HYDERABAD HEADLINES

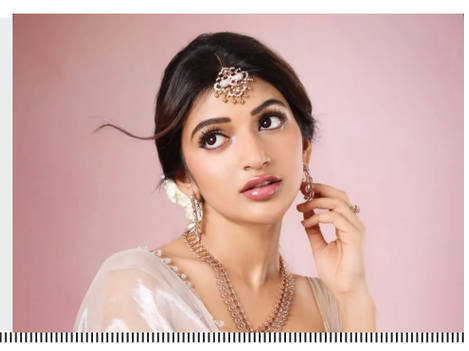
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Telangana Farmers Must Prepare for El Niño Risks

OPINION 06



Sreeleela's Bollywood Debut: The Catch!

BOX-OFFICE 12

Singareni will not be privatised: Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, Oct.15: Minister for IT and Industries D. Sridhar Babu on Thursday categorically ruled out any move to privatise Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), asserting that the Congress government was committed to protecting the public sector coal mining company. Speaking to the media at the CLP office, the Minister launched a sharp attack on BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao, questioning why he had remembered Singareni only after 12 years. He alleged that the previous BRS government had treated the company as an "ATM" and accused KTR of making statements that could damage its reputation.

Sridhar Babu maintained that tenders in Singareni had been conducted transparently since the Congress government assumed office. He alleged that the criticism was being levelled by certain forces unhappy with the changes introduced by the present government. Claiming that the previous BRS regime had left thousands of crores of rupees in dues to Singareni, the Minister questioned whether members of KTR's family had effectively

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

151 Trainees Set for NPA Passing-Out Parade

Hyderabad, Oct.15: A total of 151 officer trainees, including 135 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers and 16 foreign officers from Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives, will participate in the Dikshant Parade at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) on October 17. The batch includes 37 women officers. The trainees of the 78th Regular Recruit (RR) batch have undergone Phase-I training at the academy following their Foundation Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. Their training includes attachments with central police organisations, Central Armed Police Forces, the Indian Army and other institutions, along with visits to key constitutional and government functionaries in New Delhi. After completing the 49-week Phase-I programme, the officers will undergo 29 weeks of district practical training in their respective cadres and states. They will return to SVPNPA for the nine-week Phase-II course, scheduled to begin on June 21, 2027.

Thirteenth Exit in Ten Years:

delhi quits the banker's chair, keeps its hand on the tiller, and dares the critics to blink



IDBI GOES UNDER THE HAMMER: Rs. 52,878 CRORE, THE BIGGEST SELL-OFF THE REPUBLIC HAS SEEN

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

On 14 October 2026, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared the sale of 60.72 per cent of IDBI Bank to a Fairfax Financial Holdings-backed Canadian entity for ₹52,878 crore at ₹81 a share. The Centre and LIC will together retain 34 per cent, and Fairfax's voting rights stay capped at 26 per cent under Indian law. New Delhi has swung its fist at the old habit of the State hoarding everything and running nothing well. Wednesday's Cabinet nod hands management control of IDBI Bank to Fairfax, the Canadian group headed by Prem Watsa, an Indian-born financier. The price tag is ₹52,878 crore. Both buyer and seller know what that figure means: the largest foreign direct investment ever in India's financial sector. The sum is not a gift but a market verdict. Two independent valuers put fair

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

CM requests farmers of Telangana to defer one crop

- *This El Nino is unprecedented, worse than we have seen in decades; it has created immense pressure on water and power situation in state, says Chief Minister*
- *Farmers have always answered prayers of people; this time we will need their help in securing drinking water supply for Telangana, said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy*
- *Save Water, Save Power is our magic mantra, he said*



CM Revanth Reddy blames 2016 MOU for Rs 1 lakh crore burden through imported coal

02

HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 15

"I request all my farmer brothers and sisters in Telangana to defer one crop this farming season. The next 9-10 months will be very difficult; we will have less water because of this unprecedented El Nino situation. Only then," Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said, "would we be able to secure Telangana's drinking water supply." He was speaking on Thursday at a press conference at Secretariat after a meeting with Ministers on the El Nino and prevailing situation in the state.

"My dear people of Telangana. I am speaking to you today about El Nino. Because of global warming, this El Nino disaster is affecting the entire world. Scientists and other experts have been warning us about El Nino. Unfortunately, their worst predictions have come true. This year, El Nino is a global crisis much like Covid was in 2020. El Nino is a weather phenomenon affecting every single human being on the planet, directly or indirectly. Some people are calling this the 'Super El Nino' as it is worse than what we've seen since 1950," the Chief Minister said. He noted that United Nations had noted that El Nino would affect people in 100 countries, affecting nearly a hundred crore people directly and indirectly.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

El Niño impact: CS conducts field inspection

HYDERABAD, OCT.15



Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju on Thursday began a field visit to assess the changing weather conditions associated with the anticipated El Niño impact and their implications for water availability across the State. As part of the visit, the Chief Secretary inspected water availability in the Singur and Manjeera reservoirs and reviewed with senior officials the implementation of alternative plans formulated by the government to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply to Hyderabad and the districts of Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Nizamabad and Medak.

With water storage levels in the Singur and Manjeera reservoirs declining, the Chief Secretary directed officials to utilise available water resources efficiently and strengthen advance planning to meet drinking water requirements in the coming days. In view of falling groundwater levels, he emphasised the need for close monitoring of water consumption and directed officials to assess water availability for the next 15 days and take appropriate water management measures. The Chief Secretary observed that temperatures

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Rs. 3,000 Crore Coal Scam: KTR Targets Revanth

HYDERABAD, OCT 15



BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of deliberately creating conditions for a coal and power crisis to pave the way for a ₹3,000 crore scam through proposed foreign coal imports. He charged that the government was weakening Singareni Collieries Company Limited while preparing to facilitate expensive imports through questionable arrangements involving Bhotra Logistics. In an open letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Union Coal Minister G. Kishan Reddy, KTR demanded that all details relating to the proposed imports, including discussions, tender documents, draft agreements, pricing and the selection of Bhotra Logistics, be made public.

KTR alleged that the proposed arrangement could involve commissions of ₹1,500 per tonne, potentially translating into a ₹3,000 crore scam. He demanded an independent investigation into the proposals and questioned the basis on which Bhotra Logistics was being considered

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

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Invest in Telangana; the Government Will Support You: Dy. CM. Bhatti

Government assures full support to industrialists.. Approvals through the single-window system

Land, electricity and water facilities to be provided.. I will act as a guardian for industrialists"

Bhatti Vikramarka addresses the Samakhya Global Business Meet-2026



Hyderabad, October 15: "Invest in Telangana, and the government will support your growth. We will provide single-window clearances, land, electricity and water facilities for establishing industries. Hyderabad is one of the safest and most favourable destinations for investment. Industrialists from across the world should invest in Telangana and become partners in the state's progress," Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said.

He assured representatives of the Samakhya Chamber of Commerce that he would act as a guardian for the organization and work to provide the necessary assistance to entrepreneurs contributing to the state's economic development. Speaking at the Samakhya Chamber of Commerce Global Business Meet–2026, held at HITEX, he reiterated that the state government would extend full support to wealth creators.

He assured investors that the government would provide the necessary approvals through the single-window system and facilitate access to land, electricity and water through industrial parks. He said Hyderabad's law and order, infrastructure, skilled workforce and business-friendly environment made it a highly attractive investment destination.

Telangana Offers Several Advantages for Industrial Development

The Deputy Chief Minister explained that Telangana offered several advantages for establishing industries. Its geographically strategic location within India,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ➤

Balancing Public Safety and Political Heat

Balanagar Traffic Police Crack Down on Footpath Encroachments



Law enforcement enforces Telangana High Court directives to clear illegal stalls along the Balanagar–Ferozguda corridor despite daily pressure and political intervention.

Medchal-Malkajgiri, October 15: The Balanagar traffic police have stepped up enforcement along the busy Balanagar-Kukatpally corridor, clearing unauthorized street vendors and fruit stalls that have long clogged pedestrian pathways. Driven by mounting public grievances and severe traffic gridlock, the special drive aims to restore pedestrian safety and smooth out vehicular bottlenecks.

However, law enforcement's efforts have triggered immediate friction. Traffic Inspector (CI) Srinivas has faced intense pushback and a daily barrage of phone calls from stall owners leveraging political connections. Affected vendors, including individuals identified as Deepu and Sajid, initially approached former Balanagar Corporator Avula Ravinder Reddy and subsequently sought intervention from AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi. Despite the political pressure, the crackdown remains firmly grounded in legal directives. The operation aligns directly with recent instructions from the Telangana High Court, where Justice N.V. Shravan Kumar mandated immediate special drives to clear unauthorized structures and street vendors from footpaths across Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Officials have stressed that paying commercial property taxes or holding local assessments does not legalize the occupation of public land.

Local commuters and residents are watching closely to see how senior traffic authorities will navigate the mounting pressure as the clearance drive continues across the high-traffic stretch.

CM Revanth Reddy blames 2016 MOU for Rs 1 lakh crore burden through imported coal

KCR Govt entered MOU for coal imports in 2016

Lambasts K.T Rama Rao over lies on coal sourcing



HYDERABAD, OCT 15

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy hit back aggressively over baseless allegations made by BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on sourcing of coal for Yadadri Thermal Power Plant. He exposed the MOU entered by the previous BRS government with MSTC (Metal Scrap Trade Corporation Limited) for importing 50 percent of G9 coal. The Chief Minister on Thursday addressed a press conference in the context of the prevailing El Niño situation, at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat along with various Hon'ble ministers and MLAs. He said the KCR government entered an MOU with MSTC on December 2016 for importing 7 million tonnes of G9 coal for Yadadri plant. Instead of choosing a location with water and coal availability, KCR opted for Damaracherla to build the Yadadri plant. Due to this, we are now forced to face a burden of Rs 50,000 crore, which will extend to Rs 1 lakh crore of unnecessary additional financial burden over next 25 years.

After having entered the MOU for importing G9 coal in 2016, the BRS leaders are now advocating for using different quality coal, he remarked. While the unit power cost in Singareni and NTPC power plants is between Rs 4.29 and 4.63, the expenditure for generating unit in YTPS is Rs 6.66, he added. The CM expressed readiness for any kind of enquiry into this matter. The BRS government's actions in the past have put us in a position to import 14 million tonnes of coal. "I am ready for any investigation on coal imports. KTR should respond as to which agency should take up the enquiry." The BRS government decided to build the YTPS at the cost of pushing Singareni into losses, he explained. The cost of project would have been much lower if it were built at Manuguru, he added.

Yadadri plant chief engineer suspended

Hyderabad, Oct.15: The chief engineer of the Yadadri Thermal Power Plant at Dameracherla, Suresh Naik, has been suspended for alleged negligence in power generation.

The State government has also appointed five IAS officers as special officers to oversee power generation and coal supplies at the plant. Harikishan, Venkatesh Dotre, Rahul Raj, Hanumanth Kondiba and Sivakumar Naidu have been assigned the responsibility of monitoring operations.

The action comes in the wake of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy expressing displeasure over power disruptions and warning officials that even IAS officers would face suspension if found negligent in discharging their duties.

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Invest in Telangana; the Government Will Support You: Dy. CM. Bhatti

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availability of suitable land for industrial purposes, superior infrastructure and skilled workforce developed through educational institutions were among the state's major strengths. He added that Hyderabad's climate, multilingual culture and tradition of welcoming people from different regions also made it an attractive destination for investors. He noted that Hyderabad had attracted traders and investors from across the world since ancient times. In response to changing economic conditions, the Telangana government was pursuing a planned strategy to attract further investments.

Development Plan Divided into Three Regions

Bhatti Vikramarka said the government was preparing development plans for the areas surrounding Hyderabad under three regional frameworks: the Core Urban Region (CORE), the Peri-Urban Region (PURE) and the Rural Agriculture Region (RARE). He explained that the Core Urban Region would prioritize information technology, infrastructure and the services sector. In the Peri-Urban Region, specialized industrial clusters would be developed to meet the requirements of various industries. He said steps were being taken to develop radial roads connecting areas between the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and the proposed Regional Ring Road (RRR). Approval and planning processes for 21 radial roads had already been initiated.

These road connections would create opportunities to develop dedicated industrial clusters for pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, education, software and artificial intelligence, he said. In the Rural Agriculture Region, the government was developing the necessary ecosystem to promote agro-based industries on a large scale. Establishing industries that add value to local resources in rural areas would create employment opportunities and strengthen regional economies, he added.

Entrepreneurs Play a Key Role in Wealth Creation

The Deputy Chief Minister said that, amid changing economic conditions, industries and the services sector had become as important as agriculture in generating wealth. He explained that agriculture accounted for approximately 16 per cent of Telangana's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), while industry and services made significant contributions to the state's economy. The services sector accounted for approximately 65 per cent, and the industrial sector also played a crucial role in economic growth. He called on entrepreneurs operating in diverse sectors, including pharmaceuticals, core industries, aquaculture, exports and imports, information technology and industrial infrastructure, to contribute more actively to the state's economic progress. Every state and society must support those who create wealth, he said. He expressed the hope that entrepreneurs would grow their businesses while helping the state generate employment, attract investments and increase revenue.

Government Assures Full Support to Industries

Bhatti Vikramarka assured the Samakhya Chamber of Commerce that the state government would extend all possible assistance to the organization and its members. He said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu and the entire state Cabinet were ready to provide the necessary support to investors. If entrepreneurs brought problems encountered during the establishment of industries to the government's attention, efforts would be made to resolve them, he said. He reiterated that the government would assist investors in obtaining the necessary approvals and securing facilities such as land, electricity and water. He added that the government would support development across a wide range of sectors, including politics, business, the film industry, agriculture, information technology, aerospace and defence. Inclusive Growth Must Benefit Everyone The Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that wealth should not become concentrated in the hands of a few and that the benefits of development must reach every section of society. He encouraged entrepreneurs to share their experience and knowledge with other sections of society and provide guidance to aspiring business owners. The government was ready to create platforms for such initiatives through organizations like Samakhya, he said.

Development achieved by only one section of society could not be considered comprehensive progress. Society would develop holistically only when those who succeed helped at least ten others move forward alongside them, he observed.

He assured investors that the government would work alongside them and called on them to become active partners in Telangana's development. Welcoming entrepreneurs willing to invest in Telangana, Bhatti Vikramarka urged them to expand their businesses and contribute to the state's economic growth and employment generation.

El Niño impact: CS conducts field inspection

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were reportedly around 2–3 degrees Celsius higher than normal for the period and described the prevailing conditions as unusual for the season. He directed the concerned departments to closely monitor the impact of changing weather conditions on crops. Emphasising that the next 15–20 days would be critical for standing crops, Sanjay Jaju called upon farmers to remain vigilant and instructed Agriculture department officials to provide timely, field-level guidance to farmers to protect their crops.

The Chief Secretary directed the Electricity department to ensure an uninterrupted power supply for agricultural needs. He stressed that the Agriculture, Electricity, Irrigation and other concerned departments must work in close coordination, keeping the prevailing weather conditions and water availability in view. He also instructed officials to personally assess ground-level conditions, interact with farmers and local residents to understand their requirements, and create public awareness about the precautionary measures being undertaken by the government.

Singareni will not be privatised: Sridhar Babu

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controlled the organisation over the past decade. He advised KTR to refrain from what he termed diversionary politics and blamed the decline in Singareni's production on the policies pursued by the previous BRS government. He also demanded that the BRS account for the promises made to Singareni workers during its 10-year tenure and disclose how many had been fulfilled. Sridhar Babu further alleged that the previous government had taken steps towards privatisation by handing over the Tadicherla coal block to a private company. Reiterating that the Congress government would not permit Singareni's privatisation, the Minister warned that any attempt to privatise

Rs. 3,000 Crore..

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for the assignment. He emphasised that the proposed imports had not yet taken place and insisted that all decisions and financial arrangements be disclosed before the process advances. KTR questioned the decline in Singareni's coal production from approximately 70.02 million tonnes in 2023–24 to around 58 million tonnes in 2025–26. He demanded an explanation for the failure to strengthen domestic production, develop mines and ensure adequate coal supplies despite the predictable rise in electricity demand. He also sought a comprehensive, institution-wise account of the approximately ₹60,000 crore in outstanding dues reportedly owed to Singareni, asking the government to disclose the amounts due, payments received and pending liabilities.

Referring to Yadadri Thermal Power Station, KTR cited the reported allocation of 14 million tonnes per annum of G9-grade coal from Singareni mines and the supply agreement signed in April 2022. He questioned why domestic supply concerns were not being resolved before foreign imports were proposed.

KTR further demanded transparency in contracts for coal and ash-handling operations at Yadadri and questioned the reported outsourcing of work despite the expertise available within state power utilities. He criticised Union Coal Minister Kishan Reddy for failing to protect Singareni's interests.

KTR demanded an independent probe into the proposed import arrangements, a white paper on foreign coal procurement, disclosure of all Bhotra Logistics-related dealings, a detailed report on Singareni's production decline and audited particulars of outstanding dues.

CM requests farmers of..

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"We have had some indication that the rains would be deficient this season. This is why we had requested farmers to avoid planting paddy. Farmers of over 13 lakh acres heeded to our request. About 53 lakh acres were planted with paddy by others," he said. He implored on the farming community that paddy is a water-intensive crop and the state's water situation isn't conducive to farming it in the next 8-10 months, he said.

"Today, reservoirs are not in good shape. In Krishna basin reservoirs, we have 72% less water than we did last year at the same time. In Godavari, this number is 42%. No reservoir has enough water to supply both drinking and farming needs. Usually, at this time in a typical year, we have 462 TMC of water across all reservoirs. Today, we have only 200 TMC. This is an unprecedented moment of crisis for all of us," he said. Chief Minister Reddy also spoke of the power consumption and generation situation in the state. He noted that demand for power had grown up astronomically in past few years. "Generally, in October the daily power consumption is around 15,000 MW. However, as of now, the consumption is upwards of 20,000 MW, almost a 33% jump than average," he said.

He commended Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka for his department's work in supplying power in such a situation through adept planning. However, he continued, there still exists a paucity of energy in the country. "Several other states such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Kerala also have a power problem. There isn't any power to buy," he said. "When a natural disaster strikes us, it is everyone's duty to come together. We have to think beyond politics and join our hands on mission mode so no one is left behind. So, we can take care of everyone. Save Water, Save Power. This is our magic mantra," he said.

"In Covid, we had masks, lockdowns and social distancing until we got vaccines. Just like that, we have to follow the 'Save Water, Save Power' mantra till it rains again in July 2027," he said. "As Chief Minister of Telangana, I appeal to the people today -- be part of this mission. Let us get out of this together," Chief Minister Reddy said. He appreciated the farmers of the country for their role in developing India, especially after Independence. "Dear farmers, you are the backbone of Indian society. In 1947, when the entire country was getting ready for famine and food shortage, we looked to you to save us, to pull off a miracle. You did exactly that. You worked tirelessly and worked hard, day and night, summer and winter, under burning sun and under rains, to grow food. You saved us. In every moment of crisis, farmers have never said no to society's requests," he said. He requested the community to defer planting in the coming farming season. "If farmers sow at a time of water shortage, they might face severe losses and also affect the drinking water situation. My dear farmers, you have given us food whenever we have needed and asked for it. Now we are asking you for water as well," he said. The Chief Minister added that agricultural labourers who would be impacted by this would be compensated through VB-G RAM G. "Through VB-G RAM G, we will focus on irrigation and nala work, so when the rains come, we will be better equipped to deal with this problem if it ever comes again," he said. "This war room will manage, track, optimize water supply for every citizen. We will soon release toll-free numbers that citizens can call for information. I have instructed all ministers to focus on directly communicating with you, and inform you on steps being taken," he said.

"Today, all parties have to come together and work in unison. We all listened to Central government and did whatever Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked us to do. Similarly, we all have to put our differences aside. I also request my journalist friends to help spread awareness and right information to the public," he said.

Thirteenth Exit in Ten Years

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value at ₹75.99 a share, and the winning bid went past it at ₹81.

The Government of India sells 30.48 per cent and LIC sells 30.24 per cent. When the ink dries, the Centre still holds 15 per cent and LIC 19 per cent, a combined 34 per cent. Fairfax may hold 60.72 per cent of the equity at the start, but the Banking Regulation Act caps its voting power at 26 per cent. Over fifteen years, its stake must glide down to that level. Minority shareholders get an open offer. The Reserve Bank of India must clear the buyer before a single share changes hands, and closure is targeted by the end of this financial year. The doors are open, but the keys remain with the Republic's regulators.

Sovereignty is not sold in this deal. It is written into the rules before the first rupee moves.

Now run the ledger of the thirteen. ONGC took HPCL for ₹36,915 crore. PFC took REC for ₹14,500 crore. Dredging Corporation, NPCC and HSCC changed hands. THDC and NEEPCO went to NTPC, and Kamarajar Port to Chennai Port Trust. Then came Air India to the Tata Group for ₹18,000 crore, with only ₹2,700 crore of it cash and the rest debt taken on. Neelachal Ispat went to Tata Steel Long Products for ₹12,100 crore, Ferro Scrap Nigam to Konoike Transport for ₹320 crore, and Indian Medicines Pharmaceuticals for ₹119 crore. IDBI is the thirteenth, and it dwarfs the lot.

Several of those deals were a transfer from one public pocket to another. The real shift of control into private hands that must answer to customers came with Air India, Neelachal and now IDBI.

The money tells its own tale. The Centre's share alone is expected to exceed ₹26,000 crore. Added to the ₹55,757 crore already raised this year, it should push miscellaneous capital receipts past the ₹80,000 crore budgeted, a feat not seen since 2019. That is cash for roads, ports, defence and a leaner deficit, without fresh borrowing. The lender is also no longer the invalid it was. Gross NPAs stood at 2.30 per cent in June 2026, and the account holder's savings are untouched by the change of owner.

Let the sceptics who swore that strategic disinvestment was dead consult the calendar. Thirteen exits over ten years are no slogan. They are a record. Nor is this a retreat from the national interest. The State withdraws from commercial roles it was never built to master, so that governance, security and nation-building get its undivided attention. The process may be gradual, but it is irreversible.

MY SHOT

The Republic has sold a bank without selling itself. Sixty per cent of the equity goes to a foreign buyer, but the vote is capped, the regulator holds the gate, and the Centre and LIC stay at the table with 34 per cent. This is how a confident nation deals with the world: on its own terms, with its eyes open and its rulebook in hand. Let the critics read the terms before they raise their voices.

MURMU CALLS FOR GREATER ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

Vijayawada, Oct.15: President of India Droupadi Murmu on Thursday called for greater economic empowerment of rural women, stressing the need to strengthen their control over income and assets and expand opportunities for entrepreneurship. Inaugurating the National SARAS Mela 2026 in Vijayawada, organised by the Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Andhra Pradesh government, the President said Self-Help Groups (SHGs) had emerged as key drivers of financial independence, inclusive development and rural economic growth. Murmu noted that more than 10 crore women were associated with over 90 lakh SHGs across the country. The Lakhpati Didi initiative, digital services and renewable energy sectors were creating new opportunities for rural women, she added. She emphasised the need for community-based support for domestic care responsibilities and greater participation of women in climate-resilient enterprises. SARAS Melas, she added, were strengthening direct links between rural women entrepreneurs and consumers, contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Around 1,500 SHG entrepreneurs and LakhpatiDidis from 34 States and Union Territories are exhibiting their products at more than 650 stalls. The mela will remain open until October 31. Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu and Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar attended the event.

Samskriti Celebrates World KuchipudiDay with 'Natyotsava 2026'





HYDERABAD

Samskriti, the student club of GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, celebrated World Kuchipudi Day with 'Natyotsava 2026', paying tribute to Padma Bhushan Guru Dr.Vempati Chinna Sathyam and his enduring legacy in Kuchipudi.

The programme commenced with a prayer song and concluded with Mangalam. Nine students showcased their talent through traditional Kuchipudi performances, including Brahmanjali, Jatiswaram, Muruga Shabdam, Bhamakalapam and Tarangam. The expressive performance of Muruga Shabdam by Abigna and Harsha's portrayal of Satyabhama in Bhamakalapam-received enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Guru Chiranjay Poddar, Founder of Natya Nivedana and chief guest, recalled the rigorous training and dedication required to master Kuchipudi. Highlighting Guru Dr. Vempati ChinnaSathyam's invaluable contribution to the art form, he emphasised that devotion (bhakti) is essential to learning and preserving traditional arts. Vidushi Anju Aravind, Vidwan Anandhu Murali, faculty members and students participated in the celebrations.

GITAM Students Gain Research Exposure at IIT Hyderabad

As part of an initiative by the Women Empowerment Cell, GITAM University, 33 students accompanied by four faculty members visited the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) on



15 October 2026 to gain first-hand exposure to advanced research and emerging technologies.

The visit aimed to broaden students' understanding of scientific and engineering innovations while encouraging greater participation in STEM education and research. The students explored five facilities: the Robotics Laboratory, Soft Matter and Microswimmers Laboratory, Innovation Hub, Concrete Laboratory and Wind Tunnel Laboratory.

The laboratories introduced students to a wide range of applications, including autonomous robots, drones, underwater inspection systems, artificial microswimmers, rapid prototyping, 3D printing, advanced concrete technologies and wind tunnel testing. These interactions offered valuable insights into cutting-edge research and its practical applications across diverse engineering disciplines.

The visit provided an enriching learning experience beyond the classroom, fostering scientific curiosity, innovation and research-oriented thinking. Through such initiatives, the Women Empowerment Cell at GITAM University continues to encourage students to explore opportunities in higher education, science, technology and interdisciplinary research.

The visit was accompanied by the faculty members, Dr K. Malleswari, Mrs T. Raj Priyanka, Dr Jyoti Rashmi Nayak, and Dr Souporni Paul.

Inspection of Industries at Kakatiya Mega Textile Park

- **Special Focus on Textile Industry Development in Warangal: Sabyasachi Ghosh**

WARANGAL

Sabyasachi Ghosh, IAS, Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Telangana, Industries and Commerce Department, has advised officials to make the most of the vast opportunities available for the development of the textile industry in Warangal district and to focus on measures necessary to accelerate industrial growth. On Thursday, he visited the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park in Warangal and personally inspected the operations of Kitex, Youngone, and Ganesha companies functioning within the park. He reviewed their production activities and operational performance and held discussions with officials and industry representatives on various related issues.

Later, during a review meeting with officials, he discussed several aspects of textile industry development. He emphasized the need to provide greater encouragement to textile industries in the Warangal region and expand marketing opportunities for locally manufactured products. He directed officials to thoroughly examine the measures required for industrial development and come forward with appropriate proposals.



He observed that the growth of the textile sector would contribute to the expansion of local industries and the overall economic progress of the region. He also stressed that all concerned departments should work in coordination and provide the necessary support to industries in a timely manner.

Those who participated in the programme included Warangal Additional Collector (Revenue) L. Kishore Kumar; Additional Director of the Handlooms and Textiles Department N. Venkateswara Rao; AD Srikanth Reddy; TGIIC Zonal Manager Swamy; Narayana Reddy; TTDO; Sangem Tahsildar G. Raj Kumar; and other officials.

The Coming Storm: Why Geopolitical Volatility Is Modern India's Greatest External Threat

- **Beyond conventional border conflicts, Minister Jaishankar warns how supply chain disruptions, food insecurity, and currency shifts can impact everyday citizens**

HYDERABAD



'In an era characterized by shifting superpower dynamics and interconnected global supply networks, the fundamental definition of national security has evolved far beyond conventional border defense. Modern statecraft is increasingly defined by how nations protect themselves against structural vulnerabilities embedded in international trade, energy corridors, global finance, and essential commodities. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has repeatedly highlighted these emerging risks, emphasizing that modern conflict is no longer restricted to traditional warfare but is routinely waged through economic levers, strategic trade chokepoints, and supply chain disruptions that impact everyday citizens.

At the heart of these geopolitical warnings is what Minister Jaishankar identifies as the interconnected "4F Crisis"—comprising severe shocks across Food, Fuel, Fertilizer, and Finance. This domino effect demonstrates how a distant political or military conflict can instantly trigger a cascade of systemic disruptions across developing and emerging market economies.

When military friction erupts near critical maritime transit zones, such as the Red Sea or the Strait of Hormuz, global shipping routes face immediate paralysis. The resulting surge in freight rates and delays in energy transport directly push up global crude oil and liquefied natural gas prices, creating an immediate energy shock for major importing nations like India.

The secondary impacts of this global volatility extend rapidly into domestic agricultural systems and national food security. Because modern agricultural productivity relies heavily on energy-intensive chemical fertilizers—such as urea and potash, which require natural gas feedstocks and global mineral imports—disruptions in energy pipelines or maritime trade immediately spike fertilizer procurement costs. When combined with severe, climate-induced weather anomalies like a "Super El Niño," agricultural yields face severe headwinds, driving up staple food inflation and placing immense fiscal stress on government subsidy budgets.

Beyond physical commodities, financial and technological dependencies present equally critical structural vulnerabilities. Unilateral economic sanctions, global capital flight toward safe-haven assets during geopolitical crises, and market-access restrictions act as financial chokepoints that weaken emerging market currencies and inflate national debt servicing costs. Furthermore, critical industrial sectors remain exposed to concentrated global supply chains for essential components, semiconductors, and specialized manufacturing inputs, making single-source reliance a severe strategic liability during times of international tension.

Navigating this precarious global landscape requires a decisive commitment to strategic autonomy, proactive diplomacy, and internal economic strengthening. To shield domestic consumers and maintain long-term economic stability, policymakers must prioritize building robust strategic reserves of energy and essential commodities, diversifying international trade partnerships across regional alliances, and aggressively boosting indigenous production capacities through targeted industrial incentives.

Ultimately, true national sovereignty in the twenty-first century depends on a nation's ability to withstand external shocks, secure its critical supply networks, and transform global vulnerabilities into domestic resilience.

Governor calls for greater research, innovation in seed sector

HYDERABAD

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Thursday called for greater emphasis on research, technological advancement and innovation in the seed sector, with farmers' welfare at the centre of agricultural development.

Addressing a commemorative programme honouring late Mandava Venkatramaiah, founder of Nuziveedu Seeds Limited, at Kandlakoya in Medchal–Malkajgiri district, the Governor said that innovations in agriculture must translate into tangible benefits for farmers, including higher productivity and improved livelihoods.



The Governor paid floral tributes to Venkatramaiah's portrait and planted a sapling in his memory.

Recalling the founder's contribution to the seed industry, Shiv Pratap Shukla said Venkatramaiah had demonstrated vision and commitment by recognising farmers' needs and advancing agricultural development through an emphasis on quality, reliability and innovation. His life exemplified how professional success could acquire greater significance when directed towards social good and the betterment of people's lives, he said.

Describing farmers as the backbone of the country's economy, the Governor said their hard work and dedication were fundamental to India's food security. He stressed the need to strengthen scientific research, promote modern agricultural technologies and develop quality seeds to enhance farm productivity and improve farmers' economic conditions.

39th Hyderabad National Book Fair from Dec 18

HYDERABAD

The 39th Hyderabad National Book Fair will be held at NTR Stadium (Telangana Kala Bharathi), near Indira Park, from December 18 to 28. The 11-day event will feature literary discussions, book launches and various other programmes every day.

Publishers, authors and book lovers from Telangana and across the country are expected to participate in the fair. Lakhs of books across genres and catering to readers from different sections of society will be on display, with several titles available at discounted prices.

CORRIGENDUM-01 & 02 FOR TENDER NOTICE NO.: CON/2026/SEP/03

Corrigendum No. 01&02 for Tender Notice No. CON/2026/SEP/03, dated: 08-10-2026 against **Tender No. CE-CON-DK-PW-2026-08** has been published. For details please visit in website **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Chief Engineer/Con/ Nagaland Project/Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Construction Organization
Serving Customers With A Smile

UPGRADATION OF 183 BRAKE VANS

Tender No.: M-249-RSP-2026-27-DRG-2A. **Dated:** 09-10-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Name of Work:** Upgradation of 183 Brake Vans during Periodical Overhauling at C&W Workshop, N.F. Railway, New Bongaigaon. **Advertised Value:** ₹8,84,72,570.61/-; **Earnest Money**: ₹17,69,500/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **15:00** hrs. on **02-11-2026**. For complete information above e-tender will be available in website **http://www.ireps.gov.in** .

CWM, New Bongaigaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

Under noted amendment is hereby made against tender No. 26265154A due on 15.10.2026 Tender Notice No. 13 dt. 03.09.2026 (Item No. 14) **Item No. :- 14.**, **Item Description:-** NIT Conditions (Commercial- Compliance Sr. No.04) **Existing Entry:-** Documents uploading Not allowed **Amended as:-** Documents uploading-Allowed. **Item Description:-** Tender Opening date-with time **Existing Entry:-** 15.10.2026 11:30 am **Amended as:-** 30.10.2026 11:30 am Description may be viewed at IREPS website. All other terms and condition will be remained unchanged. **Note:** Above information may be seen on N.E. Railway Website **www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in** & Govt. of India's website **www.tenders.gov.in**

Principal Chief Material Manager
CPRO/S-73 **Gorakhpur**
Do Not Smoke Bidi/Cigarette in train

ELECTRICAL GENERAL WORKS

Tender Notice No: EL/29/68_2026/K/1553; **Dated:** 10-10-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Tender No.:** 68_2026. **Name of Work :** (A) Electrical General work in connection with S&T work "Conversion of Relay Based Interlocking to Electronic Interlocking at Siliguri Town (SGUT) Station of Katihar Division (Balance Installation Under Priority Category-3)". (B) Electrical General work in connection with S&T work "Provision of Distributed Type Electronic Interlocking System at Siliguri Station of Katihar Division". **Tender Value:** ₹1,18,71,636/-; **Earnest Money**: ₹2,37,400/-; Date & time of **closing** of tender at **15:00** hrs. and **opening** of tender at **15:30** hrs. on **03-11-2026**. Complete information alongwith tender document of above e-tender are available in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sr. DEE (G&Chg.), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:
1. E-Tender No.: DB265525, **Dated:** 12-10-2026; **Item Description:** Set of Brake Caliper unit consisting of two items **(1)** Brake caliper qty-2 nos. **(2)** Brake cylinder qty- 1 no (LH) & 1 no. (RH) for axle mounted disc Brake system of LHB Coaches. Make: KNORR BREMSE. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery] [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No., Stages:0]. **PL No.:** 331614210011, **Consignee:** SSE/BRS/DBWS, NFR (Assam), **Qty.:** 72.00 Set; **Earnest Money:** ₹6,10,020/-; **Closing of E-tender:** at 11:30 hrs. on 09-11-2026.
For details please visit **https://ireps.gov.in.**

Deputy Chief Material Manager/Dibrugarh
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE.No.SR-TVC0SnT (TEND)/3/2026/15
Dated: 14.10.2026

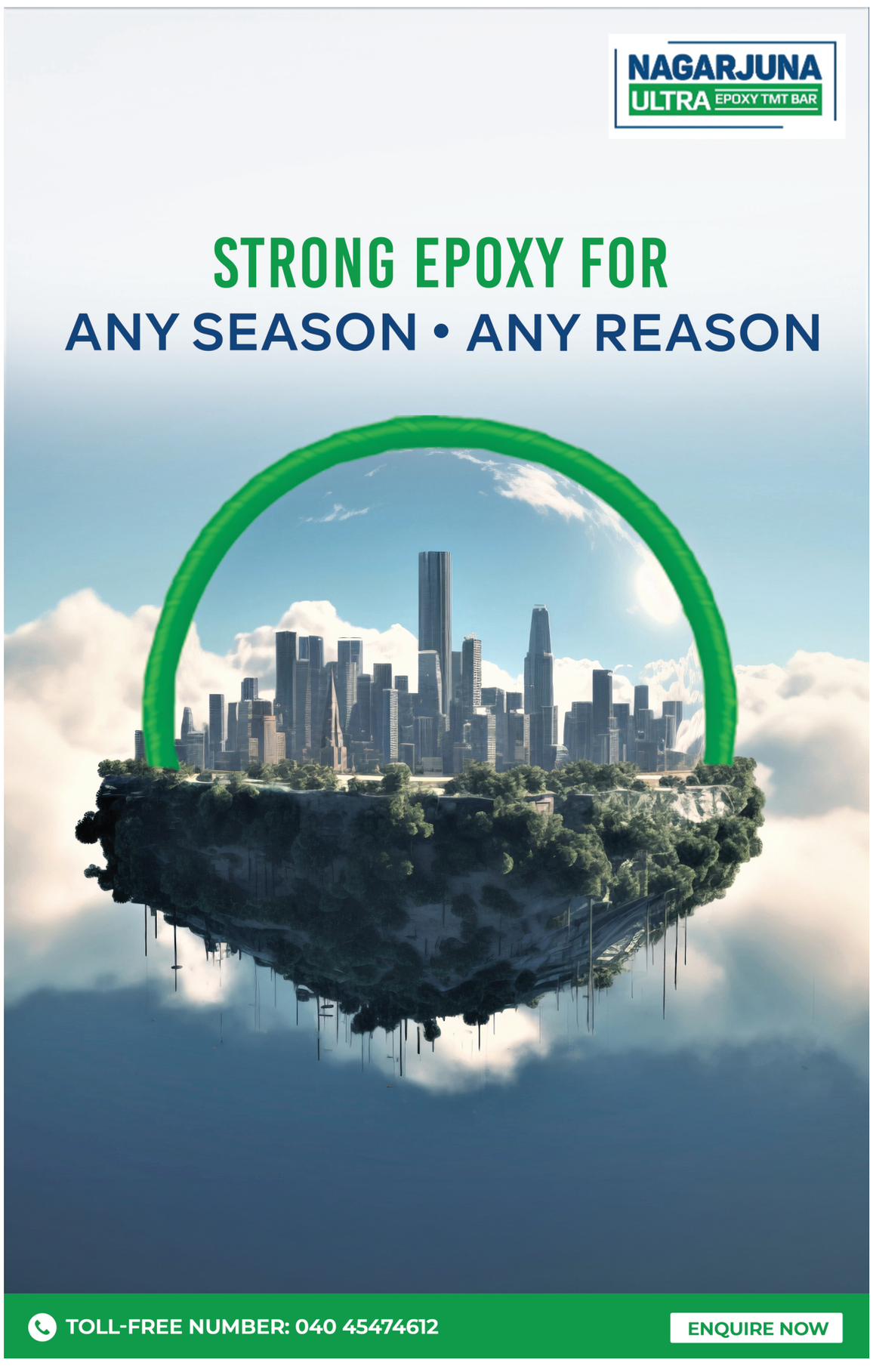
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Thiruvananthapuram-14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tenders for the following work.

Sl.No	Tender No	Name of work
1	TVC-SNT-SIG-26-27-15	Comprehensive Annual maintenance (CAMC) contract for the KYOSAN make El Systems at Kumbalam (KUMM), Turavur (TUVR) & Ochira (OCR) stations for Three years in Thiruvananthapuram Division
2	TVC-SNT-SIG-26-27-20	Comprehensive Annual maintenance (AMC) contract for the ANSALDO make El System at GURUVAYUR station in ADSTE/ERS section for Three years in Thiruvananthapuram Division
3	TVC-SNT-SIG-26-27-16	Comprehensive Annual maintenance (AMC) contract for the MEDHA make El Systems and IPS at VARD, KRPP, CGV, CGY, TRVL, PVRD, ERN, AFK & ERS stations for Three years in Thiruvananthapuram Division
4	TVC-SNT-SIG-26-27-27	Comprehensive Annual Repair Contract of M/s SUKHILA make Integrated Power Supply (IPS) system for a period of three years in Thiruvananthapuram Division
5	TVC-SNT-SIG-26-27-26	Provision of S&T arrangements in connection with shifting of crossovers at VARKALA yard of Thiruvananthapuram Division

Sl. No.	Cash Value (Approx.) (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Last Date for Receipt of Tender
1	91,76,760.00	1,83,500.00	05/11/2026 up to 15:00 Hrs
2	52,88,001.00	1,05,800.00	05/11/2026 up to 15:00 Hrs
3	3,06,08,364.63	6,12,200.00	05/11/2026 up to 15:00 Hrs
4	46,15,613.42	92,300.00	05/11/2026 up to 15:00 Hrs
5	1,09,93,721.73	2,19,900.00	05/11/2026 up to 15:00 Hrs

Complete details & tender document will be available at www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer
Southern Railway, Thiruvananthapuram - 14



SHORT TAKES

Vivek promises strict reforms, transparency in labour dept

HYDERABAD: *Minister for Labour, Mines, and Geology G. Vivek Venkatswamy has announced a major overhaul of the state Labour department following allegations of fraud and irregularities in claim settlements. Speaking to the media at the Secretariat on Thursday, the Minister revealed that the government has launched a full-scale scrutiny of all compensation claims filed under the Telangana Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board dating back to 2018. The move follows allegations that bogus documents and fake death certificates were used to fraudulently siphon off funds. "A robust mechanism will be put in place to ensure that every rupee meant for workers' welfare is utilized properly," Vivek said, emphasising that no official found guilty will be spared, regardless of rank or position. A preliminary investigation led by the Joint Labour Commissioner has already resulted in the suspension of two officials. Following these initial findings, the government ordered a comprehensive inquiry by the Vigilance department.*

Bathukamma symbolises Telangana's cultural heritage and traditions

- **Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla**
- **Governor and First Lady participate in Bathukamma celebrations at Lok Bhavan**
- **Special prayers offered for Telangana's prosperity and the well-being of its people**
- **Around 400 women take part in the festivities**





HYDERABAD

Bathukamma, Telangana's vibrant floral festival, celebrates the State's traditions, women's creativity and reverence for nature, while fostering social harmony, Governor Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla said.

The Governor, accompanied by his wife, Smt. Janaki Shukla, participated in the Bathukamma celebrations at Lok Bhavan on Thursday. The couple offered special prayers to Goddess Gauramma, seeking prosperity for Telangana and peace, happiness, good health and well-being for its people.

Describing Bathukamma as a festival that celebrates nature through the worship of flowers, the Governor said the floral arrangements reflected the beauty of the natural world and humanity's inseparable bond with it. The festival also conveyed the importance of environmental conservation and the responsible use of natural resources.

He said Bathukamma highlighted women's creativity, self-respect and active participation in society. Commending their role in sustaining traditional folk songs, art forms and customs, he stressed the need to preserve this heritage and pass it on to future generations.

The Governor called upon people to contribute to Telangana's progress by promoting environmental protection, women's empowerment and social harmony. He expressed the hope that Bathukamma would strengthen bonds of affection and unity among people.

Around 400 women participate in celebrations

Around 400 women, including artists from Telangana Samskruthika Sarathi, women employees of Lok Bhavan and their family members, participated in the festivities. Gathering around the floral arrangements representing Goddess Gauramma, the women sang traditional songs, clapped and danced. Subsequently, Smt. Janaki Shukla, wife of the Governor, along with women employees, immersed the Bathukammas in the pond on the Lok Bhavan premises.The celebrations featured lively kolatam performances and devotional offerings, creating a festive atmosphere across the Lok Bhavan premises. Colourful decorative lighting added to the festive ambience.Governor's Joint Secretary K. Shashi Kiran Komandur, Deputy Secretary G. Pallavi, Press Secretary M. Dasharatham, other officials and employees attended .

Telangana, Tamil Nadu must grow together: Minister Sridhar Babu

HYDERABAD

Telangana and Tamil Nadu can strengthen each other's industrial growth through strategic partnerships, Minister for IT and Industries D. Sridhar Babu said on Thursday, inviting Tamil Nadu industries to participate in the Invest Telangana Global Summit 2026, scheduled for December 7–9 at Bharat Future City, Hyderabad.

Addressing the Chennai roadshow organised in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Sridhar Babu said the two states' industrial strengths were complementary, not competing. He highlighted investment opportunities in textiles, automobile components, engineering, electronics and emerging technologies.

The Minister outlined Telangana's Rising 2047 vision, which aims to build a $1 trillion economy by 2034 and a $3 trillion economy by 2047. He showcased Hyderabad's technology ecosystem, Genome Valley, aerospace manufacturing and startup network, along with Bharat Future City and the proposed Mobility Valley.

He invited Tamil Nadu entrepreneurs to leverage the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park, Telangana's MSME Policy and the TG-iPASS single-window clearance system for faster industrial approvals. He also highlighted opportunities for Coimbatore engineering firms, Tiruppur textile manufacturers and Chennai's automobile component suppliers to expand operations in Telangana.

On the sidelines of the roadshow, the minister held one-on-one meetings with senior industry leaders and interacted with diplomats and trade representatives from Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Sri Lanka, Russia, Thailand and Malaysia, discussing investment and collaboration opportunities in Telangana.

"No Water Crisis in November": HMWSSB SLAMS FAKE WHATSAPP ALERTS WARNING OF DRY RESERVOIRS





- **Officials assure residents that viral drought warnings lack official backing and urge reliance solely on verified water board channels.**

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, commonly known as Jalamandali, has issued an urgent public clarification regarding alarmist messages currently circulating across WhatsApp and various social media platforms. The widespread posts falsely claim that the effects of El Niño and an upcoming drought will cause the city's major supply reservoirs to completely dry up by the end of November, forcing authorities to severely restrict or halt drinking water distribution throughout Hyderabad. HMWSSB has explicitly refuted these statements, confirming that no such advisory or warning was ever released by the department and that the alarming predictions lack any official authorization or factual backing.

Addressing the rising public anxiety, board officials emphasized that all claims regarding declining reservoir reserves and potential supply disruptions made in the viral message are entirely baseless. The water board appealed directly to citizens to remain vigilant, ignore these unverified rumors, and refrain from forwarding misinformation to secondary groups or contacts. HMWSSB stressed that all genuine policy updates, reservoir status reports, and water conservation guidelines are issued exclusively through their official press communications and verified digital channels, which residents should consult as their sole trusted sources of information.

While debunking the false scarcity narrative, Jalamandali took the opportunity to remind the public of the ongoing necessity of responsible civic habits. Authorities urged all residents to practice mindful water usage in their daily routines, eliminate unnecessary waste, and adopt conservation measures as a standard practice regardless of seasonal rumors. By ignoring unauthorized social media updates and maintaining prudent consumption habits, citizens can help ensure both accurate public awareness and sustainable water management across the metropolitan area.

Harish accuses Revanth of shifting blame for power crisis

HYDERABAD

Former Minister and BRS Legislature Party Deputy Floor Leader T. Harish Rao on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, warning that the people and government employees would ultimately cost him his job.

Reacting to the Chief Minister's remarks blaming officials' incompetence for the power crisis and warning that they would lose their jobs, Harish Rao alleged that Revanth Reddy and his Ministers had made it a habit to commit mistakes and shift the blame onto officials. "Was it not your failure to maintain coal stocks that led to the power crisis?" he asked, accusing the government of failing to conduct timely reviews and neglecting the power sector, resulting in power cuts.

In a statement, the BRS leader questioned how the Chief Minister could hold officials solely responsible for the crisis while absolving himself of accountability. Harish Rao said the Meteorological department and scientists had been warning about the likely impact of El Niño for the past nine months, but the government had failed to take preventive measures.

He accused Revanth Reddy of waking up only after the situation had deteriorated and resorting to threats of suspending officials.

Referring to the government's handling of the prohibited lands list, Harish Rao alleged that the government had committed mistakes but was now attempting to evade responsibility by blaming officials.

He said the Chief Minister was following the same approach in dealing with the power crisis by claiming that the government was not at fault and holding officials solely responsible. While Revanth Reddy had described El Niño and COVID-19 as disasters.

Political Differences Are One Thing; National Dignity Is Another

- **A Spirit of Nationalism in Asaduddin Owaisi's Remarks**



Opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies is a democratic right. Criticizing his government is also the responsibility of the opposition. But does that mean we should remain silent when foreigners make remarks that demean the dignity of India's Prime Minister? In this regard, the response of AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi is commendable. Although he politically opposes Modi, his position that insulting remarks by foreigners cannot be accepted when it comes to the dignity of the nation is an issue every Indian should reflect upon.

Criticizing the government for allegedly favoring Adani and Ambani is one thing. Making derogatory remarks portraying Prime Minister Modi as a representative of a business tycoon is another. No matter how wealthy foreign businesspeople may be, their financial power must not be used to undermine Indian democracy.

The East India Company: A Lesson from History

The East India Company entered India for trade but gradually interfered in political affairs and exploited divisions among Indian rulers to serve its own interests. Internal conflicts, the thirst for power, and mutual distrust also contributed to British dominance. Ultimately, the country suffered under colonial rule.

Today's India is not the weak nation it was then. It has established its position as the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing economies. Foreign investment, technological advancements, and international trade are essential for us. However, we must not allow these to become pretexts for others to dictate our policies or question our sovereignty.

Not only political leaders but every citizen must act responsibly in this regard. Responding only when foreigners criticize a leader we like, while defending them when they insult a leader we dislike, amounts to applying double standards. The office of the Prime Minister is not personal property; it is one of the highest positions of responsibility in a democratic system.

This is the positive aspect of Owaisi's response. Political battles should remain within our country. We must not allow our differences to be portrayed as a sign of national weakness before foreigners. Let us be friends with the world and welcome investments, but never mortgage our self-respect. We must never allow the history of the East India Company to repeat itself.

- Kolanu Venkateswara Reddy
SP Jails (Retd.).

Sarvotham Reddy Must Be Elected MLC with a Huge Majority

- **Welfare Schemes of the People's Government Will Pave the Way for Congress Victory**
- **Ensure Every Graduate Is Registered as a Voter**



WARANGAL

Ministers Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Seethakka, along with Rajya Sabha Member Vem Narendra Reddy, called upon every Congress leader and party worker to work tirelessly to ensure a landslide victory for Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy, the Congress party candidate for the Nalgonda–Khammam–Warangal Graduates' MLC constituency.

They addressed a meeting held on Thursday at the Sathya Sai Function Hall in Kazipet, Warangal, as chief guests. They urged party leaders and workers to work in coordination with the common goal of securing victory for Sarvotham Reddy, who belongs to a family with a long-standing commitment to the Congress party.

They called upon party cadres to reach out to graduates personally and mobilise support for the Congress candidate. Emphasising that the welfare schemes being implemented by the Congress government were a major strength for the party's victory, they advised leaders and workers to take the government's welfare programmes to the people on a large scale. The leaders also directed party workers to take up the graduates' voter registration drive as a mass movement and ensure that every eligible graduate is registered as a voter.

Members of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and Porika Balaram Naik; MLAs Nayini Rajender Reddy, Ramchander Naik, Bhukya Murali Naik, Yashaswini Reddy, K.R. Nagaraju, Donti Madhava Reddy and Revoor Prakash Reddy; Telangana Mahila Congress president Errabelli Swarna; KUDA Chairperson Gundu Sudharani; MLCs, constituency incharges, DCC presidents and senior PCC leaders, among others, participated in the meeting.

BRS demands CM Revanth Reddy's resignation over power crisis, Singareni coal row

HYDERABAD



BRS MLC Dasoju Sravan has demanded for Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's immediate resignation, holding him responsible for the alleged power crisis and irregularities in Singareni Collieries Company Limited.

Thanking Singareni workers and the public for making BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao's meeting at Godavarikhani a grand success, Sravan criticised the Congress government's policies and accused it of reversing the achievements made during the BRS regime. In fact, former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had increased Telangana's power generation capacity from 7,000 MW to 20,000 MW, ushering in an era without power cuts. However, the present Congress government had undermined the state's power sector, he remarked.

Sravan accused the government of ignoring power cuts affecting farmers and industries, despite claims by Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka that there were no outages. He also questioned the reported reduction in the planned capacities of the Yadadri and Jainoor power projects and demanded an explanation from the government.

Raising the Singareni issue, the BRS MLC alleged that 40 lakh metric tonnes of coal worth Rs.1,600 crore had gone missing and demanded a probe by the CBI or a sitting judge. He also alleged that the controversy was part of an attempt to privatise Singareni and hand it over to the Adani Group. Sravan further accused the Congress government of neglecting the Kaleshwaram project for political reasons, claiming that the situation was affecting groundwater levels and farmers in North Telangana.

Drawing a parallel with Congress leaders' demands for accountability over alleged electoral irregularities, the BRS leader said Revanth Reddy and his Cabinet should take moral responsibility for the power situation and the alleged coal irregularities. The BRS MLC demanded the Chief Minister's resignation, alleging that the government's policies were pushing Telangana into a power crisis.



Central Park closed for two days, prohibitory orders in force; Delhi Police cautions against unlawful assembly today

NEW DELHI, OCT 16

The Delhi Police have appealed to general public not to violate prohibitory orders imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in and around Connaught Place in view of a call for people to assemble at the Central Park on October 16 at 5 p.m. while carrying the national flag (Tiranga).

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Neha Yadav on Thursday in a video message said that the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have appealed to their workers, supporters and the general public to join the protest in large numbers. The order has been issued to maintain peace and order and to ensure the safety of lives as well as public and private property in the area. Appealing to protesters and the public, the police said no one should participate in any gathering that violates the prohibitory order currently in force. Appropriate legal action will be taken against those found violating the order. The Delhi Police aims to ensure that no situation arises that could disrupt the operations of traders and shopkeepers. The force may, however, consider facilitating a designated and suitable location for a select group of individuals to gather for the purpose of carrying the national flag and singing the national anthem, provided prescribed guidelines are followed and full respect, dignity and decorum are maintained towards the Tricolour and the national anthem. The Delhi Police once again appealed to everyone to maintain peace and order.

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has told the Delhi Police that Central Park will remain closed on October 16 and 17 for administrative reasons. NDMC has requested appropriate security arrangements to prevent any unauthorised entry into the park. "Trade and market associations in and around Connaught Place have also sought protection for their shops and establishments against disruptive elements and unlawful assemblies, noting that such activities, especially during the festive season, are adversely affecting their businesses," she said. The Delhi High Court has taken note of concerns regarding potential disruptions to commercial activities in the area. The Delhi Police has assured that suitable measures will be taken to address these concerns.



Relief for bus passengers: MSRTC cancels 15 pc seasonal fare hike proposal for Diwali

Mumbai, Oct 15L: In a major relief for millions of commuters across Maharashtra, the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) on Thursday officially scrapped its proposal for a 15 per cent seasonal fare hike ahead of the festive Diwali season. Traditionally, the transport body implements a temporary 15 per cent increase in bus fares during peak festive rushes such as Diwali to manage operational demands. A proposal seeking to implement this fare hike between November 1 and November 15, 2026, was recently submitted to Transport Minister and MSRTC Chairman Pratap Sarnaik. However, expressing deep concern over the financial strain already faced by common citizens, Minister Sarnaik on Thursday firmly rejected the proposal. Highlighting the struggles of drought-affected farmers, inflation-hit households, and the working class, Sarnaik questioned the rationale behind imposing an additional financial burden on the public during challenging economic times. "The common citizen, struggling with inflation and farming families dealing with drought conditions, are already enduring immense financial pressure. Why should an additional burden of a fare hike be placed on them at this time?" the Minister said.

He emphasised that while MSRTC must find alternative ways to overcome its own financial deficits, the administration cannot shirk its duty to provide relief to the public. The iconic red buses ('Laal-pari') of the MSRTC serve as the primary mode of transport for rural Maharashtra, connecting farmers, daily wagers, students, office workers, and senior citizens.

"A festive price hike would have added heavily to the daily expenses of commuters already grappling with high living costs. The state government is sensitive.

Odisha: Students' union polls held after 8 yrs amid sporadic tensions, results of 153 colleges out

BHUBANESWAR: (Oct 15) Students' union elections across Odisha were held on Thursday after eight years amid sporadic tensions, with results declared in 153 colleges, officials said. Polling was conducted from 8 am to 2 pm at 346 state-run colleges and 13 universities under tight security, they said.



Counting began after voting ended, and the results were declared at 153 colleges. Among the prominent institutions where counting was continuing were Utkal University and RD Women's University in Bhubaneswar.

SSR 2027: EC to provide draft, final electoral roll to political parties in readable formats

NEW DELHI, OCT 15



The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday issued the schedule of Special Summary Revision (SSR) of photo electoral rolls, with respect to January 1, 2027, as the qualifying date, making a major change in the format of roll that will be provided to political parties.

In SSR 2027, the parties will be provided soft copy of the Draft and Final Electoral Roll in readable pdf format without photos of the electors.

In the earlier SSR, the parties were provided soft copy of the Draft and Final electoral roll in image pdf format without photos of the electors.

This change introduced by the EC in SSR 2027 was among the major demands of parties and candidates who lost Assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra.

Another major change introduced in SSR 2027 by EC is the fixing of a maximum limit for submitting Form-7 by individual electors whereas no limit was prescribed earlier, the statement said.

In the latest SSR, the EC has also tweaked the provisions related to providing supplements to the recognised political parties during the draft stage. "Earlier, the addition, deletion and modification supplements were kept only for record and future use. These were not shared with any recognised political parties during draft stage," an official statement said. From SSR 2027, the EC has also decided to provide contesting candidates the soft copy of alphabetically arranged Electoral Roll at the time of poll. "Now, at the time of poll, readable pdf of the alphabetically arranged electoral roll in pendrive or any other electronic storage device can be provided to the contesting candidates by the office of Returning Officer/District Election Officer, on demand and payment basis," the statement said. Earlier, the contesting candidates were provided soft copy of alphabetically arranged Electoral Roll on the last date of nomination in roll in CD/DVDs on payment and demand basis. The EC also plans weekly sharing of list of claims and objections with political parties. Now, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) will share the weekly list of claims and objections on weekly basis along with the printed copy of previous week(s), the statement added.

Earlier, the weekly list shared with political parties was incremental in nature.

Apart from these changes, the EC has also decided that from SSR 2027 to set up at district/Assembly constituency level to facilitate enrolment of electors, specially the migrant, vulnerable and marginalised persons. Such a facility was not there earlier.

The statement said that Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) will ensure that special drives, wherever necessary, are launched for facilitation of enrolment of electors.

The special camps also may also be organised for enrolment of people living in night shelters, labour colonies as well as for homeless and marginalised persons and other vulnerable groups.

Odisha govt extends Antyodaya Gruha Yojana by two years, targets more houses

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 15

The Odisha government has decided to construct an additional 2,91,666 houses under the Antyodaya Gruha Yojana and extend the scheme by two years until 2029 from the earlier deadline of 2027. According to an official statement by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the crucial decision to construct more houses under the AGY scheme and its extension was taken by Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. Speaking on the occasion, CM Majhi said, "The goal of providing housing for everyone in the state will be achieved soon." The CMO office further informed that the total project outlay of Rs 7,550 crore will remain unchanged. However, Rs 3,500 crore earmarked for the repair component of the scheme will now be used for the construction of new houses. It was noted that the beneficiaries who have received Rs 48,500 or less under the scheme, along with other eligible households, will be considered for assistance under the scheme. The Odisha Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department has been directed to conduct a survey soon to identify new beneficiaries. The Odisha government has also revised the incentives for completing houses within the stipulated period. Beneficiaries who complete construction within five months will now receive an incentive of Rs 35,000, against the earlier Rs 20,000 for completing it within four months. Similarly, those completing houses within seven months will receive Rs 20,000, compared with the earlier incentive of Rs 10,000 for completing construction within six months. Majhi said the changes in the scheme announced on Thursday will enable more people to benefit from the scheme. The scheme initially aimed to construct houses for five lakh families, particularly poor and vulnerable households that are not found eligible for assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Notably, the scheme aims to provide pucca houses to eligible households left out of existing housing schemes, victims of natural or man-made calamities, families displaced by development projects, households where a person with disabilities is the main earning member, and beneficiaries under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

President Murmu accepts Union Minister L Murugan's resignation

NEW DELHI, OCT 15



President Droupadi Murmu, as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has accepted the resignation of L. Murugan from the Union Council of Ministers, with immediate effect, under clause (2) of Article 75 of the Constitution of India, an official in the President's Secretariat said on Thursday.

Murugan, who was earlier serving as Minister of State (MoS) for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, had requested the Prime Minister to relieve him of his Ministerial post and let him quit his Rajya Sabha membership to dedicate himself full-time to strengthening the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Tamil Nadu ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

In a letter to Prime Minister Modi, Murugan had said that he wanted to return to grassroots politics and work alongside party workers across Tamil Nadu. Referring to PM Modi's recent visit to Tamil Nadu, he said the public affection and enthusiasm he witnessed had reinforced his conviction that the BJP could achieve more in the state.

He pledged to devote his time and energy to preparing the party for the next Parliamentary elections. "Now, I wish to return to the grassroots, stand with our karyakartas and dedicate myself full-time to strengthening the BJP in Tamil Nadu ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha elections," Murugan wrote in the letter, shared on his official X account. "Nation First. Party Next. Self Last," he added, reiterating what he described in his letter as the guiding principle of his political journey spanning nearly three decades in the ABVP and BJP. Murugan said he intended to visit every village and street, meet people and help expand the party's presence throughout the state. He expressed a desire to take PM Modi's message of inclusive development to every person and encourage families to participate in building a developed India.

Describing his service in the Union government as the greatest honour of his life, Murugan recalled his humble beginnings as the son of daily wage labourers.

"His parents, who also worked as cattle grazers, continued to lead a simple life in Konur village," he said.

Madras HC closes case over delay in numbering complaint against Udhayanidhi

CHENNAI, OCT 15



The Madras High Court on Thursday closed a case concerning the delay in numbering a criminal complaint against Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin over alleged electoral malpractice during the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. Justice V. Lakshminarayanan passed the order after the Metropolitan Magistrate in George Town, Chennai, confirmed that the complaint had been numbered and a pre-cognisance notice issued. The High Court had earlier sought a report from the magistrate on the time required to number the complaint. Following confirmation that the procedural step had been completed, the court closed the petition challenging the delay. The order concerns only the grievance over the processing of the complaint and does not amount to a decision on the allegations against Udhayanidhi. The petitioner, Milany, who also contested from Chepauk, had approached the High Court seeking a direction to the magistrate to expedite the process and take his complaint on file. Milany submitted that he lodged the complaint on September 8, 2026, under Section 125A of the Representation of the People Act. When questions arose about its maintainability, he provided an oral explanation and subsequently submitted a written clarification. Despite this, he alleged that more than 25 days passed without the complaint being numbered or returned with instructions to rectify any deficiencies. He contended that keeping it pending without assigning a case number denied him timely access to justice. The complaint accused Udhayanidhi of making false declarations in his election affidavit. Milany claimed that documents obtained from the District Election Officer supported his allegations of corrupt practice and undue influence on voters. Citing a Supreme Court judgment, the petitioner argued that false declarations concerning the assets of a candidate or their spouse constituted corrupt practice. He further alleged that Udhayanidhi's political influence and financial resources made the delay particularly concerning. Milany described the failure to take the complaint on record as a travesty of justice. He also pointed to the establishment of special courts to expedite proceedings involving MPs and MLAs, arguing that delays in processing complaints undermined their purpose. Earlier, Milany had moved the High Court seeking directions to the Election Commission of India to furnish election-related documents concerning Udhayanidhi. During those proceedings, the court observed that filing an election petition was a statutory right. Thursday's disposal followed the magistrate's report confirming action on the complaint.

Karnataka Cabinet recommends rejection of mercy petitions in Shubha murder case

BENGALURU, OCT 15

The Karnataka Cabinet has decided to recommend to the Governor the rejection of mercy petitions filed by Shubha Shankarnarayan and D. Arun Varma, who were convicted in the sensational 2003 Ring Road Shubha murder case in Bengaluru, Minister Priyank Kharge said on Thursday. The decision relates to S.C. No. 314/2004, a case heard by the 17th Fast Track Court in Bengaluru. Kharge, who holds the Home, Information Technology and Biotechnology, and E-Governance portfolios, said the Cabinet had decided to recommend that the mercy petitions be rejected. The petitions were submitted under Article 161 of the Constitution, which empowers the Governor to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment, or to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases. In an order dated July 14, 2025, the Supreme Court had granted the petitioners eight weeks to approach the Governor with mercy petitions. It had also directed that they should not be arrested and their sentences should remain suspended until the petitions were considered and a decision was taken. The Governor's office subsequently forwarded the petitions to the state government for its opinion.

The case dates back to December 3, 2003, when B.V. Girish, a 27-year-old software engineer working with Intel, was murdered just four days after his engagement to Shubha. According to the prosecution, Shubha took Girish to the Outer Ring Road area under the pretext of watching an aircraft land. Her associates allegedly attacked him with a metal rod, inflicting severe injuries. Girish later succumbed to his injuries in hospital. Investigators alleged that Shubha, who opposed the engagement arranged by her family, conspired with Arun Varma, with whom she was reportedly in a relationship, and two others, Venkatesh and Dinesh, to murder Girish. Shubha, Arun Varma, Venkatesh and Dinesh were convicted of murder and criminal conspiracy under Sections 302 and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Karnataka High Court upheld their convictions and sentences, which were subsequently affirmed by the Supreme Court. The case attracted widespread public attention and later inspired the Kannada film 'Ring Road Shubha', released in 2014 and made by an all-women crew.



Vijay seeks S Jaishankar's help to free 25 Tamil Nadu fishermen detained in Maldives

Vijay urged S Jaishankar's personal intervention to secure the release of 25 fishermen detained by the Maldives Coast Guard along with their three boats.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay on Thursday urged the Centre to secure the early release and safe repatriation of 25 fishermen from Thoothukudi district who were detained by the Maldives Coast Guard along with three mechanised fishing boats. In a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Vijay sought his personal intervention and urged him to take up the matter with the Maldivian government through appropriate diplomatic channels. The Chief Minister said the fishermen were detained in the early hours of October 13, along with their three boats, which were also seized by the Maldivian authorities. "I request you to kindly take up the matter with the Government of Maldives through appropriate diplomatic channels and facilitate the early release and safe repatriation of the fishermen and their boats," he wrote. Vijay said Jaishankar's personal intervention would provide much-needed reassurance to the families of the detained fishermen and the wider fishing community. "Your personal intervention would provide much-needed reassurance to the affected families and the fishing community," the Chief Minister added. The letter seeks the Centre's intervention to secure the release of all 25 fishermen and the retrieval of their three mechanised fishing boats. Earlier this month, Vijay had written another letter to Jaishankar, requesting immediate action to secure the release of 20 Tamil Nadu fishermen and 270 fishing boats detained by the Sri Lankan Navy. CM Vijay stated that such recurring incidents are causing significant concern and fear among Tamil Nadu's coastal fishing communities. Fishermen from Ramanathapuram and adjoining coastal districts traditionally rely on the Palk Bay region as their primary source of livelihood. The arrests and boat seizures are subjecting their families to immense distress and severe economic hardship, the chief minister had.

Mizoram CM launches four digital financial management initiatives

Aizawl, Oct 15: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Thursday launched four major digital financial management initiatives of the state government to strengthen transparency, accountability and efficiency in the management of public finances. A senior official of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said that the initiatives, implemented by the Finance Department, include the Mizoram Integrated Works Accounts System (MIWAS), e-Sanction, e-Budget and 100 per cent Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

The official added that MIWAS would streamline works accounts in six departments -- the Public Works Department (PWD), Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Power and Electricity Department (P&E), Irrigation and Water Resources Department (I&WRD), Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department (EF&CC), and Land Resources, Soil and Water Conservation Department (LRS&WC). The system is expected to improve the reconciliation of expenditure figures submitted to the Accountant General and ensure the proper submission of expenditure vouchers through the Treasury, thereby strengthening financial monitoring and accountability.

EDITORIAL

India's Demographic Dividend Has a Deadline

India's young population is often described as its greatest economic advantage. A large workforce, rising aspirations and expanding access to education offer the country an opportunity to accelerate growth and improve living standards. But demographics alone cannot guarantee prosperity. Unless young Indians find productive employment and acquire relevant skills, the country's demographic dividend could become a missed opportunity. The urgency is real. A March 2026 report by Azim Premji University warns that India is nearing the peak of its demographic dividend, with the working-age population's share expected to begin declining after 2030. The challenge is not simply to educate more young people, but to ensure that education leads to meaningful work. The expansion of colleges and universities must be matched by a corresponding growth in employment opportunities.

India's employment challenge extends beyond unemployment figures. Many young people are trapped between educational qualifications and the practical requirements of industry. Employers seek technical competence, communication skills and adaptability, while graduates frequently struggle to find jobs that match their training. Vocational education, apprenticeships and industry-linked curricula must therefore become integral to the education system rather than alternatives pursued only after academic routes fail. Job creation is equally important. An economy cannot absorb millions of aspiring workers through government recruitment or the information technology sector alone. Labour-intensive manufacturing, tourism, construction, healthcare, logistics and modern agriculture can generate employment on a wider scale. Small businesses and emerging enterprises need easier access to credit, stable policies and simpler compliance requirements so that they can expand and hire more workers. Women's participation is another critical part of the equation. India cannot fully realise its economic potential while millions of women face barriers to entering or remaining in paid employment. Safe transport, affordable childcare, flexible working arrangements and equal opportunities can help convert their education and capabilities into economic participation. The World Bank has identified higher female workforce participation and the creation of better jobs as important priorities for India's long-term growth.

Technology adds another dimension. Artificial intelligence and automation may create new occupations while changing or displacing existing ones. Young workers need opportunities to reskill throughout their careers, not merely during their years in formal education. Public policy must anticipate these changes instead of responding only after disruption occurs. The responsibility is shared by governments, educational institutions and employers. Governments must measure success through job quality, wages and workforce participation, not just enrolment numbers or investment announcements. Colleges must strengthen practical learning, while businesses should invest in training and apprenticeships. Young people, too, need access to career guidance and opportunities to update their skills.

India's demographic advantage is a window, not a permanent guarantee. The country has the numbers, ambition and economic potential to become a global growth engine. What it needs now is a determined effort to connect education with employment and growth with opportunity. The deadline is not a single year on the calendar; it is the gradual closing of a demographic window that cannot be reopened at will. India must act while time is still on its side.

FATHER, YOUR SWEAT IS OUR ADDRESS

We search for God
behind temple doors,
upon mountain peaks,
in the silence of folded hands.
Yet we fail to see
the man who quietly burns his years
to keep darkness
away from our dreams.

Father!
Before dawn opened its eyes,
your struggles had begun.
Long after the world fell asleep,
your worries remained awake.
The lines upon your palms
held no promise of fortune;
they became the roads
on which our futures travelled.

Your shirt wore thin
so our hopes could grow.
Your pockets emptied
to fill our lives with possibilities.
You buried your dreams
so ours could touch the sky.
We became birds,
while you remained the roots
unseen, uncelebrated,
holding us firmly
as we proudly called our flight
our own achievement.
We mistook your silence
for a life without sorrow.
We never imagined
how many storms you endured
to shelter us from the rain.

The world applauded our victories,
while you stood quietly
beyond the circle of light.
No one called your name,
yet every honour we earned
carried your invisible signature.
Then time began
its cruellest work.
The hands that held us steady
began to tremble.
The feet that guided our journeys
struggled to take another step.
You never counted our falls.
How can we hesitate now
to hold your hand?

One day,
your shoes will wait by the door,
your spectacles upon the table,
your chair beside the window.
Everything will remain
except you.

The house will have its walls,
its windows, its familiar voices,
but the voice that called us
"My child!"
will never return.
Only then shall we realise
childhood does not end
when we grow old;
it ends when the eyes
that first saw us as children
close forever.

Father!
A thousand flowers tomorrow
cannot replace
one hour beside you today.
A lamp before your photograph
cannot warm
the hand we failed to hold.
You gave us your lifetime
without counting the cost.
Have we given you
one unhurried afternoon?
We may open
a thousand temple doors,
but no prayer can reopen
the eyes that found heaven
in our happiness.
Your sweat wrote our address
upon the map of life.
Your sacrifices became the roads
that carried us into the world.

But when honours fade,
when wealth loses its meaning,
when the world grows silent
where shall we go
to hear you call us
"My child!"
once again?
Where shall we find
those waiting arms
that made every sorrow small?
We spent our lives
searching for God in temples,
never realising
that God was growing old
beneath our own roof.
And when we finally turn
to touch His feet
may it not be
before a photograph.

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

Telangana Farmers Must Prepare for El Niño Risks, but Have No Reason to Lose Hope

Scientific crop planning, assured access to agricultural support and proactive government action can turn weather uncertainty into an opportunity to strengthen farm resilience.



Agriculture has always required patience, perseverance and the ability to adapt to changing conditions. For Telangana's farmers, concerns over El Niño, uncertain rainfall, rising temperatures and irrigation availability present challenges that deserve serious attention. But these uncertainties should not become a source of fear or discourage farmers from preparing for the next cultivation season. With timely information, prudent crop planning and effective government support, many of the risks associated with adverse weather can be reduced.

The message to farmers must be clear: prepare carefully, cultivate confidently and make informed decisions. Weather risks are real, but so are the opportunities created by scientific farming, efficient water management and coordinated public action. What farmers need at this stage is reliable guidance and practical support, not alarmist predictions.

The monsoon remains a foundation of agricultural prosperity

The southwest monsoon, which generally brings rainfall between June and September, is central to Telangana's agricultural economy. It supports rain-fed crops, replenishes reservoirs and tanks, and contributes to groundwater recharge. Its performance influences not only cultivation but also rural employment, livestock management and household incomes.

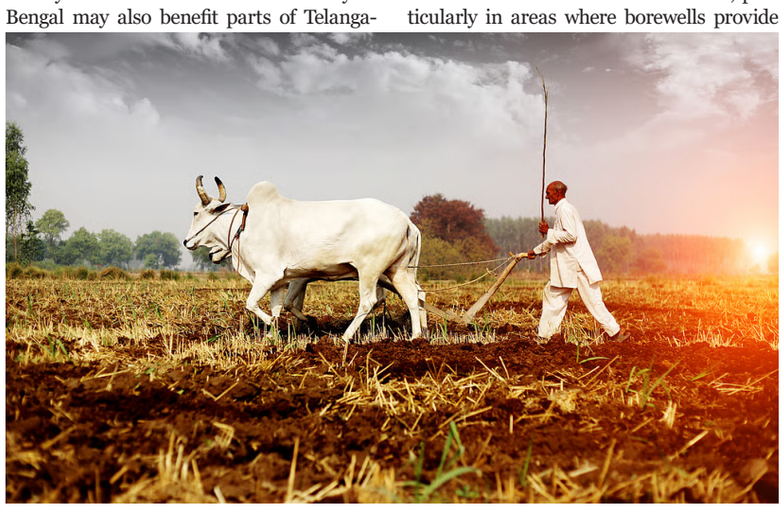
Uneven rainfall can create difficulties for farmers, particularly those dependent on borewells or rain-fed agriculture. Yet conditions can vary significantly from one district to another and even between neighbouring villages. A statewide assessment cannot fully capture the water resources available to an individual farmer.

Farmers should therefore assess local rainfall, soil moisture, groundwater availability and irrigation prospects before making major cultivation investments. Such preparation should not be interpreted as a reason to leave land uncultivated. Rather, it should help farmers identify the most suitable crops, manage expenditure and make better use of available resources.

The government must strengthen village-level agricultural advisories so that farmers receive information relevant to their own fields and local conditions.

El Niño calls for vigilance, not pessimism

El Niño is a climate phenomenon associated with warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in parts of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific. It can influence the Indian monsoon, but its effects are not uniform or predetermined. The presence of El Niño does not automatically mean that Telangana will experience drought. The actual outcome depends on several interacting atmospheric and oceanic factors. Farmers should therefore rely on the latest forecasts issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and on recommendations from agricultural scientists rather than on speculation. Rainfall from low-pressure systems and cyclonic disturbances over the Bay of Bengal may also benefit parts of Telangana after the southwest monsoon. However, such rainfall cannot be guaranteed or treated as a substitute for dependable irrigation. The government should communicate these uncertainties honestly while ensuring that farmers receive practical advice on sowing schedules, crop selection and contingency planning. Timely guidance can help farmers remain confident without overlooking potential risks.



Encourage cultivation through informed decisions

Farmers invest their savings, labour and hopes in every crop cycle. Their decisions must be respected and supported by reliable information. When rainfall and irrigation prospects are uncertain, the objective should be to help farmers cultivate wisely, rather than discourage cultivation across the State. Before sowing, farmers should estimate the water required by their chosen crops and assess whether available resources are likely to meet those needs through harvest. Where water availability is limited, locally suitable alternatives, shorter-duration varieties or a smaller cultivated area may help reduce exposure to financial losses. However, no single crop strategy is appropriate for every district. Crop selection must reflect soil conditions, water availability, growing-season requirements, market prospects and expert recommendations. Short-duration crops, for instance, are not necessarily less water-intensive. The government should ensure that agricultural officers and scientists provide farmers with practical, locally relevant alternatives. It should also improve access to information about seeds, crop insurance, agricultural credit and applicable assistance schemes.

Reports of changes in cultivated area, including claims that Telangana's kharif acreage declined from 1.39 crore acres to 1.23 crore acres, must be verified against official agricultural statistics before publication. Sound policy requires accurate data and a clear understanding of why farmers change their cultivation decisions.

Water conservation can strengthen farmers' confidence

Water is one of Telangana agriculture's most valuable resources. Protecting it requires cooperation between farmers, communities and government agencies. Mulching, moisture conservation, efficient irrigation and appropriate water-harvesting practices can help reduce avoidable losses. Drip irrigation may be beneficial for suitable horticultural crops, while improved irrigation scheduling can help farmers make better use of limited supplies. The government should accelerate the maintenance and restoration of tanks, support watershed development and communicate realistic information about reservoir storage and planned water releases. Groundwater management must also receive sustained attention, particularly in areas where borewells provide the principal source of irrigation. Such measures are not merely responses to a possible difficult monsoon. They are long-term investments in agricultural security that can benefit farmers across a range of weather conditions.

Protecting crops from heat stress

High temperatures can increase evaporation and crop water requirements, while heat during flowering, pollination and grain or fruit development can affect yields. These risks become more serious when high temperatures coincide with inadequate soil moisture. Farmers can reduce some of these pressures through timely irrigation, mulching and other locally recommended practices. Horticultural crops require particular care because prolonged water stress can damage trees and affect productivity over several seasons. The government should make crop-specific recommendations available through agricultural extension services and farmer platforms such as Rythu Vedika. Information must be timely, understandable and suitable for local soil and weather conditions. Livestock should not be overlooked. Adequate drinking water, shade, ventilation and fodder are essential during hot and dry periods. Protecting animals and orchards is an important part of protecting farm incomes.

Electricity and irrigation must work together

Reliable electricity is essential for farmers who depend on borewells. During periods of high temperatures, irrigation requirements may increase alongside domestic and other electricity demand. Claims that peak power demand reached 19,895 MW or increased by approximately 40% over the previous year should be verified using official power-sector data. The date, comparison period and measurement basis must be clear. The broader policy priority is to ensure that power supply and agricultural water management are planned together. Efficient pumping, appropriate irrigation schedules and water-saving technologies can help reduce unnecessary consumption. The government should communicate clearly about electricity availability and take appropriate measures to support agricultural operations during critical crop stages. Farmers need dependable information to plan their work and avoid unnecessary expenditure.

Reservoir management and public accountability

Reservoirs support drinking water, irrigation, hydropower generation and other essential needs. When storage is limited, transparent and carefully planned allocation becomes particularly important. Any claim that hydropower generation fell to 27% in May must be supported by official records specifying the year, the projects covered and the basis of comparison. Authorities should regularly publish reservoir levels, expected inflows and planned releases, explaining what these mean for agricultural water availability. Such communication would help farmers make realistic decisions instead of relying on rumours or uncertain expectations. The government's responsibility is not simply to warn farmers about possible shortages. It must use available information to plan ahead, manage resources efficiently and communicate decisions in time for farmers to act.

Government support must reach every farming village

Institutions such as Rythu Vedika and programmes such as Rythu Nestham can play an important role in strengthening farmer awareness. Agricultural scientists, extension officers, irrigation officials, horticulture specialists and animal husbandry departments should coordinate their efforts.

Farmers need answers to practical questions: Which crops are suitable for their soil and water resources? When should sowing begin? What alternatives are available if rainfall is delayed? Where can they obtain reliable advice and information about applicable government support?

The government should ensure that these answers reach farmers before they make substantial investments. Crop insurance awareness, access to agricultural credit, timely input availability and clear information about relief eligibility can further strengthen their ability to manage risk.

Claims that approximately 235 mandals are experiencing drought-like conditions should be confirmed through the relevant official assessment process. Verified information must be accompanied by clear communication about assistance and support wherever applicable.

Government action should be guided by evidence, but it must also be guided by an understanding of the financial pressures under which farmers operate. Early intervention is often more useful than assistance offered only after losses have occurred.

Five practical steps towards a safer crop season

Before sowing, farmers should consider five questions:

1. Water security: Is sufficient water likely to be available through the crop's critical growth stages?
2. Crop suitability: Does the proposed crop match local soil, weather and growing-season conditions?
3. Financial protection: Can the investment be managed if yields or market prices are lower than expected?
4. Reliable information: What do the latest official forecasts and local agricultural advisories indicate?
5. Contingency planning: Are there suitable alternative crops or adjustments that could reduce financial exposure?

These questions are intended to strengthen farmers' confidence, not weaken it. A farmer who understands the risks and has access to reliable advice is better placed to make sound decisions and protect the family's investment.

Preparedness is a shared responsibility

Telangana's agricultural future must not be defined by fear of an uncertain monsoon. It should be shaped by the confidence that comes from scientific knowledge, careful planning and effective public institutions. El Niño deserves attention, but it should not be presented as a prediction of inevitable drought. Similarly, the possibility of adequate rainfall should not become an excuse for postponing preparations. Responsible planning requires acknowledging uncertainty while acting on what can be controlled. Farmers must assess their resources and choose crops wisely. The government ensuring that reliable forecasts, water information, agricultural advice and applicable support measures reaching timely and promptly. Scientists and local institutions must help translate complex weather information into practical decisions.

The message to Telangana's farmers is one of confidence and caution in equal measure: do not abandon hope, do not make decisions in fear, and do not invest blindly. Prepare with scientific advice, conserve every available drop of water and cultivate according to local conditions. The message to the government is equally important: farmers should not be left to manage climate uncertainty alone. Timely advisories, transparent water management, dependable agricultural support and coordinated action can make a meaningful difference to their livelihoods.

Protect water. Support farmers. Safeguard crops and livestock. Build confidence through timely action. Telangana's farmers deserve not merely warnings about possible risks, but the knowledge, resources and institutional support that enable them to face those risks with confidence. Preparedness, backed by effective governance, is the surest path towards a resilient agricultural future.

> "El Niño deserves attention, but it should not be presented as a prediction of inevitable drought. Farmers need reliable information, scientific crop planning and timely government support—not alarmist predictions."



YEEDULAPALLY RAVITEJA
AGRICULTURE EXTENSION OFFICER
8897865899

FIFTEEN YEARS, TWO MAIDANS: ANNA HAZARE WAS ARRESTED AND THE GOVERNMENT JUST BLINKED IN HOURS. AND NOW THE COCKROACH CROWD IS DETAINED AND THE GATES STAY SHUT!



SIR, The CEC And The Street: 3,000 Detained, Jantar Mantar De-Notified, And A Supreme Court Watching The Clock!

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

In August 2011 the UPA arrested Anna Hazare and reversed course within hours. In October 2026 the Cockroach Janta Party and the Opposition face detentions, curbs and a de-notified Jantar Mantar over the Special Intensive Revision and the Chief Election Commissioner. Both seasons faced criticism of the protesters. The difference lies in how fast power retreated. On 16th August 2011 Delhi Police lifted Anna Hazare from a Mayur Vihar flat at about 7.30 am, before he could reach JP Park. Over a thousand supporters were detained that day. Home Minister P Chidambaram called it "painful duty" and later "inevitably unfortunate". "What wrong did we do? No force was used. No one was injured," he said. He also saluted the man: "As a true Gandhian he said he will go to Jai Prakash Narayan park and violate the prohibitory orders." Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the Lok Sabha the next day that the path to impose the Jan Lokpal was "totally misconceived". Opposition voices answered at once. Arun Jaitley called it "a very sad day for Indian democracy". L K Advani said the government was "looking for scapegoats and stopping peaceful protests". Brinda Karat termed the arrest "an attack on the democratic rights of the citizens". Within days the government withdrew the cases. Hazare refused to walk out until he was promised the right to fast, stayed on in Tihar for three days, and then marched to Ramlila Maidan with the Tricolour held high. The retreat took hours. The protest then ran for twelve days. Ministers questioned Team Anna's motives and funding, and one senior Congress leader had to withdraw a remark about Anna's integrity. Allegations of hidden political backing were thrown about. The Ramlila crackdown on Baba Ramdev two months earlier had drawn the Supreme Court's notice. The 2011 record is a story of rough politics and a quick climbdown, not of a spotless democracy. In 2011 power arrested, abused and then yielded, all within a fortnight. The speed of the yielding is what history remembers. Fifteen years later the contest is the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. The Election Commission says the exercise removes the dead, the shifted, the duplicates and the ineligible. Opposition parties and civil society groups claim roughly 130 million names have disappeared from draft rolls, a figure larger than the population of Japan. An Indian Express report noted that two other commissioners had raised written objections more than a dozen times. The Commission maintains decisions were unanimous and routine. The youth led Cockroach Janta Party, born from a satirical online spark, and the INDIA bloc have taken the demand for Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar's resignation and a rollback of the SIR into the streets. Rahul Gandhi has said, "Gyanesh Kumar will go. This government will go. Then the repair of democracy will begin." Mallikarjun Kharge has called the deletions "vote demonetisation" and demanded restoration of the names. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke has declared that the streets belong to the people and that the protest will continue till the Commissioner resigns. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke and co-convenors Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka were detained after landing at IGI Airport. Thousands of protesters have been picked up over successive days. Trains were cancelled, metro stations shut, internet restricted in parts of the capital, and house arrests ordered. The Supreme Court has issued notices to the Commission, the Commissioner and the government. The wall has not yet cracked. In 2011, the crowd filled Ramlila and the government blinked in days. In 2026, the crowd faces barricades, cancelled trains and repeated detentions. The Constitution has not changed. The instruments of control have. Both seasons claim the Tricolour and the right under Article 19. Both face the argument that order must be kept and that protest cannot hold a city hostage. The 2011 record shows a preventive arrest of a man who announced his intent, followed by a political retreat. The 2026 record shows larger reported deletions, heavier restrictions, and a youth movement that has not yet forced the same retreat. Critics of each agitation have questioned motives and methods. The courts remain the proper arena for the legality of the SIR and for the reasonableness of prohibitory orders. Nostalgia does not decide which crowd was purer. The ledger decides which government blinked faster. A slogan is not a verdict and a detention is not the last word. Check the numbers, quote the leaders, and watch whether power yields or hardens. The Republic belongs to the citizens who fill the streets peacefully, carry the Tricolour, and return home when the day ends. It does not belong exclusively to those who hold office or to those who merely shout slogans.



NFR Felicitates 35 Swachhata Doots, Promotes Eco-Friendly Practices During SwachhataPakhwada 2026

MALIGAON, 15 OCTOBER, 2026

As part of the ongoing Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 observance, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) felicitated 35 Swachhata Doots at its Headquarters premises in Maligaon, Guwahati, on 13th October 2026. The initiative recognised their contribution towards promoting cleanliness and hygiene while encouraging environmentally responsible practices in daily life. The felicitation programme was led by Shri Uttam Prakash, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer, NFR, who distributed cloth bags among the Swachhata Doots as a gesture of appreciation and encouragement. The initiative highlighted the importance of replacing polythene bags with reusable cloth bags to reduce plastic waste and promote a cleaner and greener environment. The Swachhata Doots were also encouraged to remain mindful of their health and well-being during their working hours.

The programme was attended by Shri Parth Pratim Roy, Chief Workshop Engineer; Shri S. C. Prasad, Chief Rolling Stock Engineer (Coaching); Shri Bhaben Nath, Chief Rolling Stock Engineer (Freight); Shri Kapil Jambhulkar, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Planning); Shri M. Kalimuthu, Chief Mechanical Engineer (EnHM); and Shri Shivaji N. Kadam, Chief Motive Power Eng other officials. Northeast Frontier Railway is undertaking various activities during Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 to strengthen cleanliness practices, encourage environmental awareness and promote the active participation of railway personnel in maintaining clean and hygienic railway premises. Through such initiatives, NFR continues to encourage sustainable habits, responsible waste management and the collective commitment of railway employees towards a cleaner and greener railway environment.

Must explain conduct: SC pulls up Rahul Gandhi over protest march to top court

CJI Surya Kant said 'nobody can browbeat' the judiciary as the Supreme Court issued notices to the Centre and the Election Commission (ECI) on petitions filed by Rahul Gandhi and Owaisi Strongly objecting to his conduct, the Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up Rahul Gandhi over his march to the top court on October 12 and asked the Leader of the Opposition to explain his actions. Referring to the opposition's protest march to the Supreme Court and the ensuing chaos, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said "nobody can browbeat" the judiciary. The top court issued notices to the Congress, Rahul and other INDIA bloc leaders on a petition filed by four lawyers raising concerns over their march to the Supreme Court. Separately, notices were also issued to the Election Commission (ECI) and the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on petitions filed by the INDIA bloc and AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi over alleged irregularities in the SIR exercise. "Issuing notice does not mean that we are condemning anything. But one objection, before that. We would like to ask one of the petitioners about his conduct on the next date of hearing," the CJI told senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who appeared for Rahul. The CJI's observation came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate Gaurav Bhatia mentioned the October 12 march



Manipur violence caused Rs 1,200 crore GST revenue loss, says CM

IMPHAL, OCT 15

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said on Thursday that the ethnic violence that erupted on May 3, 2023, had severely affected the state's economy, resulting in an estimated revenue loss of around Rs 1,200 crore in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections between 2023 and 2026. Addressing the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' at the Tadubi local ground in the Naga-dominated Senapati district, the Chief Minister added that the prolonged unrest had adversely affected economic activities and government revenue. He lauded the people of Maram, Tadubi and Mao in Senapati district for their cooperation in restoring the free movement of passenger buses and other vehicles along the National Highway connecting Imphal to Guwahati via Dimapur in Nagaland. He added that the resumption of free movement along the highway had boosted the state's economy and improved connectivity between different parts of the region. The Chief Minister also said that bandhs and blockades had adversely affected daily-wage earners and students across the state. He emphasised that differences among communities could be resolved through dialogue and mutual understanding. Khemchand Singh said that the 36 different communities residing in Manipur had cooperated with the kings of the state during the Manipuri-Burmese War, collectively resisting and successfully driving away the Burmese Army to safeguard the state.

He added that all communities must work together towards achieving a common goal for the state's progress and development. Speaking about developmental initiatives, the Chief Minister said that the state government had earmarked an estimated Rs 10 crore in the budget for each Assembly constituency for the construction of Inter-Village Roads (IVRs). He also added that, with a view to ensuring equitable development across the hill districts, a medical college had been established in Churachandpur district during the previous government's tenure, and another medical college would now be established in Senapati district. The Chief Minister expressed concern that members of the Meitei, Naga and Kuki communities were increasingly reluctant to identify themselves as Manipuris. He said that, for the state to move forward on the path of peace and reconciliation, people must first identify themselves as Indians and, secondly, as Manipuris. Citing Singapore as an example of collective efforts towards development, Khemchand Singh said that the country was home to four different communities that worked together towards the common goal of national development and had succeeded in achieving significant progress. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming the country, the Chief Minister added that India had been the world's 11th-largest economy before PM Modi assumed office as the Prime Minister. He added that India had since become the world's fourth-largest economy, attributing the country's progress to the Prime Minister's leadership.

Dibrugarh Rally a rebuke to forces disrespecting Constitution: Assam CM takes dig at Congress

Dibrugarh Rally a rebuke to forces disrespecting Constitution: Assam CM takes dig at Congress

GUWAHATI, OCT 15

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday described the massive gathering at a public awakening rally in Dibrugarh as a strong message against forces allegedly disrespecting the Constitution, constitutional institutions and the people's mandate. In a statement shared on social media, Sarma said the large turnout at the rally reflected public opposition to what he termed attempts to undermine the country's democratic institutions and national security.

"This sea of people gathered in Dibrugarh is a resounding slap in the face to those forces that seek to disrespect the country's Constitution, its constitutional institutions, and the opinion of the people," the Chief Minister said. He added that the participants had assembled to raise their voices against fake voters and in support of the country's security. "Every citizen who has



gathered at the public awakening rally is raising their voice against fake voters and in favour of the country's security," Sarma said. The rally in Dibrugarh is part of a series of public demonstrations announced by the Assam BJP leadership amid a political confrontation with the Congress over protests and allegations concerning democratic institutions. Earlier, Sarma had announced similar peaceful rallies in Tezpur and Barpeta Road, describing the mobilisation as a response to what he alleged were attempts to bring about regime change through street protests and political pressure.

The Chief Minister had maintained that an elected government could be changed only through democratic elections and that the mandate of millions of voters should not be challenged through demonstrations by political workers. The latest remarks indicate that the BJP is seeking to frame the rallies as a public mobilisation in defence of constitutional institutions, electoral integrity and national security. Dibrugarh, one of Assam's major urban centres and an important hub in Upper Assam, has considerable political significance in the state. Sarma's comments also bring the issue of alleged fake voters into the centre of the political debate, with the BJP projecting the issue as a matter of electoral credibility and national security. The Chief Minister has been constantly targeting Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party as the opposition has been taking up the issues related to Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists across several states in the country.

Sarma criticised Rahul Gandhi's march towards the Supreme Court recently, and the Chief Minister accused the Leader of the Opposition of demeaning the constitutional bodies, as the Congress party lost the last three general elections and Gandhi failed to oust the BJP through the electoral process.

Special Lecture on 'Railway Services Conduct Rules and Conflict of Interest' Organised at BLW

Emphasis on Promoting Vigilance, Ethical Values, Impartiality and Transparent Working Practices

VARANASI

Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi, organised a special lecture on 'Railway Services Conduct Rules and Conflict of Interest' on 15 October 2026 under Vigilance Awareness Campaign-2026. The objective was to familiarise officers and employees with important aspects of Railway Services Conduct Rules, ethical values and issues related to conflict of interest. On the occasion, Chief Vigilance Officer Shri Ankur Chandra welcomed the invited guest speaker, Shri Shantanu Ambekar, former Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Western Railway, by presenting him with a sapling and an angavastram. In his address, Shri Chandra emphasised the need to uphold integrity, accountability and transparency in the workplace. The welcome address was delivered by Deputy Chief Vigilance Officer Shri Neeraj Singh. He also introduced the guest speaker and highlighted the relevance of the lecture's theme and the objectives of Vigilance Awareness Campaign-2026. During his lecture, guest speaker Shri Shantanu Ambekar elaborated on various provisions of the Railway Services Conduct Rules, the importance of impartiality and honesty in the discharge of official duties, transparent working practices, and different aspects of potential conflicts between personal interests and official responsibilities. He encouraged officers and employees to adhere faithfully to service rules and maintain high ethical standards in their professional conduct. In the second session of the lecture, various practical aspects related to the subject were discussed in detail. During the question-and-answer session, Shri Ambekar addressed the queries of participants and provided valuable insights into making appropriate decisions in situations involving conflicts of interest and ensuring effective compliance with service conduct rules. The special lecture was an important initiative towards strengthening the culture of integrity, ethics, accountability and transparency at BLW and encouraging officers and employees to adopt rule-based, impartial and ethical working practices. The programme was attended by Chief Design Engineer ,Electrical Shri Anurag Kumar Gupta, Chief Electrical Engineer, Loco Shri Arvind Kumar Jain,Chief Mechanical Engineer Service Engineering Shri Vipul Singh along with other senior officers and a large number of employees.

Chief Vigilance Inspector Shri Sudhir Kumar Jain made a significant contribution to the successful and smooth organisation of the programme. The programme was smoothly conducted by Deputy Chief Vigilance Officer Shri Neeraj Singh, who also delivered the vote of thanks.



Every trace of Naxalism must be erased: HM Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that every trace of Naxalism must be erased. Affirming that the Modi government's determination to create a Naxal-free India has been realised, he stressed that it is now time to heal the wounds inflicted upon the nation by Naxalism and ensure that every victim can lead a life of dignity.

Just as Naxalism has been brought to an end, every remaining vestige of it must also be wiped out, he emphasised, adding that Bastar must once again become a vibrant and thriving region. Significant work has already been undertaken in this direction, with major contributions from traditional tribal leadership in the region. Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed a ceremony for people affected by Naxalism in Chhattisgarh via video conferencing, highlighting the Union government's commitment to heal the long-standing wounds left by left-wing extremism. In Bastar—a region that, under Congress rule, remained deprived of even basic services for five decades—every facility is now reaching the people, he said. Shah strongly condemned the violence by Naxals, stating that by using IED blasts to further their political agenda, they have left innocent people disabled. There can be no greater violation of human rights than this, he said.

Highlighting the government's approach after eliminating Naxalism, HM Shah said service initiatives are being undertaken across the country, he said Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, organised to mark 25 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public service both as a state head and as the Prime Minister of India. Highlighting the transformation in Bastar, the Home Minister pointed out that the region, which under Congress rule remained deprived of even basic services for five decades, is now receiving every facility. Under the Niyad Nellanar scheme, basic infrastructure is reaching the people. He appreciated the Chhattisgarh government's efforts to make Bastar a smiling and vibrant place once again through initiatives such as the Bastar Olympics, Bastar Pandum, Niyad Nellanar and the CM Collective Bus Scheme.

He noted that the Chhattisgarh government, district administration, State Social Welfare Department, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (Jaipur), Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana and several others were contributing to this noble endeavour of supporting persons with disabilities and victims. By providing persons with disabilities with wheelchairs, tricycles, crutches, hearing aids, smart walking sticks, artificial limbs and other assistive devices, the government could help usher in a new era of hope and happiness in Bastar, he added. The Union Home Minister reiterated that the Modi government remains fully committed to ensuring rehabilitation opportunities for every Divyang and victim, with the Centre standing firmly alongside the Chhattisgarh government in these efforts.

NFDB'S ROADMAP FOR INDIA'S BLUE REVOLUTION

Chief Executive Dr. Bijay Kumar Behera on taking India's Fisheries to the Next Level

India's fisheries and aquaculture sector is entering a new phase of transformation, with the focus shifting from increasing fish production to building a robust, technology driven and export oriented value chain. From modern processing facilities and cold chain infrastructure to seaweed cultivation, genetically improved fish varieties and digital traceability, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) is working to unlock the economic potential of the country's aquatic resources.

Headquartered in Hyderabad, the NFDB operates under the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India. Established in 2006, the Board plays a pivotal role in implementing national fisheries programmes, promoting entrepreneurship, strengthening cooperatives and improving the livelihoods of millions of fishers and fish farmers.

In this interview, Dr. Bijay Kumar Behera, Chief Executive of NFDB, discusses the structural challenges facing inland fisheries, the untapped potential of seaweed cultivation, financing support for entrepreneurs, climate resilient fishing practices, quality assurance for exports and the role of technology in making fisheries more profitable and sustainable.

You have consistently advocated a shift from infrastructure creation to value realisation. Why is this transition important, and what are the major gaps that need to be addressed?

Infrastructure is essential, but its real value lies in the economic benefits it generates for fishers, fish farmers and entrepreneurs. Building a facility alone does not guarantee higher incomes. We need to ensure that the entire value chain, from production and scientific handling to processing, storage, transportation and marketing, functions efficiently. One of the major gaps is the inadequate availability of processing and value addition facilities in inland states. India's seafood exports are valued at approximately ₹75,000 crore, but the contribution of inland states is only around 2 per cent. The remaining 98 per cent comes from coastal states and Union Territories.

States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir have considerable potential, but they need suitable processing facilities, market linkages and export oriented infrastructure. We are preparing a Standard Operating Procedure to guide the development of seafood exports from inland states. The objective is to ensure that investments translate into viable enterprises, better market access and higher returns for producers.

Inland states cannot depend on marine shrimp exports in the same way as coastal states. Which alternative species and products offer the greatest opportunities?

Inland states must develop their own strengths instead of trying to replicate the coastal export model. Species such as scampi, tilapia and pangasius offer significant opportunities. Ornamental fish, pearl culture and trout farming can also provide specialised markets, depending on local climatic conditions and production capabilities.

The priority is to match the species with the resources available in each state and the requirements of domestic and international markets. Production must be supported by quality seed, appropriate feed, scientific farming practices, processing facilities and reliable buyers.

Value addition is particularly important. Instead of selling only fresh or unprocessed fish, entrepreneurs can develop processed products and explore ways of converting fish waste into commercially useful products. This approach can improve profitability while reducing wastage.

Seaweed farming is emerging as a promising alternative livelihood for coastal communities. What is NFDB doing to make it commercially viable?

Seaweed cultivation offers an opportunity to diversify livelihoods, particularly for coastal communities that depend heavily on conventional fishing. However, the sector needs reliable planting material, technical knowledge, suitable cultivation systems, processing facilities and assured markets.

A major initiative is the development of an integrated seaweed park in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, with an allocation of ₹130 crore. The initiative aims to support cultivation, processing and value addition while helping fishers and farmers participate in the emerging seaweed economy. We are also supporting the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute as a Centre of Excellence for seaweed cultivation technologies and the development of varieties such as Gracilaria.

In Lakshadweep, ₹2.5 crore has been allocated for a seaweed cluster, including support for a hatchery and a seaweed bank. These interventions are intended to strengthen the availability of quality planting material and improve technical support.

The larger objective is to build a complete value chain. Seaweed cultivation will become more attractive when producers have access not only to technology but also to processing facilities, market connections and remunerative prices.

Climate change is affecting marine ecosystems and fishing livelihoods. How is NFDB helping fishing communities become more resilient?

Climate resilience has to become an integral part of fisheries planning. Changes in sea temperature, weather patterns and marine ecosystems can affect fish distribution, fishing operations and the incomes of coastal communities. We therefore need a combination of ecological restoration, livelihood diversification and better management of aquatic resources.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), 100 Climate Resilient Coastal Fishing Villages are being developed with an outlay of ₹200 crore. The initiative seeks to strengthen the ability of vulnerable coastal communities to withstand climate related risks and sustain their livelihoods.

We are also promoting artificial reefs and other habitat improvement measures. These structures can provide shelter, feeding grounds and breeding habitats for marine organisms when appropriately located and scientifically designed.

Diversification into activities such as seaweed cultivation and bivalve culture can also reduce excessive dependence on capture fishing. Alongside these interventions, awareness, training and access to appropriate technologies are important for helping communities adapt to changing conditions.

Q5. Post harvest losses remain a major concern in fisheries. How can cold chain infrastructure and FIDF financing improve the situation?

Fish is highly perishable, and the quality of the final product depends greatly on how it is handled immediately after harvesting. Delays in icing, inadequate storage and inefficient transportation can reduce quality, shorten shelf life and lower the price received by fishers.

We are promoting a more integrated infrastructure network comprising fishing harbours, landing centres, ice plants, cold storages, refrigerated transport, processing facilities and modern fish markets. The objective is to connect production centres with consumers and processing units through a reliable cold chain.

FIDF can support eligible infrastructure projects by improving access to financing for entrepreneurs, cooperatives and state governments. PMMSY also provides support for fisheries infrastructure and related development activities.

However, infrastructure must be accompanied by proper utilisation, maintenance, trained personnel and effective management. A cold storage facility delivers real benefits only when it operates efficiently and forms part of a functioning supply chain.

SCIENTIST, INNOVATOR, INSTITUTION BUILDER

Dr. Bijay Kumar Behera is a distinguished fisheries scientist with expertise in aquaculture, molecular biology, fish genomics, aquatic animal health and biotechnology. He has published over 220 research papers, 55 book chapters and 10 edited books, received more than 8,224 citations, and holds 10 patents.

As Chief Executive of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad, he has contributed to strengthening India's fisheries sector through technology transfer, infrastructure development and implementation of PMMSY and FIDF initiatives. His work spans modern fish markets, aquaparks, advanced aquaculture systems, fisheries cooperatives and improved fish breeding programmes.

Previously, as Founder Dean of the College of Fisheries at Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University, Datia, and a scientist at ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, he established advanced research and academic facilities and developed innovative fish disease diagnostics. He has guided researchers and students and trained thousands of fish farmers and fisheries professionals, contributing significantly to scientific advancement, institutional development and sustainable fisheries livelihoods in India.



Making Fisheries Productive and Digitally Connected

As you approach two and a half years as Chief Executive of NFDB, what would you consider the major achievements of your tenure, and what institutional changes are you working towards?

Since taking charge in April 2024, my focus has been on modernising fisheries, improving livelihoods and strengthening programme delivery. Under PMMSY, we have promoted aquaparks, Recirculating Aquaculture Systems, Biofloc technology, fish seed hatcheries and brood banks to boost productivity and entrepreneurship. More than 37 lakh fishers have been enrolled under the Group Accident Insurance Scheme, while efforts continue to expand aquaculture crop insurance and strengthen fisheries cooperatives. Digital transformation is another priority. The National Fisheries Digital Platform, developed under PM-MKSSY, facilitates registration and access to services such as credit, insurance, training and traceability. NFDB has also strengthened its operational capacity by filling 10 Executive Assistant posts and established its Patna Regional Centre on June 15, 2026, to support fisheries development across Bihar and the eastern region.

International seafood markets are becoming increasingly demanding about traceability and food safety. How is India preparing to meet these requirements?

Export competitiveness depends on consistent quality, food safety and the ability to establish the origin and movement of products through the supply chain. Producers must understand that quality cannot be assured only at the processing stage. It has to be maintained from the farm or landing centre onwards.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY), efforts are being made to improve traceability, certification and quality screening across the production and marketing chain. These measures are intended to strengthen confidence in Indian seafood and improve access to international markets. NFDB also supports entrepreneurship in processing and value addition. We need to ensure that farmers, processors and exporters follow appropriate standards, maintain records and adopt sound handling practices.

For markets such as the United States and the European Union, compliance with the relevant importing country requirements is essential. Stronger traceability and quality assurance systems can help Indian seafood businesses meet these expectations and compete more effectively.

What is being done to improve fish seed quality and help farmers achieve higher productivity?

Quality seed is one of the foundations of successful aquaculture. Even when farmers have good ponds, feed and water management practices, poor quality seed can compromise growth, productivity and profitability.

NFDB supports the National Freshwater Fish Brood Bank at its Eastern Regional Centre in Bhubaneswar. The facility has contributed to the availability of genetically improved fish varieties, including Jayanti Rohu, Amrit Catla, Amur Common Carp, CIFA GI Scampi and Maha Magur.

These varieties are being distributed through 88 network hatcheries across the country. The aim is to improve access to quality seed and strengthen the productivity of fish farming operations.

For coastal aquaculture, the Integrated Coastal Aquaculture Facility at Mulapolam in Andhra Pradesh supports seed requirements for species such as Indian pompano and seabass.

Alongside improved seed, farmers need suitable feed, disease management, water quality monitoring and scientific guidance. Productivity gains are most sustainable when these elements are addressed together.

Modern aquaculture technologies such as Recirculating Aquaculture Systems and Biofloc are attracting entrepreneurs. What role does NFDB play in promoting these innovations?

Technology can help make aquaculture more efficient, particularly where land and water resources are limited. NFDB promotes systems such as Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS), Biofloc, aquaponics and cage aquaculture, along with species diversification and other scientific farming practices.

RAS can enable intensive production with water recirculation, while Biofloc systems can support fish or shrimp farming through the management of microbial communities and water quality. However, both require technical competence, suitable infrastructure and careful financial planning.

Our approach is to encourage technology adoption through demonstrations, training, entrepreneurship support and collaboration with research institutions. Entrepreneurs should evaluate their local conditions, operating costs, energy requirements, market access and technical capacity before selecting a system. Technology should not be adopted simply because it is innovative. It must be economically viable, environmentally appropriate and capable of delivering reliable returns.

NFDB has announced specialised fisheries clusters across the country. How can this cluster based approach transform regional economies?

Cluster development allows us to concentrate resources and services around the strengths of particular regions. Instead of treating every location in the same way, we can develop specialised activities based on local water resources, climate, skills and market opportunities.

Thirty four specialised fisheries and aquaculture clusters have been announced across the country. These include saline water aquaculture in Sirsa, Haryana; scampi culture in Balasore, Odisha; pearl culture in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand; ornamental fisheries in Madurai, Tamil Nadu; seaweed farming in Lakshadweep; tuna fisheries in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; and organic fisheries in Soreng, Sikkim.

Such clusters can bring farmers, hatcheries, feed suppliers, processors, training institutions and buyers into a coordinated ecosystem. This can reduce costs, improve access to technical services and create opportunities for local enterprises.

The success of a cluster ultimately depends on how well these linkages function and whether the benefits reach small and marginal producers.

Unlocking the Potential of the Telugu States

What are the major initiatives being taken by NFDB in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to strengthen fisheries, improve infrastructure and enhance the incomes of fishers and fish farmers?

NFDB aims to strengthen fisheries through scientific aquaculture, quality fish seed, modern infrastructure and better market linkages. In Telangana, Mancherial has been identified as a murrel production cluster, with a Centre of Excellence approved under PMMSY at ₹2.5 crore. A modern wholesale fish market for Hyderabad and the proposed ₹50-crore Koheda fish market are also key initiatives, subject to the latter's current project status.

The Union Budget 2026–27 announced an integrated fisheries development initiative covering 500 reservoirs and Amrit Sarovars nationwide. In Andhra Pradesh, the focus is on strengthening fishing harbours and landing centres, expanding scientific aquaculture, and improving fish handling, storage, processing and transportation. Our ultimate goal is to reduce post-harvest losses, create employment, strengthen market access and ensure sustainable, higher incomes for fishing communities in both states.



Fisheries cooperatives can improve the bargaining power of small fishers. How is NFDB strengthening these institutions?

Cooperatives can play an important role in helping small producers access finance, inputs, infrastructure and markets. Individually, many fishers and fish farmers lack the scale to negotiate favourable prices or invest in expensive facilities. Collective organisation can help address these limitations.

Under the Phase I programme, the objective is to establish 6,000 new Fisheries Cooperative Societies and strengthen 5,500 existing ones. Under the applicable programme provisions, each newly formed society can receive a one time grant of ₹3 lakh, while selected existing societies can receive ₹2 lakh for strengthening.

The assistance is linked to structured training and the preparation of viable business plans. This is important because a cooperative must be economically active and professionally managed to deliver lasting benefits to its members.

Stronger cooperatives can facilitate the purchase of inputs, aggregation of produce, processing, cold storage, transportation and collective marketing. They can also help connect small producers with larger markets and institutional buyers.

Fisheries offer substantial employment opportunities, but income security remains a concern. What measures are available to protect fishers and fish farmers against risks?

Fisheries livelihoods are exposed to several risks, including accidents, disability, disease outbreaks, production losses and adverse environmental conditions. Social protection and risk management are therefore important components of sectoral development.

Under PMMSY, NFDB implements the Group Accident Insurance Scheme for eligible fishers. The scheme provides financial protection in specified cases involving accidental death, disability and other covered circumstances, including hospitalisation as provided under the applicable guidelines.

PMMKSSY also includes support for aquaculture insurance. The programme aims to extend insurance coverage to aquaculture farms, with a stated target of covering one lakh hectares nationwide against eligible risks.

Insurance can help reduce the financial vulnerability of producers, but awareness and access are equally important. Fishers and farmers must understand the eligibility requirements, documentation and claim procedures so that they can benefit when covered risks occur.

Digital platforms are changing agriculture and allied sectors. How is NFDB using digital technology to connect fish farmers with knowledge and markets?

Digital tools can make information more accessible and help producers take better decisions. NFDB supports initiatives that improve market transparency, technical awareness and the monitoring of fisheries development programmes.

The Fish Market Price Information System provides market price information that can help fishers and traders make informed marketing decisions. The Matsya Setu mobile application, developed in collaboration with ICAR institutions, offers electronic learning modules, advisory services and practical guidance for fish farmers.

We are also supporting digital networking of hatcheries, online monitoring of projects and information campaigns using information and communication technologies.

The potential is considerable. Timely information about prices, production practices, disease prevention and market requirements can improve decision making at the farm level. The challenge is to ensure that digital services are accessible, understandable and useful to fishers and farmers, including those in remote areas.

What financial support is available to entrepreneurs who want to establish fish processing, value addition and waste utilisation units?

NFDB supports entrepreneurs establishing fish processing, value addition and waste utilisation units. Under its entrepreneur model, eligible projects can receive subsidy support of up to ₹125 lakh for a maximum project cost of ₹5 crore, subject to scheme conditions. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) provides loans for eligible infrastructure projects with a 3% interest subvention from the Government of India. Under the stated financing arrangements, the effective interest burden is 3% for individual entrepreneurs, 5% for cooperative societies and 6% for eligible state government projects, subject to applicable terms. These mechanisms help mobilise investment in fisheries infrastructure and value addition.

Looking ahead, what would you consider the most important measure of success for NFDB in the coming years?

NFDB's success will ultimately be measured by improved incomes, employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for fishers and fish farmers. Beyond increasing production, our priorities are to reduce wastage, strengthen markets, promote processing and value addition, and expand access to quality fish seed and modern technologies.

Through collaboration among governments, research institutions, financial institutions, cooperatives and private enterprises, NFDB aims to unlock India's potential in inland and coastal fisheries, seaweed cultivation and technology-driven enterprises, building a competitive, inclusive and environmentally sustainable fisheries sector.

Ahead of India's Biggest IPO, Jio Unveils Next Growth Roadmap, Focuses on Three Growth Engines

Akash Ambani identifies Mobility, Home and Enterprise-International as Jio's three key growth engines
Jio aims to scale its home broadband base from nearly 30 million to 100 million households
Company plans to monetise its proprietary technology stack in select international markets

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15, 2026





Ahead of what is expected to be India's largest-ever IPO, Jio Platforms has outlined its roadmap for the next phase of growth. Speaking to journalists in Mumbai, Akash Ambani, Managing Director of Jio Platforms, identified Mobility, Home and Enterprise-International as the company's three key growth engines. The company believes that its technology capabilities, digital gateways and robust infrastructure will enable it to play a significant role in India's nearly $1.4 trillion digital economy by FY31.

"Our most important unit of business is our customer," Akash Ambani said, emphasising Jio's commitment to delivering better and more affordable digital services to every Indian, every household and every enterprise. Jio currently serves approximately 533 million connectivity customers and carries more than 60% of India's data traffic.

Mobility: Tapping the Next Wave of Digital Adoption

In the mobility segment, Jio sees a potential market of approximately 340 million additional 4G and 5G customers over the next five years. According to Akash Ambani, this opportunity comprises nearly 100 million first-time mobile subscribers and around 240 million customers transitioning from 2G to 4G and 5G services. In FY26, Jio's net additions of active mobile subscribers were nearly three times those of the next-largest operator, underlining its strong position in India's mobile connectivity market.

Home Broadband: Scaling Towards 100 Million Households

Jio sees home broadband as a major growth opportunity in the coming years. From its current base of approximately 28.6 million fixed broadband subscribers, the company aims to expand its reach to 100 million households. Jio accounted for approximately 67.5% of all new fixed broadband connections added in India during FY26. Akash Ambani said the company is expanding its reach through a combination of fibre and wireless technologies, with its services now extending across 19,000 PIN codes.

Enterprise and International: Taking Indian Technology Global

The third growth engine combines enterprise digital services with international expansion. Jio estimates the Indian enterprise digital services market at approximately ₹5.1 lakh crore, or $56.8 billion. Akash Ambani noted that nearly 65% of India's bank branches are connected through Jio's network. Beyond the domestic market, Jio plans to monetise its end-to-end, in-house technology stack in select international markets. Rather than limiting its approach to software sales, the company intends to work with global telecom operators as a managed services partner. Akash Ambani said this strategy could help India transition from being a technology importer to becoming a technology exporter.

Long-Term Vision and Financial Discipline

Earlier, Isha Ambani reflected on Jio's origins and Reliance's broader business philosophy, highlighting the importance of long-term thinking, scale, strong execution and financial discipline. The press conference began with Uday Kotak recalling Reliance founder Dhirubhai Ambani and Reliance's landmark 1977 IPO, connecting the company's capital-market journey with the next chapter in its growth. As Jio prepares for its proposed public-market debut, its strategy points to a broader ambition: building on its leadership in connectivity while expanding into home broadband, enterprise digital services and international technology partnerships.

IA Proud Moment for INCOIS in Ocean Science

HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 15



Dr. T. M. Balakrishnan Nair, Director, INCOIS has been elected as Chair of the UNESCO-IOC Sub-Commission for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO). Dr. Turki Al-Saeed of Kuwait and Dr. Rezah M. Badal of Mauritius are reported as the newly elected Vice-Chairs, subject to confirmation of their official names and appointments. This achievement provides an opportunity to strengthen international collaboration, advance ocean science and observations, and enhance ocean information and services across the Central Indian Ocean region. Congratulations to Dr. T. M. Balakrishnan Nair and the newly elected IOCINDIO leadership!

Mankind Pharma to acquire 70 pc stake in Belgium's Armed Cell Therapeutics for 48 mn euros

NEW DELHI: (Oct 15) Drug maker Mankind Pharma on Thursday announced it will acquire a 70 per cent stake in Belgium-based biotechnology firm Armed Cell Therapeutics B.V. (ACTx) for 48 million euros (around Rs 511 crore), marking its strategic foray into next-generation CAR-T cancer therapies.

The acquisition will be executed in instalments through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Mankind Pharma (Netherlands) B.V., which has entered into a definitive agreement for the transaction, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Piyush Goyal launches National Strategic Trade Command Centre to boost data-driven monitoring

NEW DELHI, OCT 15



Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday launched the National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC) at Vanijya Bhawan here, aimed at strengthening the monitoring, analysis and governance of India's international trade ecosystem through integrated data analytics and evidence-based decision-making. The Command Centre has been conceptualised to provide senior policymakers and government officials with a consolidated view of India's trade performance, export promotion schemes, regulatory approvals, application processing, and operational indicators. By bringing together information from multiple trade-related systems, the NSTCC seeks to facilitate timely identification of emerging trends, operational bottlenecks and areas requiring policy or administrative intervention, according to an official statement.

In his remarks on the occasion, Goyal lauded the NSTCC for enabling data-driven, evidence-based trade decisions. While reviewing the SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) dashboard, in particular, he called for regular meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee, weekly if required, to clear the backlog of pending applications and ensure that all applications are cleared expeditiously. At the core of the NSTCC is an integrated analytics and visualisation platform developed to transform trade-related data into actionable insights. The NSTCC provides interactive dashboards covering key trade indicators, scheme performance, application pendency, processing timelines, regional trends and compliance-related parameters. The platform enables users to analyse information across multiple levels, including national trade performance, regional authorities, schemes, products, destination markets and individual applications, subject to role-based access permissions.

In its initial phase, the Command Centre brings together dashboards covering key DGFT functions and trade-related domains, including importer-exporter code (IEC), advance authorisation, export promotion capital goods (EPCG), certificate of origin (CoO), SCOMET, restricted imports and exports, and other regulatory and trade facilitation processes. These dashboards will enable monitoring of scheme utilisation, processing efficiency, export obligations, trade patterns and operational performance across regional authorities.

The NSTCC is designed to support three key dimensions of trade governance, which include providing consolidated visibility into trade trends, application processing, pendency and emerging risks, enabling timely identification and resolution of operational issues. It will also facilitate monitoring and benchmarking of schemes, processes and regional authorities against defined performance indicators to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Besides, it will help identify recurring bottlenecks, procedural complexities and emerging trade patterns to support policy simplification, process improvements and targeted trade facilitation measures. The initiative also seeks to strengthen India's trade intelligence capabilities by enabling product-wise and market-wise analysis, assessment of trade agreement utilisation, identification of export opportunities and monitoring of India's trade positioning across international markets.

The NSTCC has been designed to leverage existing digital infrastructure, including DGFT systems and the Trade Connect ePlatform, while providing a framework for progressive integration of additional datasets from other departments and trade-related agencies. Going forward, the Command Centre is envisaged to evolve into a broader whole-of-government decision-support mechanism, with phased access for authorised stakeholders, including relevant ministries, states, Export Promotion Councils and other institutions. Its analytical capabilities will also be progressively strengthened through additional data integration, automated alerts and advanced analytics, the statement added.

FM Sitharaman: Inclusive Growth Key to Job Creation

NEW DELHI, OCT 15



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that jobs require ecosystems, not isolated interventions, and sustainable job creation requires high-quality and inclusive economic growth.

This, in turn, needs macroeconomic stability, efficient infrastructure, simple and certain regulations, and broad-based access to finance and skills, FM Sitharaman said as she participated as India's Governor of the World Bank in the 114th Meeting of the Development Committee Plenary in Bangkok, Thailand.

"We welcome the continued focus on mobilising private capital and creating jobs. At a time of growing energy market stress, trade fragmentation, climate pressures, and rapid technological change, productive and better-paid jobs remain the most effective pathway to poverty reduction and shared prosperity," FM Sitharaman said. According to her, last-mile connectivity to energy and job markets, large-scale physical and digital public infrastructure, financial inclusion, and regulatory trust in market forces are critical for improved productivity and jobs at scale. "The private sector must remain at the centre of the development agenda. Most jobs will be and should be created by private enterprises MSMEs, and startups will play a big role. Mobilising private investment is therefore essential. At the same time, success should be measured not by the volume of financing mobilised, but by outcomes: jobs created and rise in productivity," said Finance Minister. She further said that competitive financing must remain a core priority. "The World Bank must remain a development partner through competitive pricing, tapping tools like local currency financing, stronger guarantee products, and lower transaction costs. Affordable, predictable, and accessible financing must remain and at the core of the Middle-Income strategy," said FM Sitharaman. The Knowledge Bank must help address market failures. The most effective interventions from the World Bank Group would be in addressing market failures in critical areas like urbanisation, tourism, agricultural exports and critical minerals. "Developing countries stand to benefit greatly from the boost to state capacity that can come from AI: it deserves much greater attention in the Bank's operational and knowledge agenda," she stressed. "We reiterate our longstanding concerns regarding Worldwide Governance Indicators and similar composite assessments. Given their far-reaching implications, there is a need for a comprehensive review and revision of existing methodologies to ensure that they are transparent, objective, evidence-based, and better aligned with current realities and the diverse development experiences of member countries," said Finance Minister. Finally, evolution must strengthen voice and development impact. "The ultimate measure of success is whether reforms help countries create jobs, raise productivity, reduce poverty, and improve living standards. We also reiterate the importance of strengthening the voice and representation of developing countries in the governance architecture of the Bank," she mentioned.

RBI clarifies scope and calculation of Foreign Exchange Risk Reserve

MUMBAI, OCT 15

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday issued a set of FAQs to clarify the scope and calculation of its 20 per cent Foreign Exchange Risk Reserve (FERR), including exemptions for certain hedges and the treatment of options and rolled-over contracts. The RBI said the FERR would apply to user contracts exceeding $2 million equivalent in which the user purchases foreign currency against the rupee to hedge current-account transactions. Contracts involving the sale of foreign currency against the rupee, as well as those hedging capital-account transactions, are excluded. "The FERR requirement applies to specified derivative contracts undertaken by authorised dealers with users having a notional value exceeding USD 2 million equivalent. Accordingly, a derivative contract having a notional value of USD 2 million equivalent or less undertaken by an authorised dealer with a user is not subject to the requirement.





Drogo Aerospace's JK 250e defence UAV gets DGCA type certification

Company's tally rises to six; JK 250e is India's only hybrid fixed-wing, multirotor UAV certified for training, says firm

HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 15

Drogo Aerospace has secured Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) type certification for its JK 250e fixed-wing vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), taking its tally of certified platforms to six. Designed for the Indian armed forces' intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) requirements, the UAV combines fixed-wing flight efficiency with vertical take-off and landing capability, enabling operations without a conventional runway. It has an endurance of two to three hours and is designed for sustained surveillance and situational awareness in challenging field conditions. Drogo Aerospace this year delivered JK 250e UAVs to the Indian Army. The training certification is expected to support UAV operator training and the development of indigenous training capabilities. Drogo Aerospace chief Yeshwanth Bonthu said the JK 250e was the only UAV in India with a hybrid fixed-wing and multirotor configuration to receive DGCA type certification for training purposes. He described the certification as an important milestone in the development of indigenous UAV technology for defence and training applications and said the company would continue to work towards international standards and strengthening India's defence and aerospace capabilities.

MG ISL Opening Week Records 65 Million YouTube Views

NorthEast United FC vs Mohun Bagan Super Giant emerges as the most-watched fixture of the opening week
Bengaluru FC vs Sporting Club Delhi, the season opener, records 8.9 million YouTube views across reported formats
NorthEast United FC vs Mohun Bagan Super Giant leads English-feed viewership with 17 million views
Five matches record 65 million YouTube views, with 120,000 new subscribers taking the MG ISL's YouTube channel to 2.7 million and engaged views accounting for 25% of total views

BANGALORE , OCTOBER 15, 2026



The MG Indian Super League (MG ISL) 2026-27 season started strong, recording 65 million YouTube views and reaching 52 million viewers across five matches in its opening week. The season opened on October 10 with Bengaluru FC taking on Sporting Club Delhi. The opening fixture generated 8.9 million YouTube views across the reported formats, with peak concurrent viewership on the English feed reaching 85,277 viewers. Inter Kashi vs Kerala Blasters FC recorded the highest peak concurrent viewership on the English feed, at 349,073 viewers. In comparison, NorthEast United FC vs Mohun Bagan Super Giant led the Hindi feed with100,660 viewers. The figures highlight the audience tuning in live across both language feeds. NorthEast United FC versus Mohun Bagan Super Giant emerged as the most-viewed fixture in the English feed, recording 17 million views. The match also led viewership in the Hindi feed, highlighting the importance of multilingual content in reaching India's diverse football audience. Beyond viewership, the opening week recorded 16.8 million engaged views, while 120,000 new subscribers joined the League's YouTube channel, taking its subscriber base to 2.7 million. Fans also drove 1.6 million live interactions across the five matches through chat messages and reactions. The opening-week performance comes as every MG ISL match is available live and free on YouTube, alongside television coverage on Sony Sports Network and live streaming on SonyLIV. This multi-platform approach aims to make Indian football more accessible, giving fans across the country greater choice in how they follow their clubs and the competition.

The MG ISL 2026-27 season commenced on October 10 and runs until May 31, 2027.

Industry-researcher partnerships necessary from concept to commercialisation: Dr Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, OCT 15

Union Minister of State for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh on Thursday urged industry to become a co-creator in India's technology journey, working with researchers from project conception through development, scale-up and commercialisation. Addressing the third edition of IITK Samanvay 2026, here, Dr. Singh called for greater domestic and international investment in deep technologies and a stronger culture of research philanthropy.

Industry should engage with researchers at the earliest stages to identify practical applications, develop viable business models and accelerate the journey "from lab to land, from idea to impact, and from prototype to product," Dr. Singh said, according to the statement from the Ministry of Science & Technology. The minister referred to the Rs. 1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation Fund announced by PM Narendra Modi as a vehicle to boost industry participation in deep-tech development and cited liberalisation of foreign direct investment in strategic sectors as part of efforts to mobilise resources. Dr. Singh highlighted India's expanding tech and startup ecosystem to over 400 space startups. He placed the country's space economy at around $9 billion, with projections of reaching $45 billion by the end of the decade.

The minister also referred to the growth of India's startup ecosystem to around 2.5 lakh startups and the expansion of the bio-manufacturing sector from approximately $10 billion to nearly $200 billion over about a decade.



Beyond Rajasthan

Discover the Timeless Charm of Mandu

The historic town in Madhya Pradesh combines magnificent medieval architecture, romantic legends, scenic landscapes and peaceful surroundings, making it an appealing alternative to India's more crowded heritage destinations. When travellers think of India's royal heritage, Rajasthan is often the first destination that comes to mind. Its magnificent forts, grand palaces, colourful cities and stories of kings and queens have made it one of the country's most popular tourism regions. Yet, beyond Rajasthan's celebrated landmarks lies another destination where history, architecture and natural beauty come together in remarkable ways. Nestled among the Vindhya hills of Madhya Pradesh, Mandu offers a memorable heritage experience without the bustle associated with many famous tourist centres. Known for its medieval monuments, picturesque lakes, impressive gateways and romantic legends, Mandu is a destination where the past remains closely connected to the surrounding landscape. Ancient palaces stand amid green hills, stone structures overlook valleys and historic pathways lead visitors through the remains of a once-flourishing kingdom. The town's atmosphere is particularly appealing to travellers who prefer exploring at a relaxed pace rather than moving between crowded attractions. For history enthusiasts, architecture lovers, photographers and those seeking a peaceful weekend escape, Mandu offers a distinctive combination of experiences. Its monuments tell stories of political ambition, artistic achievement and romance, while its natural surroundings add another dimension to the journey. For anyone looking beyond Rajasthan for a heritage holiday, this historic town deserves a place on the travel list.

Mandu: A Journey Into Medieval India's Past

Mandu, also known as Mandavgarh, occupies a strategic position on the Malwa Plateau in western Madhya Pradesh. Its elevated location, surrounded by hills and deep valleys, made it an important fortified settlement through different periods of Indian history. The town developed into a significant centre of political power and architectural activity, particularly during the medieval period when the Malwa Sultanate flourished. The remains of this historic era can still be seen across Mandu. Its massive gateways, defensive walls, mosques, palaces and pavilions reveal the importance of the settlement and the architectural traditions that shaped it. Rather than being confined to a single palace complex, many of its monuments are spread across a broad landscape, allowing visitors to discover different structures while travelling through the countryside. Mandu's historical significance is closely associated with the rulers who transformed it into a centre of administration, culture and artistic expression. Afghan architectural influences are particularly visible in several monuments, including their imposing proportions, sturdy construction, elegant arches and carefully designed courtyards. The town also reflects the relationship between architecture and geography. Builders made use of the natural elevation, water bodies and surrounding terrain to create structures that were both functional and visually striking. This combination of engineering, artistic vision and landscape makes Mandu an especially rewarding destination for those interested in India's architectural heritage.

Jahaz Mahal: A Palace That Appears to Float

Among Mandu's most recognisable monuments, Jahaz Mahal stands out for its unusual design and picturesque location. Built between two water bodies, the palace appears to resemble a ship resting on the surface of a lake. This distinctive appearance has made it one of the town's most photographed landmarks. The elongated structure, with its terraces, arched openings and decorative architectural details, demonstrates how medieval builders combined practical design with visual appeal. Its position between the waters of Munj Talao and Kapur Talao enhances the impression that the palace is floating, particularly when the surrounding landscape is green and the water reflects the building. Jahaz Mahal is generally associated with the reign of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Khalji, who ruled Malwa in the late fifteenth century. The palace is believed to have served as a residence for members of the royal household and women of the court. Its spacious layout and carefully planned water setting offer a glimpse into the lifestyle and architectural preferences of the period. The monument is particularly attractive during the monsoon and winter months, when the surroundings can appear lush and the weather is comfortable for walking. Visitors can explore its different levels, admire the arches and look across the water bodies to appreciate the relationship between the palace and its setting. For photographers, Jahaz Mahal offers opportunities to capture architectural symmetry, reflections and changing light. For other visitors, it provides an introduction to the creativity that defines Mandu's historic landscape.

Baz Bahadur's Palace: An Architectural Reminder of a Royal Era

Another important attraction is Baz Bahadur's Palace, which is traditionally linked to the ruler whose name appears throughout Mandu's romantic history. The complex reflects the architectural character of the region, combining broad courtyards, terraces, arched entrances and spaces designed around movement and views. The palace is often visited alongside Roopmati Pavilion because of their historical and legendary association. Exploring the two sites together helps visitors understand how Mandu's monuments are connected through the stories that continue to shape the town's cultural identity. The palace's layout also provides an opportunity to appreciate the planning behind medieval royal buildings. Open spaces, enclosed areas and elevated sections served different purposes while contributing to the overall appearance of the complex. Its architectural simplicity, compared with some more heavily ornamented palaces elsewhere in India, gives it a character of its own. For visitors interested in history, the site invites questions about royal life, courtly traditions and the relationship between rulers and their surroundings. Even without elaborate interiors or modern displays, the remaining structures communicate something of the scale and atmosphere of the period. The palace is also a useful stop for those exploring Mandu's monuments independently, as it can be combined with nearby attractions during a single sightseeing excursion.

Hindola Mahal: A Distinctive Example of Medieval Design

Hindola Mahal is another monument that demonstrates the architectural imagination of Mandu's builders. Its name, commonly translated as the Swinging Palace, refers to the distinctive appearance created by its sloping exterior walls. These walls give the structure a sense of movement, making it stand apart from more conventional palace buildings. The monument is generally dated to the fifteenth century and is associated with the architectural traditions of the Malwa Sultanate. Its large halls, imposing proportions and carefully arranged openings reflect an approach to construction that prioritised both structural strength and visual impact. Unlike a conventional palace filled with elaborate decorative features, Hindola Mahal impresses visitors through its geometry and scale. Its massive walls and broad interior spaces offer an opportunity to study how medieval architecture used proportion and structural design to create striking buildings. Architecture students, heritage enthusiasts and curious travellers can all find something interesting in its unusual form. Observing the building from different angles makes its sloping walls particularly noticeable, while the surrounding historic complex places it within the wider architectural story of Mandu. The monument is also a reminder that India's heritage extends beyond famous royal residences. Administrative buildings, assembly halls and other structures were essential to the functioning of historic cities, and their remains help reconstruct the everyday institutions of earlier periods.

Roopmati Pavilion: Where History Meets Romance

Mandu's appeal extends beyond its buildings to the legends that have become part of its identity. One of its most celebrated landmarks is Roopmati Pavilion, a structure perched along the edge of a hill with sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. The pavilion is closely associated with the romantic story of Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa, and Rani Roopmati, remembered in popular tradition as a gifted singer. Their story has inspired generations of visitors and contributed to Mandu's reputation as a destination of romance and melancholy. According to the popular legend, Roopmati wished to see the sacred Narmada River, and Baz Bahadur arranged for her to stay at a location from which she could view the surrounding landscape. The pavilion's elevated position and expansive views have helped preserve the association between the monument and the story. Beyond its romantic significance, the structure offers a striking example of how architecture can complement its natural surroundings. The open terraces and elevated setting create an uninterrupted visual connection with the countryside. On clear days, visitors can look across the valleys and appreciate the dramatic geography that made Mandu such a distinctive settlement. The best experience often comes from spending time at the viewpoint rather than simply taking a photograph and moving on. The changing colours of the landscape, the breeze across the hilltop and the quiet atmosphere encourage visitors to slow down and absorb the surroundings. Roopmati Pavilion is particularly appealing to couples, photographers and travellers interested in destinations where historical stories and natural beauty overlap.

Jami Masjid: Grandeur in Stone

Mandu's architectural landscape also includes Jami Masjid, an imposing mosque known for its expansive courtyard, monumental arches and strong Afghan architectural influences. Its design reflects the importance of religious architecture in the region and the craftsmanship employed by builders during the medieval period. The mosque's broad courtyard creates a powerful sense of scale. Visitors entering the complex encounter a composition of arches, domes and substantial stone surfaces that convey both simplicity and grandeur. The restrained decorative approach allows the building's proportions and structural details to take centre stage. Jami Masjid is often associated with the architectural traditions of the wider Islamic world, adapted to local materials and regional building practices. Its design illustrates how ideas travelled across regions and were transformed by the places in which they took root. Walking through the complex provides a different experience from exploring Mandu's palaces. While the royal buildings are closely connected with courtly life and romantic legends, the mosque reflects the religious and communal dimensions of the historic settlement. The monument is an essential stop for anyone interested in architecture, cultural history or the development of medieval Indian cities.

Beyond the Famous Monuments: Discovering Mandu's Landscape

Although Mandu's historic buildings are its principal attractions, the surrounding landscape contributes significantly to its appeal. The town's location on the Malwa Plateau creates a combination of elevated viewpoints, rolling countryside, valleys and seasonal greenery. During the monsoon, the landscape can become particularly beautiful. Rain nourishes the vegetation, water bodies fill up and mist may settle across the hills. Historic stone structures framed by greenery create scenes that are especially attractive to photographers and nature lovers. The experience is different in winter, when clearer skies and comfortable temperatures make it easier to spend long periods outdoors. Visitors can explore monuments, stop at viewpoints and travel between attractions without the discomfort that intense summer heat can bring.

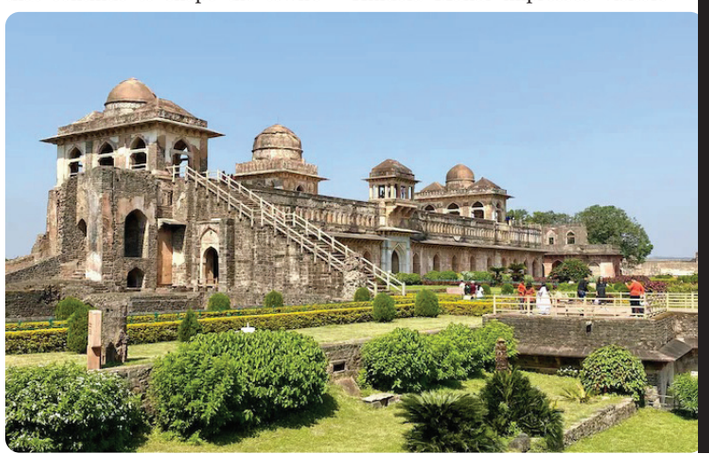
Mandu is not a destination that needs to be experienced entirely through a tightly packed sightseeing schedule. Travellers can leave time to admire the scenery, observe local life and enjoy the quiet roads connecting its historic sites. The landscape gives the journey a sense of continuity, linking monuments that might otherwise feel like isolated attractions. This is one of the town's greatest strengths. History is not limited to museum displays or palace interiors; it can be experienced through the relationship between buildings, water, hills and the environment.

Why Mandu Is a Refreshing Alternative to Rajasthan

Rajasthan remains one of India's most rewarding heritage destinations, but its popularity means that famous attractions can become crowded during peak travel periods. For visitors seeking a quieter experience, Mandu provides an alternative without sacrificing architectural richness or historical depth. Its monuments are spread across the landscape, creating opportunities for exploration at a more leisurely pace. Rather than spending most of a visit navigating busy tourist areas, travellers can devote time to understanding the structures, appreciating their surroundings and photographing the details that catch their attention. Mandu also offers a different architectural character. Its stone palaces, monumental mosques, water-linked structures and hilltop pavilions reflect the distinctive history of the Malwa region. The experience is less about reproducing the familiar image of royal Rajasthan and more about discovering another important chapter in India's cultural past. The destination is particularly suitable for travellers who enjoy combining sightseeing with time outdoors. Families can explore the monuments together, couples can discover the romantic legends associated with the town, and solo travellers can appreciate the freedom of moving through a historic landscape at their own pace. However, Mandu should not be understood simply as a crowd-free substitute for Rajasthan. It has its own identity, history and architectural traditions. Its real attraction lies in the opportunity to discover a lesser-known destination on its own terms.

Best Time to Visit Mandu

The period from July to March is generally a favourable time to plan a trip to Mandu, although the experience varies with the season. The monsoon months, usually from July to September, transform the surrounding landscape. Hills become greener, water bodies gain prominence and clouds can create dramatic backdrops for the monuments.





SHORT NEWS

World Cup League

De Leede to captain Netherlands for two games



AMSTELVEEN: Seam-bowling all-rounder Bas de Leede will captain the Netherlands as they take on Oman and the UAE in the next round of the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 in Dubai later this month, the Royal Dutch Cricket Association (KNCB) announced on Thursday. The 15-member squad will play four matches on the tour, which will also be the first assignment under new head coach Ashley Noffke. The 50-over League 2 is part of the qualification pathway for the 2027 ODI World Cup, to be held in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia from October 2 to November 21. The top four sides in the standings will advance to the Global Qualifier, to be played in early 2027. The Netherlands, however, have already secured their place in that qualifying event. The USA have already sealed the League 2 title and sit at the top of the table with 49 points from 36 matches, followed by Scotland on 45 points from as many games.

Chola Chiefs end winless streak with shoot-off win; Mighty Marathas, Kakatiya Knights stumble

HYDERABAD



With the bottom-placed Chola Chiefs setting the tone, it turned out to be the day of the chasing teams in Season 2 of the Archery Premier League (APL) as top teams – Mighty Marathas, Kakatiya Knights and Prithviraaj Yodhas – all suffered defeats on Day 8 of the competition on Thursday.

Mighty Marathas and Kakatiya Knights began the day on 10 points and within touching distance of a place in the playoffs but came up against a determined Rajputana Royals and Chero Archers, respectively. The Royals won 6-2 while Chero clean-swept the Knights 6-0.

But the first match turned out to be the best, as struggling Chola Chiefs managed to end a run of five straight defeats as they beat Prithviraaj Yodhas in a thriller that went into the Hit-or-Miss Shoot-off after a 4-4 draw in regulation time.

For Chiefs, Colombia's Alejandra Usquiano and India's Yuktha Sri Kondapavuluri managed to land their arrows into the golden X-ring in the tiebreak that registered as hits while the rest of the archers scored misses for a 2-0 scoreline.

The Chiefs had been struggling for a win since the second day of the tournament but were able to stop the slump on Day 8, with just a couple of matches left in the round-robin phase. The win could have been even more comfortable as they won the first two sets and had a fairly simple equation to win the third too when their recurve archers Yuktha Sri and Marcus D'Almeida landed the arrows into the 7-ring.

The Yodhas, led by a superb X from Gatha Khadake, clinched the final set and it looked like Chiefs were about to collapse from a comfortable position. But in the tiebreaker, Usquiano laid down the marker with a brilliant X for a Hit. In fact, the Colombian compound archer finished the match with 80 out of 80 in regulation time for one of the best individual performances of this season in the APL. The win keeps Chiefs' chances of a top-four finish alive by taking them to four points while Yodhas stay on eight points.

Archery Premier League (APL), the world's first franchise-based archery league, is initiated by the Archery Association of India and comprises six teams and a total of 48 archers, with 36 Indians and 12 elite international stars. The league, taking place at People's Plaza in Hyderabad, will culminate on October 18 with the grand finale.

The second season of APL will also have a new playoffs format that rewards teams finishing higher in the league standings and ensures competitive fairness. The sides that finish first and second will have two shots at qualifying for the grand final on Sunday, while the teams finishing third and fourth will face off in Eliminator 1 on the penultimate day (October 17) after the regular schedule of three matches. The winner of that clash will proceed to Eliminator 2. On Sunday, the two top sides will meet in the Short-cut Decider, with the winner reaching the title clash and the loser facing the winner of Eliminator 2 to decide the second finalist.

In the second match, Marathas were off to a nightmare start as they were unable to shoot their 8th arrow in both the first and second sets, with Alejandra Valencia and Mrinal Chauhan caught by time pressure. While they bounced back to take the third set, Royals emerged 6-2 winners, with Tokyo Olympic champion Mete Gazoz showing his class with the last arrow for 10, shooting with barely any time left.

In the final match, Knights missed the services of red-hot Neeraj Chauhan as his recurve backup Rohit Kumar started off with a 6, before recovering to shoot well for the rest of the match. Chero Archers, however, were steady from the start, led by another sensational performance by Atanu Das and compound world No. 1 Mathias Fullerton. India's Asian Games medallists in archery – who are all part of the six teams at the APL second season – were in Delhi on Thursday to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On Friday, the first match will see defending champions Rajputana Royals face off against Chola Chiefs, who are languishing at the bottom of the table. The second match will see Prithviraaj Yodhas take on local franchise Kakatiya Knights. In the final match, Mighty Marathas take on Chero Archers.

BEST ARCHERS OF THE DAY (Rs 1 lakh reward each):
Recurve male: Atanu Das (Chero)
Recurve female: Sangeeta (Royals)
Compound male: Ojas Deotale (Royals)
Compound female: Alejandra Usquiano (Chiefs)
SCORES -- DAY 8:
Match 1: Chola Chiefs 4-4 (76-72, 78-77, 73-75, 74-77) Prithviraaj Yodhas. Chiefs won the Hit-or-Miss Shoot-off 2-0.



Former India opener Punam Raut retires from all forms of international cricket

MUMBAI

Former India opener Punam Raut on Thursday announced her retirement from all forms of international cricket and brought the curtains down on a career that spanned more than a decade and included a run to the 2017 Women's ODI World Cup final.

Punam, 37, who last played for India in 2021, made the announcement in a statement shared on her Instagram account on Thursday. "After much thought and reflection, I have decided to retire from international cricket in all formats of the game.

"Representing India has been the greatest honour of my life. Cricket has been more than just a sport - it has shaped my character, taught me resilience, and given me memories that I will cherish forever. Every time I wore the India jersey, I did so with immense pride and gratitude," she wrote.

Mumbai-based Punam made her ODI debut against the West Indies in March 2009 and went on to play 73 ODIs, scoring 2,299 runs at an average of 34.83 with three hundreds and 15 fifties. She also played 35 T20Is, making 719 runs, and four Tests, in which she aggregated 264 runs, including a career-best 130 against South Africa in 2014. She was part of the Indian side that finished runners-up at the 2017 ODI World Cup in England, including top-scoring with 86 in the final against the hosts at Lord's. During her career, she featured in three ODI World Cups and four T20 World Cups.

Earlier that year, she and Deepti Sharma had stitched together a world-record 320-run opening stand in the ODI World Cup qualifier game against Ireland, with Punam contributing 109.

Recalling the 2017 campaign, Punam described it as a turning point for the women's game in the country. "The 2017 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup will always remain one of the defining moments of my career. Although we fell just short of the trophy, that tournament transformed women's cricket in India, inspired a generation of young girls, and changed the future of our game. I will always be proud to have been part of that historic team.

"I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for giving me the opportunity to represent my country at the highest level."

'India's three best Asian Games performances came in the last 12 years'

NEW DELHI

Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for the transformation of India's sporting ecosystem, saying the country's three best performances at the Asian Games had come in the last 12 years.

Addressing the Indian contingent that returned from the 2026 Asian Games at Aichi-Nagoya in Japan during an interaction with PM Modi at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi, Mandaviya said the government's initiatives, improved opportunities and greater transparency in athlete selection had strengthened Indian sport.

"Over the past 12 years, you have established sports not merely as a sector but as a national movement. In recent years, your approach towards sports has changed, the ecosystem has transformed, opportunities have increased and, most importantly, the confidence of young Indian athletes has grown. All this has been possible because of your visionary thinking and determination," Mandaviya said.

The Sports Minister said PM Modi had consistently prioritised the transformation of sports, adding that initiatives such as the Fit India Movement, Khelo India and the National Sports Governance Act had contributed to the development of a more coordinated sporting ecosystem. "Under your leadership, the Fit India Movement, the Khelo India policy and the National Sports Governance Act have come into being. These initiatives have helped develop a vibrant ecosystem for sports," he said.

Mandaviya noted that the government, National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) were increasingly working together to advance Indian sport.

He also referred to the approval of a Rs 36,000-crore Khelo India scheme for the next five years, saying the investment reflected the growing importance of sports in the government's vision of a developed India.

Highlighting changes in athlete selection, Mandaviya said the process had become more transparent under PM Modi's leadership, giving deserving players greater opportunities to demonstrate their abilities at the international level. "Under your leadership, transparency has also come into the selection process.

'Other fast bowlers haven't done enough to keep Bhuvi out'

NEW DELHI

India's other fast bowlers have not done enough to keep a veteran pacer like Bhuvneshwar Kumar out of the T20I side, former India opener WV Raman said on Thursday, while calling on the bowling coach to put in extra time for the development of young pacers.

Bhuvneshwar earned his India T20I recall after a gap of four years on the back of a sensational IPL 2026 campaign, where he spearheaded Royal Challengers Bengaluru's successful title defence with a 28-wicket haul.

He finished as the second-highest wicket-taker in IPL 2026 and missed the Purple Cap to Kagiso Rabada by just a solitary scalp. Bhuvneshwar's last appearance in international cricket came during a T20I in New Zealand in November 2022.

In 87 T20Is for India, Bhuvneshwar has bagged 90 wickets at an average of 23.10 while maintaining an impressive economy rate of 6.96. "See, on the one hand, you would obviously admire Bhuvneshwar Kumar for putting up performances and just pushing his way back into the side.

"But the other side of the coin is that it does give you a little bit to think about, isn't it? Because here is one guy who's deemed done and dusted for a while and then suddenly he makes a strong comeback, and that's obviously something that you would admire. But it also goes to show that the others have not really done enough to try and keep somebody like Bhuvi out, who has not been firing regularly.

"So the other fact of the matter is that the bowlers, yes, it's easy to say that they've been leaking runs, but they've been playing on plump batting tracks. But what I would like to see happen is that if the word transition is being used, then it is incumbent on the fast bowling coach to spend some time with the bowlers when they're not playing cricket and try and work with them," Raman told reporters in a select virtual interaction facilitated by Sony Sports Network on Thursday.



Raman added that India had no shortage of raw pace, but the talent needed sustained attention away from the match calendar. "It's very critical if you're talking about young fast bowlers who have the raw pace, who have the talent, they need to be really worked upon. That is where the bowling coach needs to spend a lot more time with the boys to ensure that they are well prepared when they get to play international cricket. "As I can understand, there's a lot of cricket played these days. There's a lot of time these coaches spend on the road. But still, I think extra time needs to be spent by the fast bowling coach because you do have a lot of quick guys. There's no doubt about that.

"But we've seen all of them play in rotation and then go for runs, which means that there's something that needs to be done with them. This is where, as I said, some extra work needs to be done on these promising fast bowlers."

Looking ahead to the two-game Test series in New Zealand, which carries crucial World Test Championship (WTC) points, Raman felt the Test team needs to learn from getting its combination wrong at home. "See, we are talking about different things altogether. In England (where India drew 2-2), if you looked at it, the pitches were different.

"It was a very, very hot summer in England. It is more or less like what they normally call an Indian summer. So there's not much swing or seam movement, and also their attack was probably not the best. This is not taking away the credit from our batters who got runs there.

"That's not the issue here. The fact of the matter is that in India, what happened was that we were not picking the right combination, and what happened was that we did not get the combination right. So it is perhaps something that may not be repeated, that will not be repeated because the team management has learned its lessons from that.

'38 medals won by women is a picture of new India': PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hailed the Indian women athletes for their success at the recent Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, calling the 38 medals won by them not just a number but a picture of new India.

PM Modi met with India's Asian Games participants at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in the national capital and praised the athletes for their performances as India bagged 85 medals and finished fourth in the medal tally with 21 gold, 27 silver and 37 bronze medals.

He reserved special praise for the daughters of the nation for bringing laurels to the country. "Friends, I would like to especially praise our daughters. Out of the 85 medals won by India, 38 medals were won by our women athletes. And 11 gold medals are included in them. And these medals are not just a number. This is a picture of a new India," PM Modi said in his address.

He also hailed the Indian women's hockey team for winning a gold medal for the first time in 44 years, ending a long wait for a yellow metal.

For the first time in the Asian Games history, both India's men's and women's hockey teams won gold medals in a single edition of the continental showpiece.

Free entry for female spectators for India-Zimbabwe women's T20Is in Raipur

NEW DELHI



Female spectators will be allowed free entry to the three women's T20Is between India and Zimbabwe, starting at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium here, following a suggestion from the state's Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

The matches will be played on October 16, 18 and 20, with all three games starting at 7 pm. A Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS) source said to IANS on Thursday that the decision was taken after the chief minister floated the idea when office-bearers of the association invited him to watch the T20I series.

"The Chhattisgarh CM suggested free ticketing for female spectators yesterday when he was invited to watch the T20I games by the state association. This happened because of the CM's suggestion, as one cannot refuse the CM's suggestion.

"Navratri is also going on, and having as many female spectators as possible in the T20I matches will add more spark to the festive season in Raipur," further said the source.

The invitation was extended to Sai by CSCS president Mohan Das, director Vijay Shah, former president Mukul Tiwari, secretary Vintesh Agrawal, along with G S Murthy, Vinay Bajaj and other office-bearers.

The association announced the initiative on its social media accounts on Thursday and urged female fans to turn up in large numbers and fill the stands in support of the Indian team. The series marks the start of Smriti Mandhana's tenure as India's full-time captain and is Zimbabwe's first bilateral series against India.

It will also be the first time Raipur hosts a women's international match. After the T20Is, the two teams will move to Vadodara for a three-match ODI series from October 23 to 28. Meanwhile, Surat will host Elite Group A games in the Senior Women's T20 Trophy, which New Delhi was to stage originally.

But with Arun Jaitley Stadium set to undergo drainage and pitch upgrades, and Palam Grounds occupied with the Ranji Trophy, there weren't sufficient grounds to stage the games. CK Pithawala Ground and Lalbhai Contractor Stadium in Surat will now host Elite Group A games starting on October 26.

"Delhi did not have the grounds due to red ball games also running simultaneously. Surat will host the group games and the change is also visible on the BCCI website," said a source aware of the development.

Two-time Olympic champ Shaunae Miller-Uibo wants to have a crack

NEW DELHI



Two-time Olympic champion Shaunae Miller-Uibo, the International Event Ambassador for the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) 2026, has set her sights on the women's 400m world record as she prepares for Los Angeles 2028.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of Sunday's 21st edition of the World Athletics Gold Label Road Race in New Delhi, where she will be present to cheer on and support the participants, Shaunae Miller-Uibo said, "I have won every title there is in the 400m, so for me it is now about setting new goals. I would love to give the world record a crack. In recent years we have seen women go under 48 seconds, and I believe I am more than capable of doing that as well. If we keep racing each other, I think we can push each other towards it."

On her first visit to India, Miller-Uibo also spoke about what the Delhi Half Marathon means and why she is looking forward to supporting the runners on Sunday. "I am really looking forward to it. It is bigger than just running. It is a great community, and people can pledge their support for different causes. It brings everyone out and unites people here in India. I am also excited to hear that there are more participants this year, and especially more women. I hope this year's race inspires even more women to come out next year and take that first step towards whatever their dreams and goals might be." Miller-Uibo welcomed her son in 2023 and her daughter in 2025, and has spent this season rebuilding her speed in the Bahamian capital, Nassau, under her father's coaching.

"Coming back from two pregnancies, I had to give myself a lot of patience. I wanted to jump straight back in where I left off, but there was a lot of building to do again. This season showed me that the speed is back, and I am really looking forward to getting back into the 400m.

Ramayana Trailer: Has the VFX Improved?



Ramayana is one of the most prestigious and monumental high-budget mythological sagas in Indian cinema history. The latest film retells the epic saga, and the team launched a release trailer today with new visuals. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the film is heading for a grand release this Diwali. The new trailer of Ramayana opens with an authoritative voiceover narrating the era when gods walked among mortals on Earth and the wrath of a supreme demon empowered by Lord Brahma's boons. Soon after, Yash enters as Ravana. Slowly, the trailer shifts to Ranbir Kapoor's introduction as Maryada Purushottama Sri Rama. The trailer establishes Yash as the symbol of Adharma and Ranbir as the one who restores Dharma. While some trailer sequences build excitement, the visual effects, which were supposed to be the film's USP, draw mixed reactions. The VFX shots show definite improvement, however compared with previous versions, some visuals still fall short. The team claims the film is being made on a 4000 Cr budget (2 parts), which is huge. We have to see how the film justifies it. The confrontation scenes between Ranbir and Yash promise a theatre experience. Sai Pallavi portrays Goddess Sita, and Ravi Dubey plays Lakshmana. Sunny Deol will play Lord Hanuman. Lara Dutta, Rakul Preet Singh, Kajal Aggarwal, and Arun Govil are also seen in the film. Oscar-winning composer A. R. Rahman and Hollywood titan Hans Zimmer have teamed up for the first time on this venture. The score elevated the trailer to global standards. Global visual effects powerhouse DNEG is handling the VFX, with Namit Malhotra producing it. The first part of the film hits screens on November 5th.

Ram Charan-Sukumar's 3-YEAR PLAN?

Ram Charan, who is owing to make a solid comeback after Peddi and Game Changer, is all set to collaborate with ace director Sukumar. Sukumar and Ram Charan's combination was a blockbuster as the duo delivered RC's cult classic film Rangasthalam. Naturally, their reunion draws a lot of curiosity and joining them is Mythri Movie Makers. The latest inside buzz is that Sukumar and Ram Charan's next RC17 which is set for Vijaya Dashami launch is going to be made on large canvas and will have two parts, just like Pushpa 1 and Pushpa 2. Sukumar has narrated a gripping and intense film to Ram Charan who immensely loved the story and the script also said to have come out well. Once the film is launched, Sukumar will take a good time for the film to hit the sets. The pre-production works are happening at a rapid pace and once all the dates of the actors are finalised, the film is likely to hit the sets this December or January 2027. Inside talk is Sukumar has blocked Ram Charan for next 3 years minimum to make these two parts. Meanwhile, this film is going to be made against an urban backdrop unlike Rangasthalam which was made in rural milieu. Buzz is that Sara Arjun of Dhurandhar fame is most likely to be the film's female lead. There is some curiosity about the film's music director. Anirudh Ravichandar's name is strongly heard. More details are awaited on RC17.



Chay Gears Up for a Thrilling Vrushakarma

The countdown to Vrushakarma has begun, with the makers unveiling a powerful new poster to mark 50 days until its scheduled theatrical release. Starring Naga Chaitanya, the film is set to reach cinemas worldwide on December 4, reaffirming its position as one of the actor's most ambitious upcoming projects. Made on a massive budget, Vrushakarma has done biggest prebiz for Chay. The newly released poster offers a peek into the film's action-heavy visual world, as Chay is gearing up for a thrilling ride. Naga Chaitanya is seen gripping an unusual rope-based weapon with a metallic blade, while dust clouds and shattered rocks dominate the surroundings. His focused expression and poised stance lend the poster a sense of urgency. The poster also underlines the distinctive atmosphere that director Karthik Dandu is creating for this mythological thriller. Presented by Bapineedu and produced under the banners of SVCC and Sukumar Writings, Vrushakarma features cinematography by Ragul D Herian and music by Ajaneesh B Loknath.

The Traitors Telugu Scores With Its Host



Telugu audiences have been watching similar drama-driven reality shows for years, and The Traitors Telugu arrives on Prime Video as a refreshing change at the right time. With its unique format, strategic gameplay and unexpected twists, the show offers a different kind of reality entertainment that keeps viewers guessing. One of the most interesting aspects is Prime Video's choice of host. While veteran actors have traditionally dominated reality show hosting across national and regional television, the platform has taken a refreshing route by bringing in young actor Teja Sajja. With his growing popularity across different sections of the audience, Teja brings freshness, relatability and a new energy to the hosting space. The first three episodes establish the show's appeal through unpredictable gameplay, shifting suspicions and strategic moves. The neat presentation makes the format easy to follow, while the unexpected twists add intrigue and keep audiences invested in the game. Teja Sajja emerges as a major highlight, he brings remarkable maturity to his hosting debut. His understated approach complements the show's suspense without overshadowing the game, demonstrating that an effective host need not rely on excessive theatrics to command attention. For Teja, this marks a refreshing new chapter beyond films. For Prime Video, it is a smart casting decision that gives the show a distinctive identity. With a compelling format, engaging presentation and the right host, The Traitors Telugu makes a promising start and brings a much-needed change to Telugu reality entertainment for sure.

Sreeleela's Bollywood Debut: The Catch!

After keeping fans waiting for a long time, Sreeleela's debut Hindi film has finally got a release date. The romantic love story is now scheduled to hit theatres on April 30, 2027. While the announcement brings some clarity, the long wait has also raised questions about the buzz surrounding the project. The biggest concern is the long gap between the film's announcement and its release. With the movie arriving only in April 2027, there is still plenty of time for the excitement to fade. The team has remained largely silent for almost two years, and this lack of updates could affect the film's visibility among audiences. In today's competitive film industry, maintaining audience interest is equally important as making a film. Regular updates, promotional content, posters, and glimpses can help keep a project in the news. If the makers continue to remain silent until the release gets closer, building strong pre-release buzz could become a challenge. For Sreeleela, the stakes are particularly high. The actress has faced a series of setbacks with her recent Telugu and Tamil films, making this film crucial for her career. A successful film could help her bounce back and open new opportunities. However, the makers must ensure that the long wait does not work against the project and keep audiences interested and deliver the comeback Sreeleela desperately needs.

Kayadu Lohar Looks Magical



Kayadu Lohar became a youth favourite overnight with Dragon, and this year she also appeared in The Paradise along with a couple of 4-5 movies. Kayadu looked breathtaking in a peach organza saree with scalloped borders and delicate white floral and bow embroidery. Beyond the drape, her pose stole the show, as she sat gracefully with her hands on her shoulder and a soft sideways glance. Pearl drop earrings, gold bangles, a small bindi, soft waves and a dewy glow completed the look. Her releases this year have not clicked at the box office, and the big question is whether she will remain a one film wonder despite the many offers lined up. Her next project could be the one that decides it.

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