma slammed a fiery 64 off 40 balls while seasoned spinner Deepti Sharma claimed 3-26 as India surged to a comprehensive 40-run victory over Bangladesh in the first semifinal of the Women's Asia Cup at the Dubai International Stadium here on Thursday.

Asked to bat first, seven-time Asia Cup winner India recovered from early setbacks with Shafali Verma slamming another half-century, hitting seven boundaries and three sixes in her 40-ball knock, to help India post a competitive 149/6 in their 20 overs.

Deepti then delivered a superb performance, along with the Indian women spinners, and helped them derail Bangladesh's chase and restrict them to 109/7 in 20 overs, winning the match and made it to the final.

Chasing a stiff target of 150 runs, Bangladesh women made a slow start, with openers Dilara Akter (21) and Juairiya Ferdous (14) raising 26 runs for the opening wicket in the sixth over.

But Juairiya's departure for an 18-ball 14 gave India the chance, and they established their ascendancy. Shree Charani made the breakthrough by sending back Juairiya, and though Sohana Mostary (18) and captain Nigar Sultana (19) made starts, they got out to Deepti Sharma to turn things in India's favour.

With wickets falling at regular intervals, seasoned Sharmin Akter (1) and Fahima Khatun (14) could not provide Shorna Akter enough support as they went down tamely against an Indian side that was never threatened in the match.

Shorna finished with 3-26 while Nandini Sharma (2-10) struck two blows in the last over; Shree Charani (1-14) and Prema Rawat (1-21) tied the Bangladesh batters in the middle overs as India romped to victory.

Earlier, on a slow pitch, where conditions aided spinners, and every other batter struggled to time the ball well, Shafali was calculative in her shot selection – playing mostly in the 'V' – to hit seven fours and three sixes to reach her 20th T20I fifty. Her innings was also a



blend of brute force and wristy bottom-hand power, apart from playing an inventive reverse sweep.

Bangladesh, though, will have themselves to blame as they dropped Shafali on 6, 11 and 56 and also missed a straightforward run-out chance. In all, they had a sloppy fielding unit performance. With

the second over when off-spinner Sultana Khatun removed vice-captain Smriti Mandhana for two, who top-edged a catch to mid-on.

Sultana had previously dropped a sitter off Shafali on the third ball of the same over. Shafali capitalised on the reprieve by hitting back-to-back sixes off Sultana in the fourth over before Pratika Rawal joined the act with a cover-driven four off Marufa.

Pratika then launched leg-spinner Rabeya Khan over cow corner for a maximum in the sixth over to take India to 45/1 at the end of the Powerplay. The 50-run partnership for the second wicket came up in the tenth over before Rabeya broke the stand by removing Pratika for 20, as her top edge was caught by cover.

After skipper Harmanpreet Kaur survived a direct hit on her very first delivery after a mix-up with Shafali at the non-striker's end, the latter brought up her half-century off 35 balls in the 13th over. She smashed two consecutive boundaries off Sultana before the off-spinner finally had a catch when substitute fielder Farjana Easmin took

the catch at deep mid-wicket. Richa Ghosh provided late-order impetus, clearing the ropes off Rabeya and Shorna Akter in her 16-ball 21 before being stumped by Nigar Sultana off Nahida Akter in the 19th over. Harmanpreet, who struggled to find her timing for most of her innings, broke free with a towering maximum over deep mid-wicket off Nahida in the same over. Despite her being scratchy, Deepti Sharma turned on the screws in the final over by launching Marufa for a four and a six off consecutive deliveries to score a quickfire 13 off six balls. But Deepti was caught at mid-off on the fifth delivery, while Bharti Fulmali was run out on the final ball of the innings as India collected 12 runs from the 20th over to finish one run shy of the 150-mark.

Brief scores:
India 149/6 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 64, Harmanpreet Kaur 24 not out; Sultana Khatun 2-30, Rabeya Khan 1-22) beat Bangladesh 109/7 in 20 overs (Shorna Akter 22 not out, Dilara Akter 21; Deepti Sharma 3-26, Nandini Sharma 2-10, Shree Charani 1-14) by 40 runs

Talented Hissi Besra shoots 5-under for best card of first leg of US Kids Golf



GURUGRAM

Hissi Besra, a young golfer blessed with a smooth swing and great temperament, created waves with the best card of the day as she produced a round of 5-under 67 to win the US Kids India (North) title in the Girls 11-12 section. Hissi, who has podium finishes in multiple events including the three-day US Kids India Championships last year, has been in the spotlight with good finishes in numerous events.

Hissi had six birdies, with three on either side of the Classic Golf and Country Club. The only blemish on her card was a bogey on the Par-4 sixth hole. She birdied the first, third, and the eighth on the front nine and added three more on the 10th, 12th, and 15th before closing with three pars.

Hissi, who has been in the top 3 at the CSK South Zone Championship in Chennai, Patna Junior Masters, the Kolkata Juniors and the Shubhankar Sharma All India Junior Invitational, has been on the rise in recent months, and this is one of her first big wins in a career that shows great promise.

The first leg of the 2026 US Kids Golf India (North) used preferred lies, and the

young stars showed great skill and played superbly. Nihal Cheema, a medallist at the US Kids World Championships this year in Pinehurst, was among the three other winners, who returned under-par scores. Cheema shot 70 with four birdies against two bogeys, while winning the Boys 9 competition ahead of another fine young talent, Zowra Veer Sikand (76).

Rayirth Jain (70) of Gurgaon had an action-packed round, which began with two bogeys, and he was 1-over till the 13th. Then he was in full flow with four birdies against one bogey in the last five holes. He had back-to-back birdies on the 14th and the 15th before dropping a shot on the 16th. Rayirth closed birdie-birdie to compile a fine round of 2-under 70.

Drona Singh Dhull, who has won a string of titles on the Indian scene this season, repeated his US Kids win in Boys 11 from last year. This time playing in Boys 12, he shot 1-under 71 despite three bogeys in a row from the 15th to the 17th. Boys and Girls up to the age of eight played nine-hole rounds, while all others played full 18 holes. The second leg will be held on Friday (September 11) at the Classic GCC.

GCL Season 4: Alpine Pipers, American Gambits, Ganges Grandmasters win one match each in close race to top

BENGALURU

The group stage of the fourth season of the Global Chess League (GCL) in Bengaluru is heading to a nail-biting finale, with just one game point separating the top three teams, with just two rounds left to play.

Defending champions Alpine APL Pipers, FYERS American Gambits and Ganges Grandmasters now have 15 Match Points after eight rounds, with the first two slightly ahead with 73 Game Points, while the Grandmasters are on 72.

Pipers and Grandmasters had a chance of taking sole lead on Thursday as they were scheduled to play two matches each. Ganges Grandmasters began the day with a convincing 12-4 win over the Alpine APL Pipers with black pieces but went down 13-5 in the last game against the American Gambits.

Pipers went on to beat PBG Alaskan Knights 11-6, and CheQ Mumbai Masters kept their chances of making the final alive with a 14-5 win over Triveni Continental Kings. They now have 12 Match Points and 73 Game Points to show for their effort. The day began with the Ganges Grandmasters beating the Pipers without dropping a game.

Stavroula Tsolakidou began the Grandmasters march by inflicting a second loss of the tournament on Koneru



Humpy. On the Superstar men's board, two-time World Cup winner Levon Aronian turned the tables on Anish Giri by making the most of an additional knight in the end-game to win in 61 moves.

I got lucky, very lucky. But I always believed that I could find the best moves despite playing very badly at the start. Maybe not losing the game was what I deserved, but winning, of course, is a huge luck," said Aronian, who was also adjudged the Player of the Match. Aronian made it a double when he defeated Nihal Sarin of FYERS American Gambits in the last match of the day, but his team lost four of the six matches and surrendered the advantage.

On the icon board, Candidates 2026 winner Javokh-

ir Sindarov defeated Ian Nepomniachtchi, Daniil Dubov outplayed Leinier Dominguez Perez, Bibisara Assaubayeva handed Polina Shuvalova her first loss of the competition, and Marc'Andrea Maurizzi claimed three points after Luke Leon Mendonca ran out of time on the prodigy board.

Earlier, Pipers had bounced back immediately after the reversal against the Ganges Grandmasters, with world number one Magnus Carlsen proving too strong for Viswanathan Anand with white pieces. Koneru Humpy then registered her fourth win of the tournament, handing Nino Batsiashvili her first loss of Season 4.

Volodar Murzin then defeated Abhimanyu Mishra on the prodigy board in a time

scramble to put the result beyond doubt. Only 15-year-old Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus managed to score four points for a win with black for the Alaskan Knights as Vidit Gujrathi ran out of time on the Superstar men's board.

In the day's other match, CheQ Mumbai Masters kept their hopes of reaching the final alive with a thumping win over Triveni Continental Kings.

Playing black, the Mumbai Masters won three of the six games, with Alexandra Kosteniuk winning the only game for the Continental Kings. On the icon board, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave outplayed Alireza Firouzja, and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov defeated Aravindh Chithambaram on the Superstar men's board.

Gavaskar, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma launch Guwahati International Marathon; 12,000 runners expected

GUWAHATI

The inaugural Guwahati International Marathon was officially launched in Guwahati on Thursday, with the first edition scheduled to be held on February 7, 2027, and around 12,000 participants are expected to take part in various race categories.

The marathon was formally announced at a press conference by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in the presence of Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar.

Promoted by PMG Sports LLP, the event will feature a 42.195km full marathon, 21.097km half marathon, 10km run, 5km run and 1.5km run.

The organisers have announced a total prize purse of Rs 1.25 crore, giving the event a strong competitive edge and attracting elite athletes and professional runners from India and abroad.

The full marathon is expected to feature 30 leading



male and female distance runners from around the world, along with India's top long-distance athletes.

Speaking at the launch, Sarma said the marathon was a matter of pride for Assam and would help establish Guwahati as a destination for sport, fitness and sports tourism.

"This is more than a marathon; it is a powerful state-

sporting tradition and inspire greater participation in fitness and sport across the state.

In a symbolic moment at the launch, Gavaskar presented Bib No. 1 to Sarma, marking the Chief Minister's endorsement of the event.

Gavaskar said Guwahati had the potential to become one of the world's recognised marathon destinations.

"Running has a unique power to bring people together, across communities, cultures and every walk of life. I believe this is the right time for Guwahati to join the world's great marathon cities," Gavaskar said. "Our vision is to build the Guwahati International Marathon into an iconic global event, attracting leading runners from across the world," he added.

Indian badminton star P.V. Sindhu will be the brand ambassador of the event.

The marathon and other races will start and finish at the historic Judges Field. The proposed route will take

runners towards Gauhati University, across the Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu, towards IIT Guwahati and back to Judges Field, including another crossing of the bridge.

The course has been measured by Australia's Kim Vivian, a Grade A Certified Road Race Course Measurer of World Athletics.

Richard Hunter of the UK will serve as Race Director, while Ian Ladbroke will be the International Elite Athlete Coordinator. Former Asian Marathon Champion Sunita Godara will be the India Elite Athlete Coordinator.

Registrations for the inaugural edition will open on September 11, with runners from India and overseas eligible to register.

The organisers said the marathon aims to develop into an annual international event while promoting fitness, sports tourism, community participation and the global sporting profile of Guwahati and Assam.

'I played the ball, not the bowler', says Salil Arora

NEW DELHI

Punjab batter Salil Arora made headlines when he smashed a 10-ball 30 against Mumbai Indians in one of the matches during his debut Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season for Sunrisers Hyderabad, where he hit a spectacular no-look six off India pace icon Jasprit Bumrah.

Arora played a strong hand in the death overs in SRH's clash against five-time winners MI, as he helped his team chase down 244 at the Wankhede Stadium. Heinrich Klaasen led the chase with his unbeaten 30-ball 65, but Salil also made a strong impact coming in at No.6 in the death overs with his 30-run outing, which included three sixes and two fours.

He hit one of those maximums to Bumrah, a no-look hit straight down the ground to one of the best modern-day cricketers in the world. Speaking exclusively to IANS, Arora recalled his memorable knock, emphasising that his focus was not on the bowler, but on the ball rather. "When I went to bat, there were a lot of big names in front of me.



Jayam Ravi Gets A Divine Role

Nabha Natesh's Bold Style Move

Nabha Natesh's work front has taken a rocky turn. After a two-year gap, she returned with Nagabandham: The Secret Treasure, playing dual roles alongside Virat Karrna and Iswarya Menon. Despite its grand mythological scale, the film failed at the box office and left fans disappointed. All hopes now rest on Swayambhu, the pan-India historical epic starring Nikhil Siddhartha and Samyuktha alongside Nabha. Directed by Bharat Krishnamachari, the ambitious project has faced repeated delays, with its release pushed multiple times due to extensive VFX work. Meanwhile, Nabha keeps her fans hooked with her striking photoshoots. Her latest pictures in a purple floral saree, paired with an effortless candid pose, have taken over social media, with fans showering praise on her style game amid the career ups and downs.

Jayam Ravi to Play Lord Venkateswara in Manchu Manoj's 'Vaddi Kasula Vaada' Popular Tamil actor Jayam Ravi, now known as Ravi Mohan, is all set to appear before Telugu audiences in a highly intriguing role. The actor will portray Lord Venkateswara Swamy in Manchu Manoj's upcoming film 'Vaddi Kasula Vaada', directed by Teja Uppalapati. The makers officially announced the news on Thursday, coinciding with Jayam Ravi's birthday. The announcement has already raised curiosity and expectations among movie lovers. Production



house AK Entertainments shared a special birthday post for the actor, welcoming him to the project in the divine role of Lord Venkateswara. The production house described his presence in the film as a blessing and concluded the post with "Om Namo Venkatesaya." Responding to the announcement, Jayam Ravi called the opportunity a divine blessing on his birthday. He expressed his gratitude to Manchu Manoj, producer Anil Sunkara, director Teja Uppalapati and the entire team, while describing it as his good fortune to portray Lord Venkateswara Swamy. Manchu Manoj also responded warmly, saying that having Jayam Ravi portray their Venkateswara Swamy is a blessing for the entire

team. He extended birthday wishes to the actor and prayed for his health and happiness. Jayam Ravi also shared another post in which he described his fans as a blessing from God. 'Vaddi Kasula Vaada' boasts an impressive technical crew. **Prasad Murella** is handling the cinematography, while Ghaati* fame Nakka Venkata Swamy is the editor. **Avinash Kolla**, known for his work on films such as Dasara* and *Jersey*, is serving as the production designer. Produced by **Rama Brahmam Sunkara under the AK Entertainments banner, the film has Kishore Garikipati, Ajay Sunkara and Daya Pannem as co-producers. With Jayam Ravi taking on the divine role of Lord Venkateswara, the film has added another major attraction to its already intriguing lineup.

Chaitanya's Vrushakarma Gets Release Date

Naga Chaitanya's much-awaited mythological thriller 'Vrushakarma' has officially locked its release date. The makers have announced that the highly anticipated film will arrive in theatres worldwide on **December 4, 2026. A brand-new poster was also unveiled along with the announcement. The film has generated significant buzz as it marks the reunion of director Karthik Dandu, who delivered the blockbuster *Virupaksha*, and the team of Sukumar Writings. Produced under the SVCC banner, the movie is being mounted on a grand scale, blending elements of mythology, mystery and thriller. The makers are aiming to create a unique cinematic experience by presenting a compelling story rooted in mythological lore. Naga Chaitanya is said to be portraying a never-before-seen and powerful character in the film. His shooting portion has already been completed. Meenakshi Chaudhary is paired opposite Chaitanya as the female lead, while Bollywood actor **Sparsh Srivastav** plays the antagonist. His striking makeover in the previously released glimpse has already caught the attention of movie lovers. The film is currently in the final stages of production. *Kantara* and *Virupaksha* fame **Ajaneesh Loknath** is composing the music, while **Ragul Dheer Hariyan** is handling the cinematography. **Sri Nagendra Thangala** is serving as the production designer and is expected to bring a visually spectacular world to life. The glimpses and behind-the-scenes videos released so far have already offered a glimpse into the film's distinctive world and visual grandeur. With the release date now locked, the team is gearing up for an extensive promotional campaign across India and overseas. With an intriguing storyline, impressive cast and a technically accomplished team, 'Vrushakarma' is expected to become one of the most significant films in Naga Chaitanya's career.



Indian3 Back On Track?



Well, it looks like the 'Indian' franchise may not be over yet. While Indian 2 failed to impress audiences and brought work on the next chapter to a halt, the third part could now finally move ahead. Interestingly, a major portion of Indian 3 has already been shot along with Indian 2. The film does not reportedly require extensive fresh shooting, with only minor patchwork remaining. However, a substantial amount of computer graphics work is still pending. The project was put on hold following the disappointing response to Indian 2. Now, as per the latest news from Chennai,

the makers could soon resume the post-production process and take the film forward. Kamal Haasan is expected to return as Senapathy, while Shankar will continue as the director. The development is particularly noteworthy given Shankar's recent career struggles following the failure of Game Changer. For now, there is no official announcement regarding the restart. However, with much of the shoot already completed, Indian 3 could be a project that the makers decide to finish and release as soon as possible.



Chakkora - Lunar Love Bird continues to build excitement with its second single, "Dam Dam." Unveiled by National Award winner GV Prakash Kumar, the lyrical video instantly grabbed attention with its vibrant energy and youthful musical flavor. Music director Prince Henry delivers an upbeat composition that is easy to groove to, while Ramajogayya Sastry's lyrics add a refreshing blend of romance and mass appeal. The track has all the ingredients to become a favorite among younger audiences. Adding freshness to the song is debut playback singer Abhikhy Tanikella, whose lively vocals complement the energetic composition. Dance master Meher Baba has choreo-

Dam Dam Delivers Youthful Vibes



Kiara Owns Corporate Chic

Just hours after wowing everyone in a flowy white gown, Kiara Advani switched gears completely and stepped out in a sharp beige power suit. The transformation from soft glamour to boss-lady energy has fans doing a double take, proving her range goes well beyond red carpet elegance. The three-piece ensemble came complete with a waistcoat, tie, and wide-leg trousers, styled with tousled waves and a bold side-swept fringe. Gold statement earrings added a touch of shine, while her confident stance and sharp gaze gave the whole look an unmistakable boss-babe edge. The style switch comes at a time when Kiara is choosing to stay focused on her fashion game rather than dwell on Toxic's underwhelming response at the box office. If anything, the back-to-back sharp looks suggest she's shrugging off the flop talk and stepping into her next chapter with full confidence.